



Topic Particles in the North Hail Dialect of Najdi Arabic

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates a set of clause-initial discourse particles in North Hail Arabic (NHA), a dialect spoken in Saudi Arabia. The particles are shown to be heads in the C-domain with topic-marking function. It is shown that the topics typology put forward by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) for German and Italian extends to NHA. The Shifting Topic (S-Topic) is situated above the Focus Phrase, followed by Contrastive Topic (C-Topic), which is in turn followed by Familiar Topic (F-Topic). S-Topic can be marked by either C-particles *mar* or *ʕad*.

The particles *tara* and *ʔaktin* mark an entity expressing C-Topic, while the particle *ʔedi*, *tsin*, *ʔefwa* and *tigil* mark an entity expressing F-Topic. All particles are argued to carry a valued [TOP] feature. However, they are different with respect to whether they have ϕ -content. This difference motivates the distinction between agreeing particles (having ϕ -content) and non-agreeing particles (not having ϕ -content). The study shows that the agreeing particles are probes, being with unvalued ϕ -features, establishing an Agree relation (Chomsky 2000, 2001) with the element that carries a matching unvalued [TOP] feature and valued ϕ -features. This results in the valuation of the unvalued ϕ -features of the agreeing particle, and the valuation of the matching unvalued [TOP] feature of the goal. As a result, the topic interpretation is achieved via the chain created by the head of the topic and the topicalized item. The study shows that when the goal has ϕ -content, an inflectional suffix expressing the same ϕ -content as that of the goal is suffixed to the particle.

The motivation behind counting the [TOP] feature on the goal to be unvalued comes from the cases where the goal is the object. NHA data show that the object moves to a position where it gets accessible to the probe, the agreeing particle, following Chomsky (2000, 2001), Bošković (2007, 2014) and Holmberg *et al.* (2017). This is consistent in the case with multiple topics, where the two topics, the subject and the object, tuck in the projecting headed by the particle (Richards 1997, 1999).

As for the non-agreeing particles, the study argues that, instead of ϕ -content, these heads are endowed with an [EPP] feature, which attracts the element carrying the matching unvalued [TOP] feature to the Spec position of the relevant head. This accounts for why such particles cannot be clause-initial. These facts motivate the assumption that movement to the left periphery (i.e. topicalization) is forced when the head of the Topic Phrase is not endowed with any ϕ -content.

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Declaration

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Dedication

To my parents, who have raised me and made me able to handle matters.

To my son, Firas, and to my daughter, Dilara, who spent their early childhood away from their homeland. I appreciate your patience and all the situations you had been in, my little kids!

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Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
A-Topic	aboutness topic
ACC	accusative case
CLLD	clitic left dislocated item
C-Topic	contrastive topic
COMP	complementizer
Def	definite article
EPP	Extended Projection Principle
F	feminine gender
FM	focus marker
FI	Full Interpretation Principle
Foc	focus feature
F-Topic	familiar topic
FUT	futurity marker
GEN	genitive case
IMP	imperative
INDF	indefinite
LD	left-dislocated phrase
LF	logical form
M	masculine gender

NA	Najdi Arabic
NHA	North Hail Arabic
Neg	negative marker
NOM	nominative case
Obj	object argument
P	plural
PASS	passive voice
PF	phonetic form
PROG	progressive aspect
PRTCP	participle
PRS	present tense
PIC	Phase Impenetrability Condition
PST	past tense
PRT	particle
Q	question particle
S	singular
Sj	subject argument
S-Topic	shifting topic
TOP	topic feature
UG	Universal Grammar
V	lexical verb
v	little verb
VOC	Vocative

∅	null spell out
*	ungrammatical
?	marginal reading
φ-features	phi-agreement features

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1 CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 Introduction¹²

The syntactic object referred to in the literature as ‘discourse particle’ has been the object of increasing interest within generative linguistics in recent times, inspiring a significant number of linguistic studies. The function of this class of words is conveying the speaker’s attitudes, broadly speaking, to the propositional content of the utterance, and relating the propositional content to the context of utterance. (Fischer 2006; Coniglio and Zegrean 2010: 7; Bayer and Obenauer 2011; Stede and Schmitz 2000; Biberauer and Sheehan 2011 and Biberauer et al. 2014). Is it new or old information? Is it familiar or surprising? How certain is the speaker of the truth of the statement? Does it express evidentiality, speaker’s positive/negative attitudes? (Paul 2009; Aikhenvald 2004; Biberauer and Sheehan 2011; Biberauer et al. 2014). Hence, analysis of discourse particles provides important clues to our understanding of the syntax-to-discourse relation. Discourse particles are also used to express the speakers’ attitude through discourse towards the propositional content of the associated clause (see, Bayer and Obenauer 2011; Stede and Schmitz 2000:125-6, Coniglio and Zegrea 2010, and Coniglio 2008 for discussion). Most authors who work on discourse particles agree that it is difficult to capture the pragmatic contribution of such elements, as their interpretation appears to be to a large degree context-dependent (Biberauer and Sheehan 2011 and Biberauer et al. 2014).

A frequent example in this respect is attested in German, one of the languages that is rich in discourse particles. Consider the German discourse particle *wohl*, in the following examples:

(1)

- a. Bist du **wohl** still (Zimmermann 2004: 23)
are you **PRT** quiet
‘Will you be quiet!’

¹ Throughout the thesis, the data provided are from North Hail Arabic unless otherwise indicated.

² All NHA data given and discussed in this thesis have been checked by several native speakers of NHA.

b. Hania hat **wohl** auch ihre Chefin eingeladen. (Zimmermann 2004: 4)

Hania has **PRT** also her boss-fem invited

‘Presumably, Hania has invited her boss, too.’

c. Dieser Satz enthält **ja doch wohl** viele Partikel. (Struckmeier 2014: 16)

this sentence contains **PRT PRT PRT** many particles

‘This sentence contains many particles, doesn’t it?’

It is clear that there is no one-to-one correspondence between *wohl* and any English word. The authors attempt to convey the meanings of *wohl* through using different words or constructions that are used to express the speaker’s attitude in English, such as *presumably* in (1b) or the question tag in (1c). The received view among researchers is that, even though discourse particles may contribute to the interpretation of the clause (Biberauer et al. 2014, Bayer and Struckmeier 2017), it is hard to capture their precise meaning or function in every context where they occur (Fischer 2006; Thurmair 1989, Molnár 2002, and Coniglio 2008). Consider the following sentences:

(2) a. Wo wohnst du German
where live you
‘Where do you live?’

b. Wo wohnst du **denn** German
where live you **PRT**
‘Where do you live? (I am wondering).’

According to Thurmair (1989) and Bayer and Struckmeier (2017), discourse particles are extra-propositional; they affect the illocutionary component of the clause, which supplies information on how the utterance is integrated into the given discourse. They don’t however, affect the content of the utterance. Under this view, according to Bayer and Obenauer (2011: 450), the difference between the two clauses in (2) revolves around the presence of the particle in (2b), which results in revealing that the speaker is in a particular way ‘concerned’ about the proposition that the answer would yield. In other words, the particle *denn* could be taken as a spell out of the otherwise expressed phrase ‘I am wondering’. With this property of the discourse particle *denn*, Bayer and Obenauer (2011) further consolidate the widely-held assumption that

discourse particles modify the pragmatic context dependent interpretation of the utterance rather than the content of the proposition (Zwicky 1985; Biberauer et al. 2014). It is for this reason that most work on discourse particles has concerned the semantic and pragmatic description of the discourse particles, while their syntactic analysis has received relatively little attention (Biberauer *et al.* 2014).

On the other hand, with the recent appreciation of the role of information structure in sentence derivation, much recent work within the generative model of syntax has investigated discourse particles, regarding them as a bridge or interface between syntax and discourse. There is a generalisation or rule in grammar that components high in the sentence are more context-related than components low in the structure. This higher domain of the sentence structure in the generative framework of syntax is represented in the CP layer, the domain of the clause where properties relating to discourse effects and information structure are merged (see, Shlonsky 1997, Ch. 1); hence, discourse particles are often termed as C-particles (Cardinaletti 2011; Biberauer *et al.* 2014; Coniglio 2008; and Zimmermann 2004, 2011, among many others).

One of the most widely-investigated particles is the German particle; *doch*, which is argued to trigger what is called an illocutionary effect by modifying (or strengthening) the illocution of the clause where this particle occurs (Coniglio 2008: 97). This supports the view that there is a close link between discourse particles and the left periphery, as clause typing is generally assumed to take place in the CP-layer (see Bayer and Obenauer 2011) for a full study of German discourse particles merged in the head Force of Force Phrase).

As the role of discourse in sentence building and processing has begun to receive attention, including the advent of the so called cartographic proposals in the wake of Rizzi (1997 *et seq*) and Cinque (1999), discourse particles have been the locus of several works that investigate the mapping between syntax and discourse. One important reason is that such particles can be used as a means to explore the structure of the left periphery of clauses. For instance, Schwabe (2004) makes use of the particle *li* to examine the left periphery of Slavic yes/no interrogatives and argues that *li* can indicate interrogativity and focalisation. In the same vein, Coniglio and Zegrean (2010) utilize discourse particles as evidence to argue for splitting up of the Force Phrase, a separate layer within Rizzi's (1997) articulated CP domain. Hack (2014) analyses the Italian particle *po* and argues that it may encode modal readings. He shows that this particle

was grammaticalized from an adverb which can be used as a question marker in some other contexts, forming a functional head in the associated clause. Haegeman (2014) considers a range of discourse-related particles in West-Flemish which express speaker attitude and are situated in the functional domain at the clausal periphery.

Biberauer and Sheehan (2011) point out that, within modern generative practice, discourse particles are represented in syntax as heads. One example of this is Roussou (2000), who postulates that the Greek particles *tha*, *na* and *as* occupy the lower C head, which is specified for modality. In his study of German modal particles, Struckmeier (2014) analyses them as C-related elements, emergent functional heads in the VP periphery that spell out features related to the speaker's attitude. Bayer and Trotzke (2015) analyse the German particles *denn* and *nur* and argue that their categorial status is as heads, given that they are sensitive to intervention effects imposed by a c-commanding verb (a property that I will also use as a test for the categorial status of the particles investigated in this research). Cruschina (2009) posits that discourse related features (TOP, FOC) can be morphologically realized; having a phonological representation in the form of a particle or special markers that head the corresponding functional projection (cf., for example, Kuno (1972); Svolacchia *et al.* (1995); Frascarelli and Puglielli (2007, 2009) for similar arguments in Somali and Ouhalla (1997) for a similar view on the Focus system in Standard Arabic).

Against this background, the current research attempts to investigate a set of discourse particles, henceforth C-particles, which reside in the C-domain of the sentence, in North Hail Arabic, characterising their pragmatic functions in the sentence where they are merged and their syntactic functions, with special attention to the so-called topic particles that mark the elements whose referent expresses the topic of the sentence. Using the C-particles as a diagnostic, the fine structure of the left periphery in NHA can be determined.

In the following sections, I provide an overview of the status of the discourse particles in Arabic, both standard and dialectal Arabic. I also discuss the word order patterns in Arabic in general which is important because the particles will be shown to interact with the sentence structure building.

1.2 Discourse particles in Standard Arabic

In his work on the focus system in Standard Arabic (SA), Moutaouakil (1989) made a distinction between two types of constituents that express new, non-given information, based on the different pragmatic functions they bear. Using the traditional terminology, Moutaouakil (1989) contends that the constituent that expresses the type of focus with new information remains in situ in syntax. On the other hand, he treats the contrastive focus which gives new, contrastive corrective information (Ouhalla 1994b, 1997: 11) as undergoing movement in syntax. Building on Moutaouakil's (1989) work and Ouhalla's (1992) work on the focus system in SA, Ouhalla (1994b, 1997) argues convincingly that SA exhibits a set of discourse particles that affect how focus is represented and interpreted in this language. In this regard, Ouhalla (1992) proposed the existence of a Focus Phrase that hosts focus-fronted items, sandwiched between CP and TP. Further, Ouhalla (1994b, 1997) investigates a set of discourse particles, traditionally called *ħuru:f ʔattauki:d*, the particles of corroboration/confirmation (Ouhalla 1997: 20).³ The function of these particles is to add a certain force, extra-propositional information, to the sentence, and they are often assumed to confirm the propositional content of a given sentence. Ouhalla (1997) argues that some of these particles are also Focus heads whose existence conspires not to move the focalized elements to the left periphery. In the minimalist spirit, assuming principles of economy of derivation, Ouhalla (1997: 23-24) discusses how focus constructions are derived in Arabic, those with overt focus movement and those without such movement. Based on the assumption that there is a focus position in the C-domain, which is the specifier position of a focus head, Ouhalla (1997) shows that focus movement of an XP element to the left periphery is sensitive to whether the head of the focus phrase is overtly filled or not. He analyses a set of focus particles, which are merged in the head F of Focus Phrase. This merger is the result of the fact the head of this Phrase is endowed with a Focus feature and that this feature needs to be satisfied by means of identification, or, more precisely, via a process Ouhalla (1997) terms as *morphological identification*; i.e., with the merger of a particle. Alternatively, for this identification requirement to be satisfied, movement of the focused item to the Spec of this projection is triggered. Typical examples of these particles are illustrated in the following sentences from Ouhalla (1997: 23):

³ See Ouhalla (1997) for a list of focus particles in Standard Arabic.

- (3) a. **ʔinna** Zayd-an **la**-MUHAAJIR-un SA
FM Zayd-ACC **FM**-emigrating-NOM
‘Zayd is EMIGRATING.’
- b. **la**-MUHAAJIR-un Zayd-un SA
FM-emigrating-NOM Zayd-NOM
‘Zayd is EMIGRATING.’

The two sentences in (3) have the same reading; the constituent *MUHAAJIRUN* ‘emigrating’ is focus in both sentences. Given Ouhalla’s (1997) logic, in (3), there are two instances of Focus feature, one associated with the constituent *MUHAAJIRUN* which is spelled out as the particle *la*, (which Ouhalla (1997) calls a constituent-focus marker) and the other is associated with the head F of FP and is spelled out as the particle *ʔinna* (what Ouhalla (1997) call a sentence-focus marker). The particle *ʔinna* in (3a) satisfies the morphological identification requirement of the head F of FP. The consequence of this process is that the focused constituent need not move to the Spec of FP, to be assigned the interpretation of focus, but bears an operator-focus reading *in situ* (Moutaouakil 1989, Ouhalla 1997). In (3b), on the other hand, overt movement of the focused constituent *MUHAAJIRUN*, is needed because the head F of FP is not morphologically identified, and, instead, the interpretation is only achieved via a Spec head configuration (Ouhalla 1997: 24).

The upshot of Ouhalla’s (1997) proposal is that movement of a focalised element to the left periphery is motivated when the head of the Focus Phrase is not morphologically identified. This means that the existence of an overt focus head represented as a particle, with a matching focalised item, excludes overt movement of the focused item, which is consistent with the spirit of the Minimalist program in that movement is last resort. What Ouhalla’s (1997) work also shows us is that the focus particles that SA grammar provides have different functions, sentence-focus marker and constituent-focus marker. As Ouhalla (1997: 21) puts it ‘the function of these particles is to ‘reinforce/confirm’ the propositional content of a given sentence, or... ‘highlight’ a given category in the sentence’. The current thesis aims to show how these insights carry over in their essentials to North Hail Arabic. It will be clear that the particles under investigation mark/highlight different items in syntax, and this marking has morphological and, in some cases, phonological reflexes, such as spelling out inflectional suffixes on the relevant particle and spelling out a constituent with contrastive stress. The

particles investigated in this thesis are not focus particles, though, but topic particles. Ouhalla's (1997) finding that a null head triggers movement of a constituent to its Spec in a Spec head relation as an alternative to agreement is extended to the syntax of the particles investigated in this research, as we will see throughout this thesis.

In the next section, I explore the existence of discourse particles in Najdi Arabic of which North Hail Arabic (NHA) is a sub-dialect.

1.3 Discourse particles in Najdi Arabic

Najdi Arabic (NA), of which NHA is a sub-variety, has been an object of attention for many modern Arabic dialectologists since the last century, most notably Ingham (1994, 2008), who covered essential parts of Najd (central, north and mixed central territories). Most relevant to the current research is Ingham's survey of the word orders used in the Najdi clause as well as the pragmatic functions of a set of discourse particles frequently used in most parts of NA. As his study was descriptive in nature, he provides only a brief account of the interpretation of each discourse particle. As for the distribution of discourse particles in NA, the researcher, though he mentions a range of them, did not seem to be entirely clear about the exact parts of Najd where they are used. There are particles which are used in different parts of Najd but with (partly) different meaning.⁴ Some of the discourse particles being investigated in the present research have been mentioned in the literature, including the particles *tsin*, *tigil*, *kedl*, and *ʕad*, which will be the topic of the following chapters, as will be discussed, having the status of topicalizers. For example, Ingham (1994, 2008) treats the particles *tsin* and *tigil* as speculative markers with the meaning 'it seems that', which is not the case in NHA context, as in the following examples from Ingham (1994: 333; Ingham 2008).

- (4) Faras-in tajib-ah ma **tsin**-ah rikbat
 Horse-INDF good-it Neg **PRT**-it ridden
 'A good horse, as though it had not been ridden.'

⁴ Amongst the discourse particles he mentions is *qid*, an aspectual marker following his classification, but it is used in central and east central parts of Najd, not in the north part of it, where NHA is located.

- (5) **tiġil** dʒa:ja-hum ʕilm niði:r
PRT came-them news worrying
 ‘It seems they received a warning.’

In the dialect investigated in the present work, though, as will be seen, these particles have a different function. Occurrences of other particles like *ʕedi*, and its variant *aʕedi* (which are used interchangeably in east Najd), have been attested in Northern Najdi, where NHA is located (Ingham 1994, 2008; Sawayan 1982). Ingham assumes that this particle is used in central Najd as an alternative to the particle *ku:d*, used elsewhere in Najd. Ingham treats *ʕedi* as a modal particle, conveying optative resultant meaning ‘mayhap’, and assumes it is derived from Standard Arabic *qad yakun* ‘it may be’ (Ingham 1994, 2008) or *qad* (Johnstone 1967). Consider the following Najdi sentences from Ingham (1994: 333) and Ingham (2008: 126).

- (6) a. nabi nistarxis min ʔal-ʔami:r **aʕedi**-h jasmaḥ-lina
 want.we ask for permission from the-prince **PRT**-he permit-to us
 ‘We will ask the permission from the prince in the hope that he will permit us.’
- b. ʔttisil bi-l-bit **aʕedi** Faisal mittisl-in-ba-ham
 contact to-the-house **mayhap** Faisal has-contacted-with-them
 ‘Ring the house. Perhaps Faisal has telephoned them.’

Sawayan (1982: 58) also notes the use of the particle *ʕad*, functioning as an interjective particle, in central areas of Najd.

- (7) w-la-ʔadri **ʕad** wiʕu qal
 and-Neg-know.I **PRT** what said.3SM
 ‘And I didn’t know what he said.’

The research covering NA, and, more importantly NHA, has been descriptive, with a focus on only a single function for each of the surveyed particles. The received view on discourse particles, it is argued, is that they have many values, i.e. each particle has several values that are triggered in certain contexts, which means that they can have different positions in syntax (Fischer 2006; Tsoulas and Alexiadou 2006; Bayer and Obenauer 2011; Stede and Schmitz 2000; Coniglio and Zegrea 2010: 7; Biberauer and Sheehan 2011; Biberauer et al. 2014;

Struckmeier 2014, Bayer and Trotzke 2015; Bayer and Struckmeier 2017). However, these studies on NA don't provide a syntactic account that analyses the use of these discourse particles in different contexts, and hence, would be able to tell us about the role and exact positions of the discourse particles in a syntactic framework. As will be seen, though they are lexically identical, the discourse particles under investigation have different pragmatic functions from those mentioned in Ingham's (1994, 2008) work on NA. One plausible reason for this difference between North Hail Arabic and other varieties of Najd, that Ingham didn't possibly notice, is that the region where North Hail Arabic is spoken was dominated by one major tribe, Shamar, which has determined the form of the dialect in the region. One can easily notice the difference once crossing the borders of NHA region, eastwards (Qassim), westwards (Madina) and North-eastwards (Hafar). On the other hand, the particles that Ingham mentioned were used by a group of tribes (mentioned in his own work, including Mutair and Murrah), but excluding Shamar. The discourse particles in NHA, investigated in the present work, with their pragmatic functions, have not been the focus of attention in any theoretical work. With the generative theoretical framework adopted in the current research, we will see that the NHA discourse particles that are being investigated have entirely different functions and fixed syntactic positions in syntax. For this purpose, I find it important to have a look at the word orders used in this dialect and other related dialects in Najd. I begin my pursuit with a brief discussion of the syntactic derivations of the allowed word orders in standard Arabic and other Arabic varieties, then I shift towards those used in Najdi Arabic.

1.4 Word orders and the left periphery: an overview of Arabic

In this section, I explore the word orders and the left periphery in Arabic.

1.4.1 Word orders in Standard Arabic and other Arabic varieties

The property of Arabic having several word order patterns has attracted the attention of many linguists working in the field, triggering a considerable amount of research to account for the mechanisms of the derivation of these word orders (Ouhalla 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1997; 1999; Fassi Fehri 1993; Aoun and Benmamoun 1998, Bolotin 1995; Benmamoun 1992, 1998, 2000; Shlonsky 2000, Mohammad 1989, 1990, 2000, Soltan 2004, 2006, 2007, 2011; Aoun *et al.* 1994; Aoun *et al.* 2010, Brustad 2000, Fischer 2002, among others). Arabic displays two common sentential word orders, SVO and VSO, both in which the lexical verb undergoes v to T movement since Arabic is considered a v-to-T language (Fassi Fehri 1993; Aoun and

Benmamoun 1994; Ouhalla 1994a; Benmamoun 2000, Mohammad 1989, 2000; Aoun *et al.* 2010)⁵. In this regard, one related deeply discussed issue in the Arabic literature has been the subject-verb agreement asymmetry associated with word orders. It is common in the literature on SA to find that SVO word order shows full agreement between the verb and the subject in all ϕ -features, while VS word order shows partial agreement (Ouhalla 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1997; Fassi Fehri 1993; Aoun and Benmamoun 1998, Bolotin 1995; Benmamoun 1992, 1998, 2000; Shlonsky 2000, Mohammad 1989, 1990, 2000, Soltan 2004, 2006, 2007, 2011; Aoun *et al.* 1994; Aoun *et al.* 2010, among others). Consider the following sentences from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 57-58):

- (8) a. \int akala l-mu \int allim-u
 ate.3ms the-teacher.ms-Nom SA
 ‘The teacher ate.’
- b. l-mu \int allim-u \int akala
 the-teacher.ms-Nom ate.3ms SA
 ‘The teacher ate.’
- c. l-mu \int allimuun \int akal-uu
 the-teacher.mp.Nom ate-3mp SA
 ‘The teachers ate.’
- d. * \int akal-uu l-mu \int allimuun SA
 ate-3mp the-teacher.mp.Nom
- e. \int akala l-mu \int allimuun SA
 ate-3ms the-teacher-mp.Nom

In (8a,b), the same form of the verb is used, whether the subject is preverbal or post-verbal, which indicates that the verb agrees in full ϕ -content with the subject. However, partial agreement can be seen when the subject is specified as plural, as the contrast in (8c,d,e) shows. It is widely taken that this agreement asymmetry is attributed to and sensitive to the position

⁵ I will assume movement of the verb to T in this research.

of the subject and the verb in Standard Arabic.⁶ In all Arabic dialects, on the other hand, it is argued that such agreement asymmetry doesn't arise (see Soltan 2007; Jlassi 2013; Musabhien 2009; Fassi Fehri 1993; Aoun *et al.* 2010). For instance, in (9) below from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 46), the verb shows full agreement with the subject regardless of the subject position, preceding or following the verb.

- (9) a. ζ omar kla t-təffaha Moroccan Arabic
 Omar ate.3ms the-apple
 ‘Omar ate the apple.’
- b. kla ζ omar t-təffaha Moroccan Arabic
 ate.3ms Omar the-apple
 ‘Omar ate the apple.’
- c. neem-o l-wleed Lebanese Arabic
 slept-3p the-children
 ‘The children slept.’
- d. l-wleed neem-o Lebanese Arabic
 the-children slept-3p
 ‘The children slept.’

Relevant in terms of dialectal Arabic is that Arabic dialects allow two main word orders: VSO and SVO, where SVO is mostly taken to be the unmarked order in the modern dialects (Soltan 2007; Jlassi 2013; Musabhien 2009) (I will shortly show that this is the case in NHA, too).

Another long-standing issue with respect to word order in Arabic concerns the status of the preverbal subject: whether it is a genuine subject occupying an A-position or a topic occupying

⁶ Since the focus of the current research is on the information structural status of the sentence constituents, including the subject, with respect to the discourse particles, and that NHA is a dialect that displays full verb subject agreement, I will not discuss the proposals and analyses that account for the agreement asymmetry in Arabic. I though refer the reader to the above references, especially Mohammad (1990, 2000) Benmamoun (1992, 2000) Fassi Fehri (1993) Aoun *et al.* (1994) Aoun *et al.* (2010) Ouhalla (1991, 1994) and Soltan (2006, 2007) for discussions on the deeply investigated issue of full vs. partial agreement in Arabic, with respect to the subject positions, preverbal and post-verbal.

an A'-position, moved or based-generated. In this regard, the preverbal subject has been analysed as a thematic subject that is first merged in its thematic position, Spec vP, and then undergoes A-movement to Spec of TP to satisfy an [EPP] feature on T (Benmamoun 1992, 2000; Mohammad 1989, 1990, 2000; Ouhalla 1991, 1994a; Aoun *et al.* 1994). On the other hand, an alternative view is that the preverbal subject does not undergo movement, but is based-generated in an A'-position, perhaps the Spec position of a dedicated projection with a topic interpretation, and binds a null resumptive pronominal in the A-domain, Spec TP, of the clause (Bakir 1980; Ayoub 1982; Fassi Fehri 1993; Aoun *et al.* 2010; Soltan 2006, 2007). Moreover, for Soltan (2006), this A'-position, where the subject is interpreted as a topic, is Spec TP, while Spec vP is occupied by a null subject *pro*. The widely held view that the preverbal subject is a topic is influenced by the fact that the semantics and syntax of the preverbal subject is different from that of the post-verbal subject. Semantically, SV constructions were traditionally taken to represent a topic-comment structure, in which the subject is interpreted as topic of the discourse against which the event is presented, whereas in VS constructions the subject is assumed to have the unmarked interpretation, in which an event is neutrally reported with the participants involved.⁷ Syntactic evidence in favour of the assumption that the preverbal subject expresses a topic was adduced from the fact that indefinite nonspecific DPs cannot occur preverbally in SA (Ayoub 1981).⁸

Another view on the preverbal subject is that it can also be a focused item, moved to the Spec position of a dedicated projection in the left periphery (Ouhalla 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1997; Shlonsky 2000), Spec of Focus Phrase in the sense of Rizzi (1997). In this case, the preverbal subject is interpreted as having a contrastive focus, giving new information that contrasts with the existing information (Moutaouakil 1989; Ouhalla 1994b, 1997) or new, non-discourse

⁷ This assumption is mainly adopted from the traditional Arabic grammarians' view that the preverbal subject is 'mubtada?', which means 'something to start with', about which ?alxabar', which means 'the clause/predicate', says something (Soltan 2007).

⁸ Fassi Fehri (1993) provides the following contrasting example in favour of the view that a preverbal subject is a topic (see also Aoun *et al.* 2010). See Mohammad (2000) for argument that in Palestinian Arabic an indefinite subject can occur preverbally if it is specific.

- a. *walad-un kasara l-baab-a
 boy-NOM broke 3sgmas the-door-ACC
 'A boy broke the door.'
- b. kasara walad-un l-baab-a
 broke 3sgmas boy-NOM the-door-ACC
 'A boy broke the door.'

given information. As for the post-verbal subject, on the other hand, it remains in its thematic position within the predicate (Mohammad 1989, 2000; Benmamoun 1992, Fassi Fehri 1993).⁹

Furthermore, the grammar of Arabic allows different kinds of constituents to appear in the periphery of the clause, giving several word orders. Significant work has been done regarding the syntactic analysis of word orders other than SVO and VSO, including OVS, OSV, and SOV (Aoun *et al.* 2010; Ouhalla 1994a, 1994b, 1997; Shlonsky 2000; Mohammad 1989, 2000; Soltan 2006, 2007; Aoun *et al.* 2010). A number of linguists have advanced proposals regarding constructions that involve a displaced object. For example, Ouhalla (1994b, 1997) proposes that the displaced object has two distinct interpretive properties, with different information values. It can express a piece of old, given information or a piece of new information. In case it expresses a piece of old, given information, it targets the Spec position of Topic Phrase in the left periphery of the sentence (see Shlonsky 2000; Aoun *et al.* 2010). In this case, it is argued that the object must be definite, specific and resumed by a clitic on the verb (Aoun *et al.* 2001; Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Mohammad 2000, Shlonsky 1992, 2000, and Aoun *et al.* 2010). Consider the following OVS examples, from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 48):

- (10) a. t-təffāha kla-**ha** ʕomar Moroccan Arabic
 the-apple ate.3ms-it Omar
 ‘The apple, Omar ate it.’
- b. mona gaabal-**ha** ʔeħmad Palestinian Arabic
 Mona met.3ms-her Ahmad
 ‘Mona, Ahmad met her.’
- c. khalil beesit-**o** maya Lebanese Arabic
 Khalil kissed.3fs-him Maya
 ‘Khalil, Maya kissed him.’

⁹ Since the focus in this research is on moved items, I will not detail the status of postverbal subjects here. I refer the reader to the mentioned references, especially Shlonsky (1997); Mohammad (2000) and Aoun and Benmamoun (1994). See Fassi Fehri (1993); Shlonsky (1997); and Mohammed (2000) for the argument that the post-verbal subject is in Spec, vP but does not move to Spec, TP, and Aoun *et al.* (1994) and Aoun *et al.* (2010) for the argument that the post-verbal subject moves from Spec, vP to Spec TP.

The sentences in (10) represent what is referred to as clitic left dislocation, in which a DP with the function of topic, is in the left periphery of a sentence but is resumed by a clitic in the sentence, (cf. Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Aoun and Benmamoun 1998; Ouhalla and Shlonsky 2002; Shlonsky 2000; Aoun et al. 2010). In this construction, the clause initial object DP is assumed to be externally merged in the left periphery of the sentence, since, if moved, it would in certain instances violate island conditions, moving a DP out of adjunct, complex NPs, and *wh*-clauses (Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Aoun *et al.* 1994).¹⁰

The object can also surface to the immediate left of the subject giving, OSV word order, as in the following examples, from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 48):

- (11) a. t-təffaħa ʕomar kla-**ha** Moroccan Arabic
the-apple Omar ate.3ms-it
‘The apple, Omar ate it.’
- b. mona ʔeħmad gaabal-**ha** Palestinian Arabic
Mona Ahmad met.3ms-her
‘Mona, Ahmad met her.’
- c. Khalil maya beesit-**o** Lebanese Arabic
Khalil Maya kissed.3fs-him
‘Khalil, Maya kissed him.’

Furthermore, the object can show up to the right of the subject, giving SOV word order, as in (12) below from Aoun et al. (2010: 48):

- (12) a. ʕomar t-təffaħa kla-**ha** Moroccan Arabic
Omar the-apple ate.3ms-it
‘Omar, the apple, he ate it.’

¹⁰ Aoun *et al.* (2010) show that Clitic left dislocated items appear to the left of a *wh*-phrase which occupy Spec FocP, implying that they occupy the Spec of the Topic Phrase, which is located to the left of FocP. They also argue that OVS, OSV, and SOV word orders suggest that the object is an A'-position, provided that the object is resumed on the verb by a pronominal clitic or an inflectional suffix.

b. ʔeħmad mona gaabal-**ha** Palestinian Arabic
 Ahmad Mona met.3ms-her
 ‘Ahmad, Mona, he met her.’

c. maya khalil beesit-**o** Lebanese Arabic
 Maya Khalil kissed.3fs-him
 ‘Maya, Khalil, she kissed him.’

Mohammad (2000) argues that, given that the verb adjoins T, the object is outside the TP domain in the OSV constructions in (11), hence, in the CP domain. In the SOV constructions in (12), given that there is no proper position for the object to move to between the subject and T which contains the verb, Mohammad (2000) argues that both the subject and the object are in the CP domain.

The SOV patterns (13a) and OSV (13b), also hold in SA, where Shlonsky (2000) treats both preverbal DPs, the subject and the object, as topics, as in the following sentences, from Bakir (1980):

(13) a. hind-un saalim-un tadribu-hu SA
 Hind-NOM Salim-NOM hit-3S.F-3S.M
 ‘As for Hind, she beats Salim.’

b. saalim-un hind-un tadribu-hu SA
 Salim-NOM Hind-NOM hit-3S.F-3S.M
 ‘As for Hind, she beats Salim.’

In addition to the topic value, an initial, peripheral object can also bear a different value, expressing a piece of new information, a focused item. Unlike the clitic left dislocated item which is generally analysed in terms of base generation, the focused element is usually analysed in terms of movement, targeting the Spec of a projection with focus interpretation (FP), whose head has a strong feature F that needs to be checked in the sense of Ouhalla (1992, 1994b, 1997, 1999b), and is associated with a gap in the clause rather than a clitic (Moutaouakil 1989,

Bakir 1980, Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Shlonsky 2000, Aoun *et al.* 2001; Aoun *et al.* 2010).¹¹ Consider the following examples in (14) from É Kiss (1998: 270) and (15) from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 202), following Ouhalla (1994b):

- (14) a. \int AY-AN fariba zayd-un SA
tea-ACC drank.3S.M Zayd-Nom
‘It was tea that Zayd drank.’
- b. \int AY \int arib zayd Lebanese Arabic
tea drank.3ms Zayd
‘It was tea that Zayd drank.’
- (15) a. fariba zayd-un \int AY-AN SA
drank.3S.M Zayd-Nom tea-ACC
‘It was tea that Zayd drank.’
- b. \int arib zayd \int AY Lebanese Arabic
drank.3ms Zayd tea
‘It was tea that Zayd drank.’

Following Moutaouakil (1989), Ouhalla (1994b) analyses the clause initial constituent in (14a) as fronted to get the interpretation of contrastive focus, which has the properties of being contrastive and exhaustive, while the in situ constituent in (15) has a new information focus interpretation (Moutaouakil 1989; Ouhalla 1994b, 1997). Again, here, the examples in (14) show that movement of the contrastive focused item to the left periphery of the sentence is due to the head of the Focus projection being null, without a particle, as we saw in (3b) above. Hence, the contrastive focus interpretation is achieved via a Spec head configuration.

Other word orders exist in Arabic, including VOS, as in (16) below. Given that the verb moves to T, and that the object is located between the verb and the subject in Spec vP, VOS

¹¹ For Ouhalla (1994b), a clitic-left dislocated item is based generated adjoined to the PF that hosts focus-fronted phrases; thereby accounting for the relative order of a clitic-left dislocated item with respect to a focus-fronted phrase; the former is merged to the left of the latter.

construction is derived by overt movement of the object to a position c-commanding the subject (Mohammad 2000). Soltan (2007) in his study on SA, argues that the object in this construction moves to the vP edge, while the verb moves to T and the subject remains in its thematic position within vP. This is how the object appears intervening between the verb and the subject, *in situ* in Spec of vP, as shown below in (16) from Soltan (2007: 118).

- (16) qaraʔa ʔal-kita:b-a Zayd-un SA
 read.3S.M Def-book-ACC Zayd-NOM
 ‘Zayd read the book.’

What the above discussion reveals is that almost all word order permutations of S, V, and O are allowed in Arabic in suitable contexts with the help of certain syntactic tools, including the use of resumptive pronouns in case of clitic left dislocation. In the following section, I continue the same discussion with special attention to the word orders attested in Najdi Arabic and NHA.

1.4.2 *Word orders in Najdi Arabic varieties, including North Hail Arabic*

Ingham (1994, 2008) gives a general description of NA varieties with regard to word orders; he shows that the two common sentential word orders in NA are SVO and VSO. He further claims that VSO is the unmarked word order, while SVO involves topic fronting. However, Ingham (1994) does not specify his criteria for markedness. His view that VSO is the unmarked word order in NA runs counter to the widely-suggested view that Modern Arabic vernaculars use the SVO word order as the unmarked word order (See Aoun *et al.* (1994) for Lebanese Arabic and Shlonsky (1997) for Palestinian Arabic and Fassi Fehri (1993) and Aoun *et al.* (2010) for Moroccan). This is stated as a descriptive generalisation, without any detailed syntactic analysis. Recent work on NA has shown that NA exhibits other word orders which are triggered once discourse is invoked. For instance, AlShammiry (2007) analyses the Turaif variety of Najdi Arabic, and argues that the basic word order in Turaif Arabic is SVO while VSO and VOS are viewed as marked word orders. He analyses the subject in SVO constructions as a neutral preverbal subject, a topic or as a focus, respectively (17a), as shown

in the translations. In VSO constructions, the post-verbal subject is only interpreted as a neutral element with no focalized or topicalized readings possible, as seen in (17b).

- (17) a. ?al-bana:t ja:f-an ?al-filim Turaif Arabic
 Def-girl.P saw-3P.F Def-movie
 ‘The girls saw the movie.’
 ‘As for the girls, they saw the movie.’
 ‘THE GIRLS saw the movie.’
- b. ja:f-an ?al-bana:t ?al-filim Turaif Arabic
 saw-3P.F Def-girl.P Def-movie
 ‘The girls saw the movie.’

AlShammiry (2007: 6) shows that Turaif Arabic also displays VOS word order, a construction in which the subject, appearing clause-finally, is interpreted as a topic whereas the vP, containing the verb and the object, is interpreted as a focus (18) (see Lewis 2013 for a similar analysis of Najdi Arabic).

- (18) ja:f-an ?al-filim ?al-banat Turaif Arabic
 saw-3P.F Def-movie Def-girl.pl.f
 ‘As for the girls, they SAW THE MOVIE.’

Having highlighted the word orders allowed in Standard Arabic and some Arabic varieties, we will now turn to the variety concerned with the current research. North Hail Arabic (NHA) is a variety spoken in Saudi Arabia, the dialect of people inhabiting the north of Hail region, in the northern part of the Arabic peninsula, in Saudi Arabia. It is the central point of Najd, the middle region of the desert part. As is the case in all Saudi dialects, North Hail people use their dialectal Arabic for everyday communication. This is their mother tongue, not Standard Arabic, which is only used in schools and in formal contexts. Linguistically, NHA belongs to Najdi, one of the main dialects spoken in Saudi Arabia. The dialects falling under Najdi share some linguistic features, phonological, morphological and lexical. They exhibit almost the same word order alternations, as just discussed, with movement triggered by discourse/informational properties of the sentence (see Alshamari and Jarrah 2016 for a study of verb movement in NHA).

NHA is rich in discourse particles, which means that it belongs to those languages in which discourse-related functional projections have morphologically realised heads (Cruschina 2009). Regarding NHA, see Alshamari (2015a) for a pragmatic analysis of one particle in Najdi and Alshamari (2015b,c) for a pragmatic-syntactic analysis of a set of particles in NHA. The literature on Arabic in general does not seem to provide syntactic accounts on discourse particles in Najdi contexts.

In part, in opposition to Ingham (1994, 2008), the unmarked order in NHA is SVO. Consider the following sentence.

- (19) Firas ʃaf as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
 Firas see.PST.3S.M Def-car in-Def-yard
 ‘Firas saw the car in the yard.’

The sentence in (19) expresses a complete thought, a propositional content represented in syntax via a subject-predicate construction, an SVO word order, which I take to be unmarked. Some syntactic evidence that SVO is the unmarked word order in NHA is that this word order is the main order used in embedded clauses, irrespective of the selector of the embedded clauses, e.g. complement of a verb, etc (20a) and that SVO is the word order of the answer to the question ‘what happened?’, transitive and intransitive, as in (20b). A sentence with VSO order cannot be an answer to the question *wif sʕar* ‘what happened?’:

- (20) a. Ali ga:l ʔin Firas ʃaf as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
 Ali said.3S.M that Firas see.PST.3S.M Def-car in-Def-yard
 ‘Ali said that Firas saw the car in the yard.’

- b. Q: *wif sʕar*?
 What happened
 ‘What happened.’

- A1: (*ʃa:fat) Manal ʃa:fat al-nahar
 Manal saw.3S.F Def-river
 ‘Manal saw the river.’

A2: (*fa:fat) bint fa:fat al-nahar
 girl saw.3S.F Def-river
 ‘A girl saw the river.’

A3: (*dʒat) Manal dʒat
 Manal came.3S.F
 ‘Manal came.’

A4: (*dʒat) bint dʒat
 girl came.3S.F
 ‘A girl came.’

Other word orders can be used in NHA, including VSO, as the following example illustrates:

(21) faf Firas as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
 see.PST.3S.M Firas Def-car in-Def-yard
 ‘Firas saw the car in the yard.’

In addition, VOS can be used, with two different structural patterns.¹² In one case, the subject expresses a topic while the vP is focalised (22a). That is, the vP, expressing the event, could be an answer to the question: *what did the boy do?* The other structure is different in that the verb is resumed by the object clitic, arguably for information structure interpretive properties (22b), in which case the clause is an answer to the question: *who saw the car?*¹³

(22) a. faf as-sayarah al-walad bi-a-sa:ħah
 see.PST.3S.M Def-car Def-boy in-Def-yard
 ‘A boy saw the car in the yard.’

¹² This word order is investigated by Alshamari and Jarrah (2016) who argue that VOS involves vP movement, containing V and O, to the left periphery while the subject remains in Spec TP. The authors depend on the observations that the past tense copula remains to the right of the subject which in turn does not have to get some special informational value to be licensed at this position. The authors do not discuss cases where the past tense copula is not present. So, their analysis of VOS is restricted to the cases where the tense is overt.

¹³ The syntax of pronominal clitics will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.

- b. **ʃaf-ah** as-sayarah al-walad bi-a-sa:ħah
 see.PST.3S.M Def-car Def-boy in-Def-yard
 ‘A boy saw the car in the yard.’

The two word orders SOV and OSV are also acceptable but less frequent. Consider the following examples:

- (23) a. Firas as-sayarah **ʃaf-ah** bi-a-sa:ħah
 Firas Def-car see.PST.3S.M-it in-Def-yard
 ‘Firas saw the car in the yard.’

- b. as-sayarah Firas **ʃaf-ah** bi-a-sa:ħah
 Def-car Firas see.PST.3S.M-it in-Def-yard
 ‘Firas saw the car in the yard.’

In the latter two orders, a clitic that shows the same ϕ -content as the object must be attached to the verb; otherwise, the resulting sentence is ungrammatical, as the following pair demonstrates:

- (24) a.* Firas as-sayarah ʃaf bi-a-sa:ħah
 Firas Def-car see.PST.3S.M in-Def-yard
 Intended meaning: ‘Firas saw the car in the yard.’

- b. *as-sayarah Firas ʃaf bi-a-sa:ħah
 Def-car Firas see.PST.3S.M in-Def-yard
 Intended meaning: ‘Firas saw the car in the yard.’

Sentences (24 a, b) demonstrate that the so-called gap strategy, i.e. movement without use of a resumptive pronoun, is not compatible with SOV clauses. If we suppose that the resumptive pronoun is base-generated as complement of the verb in VP, while the object is base-generated in its surface position, the ban against using a gap in the position of the object follows. The question arises though what the position of the preverbal object is in SOV. There is positive evidence to assume that the object is in the left periphery (and hence the subject is also in the left periphery given its linear position relative to the object). This piece of evidence comes first

from cases where the past tense copula *kaan* is used. If this copula is merged in a sentence with SOV, the tense copula appears to the immediate right of the object rather than its left, as exemplified in (25).

- (25) Firas as-sayarah kaan ʃaf-ah bi-a-sa:ħah
 Firas Def-car copular.PST see.PST.3S.M-it in-Def-yard
 ‘Firas, the car, he was seeing it in the yard.’

Given that there is no downward tense movement, the object must be in a position c-commanding the tense.

Accordingly, it is clear that marked word orders require a more complex derivation than the unmarked word order SVO, involving conditions on marking, stress, and discourse status. As will be explained in the coming chapters, when a discourse particle agrees with the direct object, the word order used is VOS, which is a marked word order, used exclusively to express some discourse-related effects. What is important to focus on here is that NHA is flexible in terms of word order, which, insofar as the marked orders are derived by movement, internal or external, to the C-domain, indicates the richness of the left periphery of this Arabic dialect. Several works have linked the flexibility of word order with richness of the left periphery (Puskás 2000, Platzack 2004, and Salvi 2005). Mounting evidence for the richness of the left periphery of NHA comes from the existence of a variety of discourse particles in this dialect. This, in turn, explains why the word order appears to be so flexible. Some of these particles have certain pragmatic effects on the interpretation of the relevant clause; they are the locus of discourse features that affect the information structure of the sentence, encoding the notion ‘topic’ in syntax. In the next section, I highlight the discourse particles used in NHA, categorising these particles in terms of their syntactic functions.

1.5 Discourse particles in North Hail Arabic

1.5.1 Overview

We have seen a brief discussion on discourse particles in Najd, where NHA is spoken. However, as will be shown later, the particles provided by the linguists mentioned above, which NHA shares with NA, are used in different contexts, hence, they differ regarding their functions from the ones discussed here. In this section, I provide a descriptive overview of the particles investigated in the current research, highlighting their exact discourse functions in NHA which will be further investigated, analysed and explained in what follows.

Recall that the received view is that discourse particles are used by speakers not for any contribution to the content of a given sentence but rather because of their pragmatic function pertaining to the ongoing discourse, affecting the interpretation of the associated clause (Stede and Schmitz 2000: 126, following Hirschberg and Litman 1993; Biberauer *et al.* 2014, Bayer and Struckmeier 2017). For instance, consider the following sentence:

(26)

kedī Firas ʃaf as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
PRT Firas see.PST.3S.M Def-car in-Def-yard
'Firas saw the car in the yard.'

In (26), the discourse particle *kedī* expresses the speaker's attitude towards the proposition expressed by the sentence. Sentence (26) is conceived of as the speaker reporting the content of his/her utterance accompanied with his/her attitudes, so the listener understands the speaker's stance towards the content of the clause (it will become clear that *kedī* is used as an information structural item colouring the proposition as a familiar discourse-given piece of information). If the discourse particle *kedī* is omitted from sentence (26), as in (27) below, there is no change in the propositional content expressed by the sentence, but the speaker's attitude is no longer determined.

(27) Firas ʃaf as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
Firas see.PST.3S.M Def-car in-Def-yard
'Firas saw the car in the yard.'

Determining whether a given particle contributes to the propositional content of a sentence can be difficult, given the fact that the semantic/pragmatic contribution of discourse particles is difficult to capture; see section 1.1 (Struckmeier 2014: 17; Bayer and Obenauer 2011; Biberauer et al. 2014, Bayer and Struckmeier 2017). With the attempts to analyse and understand the syntax of discourse particles, there was a requirement to specify the role of syntax in the interpretation of the sentence containing particles (Zwicky 1985; Bayer and Obenauer 2011; Biberauer *et al.* 2014), an inquiry which can be best tackled via generative syntax (Bayer and Obenauer 2011; Biberauer et al. 2014).

1.5.2 *North Hail Arabic discourse particles: functions and position*

NHA exhibits a variety of particles which in most cases appear clause-initially. The particles that are the focus of this dissertation function as topicalizers, marking the elements that express the topic of the given sentence. The analysis that will be put forward is that the particles are heads of Topic phrases in the articulated left periphery, following Rizzi (1997). It will become clear in the coming chapters that each particle (or set of particles) marks a distinct type of topic, following Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). This marking is carried out through one of two different mechanisms, namely movement or agreement. The selection between these two mechanisms is not arbitrary but rather follows from a specific syntactic rule. While some particles require a local Spec-head relation with the element expressing the topic, so that the topicalized element must move to the position preceding the particle, other particles do not require such a relation, and the topicalized element can remain and be marked *in situ* (as long as it is accessible to the particle), similar to the analysis of the focus particles discussed by Ouhalla (1997). The particles that require a local Spec-head relation will here be called non-agreeing particles, having the property that they do not host an inflectional suffix agreeing with the topicalized element that they mark, whereas the particles that do not require such a relation are labelled as agreeing particles, having the property that they host such an agreeing suffix with the topicalized element that they mark,¹⁴ in case this element has ϕ -features, i.e. is a DP. Table 2 shows this dichotomy and which particles belong to which category.

¹⁴ When a discourse particle has a suffix whose ϕ -content duplicates that of, say, the subject, the particle is said to mark/highlight the subject, borrowing the terminology of Ouhalla (1997).

Table 2: Agreeing particles vs. non-agreeing particles in NHA

Agreeing particles	Non-agreeing particles
<i>vedɪ</i>	<i>tigil</i>
<i>tara</i>	<i>ʕad</i>
<i>tsin</i>	<i>ʔefwa</i>
<i>ʔaktɪn</i>	<i>mar</i>

To illustrate the difference between agreeing particles and non-agreeing particles, consider the following example (it will be shown later when its syntax is analysed that, in some cases, the agreeing *vedɪ* can show up without spelling out the agreement feature on it, hence, merged bare, without a suffixed being attached to it):

- (28) **vedɪ** Ali ʃaf as-sayarah
PRT Ali see.PST.3S.M Def-car
 ‘Ali saw the car’.

Sentence (28) is introduced by the discourse particle *vedɪ*, which takes scope over the whole proposition expressed by the sentence. The effect that the particle *vedɪ* has is that the action of someone having seen the car is interpreted as a piece of given information, and the sentence states that Ali is this person, i.e. the VP is the topic of the sentence, while Ali is the focus, providing the new information. What is important to mention is that an inflectional suffix can be attached to the discourse particle *vedɪ*. This inflectional suffix can agree with the subject or the direct object. When the inflectional suffix appearing on the discourse particle *vedɪ* agrees with the subject, the latter occurs to the left of the verb (which adjoins T), as is the case with unmarked sentences in NHA:

- (29) **vedɪ-h** Ali ʃaf as-sayarah
PRT-3SM Ali see.PST.3S.M Def-car
 ‘Ali saw the car’.

The inflectional suffix *-h* attached to *vedɪ* shows the same φ -content as the subject following *vedɪ*. An alternative translation for sentence (29) would be ‘Ali, he saw the car’. Ali functions as a topic of the sentence, while the VP no longer expresses given information but says something new about Ali. When the discourse particle *vedɪ* agrees with the direct object by

virtue of the inflectional suffix, the direct object must appear to the right of the verb, immediately preceding the subject.

- (30) **vedɪ-ah** ʃaf-ah as-sayarah Ali
PRT-3SF see.PST.3SM-it Def-car Ali
 ‘The car, Ali saw it’.

Again, as the translation shows, the element whose referent is the topic of the sentence is now the direct object *assayarah* ‘the car’ rather than the subject *Ali* or the VP. Given its interpretive and syntactic properties, the immediate assumption is that the discourse particle *vedɪ* is a topicalizer in the sense that it marks the elements that function as topics, as will be explained below (it will be clear that the particle *tsin* has the same pragmatic function and syntactic properties that *vedɪ* has). It should be stressed here that the subject or object under such situations cannot express new information, as can be adduced by the inability of *vedɪ* to co-occur and agree with an indefinite constituent; *vedɪ* only marks an item that is definite and specific, indicating that it is compatible only with constituents expressing the topic (Ouhalla 1997 and Shlonsky 2000), as shown by the ungrammaticality of the following sentences:

- (31) a. ***vedɪ-h** walad ʃaf as-sayarah
 PRT-3SM boy see.PST.3S.M Def-car
 Intended meaning: ‘A boy saw the car’.
- b. ***vedɪ-ah** ʃaf-ah sayarah Ali
 PRT-3SF see.PST.3S.M car Ali
 Intended meaning: ‘A car, Ali saw’.

The same observation extends to the discourse particles *mar* and *ʃad*, which are used to revive the topic of discourse that has been shifted from at an earlier point of the conversation, as in (32) below.

- (32) a. l-radʒa:l **mar** Omar ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’

- b. l-radʒa:l **ʕad** Omar ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’

In syntax, the item that *mar* and *ʕad* mark is positioned to the left of them. The same condition imposed on *ʕedi* is imposed on the particles *mar* and the particle *ʕad*, in that the item they mark as a topic must be definite (and specific). This is the reason for the ungrammaticality of the following two sentences, where the element preceded by the particle is indefinite.

- (33) a. *radʒa:l **mar** Omar ʃaf-uh.
 man **PRT** Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘As for a man, Omar saw him.’

- b. *radʒa:l **ʕad** Omar ʃaf-uh.
 Man **PRT** Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘As for a man, Omar saw him.’

The ill-formed sentences in (33) add support to the claim that such particles are topicalizers, being compatible only with discourse given entities.

The discourse particles *tara* and *ʔaktm* have the same effects, and obey the same conditions, except that the element expressing the topic is contrastive and must be said with contrastive stress (shown in capitals). Consider the following examples:

- (34) a. **tara** Omar ʃAF l-ħurmah.
PRT Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
 ‘Omar SAW the woman.’

- b. **tara-h** OMAR ʃaf l-ħurmah.
PRT-3SM Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
 ‘OMAR saw the woman.’

c. **tara-ah** ʃaf-ah L-ḤURMAH Omar.
PRT-3SF see.PST.3S.M-her Def-woman Omar
‘THE WOMAN, Omar saw her.’

(35) a. **ʔaktɪn** Omar ʃAF l-ḥurmah.
PRT Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
‘Omar SAW the woman.’

b. **ʔaktɪn-h** OMAR ʃaf l-ḥurmah.
PRT-3SM Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
‘OMAR saw the woman.’

c. **ʔaktɪn-ah** ʃaf-ah L-ḤURMAH Omar.
PRT-3SF see.PST.3S.M-her Def-woman Omar
‘THE WOMAN, Omar saw her.’

The particles, *tigil* and *ʔefwa*, similar to *ʃad* and *mar* but unlike the agreeing particles, do not host an inflectional suffix, in which case the element functioning as a topic must appear to the left of them. Different from the agreeing particles is the property that *tigil* and *ʔefwa* don’t show up clause initially, taking scope over the clause. If the verb or event is topicalized, the C-particle appears sentence-finally, as in the a-examples below. If the subject expresses the topic it shows up to the left of the given particle, as in the b-examples; the same extends to the direct object as in the c-examples below.

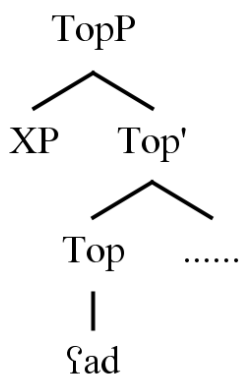
(36) a. Omar ʃaf l-ḥurmah **tigil**.
Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman **PRT**
‘Seeing the woman is what Omar did.’

b. Omar **tigil** ʃaf l-ḥurmah.
Omar **PRT** see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
‘Omar saw the woman.’

which, as a complex, force the movement of the PrtP across the verb, to Spec CP. Thus, movement of the particle is an effect of pied-piping: the constituent undergoing movement is the wh-phrase. The particle moves only as an automatic effect of pied-piping. Further evidence for the head analysis of discourse particles is provided by Poletto's (2000) observation that the particle *po* is incompatible with the complementizer *che*, which is explained if both elements compete for the same position, a C-head.

Returning to the issue of NHA discourse particles, let us start here with the non-agreeing particles (*ʕad*, *mar*, *tigil* and *ʔefwa*). When these particles, as seen in the previous examples, mark an item, the relevant item must be positioned to the left of the particle, holding what seems to be a Spec-head relation to agreement. Hence, I argue that the phrase expressing the topic occupies the Spec position of a functional phrase, whose head, endowed with the feature [TOP], is spelled out as a particle. Under this view, the phrase is interpreted as a topic of a particular type, for instance, a shifting topic in case of *ʕad*, *mar* (as will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2) and the phrase is externally merged (a will be shown later). The following schematic representation illustrates the derivation of the projection hosting a non-agreeing particle (I give *ʕad* as an example).

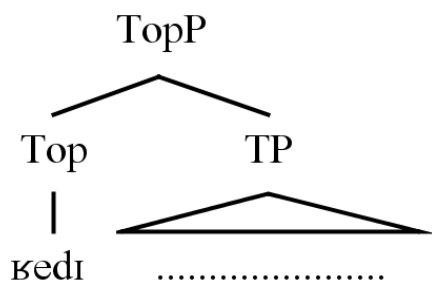
(39a)



As for the agreeing particles, I argue that they are heads similar to non-agreeing particles (like *mar* and *ʕad*), occupying the head position of a TopP. However, they differ from non-agreeing

particles in that in syntax they don't require a Spec-head configuration, but rather mark the topicalised item in situ. In other words, the phrase expressing topic remains in situ as far as it's in the visible domain of the agreeing particle. The following schematic representation illustrates the derivation of the projections hosting agreeing particles, where the particle agrees with the relevant topicalised item in the TP domain, be it a subject or an object (I give *Ƶedi* as an example).

(39b)



Let's now consider arguments in favour of the assumption that NHA particles are heads. One observation in favour of this assumption comes from their syntactic properties in the sentence where they are merged. To recapitulate, there is consensus that discourse particles are fixed in a dedicated position, are immobile, and not assumed to undergo movement since they, once merged, have accomplished scope and discourse marking, for instance, topicalization (Sheehan and Biberauer 2011; Struckmeier 2014; Bayer and Struckmeier 2017; Bayer and Obenauer 2011; Bayer and Trotzke 2015). Following these facts, it follows that discourse particles cause intervention effects to movement of syntactic items with similar morphosyntax, that is, zero level items. Consider the following sentences with a moved verb (the particle *Ƶedi* in (40) represents all the agreeing particles while the particle *tigil* in (41) represents all the non-agreeing particles).¹⁵

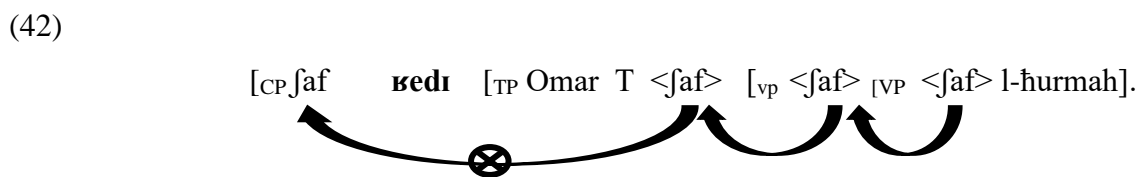
¹⁵ It will be shown that the position that *Ƶedi* and *tigil* occupy in (40-41) is lower than FocP. Hence, *Ƶedi* and *tigil* serve as plausible examples detecting the movement of the verb to the head F of FocP, which is higher in the structure than *Ƶedi* and *tigil*.

(40) a. *ʃaf **ʔedi-h** Omar l-ħurmah.
 see.PST.3S.M **PRT**-3SM Omar Def-woman
 Intended meaning: ‘See the woman, Omar did.’

b* ʃaf **ʔedi** Omar l-ħurmah.
 see.PST.3S.M **PRT** Omar Def-woman
 Intended meaning: ‘See the woman, Omar did’

(41) *ʃaf **tigil** Omar l-ħurmah.
 see.PST.3S.M **PRT** Omar Def-woman
 ‘See the woman, Omar did.’

Recall that the unmarked word order in NHA is SVO, where V+v adjoins to T, as normally is the case in Arabic. With any verb-initial clause, then, it can be assumed that the verb has moved to the left periphery, to an F head of FP projection in the sense of Aoun *et al.* (2010: 70). Under this view, in (40-41) the verb undergoes head movement from T to F, for some scope-interpretive reason¹⁶. In principle, nothing would prevent this movement of the verb unless there is intervention somewhere on the way. The ungrammaticality of the sentences in (40-41) is then explained if we assume that the verb (or actually T in such cases) is unable to move to the left of *ʔedi* and *tigil*, which, being a head, causes an intervention effect to the verb or T movement to any position across them (see, e.g., Rizzi 1990, 2004 and Boeckx 2008). Consider the potential derivation for (40b) in (42) below:



What the schematic representation in (42) shows is that *ʔedi*, being a head, blocks movement of T to its left by virtue of the Relativized Minimality principle (cf. Rizzi 1990). The same line of analysis applies to the non-agreeing particles. The verb cannot move across the particles *tigil* (and *ʔefwa*) (41).

¹⁶ See the translation line in (40-41).

In conclusion, this section sub-categorizes the particles into two sets: agreeing particles and non-agreeing particles. The former type consists of the particles that agree with the topic while it remains *in situ*. These particles are characterized by the inflectional suffix that agrees with the topic, provided that the topic has Φ -features. The latter type, non-agreeing particles, are the particles that force the topicalized element to appear immediately to their left while no inflectional suffix can be attached to them.

1.6 The questions and aims of the study

Against this background, it is obvious that the C-particles vary in terms of their syntactic behaviour. Some allow an inflectional suffix to be spelled out on them; here, the topic element remains *in situ* or, if distant from the particle, it moves closer to the particle (as far as the edge of the phase immediately containing the topic, to be local, as we will see). On the other hand, other particles do not allow such an inflectional suffix and, as a consequence, the topic elements must move to the left of these particles. It is the aim of the current work to explore this discrepancy and related observations and figure out how such behaviour can reveal the hierarchical structure of the functional phrases in the left periphery in NHA. With these aims in mind, the current research seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What contribution do the various particles make to the meaning of the sentence?
2. What are the syntactic properties of each particle? Where do they merge? What syntactic features do they have?
3. Do they provide any new insight into the fine structure of the left periphery of NHA in particular, and Arabic and other languages in general?
4. What theoretical implications do the particles have for the theory of movement and agreement, and more in general, for the theory of the interface between discourse and sentence grammar?

To this end, the assumptions of the minimalist approach to clause building (Chomsky 1995, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2008, Bošković 2007, 2014 Roberts 2010) will be used. Central in this approach is the idea that various syntactic operations are driven by the need to assign values to unvalued features. Syntactic features of various kinds occur in two guises, valued and unvalued. For instance, the feature Person has three possible values, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. Pronouns and other DPs have a Person value inherently. However, in many languages verbs, adjectives, and adpositions can be marked for Person, too, in agreement with a DP. These categories have an unvalued Person feature which needs to be assigned a value in the course of the syntactic derivation. By hypothesis, unless an unvalued feature is assigned a value, the syntactic structure containing the unvalued feature (the phase; see Chomsky 2000, 2001, 2008, Boskovic 2007, 2014) cannot be interpreted, neither at PF nor LF (cannot be ‘transferred to the interfaces’ in Chomsky’s 2008 terms). This may require movement of the constituent with the unvalued feature.

In Chomsky (1995, 2000) the distinction between interpretable and uninterpretable features was important, in later work overlapping with the distinction between valued and unvalued features. The feature Person, for example, is valued when occurring on a pronoun, as it restricts the reference of the pronoun. But Person marked on a finite verb does not restrict the reference of the verb (see Holmberg 2005; Pesetsky and Torrego 2007). Chomsky postulated that any unvalued features had to be deleted in the course of the syntactic derivation. The mechanism for deletion was, in Chomsky (1995, 2000), so called feature checking, in Chomsky (2001) and subsequent work, feature valuation by Agree. The notion that valued, unvalued features have to be deleted, though, will not be assumed in the present work. As pointed out by Roberts (2010: 60), this notion is inconsistent with a more current approach to null arguments which will also be assumed in this work. The assumption that valued unvalued features are not deleted is motivated by two reasons. Firstly, as will be explained in the following chapters, the particle, which operates as the probe, will probe by virtue of its unvalued ϕ -features. When the particle agrees with a DP, an inflectional suffix is spelled out on it, which means it is not simply deleted at the interface, at least at PF. Secondly, the topicalized item, DP, V, PP or ADV, operates as the goal with an unvalued instance of the feature [TOP], which is assigned a particular topic value (Shifting topic, Contrastive topic or Familiar topic), as a result of the Agree relation established between the particle and the topicalized item, and this value of the latter is interpreted as such at the interfaces. Further,

Contrastive topic, as will be seen, is interpreted at PF because it bears a contrastive stress, hence, no deletion can be assumed here.¹⁷

I here follow Chomsky's (2000, 2001) theory of Agree, the operation by which unvalued, features are valued. An Agree relation is established between the functional head, called a 'probe', which has an unvalued feature and a constituent called a 'goal', with a matching valued feature, where, according to the activation condition (Chomsky 2001), a goal, to be a licit object, is required to have, an additional, unvalued feature. When the unvalued feature is assigned a value, it can be transferred to PF (and LF) (Chomsky 2004: 116), resulting, for instance, in an affix attached to the probe. What is important here is that there are some conditions on the Agree relation to be established between a probe and a goal that must be met. The domain of the probe is its c-command domain. The Agree relation occurs within this domain. The agreeing terms need not be adjacent. On the other hand, this does not imply that no locality conditions exist. For example, if, in some domain, there are two possible goals, an Agree relation is established with the one that is closer to the probe (Chomsky 2000, 2001, and 2004). Agree is sometimes combined with movement of the goal to the vicinity of the probe, where this movement is triggered by a feature of the probe, called an [EPP] feature (Chomsky 2001) or by an unvalued feature on the goal that needs to be valued (Bošković 2007, 2014; Holmberg *et al.* 2017).

1.7 The significance of the study

Discourse particles have recently been the focus of attention in the generative literature (mainly in Romance and Germanic languages). As discourse particles in general, including the ones discussed here, are typically found in the C-domain, the present work is a contribution to this line of research as well. In the literature on Arabic within the generative approach, a number of studies have investigated issues such as word order, the left periphery (Moutaouakil 1989; Ouhalla 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1997; Fassi Fehri 1993; Aoun and Benmamoun 1998, Benmamoun 1992, 2000; Shlonsky 2000, Mohammad 1989, 1990, 2000, Soltan 2006, 2007

¹⁷ Epstein *et al.* (2010) propose that, because it is interpretive rather than computational, the interface only recognizes features that have an interpretation. They claim that unvalued features that have been assigned a value do not need deletion, and are simply ignored at interfaces. There is a conceptual distinction between unvalued features which I take to be important: φ -features of T, v, or the discourse particles don't add anything to the semantic interpretation. However, other features, such as the [TOP] that DPs and other phrases can have, as well as the [WH] feature that wh-phrases have, enter the derivation unvalued, but when they are transferred to the interfaces, they carry a value, having a semantic import as LF; some might be pronounced at PF (Carstens 2010: 216). Under this view, the topicalised item would be read by the LF interface as Shifting topic, Contrastive topic or Familiar topic. Hence, these need not be removed before reaching the interface (See also Carstens 2010).

and Aoun et al. 2010), and discourse particles, in particular, focus particles (Ouhalla 1994b, 1997). Such work includes a considerable amount of research on dialectal Arabic, as sketched above, including some work on Najdi Arabic. However, although this variety of Arabic is rich in discourse particles, little attention has yet been paid to their syntax. Building on the current literature on the syntax of discourse particles, the present research discusses observations that have not been made before, arguing particularly that the particles investigated are topicalizers marking a constituent of the sentence as topic. Added interest comes from the observation that the discourse particles exhibit morphosyntactic properties, with some of them hosting a suffix agreeing with a topicalized argument, while other particles do not show agreement, but trigger movement of the topicalized element. The present work will provide a detailed description of a set of discourse particles in the North Hail dialect of Arabic, a variety of Najdi Arabic. It will also propose a theoretical account of their properties in the framework of current generative linguistic theory, combining assumptions from Chomsky's Minimalist program with assumptions from cartographic theory.

1.8 Outline of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters, including the conclusion. Chapter one introduces the topic, the notion of discourse particle and its status in the cross-linguistic literature, with light being shed on the generative analyses put forth for discourse particles in syntax. It also provides an overview on their status in Najdi Arabic and how they are used similarly/differently in North Hail Arabic. Moreover, this chapter offers an overview of the current literature on the left periphery of Arabic, Standard and dialectal, with special focus on North Hail Arabic. An introduction to the morphosyntactic behaviour of and the pragmatic function of the North Hail Arabic discourse particles under investigation is provided, giving a taxonomy of them as agreeing particles and non-agreeing particles, their headedness property, and their function as topicalizers.

Chapter two investigates the discourse particles *mar* and *ʕad*. It argues that these particles mark the element that serves as a Shifting Topic in the sense of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). The Shifting topic is the constituent referring to the entity which the sentence is about when this entity is re-introduced into the ongoing conversation. In this chapter, an overview of the notion of topic in Arabic is given. This is accompanied by the treatment of the constituent that *mar* and *ʕad* mark as a topic. The theoretical framework of Ouhalla (1994b), Shlonsky (2000)

on Arabic and Rizzi's (1997) Split CP and Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) approach to the typology of topics, and related assumptions are presented to account for the syntax of *mar* and *ʕad* and the interpretation of the constituent that *mar* and *ʕad* mark.

Chapter three investigates the discourse particles marking the familiar topic in the sense of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007), which they define as the entity which is textually given and d(iscourse)-linked with the main topic established in the conversation. It turns out that NHA grammar provides four such particles, *ʕedi*, *tsin*, *tigil* and *ʔefwa*, all heading the so-called Familiar Topic Phrase in the sense of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). Though similar in pragmatic functions, they differ in that some establish an Agree relation with the topicalised item, while others instead trigger movement of the topicalized constituent.

Chapter four investigates the C-particles *tara* and *ʔaktin*. It argues that these discourse particles head the Contrastive Topic Phrase in the sense of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). The Contrastive Topic Phrase is a type of topic that creates oppositional pairs with respect to other alternatives (Krifka 2007, Chocano 2012: 143). As in the case of some of the familiar topic particles, *tara* maintains an Agree relation with the topicalized item.

Chapter five concludes the thesis and offers recommendations for further research.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the status of the term discourse particle, reviewing some of the related literature, with special attention to the generative analyses advanced recently. It also paid attention to the available studies on Arabic discourse particles, including the mechanisms and the analyses, mostly in Standard Arabic (Ouhalla 1997). It also briefly reviewed recent literature covering Najdi Arabic, of which North Hail Arabic is a branch. Further, this chapter offered an overview of the current literature on the left periphery of Standard Arabic and dialectal Arabic, with special attention on North Hail Arabic. This includes the different word orders these Arabic dialects display. Finally, the North Hail Arabic discourse particles under investigation were introduced, with emphasis on their syntactic position and their morphosyntax (distinguishing between agreeing and non-agreeing particles), their headedness property, and their function as topicalizers.

Having highlighted the characteristics of the left periphery in NHA, along with the discourse particles NHA has, it is the task of the next chapters to explore this empirically. To do this, I

will review relevant studies on the Arabic left periphery. In light of this, I will explore the architecture of the NHA left periphery. I will argue that the NHA left periphery displays three types of topics, which accords with the proposal advanced by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). I will show that each type of topic can be represented by a particular particle or set of particles. This will include an analysis of how these particles mark the constituent expressing the relevant topic, accounting for the derivation and the interpretation of the sentence.

2 CHAPTER TWO: Shifting-Topic and the Topic Typology

2.1 Introduction

As shown in the preceding chapter, discourse particles in NHA either appear clause-initially or surface preceded by some items. Following the prime goal of the current thesis, which is determining the precise architecture of the left periphery of NHA with reference to such discourse particles, I first present NHA data on two discourse particles, *mar* and *ʕad* which I argue occupy a fixed position in the left periphery. As the discussion proceeds, I will motivate an introduction to the general frameworks on the left periphery, Ouhalla (1994b), Shlonsky (2000) and Rizzi's (1997) seminal work on the split Comp domain (Split CP system). The introduction of these approaches is motivated by the assumption that the left periphery is the domain where discourse-related categories are instantiated. Such approaches make available a full-fledged theory of how a sentence is linked to discourse through postulating a set of functional projections with distinct discourse-interpretive properties. At a later point in this chapter, I will sketch the topic typology of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007), which I will adopt throughout the rest of this work.

2.2 The particles

In this section, I highlight two discourse particles, i.e. *mar* and *ʕad* as used in NHA. Anticipating the forthcoming discussion, I argue that the two particles perform the same function, marking a kind of a topic which must be definite, specific and which expresses salient information accessible from the common ground of the utterance, but which is reintroduced, returned to in the current discourse.

2.2.1 *The particle mar: function and position*

The particle *mar* carries the same information as the English phrase *in relation to* and similar to *as for* in terms of use, introducing (marking) an entity the discourse will be about. What is interesting to mention about this particle is that it cannot appear clause-initially (as seen in (1a)). Under no circumstances can any category that *mar* introduces (marks) immediately follow it.

- (1) a. l-radʒa:l, **mar** Omar ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’
- b. ***mar** Omar l-radʒa:l, ʃaf-uh.
PRT Omar Def-man see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’
- c. ***mar** l-radʒa:l Omar ʃaf-uh.
PRT Def-man Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’

Sentences (1b-c) are ungrammatical because the particle *mar* is not preceded by the item it marks, but is rather followed by it, the observation that demonstrates the high position that this particle occupies in the sentence where it shows up¹⁸. With this being the case, the resulting construction (*mar* + the immediately preceding constituent) must appear sentence-initially regardless of whether it is the subject or object. In terms of its discourse/interpretive function, the speaker uses *mar* when he/she introduces a topic in the running conversation, which (i) is part of the common ground of the sentence context (cf. Stalnaker 2002), hence the interlocutors are familiar with it and, more importantly, (ii), is already the topic of the conversation but, as the conversation flows, it was digressed from, and is now reintroduced. In other words, the speaker makes use of this particle to make the hearers change the ongoing topic which they are engaged with and focus on what he/she re-introduces, instead, i.e., the constituent that *mar* marks (e.g. *lradʒa:l* in (1a)). In order to put the discussion in concrete terms, consider the dialogue in (2):

(The context: five speakers reflecting on a match they just attended in person):

- (2) Speaker A: ʔal-mubarah kanat ʃilwah min kil ʔa-nawaʃi.
 Def-match be.PST.3S.F good from all Def-ways
 ‘The match was good on the whole.’

¹⁸ *Mar* (and *ʃad*) cannot be preceded by two constituents.

Speaker B: *ʔakl ʔal-maʕab wa ʔadaʔ ʔa-laʕibi:n*
 design Def-stadium and performance Def-players
kanu mudhiʕi:n
 be.PST.P amazing.P

‘The design of the stadium and the performance of the players were amazing.’

Speaker C: *ʔana ʕabert tafaʕul ʔal-dzumhu:r*
 I love.PST.1S interaction Def-audience

‘I loved the interaction of the crowd.’

Speaker D: *ʔaʕla ʕae ʔin ʔan-nas dzaji:n*
 best thing Comp Def-people coming.PRTC.P
min kil duwal ʔal-xali:dʒ
 from all states Def-gulf

‘The best thing was that the people came from all the states of the Gulf.’

Speaker B: *lahdʒat mixtaʕah ʕae ʔidʒtimaʕi ʕilu:*
 dialects different thing social good

‘Different dialects. A good social thing.’

Speaker E: *l-mubarah, mar ʔal-hdaf kan ʔafzʕal ʕae*
 Def-match, PRT Def-goals be.PST best thing

‘As for the match, the best thing was the goals.’

In (2), the main conversation is about the match (and all of its possible surroundings, including players, their performance, goals, the venue and the audience) along with the speakers’ opinions about it. As the conversation proceeds, it starts to drift away from the main topic it, i.e., the match, to different, though related, topics. The speakers throughout the conversation have moved from the match as a wonderful event to the fact that the audience of the match being from diverse countries and dialects makes the event social. Wanting to say something

about the match as a sports event rather than a social, economical or political one, Speaker E shifts from the current topic to the previous topic, which is already part of the ‘discourse universe’ as it is a particular part or aspect of the match, using *mar*. This shows that *mar* is a device that signals an element functioning as a ‘revived’ topic. Therefore, *mar* is employed by the speaker when gearing the conversation towards a topic from the common ground of sentence context. If the topic in the dialogue (2) was not from the common ground of the sentence context, Speaker E’s utterance would be infelicitous and the communication would break down.

Crucial for the purposes of the current investigation is the observation that this particle does not introduce (or mark) information that the hearer is not familiar with (i.e., information Focus or identification Focus in the sense of È. Kiss (1998)). Instead, this particle is used by the speaker when the conversation has digressed from a certain topic on which the conversation was basically built. *Mar* is used to make the conversation return to the first (primary) topic and revitalize it. It follows that this particle does not occur at the beginning of a conversation. It is exclusively used within a given conversation, where the speaker attempts to drag back the conversation to the main topic, different from the current one (cf. Givón 1983: 8). The generalization we reach now is that *mar* must be preceded by an element that does not express information that the speaker is not familiar with. The constituent followed by *mar* must be part of the common ground of the running conversation. In view of this, we can account for the observation that the item marked by *mar* must be a definite, specific nominal. The restriction on the definiteness of the constituent followed by *mar* indicates that the discourse interlocutors must be familiar with the entity that the particle introduces. For instance, the DP used as the subject of a clause (3a) must be definite once attached to *mar*, otherwise the sentence becomes ungrammatical (3b).

(3) a. walad raḥ li-l-bert badri ʔal-bariḥ.
 boy go.PST.3S.M to-Def-house early yesterday
 ‘A boy went home early yesterday.’

b. *walad, **mar** raḥ li-l-bert badri ʔal-bariḥ
 boy **PRT** go.PST.3S.M to-Def-house early yesterday
 ‘As for a boy, he went home early yesterday.’

c. * walad t²awi:l, **mar** raḥ li-l-beit badri ʔal-bariḥ
 boy tall **PRT** go.PST.3S.M to-Def-house early yesterday
 ‘As for a tall boy, he went home early yesterday.’

Note that sentence (3c) is ungrammatical even if the indefinite DP associated with *mar* is specific. We can conclude that the constituent associated with *mar* must be definite, the main property of topics in Arabic (see, e.g. Ouhalla 1997; Soltan 2007; Aoun *et al.* 2010: 63).

A relevant point to mention here is that the particle *mar* cannot co-occur with another particle, *ʕad* (I will use co-occurrence of particles with the same function throughout this work). The constituent merged with the particle *ʕad* carries the same informational/discourse value of the constituent merged with *mar*. I elaborate on these points in the next subsection.

2.2.2 The particle *ʕad*: function and position

The particle *ʕad* behaves exactly like *mar*. Consider the following dialogue, which is said when a football match has just finished, and speaker B missed the last 5 minutes of the match:

(4) A: muntaxab-na ʔal-watʕani taʕaraz^ʕ il hazi:mah
 team-our Def-national had to defeat
 ‘Our national team was defeated.’

B: wifū! ʔal-natidzah ka:nat ʔiθni:n waḥid li-na ʔila ʔid-digigah
 What! the-score was two one to-us up to Def-minute
 ʔarbaʕah w θimani:n
 Four and eighty
 ‘What! Was the score not 2-1 for us in the 84th minute?’

A: ʕal-ḥaris ʕaxt^ʕaʔ w-haḏa kalaf-na hadaf
 Def-goal keeper mistakened.3S.M and-this cost.PST-1P goal
 w-haḏa ʔaf-ʕae hammas-hum w ʔaḥbat^ʕ-na
 and-this Def-thing inspired.3S-3P.M and frustrated-1P
 w-sadzalu hadaf θani

Resultative-scored.3P.M goal second

‘The goal keeper made a mistake, and this cost us a goal and motivated them while it frustrated us. As a result, they scored another goal.’

B: mu maʕqu:l lakin ʕala ʔae ħa:l hal-mubarah raħat
Neg believable but on any way this-game over
ʔal-ħ:n la:zim jiħazʕru:n li-l-mubarah ʔal-dʒajah w-ħasʕd
Def-now must prepare.3P to-the-game Def-up coming to-gaining
θala:θ nuɡatʕ au natʕlaʕ barra
three points or get.out.1P outside
‘Unbelievable! But anyway, this game is over. Now they must prepare for the upcoming game to gain the three points or we will not qualify any further.’

C: ʕaba:b! mumkin maʕlu:mah ʕan tʕari:qat takwi:n
Guys! Possible.INTRG information about way creating
mauqiʕ ʕabakah ʕaʕan ħada wjadʒbat-i
site web for one.of assignments-my
‘Guys! Do you have any idea about how to create a website; it is for one of my assignments?’

D: ʕu:f l-uk mixtusʕ
Search for-you specialist
‘Search for a specialist.’

A: ʔal-hazi:mah ʕad ʔal-laʕibi:n lazim jidʒtahdu:n
the-defeat **PRT** Def-players must work harder
l-taʕwi:tʕ-ah
to-compensate-it
‘As for the defeat, the players must work harder to compensate for it.’

In (5), the topic introduced by speaker A is about his team’s unexpected defeat in a matter of 5 minutes. After speaker C has introduced a new topic, speaker A returns to the original topic, using *ʕad* as a marker of the shifted topic. A relevant issue here is that the constituent merged

with the particle *ʕad* must be definite and specific, as the following ill-formed sentence demonstrates:

- (5) * hazi:mah **ʕad** ʔal-laʕibi:n lazim jidʒtahdu:n l-taʕwi:tʕ-ah
 defeat **PRT** Def-players must work hard to-compensate-it

Intended meaning: ‘As for a defeat, the players must work harder to compensate for it.’

While *ʕad* shares with *mar* the property of marking a constituent expressing old, given information accessed within the common ground of the conversation, they also share the same syntactic behaviour in that the constituent they mark consistently surfacing sentence-initially, immediately preceding *ʕad* and *mar*, as the following sentences illustrate:

- (6) a. l-radʒa:l, **mar** Omar ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’
- b. Omar **mar** l-radʒa:l, ʃaf-uh.
 Omar **PRT** Def-man see.PST.3S.M-him
 ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’
- c. l-radʒa:l **mar** Omar ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’

- (7) a. ʔal-laʕibi:n **ʕad** lazim jidʒtahdu:n l-taʕwi:tʕ ʔal-hazi:mah
 Def-players **PRT** must work hard to-compensate Def-defeat
 ‘As for the players, they must work harder to compensate for the defeat.’
- b. ʔal-hazi:mah **ʕad** ʔal-laʕibi:n lazim jidʒtahdu:n l-taʕwi:tʕ-ah
 Def-defeat **PRT** Def-players must work hard to-compensate-it
 ‘As for the defeat, the players must work harder to compensate for it.’

So far, we can see that the particles *mar* and *ʕad* and the topicalized constituent the particles mark appear clause-initially, whence the particle topicalizes the constituent with the topic interpretation.

From the semantics and syntax of the topicalized constituent that *mar* and *ʕad* mark, here being expressed by a DP, there is evidence that this topicalized constituent, DP, is what is in the literature identified as a clitic left dislocated item (CLLD) (see, Ayoub 1981, Bakir 1980; Shlonsky 2000; Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Aoun and Benmamoun 1998; Ouhalla and Shlonsky 2002; Aoun *et al.* 2010). In the related literature, two basic characteristics have been found which identify CLLD. Firstly, CLLD is a DP merged in the clause initial position of a clause and linked to a thematic position inside the clause occupied by a clitic pronoun that bears the same features as the left-dislocated DP (Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Aoun and Benmamoun 1998; Ouhalla and Shlonsky 2002: 22; Aoun *et al.* 2010). Secondly, CLLD expresses old information, referring to entities which are familiar to the conversants and which may already be the topic of the discussion (Ouhalla 1997).¹⁹ With these characteristics in mind, let's consider analyses of CLLD proposed in the relevant literature.

Arabic, in general, employs this strategy of left-dislocation, which several authors have subsumed under the term topicalization (see e.g. Ayoub 1981, Bakir 1980; Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Shlonsky 2000). The following examples from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 191) are illustrative:

- (9) a. naadia ʃai:f-**a** saami mbeerih Lebanese
 Nadia saw.3ms-her Sami yesterday
 ‘Nadia, Sami saw her yesterday.’
- b. ʔat-tilmiiðat-u raʔaa-**ha** saami l-baariha SA
 the-student.fs-Nom saw.3ms-her Sami the-yesterday
 ‘The student, Sami saw her yesterday.’

The analysis of CLLD revolves around a cluster of issues. The main issues are whether a CLLD is a product of base-generation or movement, whether there can be more than one occurrence

¹⁹ I refer the reader to Ouhalla (1997) for other characteristics identifying CLLD among which is the lack of stress.

of CLLD in a single clause, and whether CLLD can occur in both main and embedded clauses. These three issues will be discussed in the following sections. The syntactic and pragmatic analyses provided in the literature on CLLD in Arabic will be discussed in the following section and will be used to analyse the discourse particles *mar* and *ʕad*, and the interpretive properties of the items they mark so to arrive at a feasible generalisation about their syntax.

Given the fact that *mar/ʕad* and the constituent they mark are merged clause-initially and that the constituents they mark express topic, we need a theory that can account for the position of these discourse particles along with the constituents they mark, a theory that also explains the interpretation specified for the constituents these particles mark. In other words, we need an account for the interpretive-discourse properties of the complex that affect the interpretation of the associated sentence. In this regard, the view that a CLLD DP, associated with a resumptive clitic, is a topic is widely accepted (Ayoub 1981; Bakir 1980; Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Shlonsky 2000; Cinque 1977, 1990; Aoun and Benmamoun 1998; Aoun *et al.* 2010). Prior to the rise of the cartographic approach to the left periphery (cf. Rizzi 1997), there had already been cartographic analyses put forth to account for the syntax of CLLD in SA and some dialects of Arabic, making the important distinction between CLLD and focused items. The issue of the relative order of CLLD phrases and focalised items, where the former precedes the latter, has been investigated and discussed in Ouhalla (1994b, 1997) and Shlonsky (2000). Ouhalla (1994b), for instance, attributes the relative ordering between fronted focus phrases and CLLD phrases in SA to the positions they are merged in in the left periphery. He argues that while a focused item moves to the Spec of a functional projection (the highest projection in the structure) he calls FP endowed with a Focus feature that needs to be identified (Ouhalla 1994b, 1997), an CLLD item is base-generated adjoined to that FP. In line with Ouhalla's (1994b, 1997) and also Shlonsky's (2000) postulated CP domain, I adopt Rizzi's (1997) theory, which advanced a more articulated fine structure of CP. I discuss Rizzi's (1997) Split CP system in the following section.

2.3 Rizzi's (1997) Split CP Hypothesis and the typology of topics

2.3.1 Rizzi's (1997) Split CP Hypothesis

For Rizzi (1997), the functional projection CP is split into a number of hierarchically ordered projections where each one of these projections constitutes a syntactic layer on its own, i.e., a maximal projection. The order of these layers is taken to be universal, i.e. extending to all natural languages. These projections include the following: Force Phrase, which is the highest projection in the hierarchy, Topic Phrase, Focus Phrase, and Finiteness Phrase which is, in turn, the lowest projection in this hierarchy (Rizzi 1997:297). Consider Figure 1:

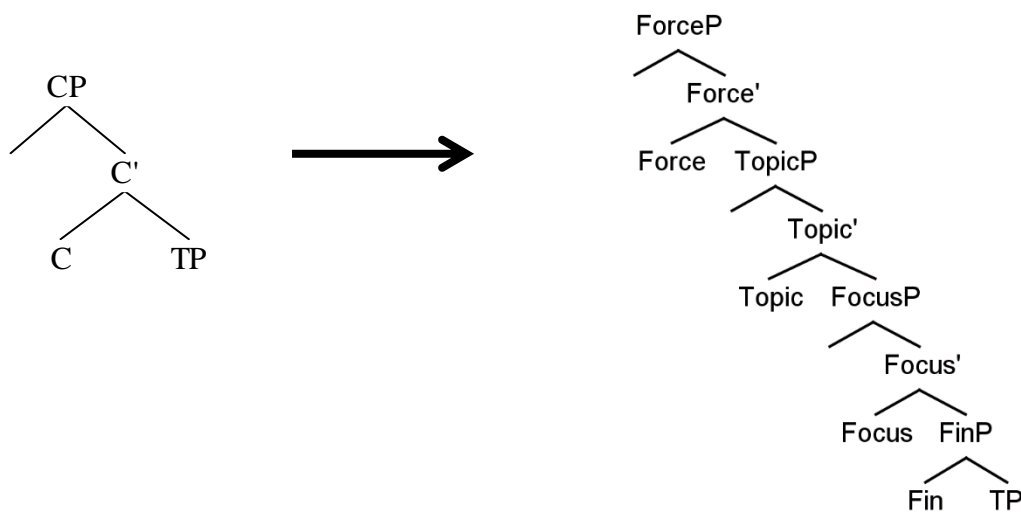


Figure 1: Rizzi's (1997) Split CP Hypothesis

The Split CP thus encodes an array of complex information that concerns the relation between the clause (i.e., the TP-domain) and the discourse (Hill 2002: 224). Within Rizzi's (1997) proposal of a split CP, the topic and focus layers project only if there is a need for them. For example, if a sentence includes a topicalized item, that is an XP with a feature [Topic], then the Topic Phrase is projected. However, if there is no topicalized item, no Topic head is merged in the C-domain. Similarly, the Focus Phrase is projected only if there is a need for it (i.e., if there is a constituent in the sentence with a [Focus] Feature). The Topic and Focus heads trigger movement of the elements bearing the matching feature to the left periphery. Additionally, Force Phrase and Finiteness Phrase are syncretised, i.e. collapsed within one projection, if neither Topic Phrase nor Focus Phrase are projected in the left periphery of a given clause (see, Rizzi 1997, Haegeman 2006, and Radford 2009).

For Rizzi (1997: 283) the Force head encodes whether a sentence is a question, declarative, imperative or exclamative. The clause type is selected by a higher predicate. For instance, certain predicates select embedded questions. Others select declaratives, while some clause types only occur as main clauses (exclamation, imperatives). The Finiteness Phrase reflects certain properties of the verbal system of the associated clause, i.e., agreement rules between C and I. Following Holmberg and Platzack (1995), Rizzi argues that the C-system expresses a specification of finiteness which selects an IP system with the familiar characteristics of finiteness, e.g., mood and tense distinctions.

Let us now focus on the last type of projection within Rizzi's (1997) left periphery, namely the Topic Phrase. I expand the discussion of this type of projection, given that the bulk of this work relies on it. A topic normally express given information (cf. Rizzi 1997).²⁰ Of particular importance here is the assumption made by several studies that more than one Topic Phrase can be projected in the left periphery of a given clause; topics are recursive (Rizzi 1997, Cecchetto 1999, Haegeman 2004; Belletti 2004). Rizzi's (1997) Split CP Hypothesis has since widely been used to account for a range of data in Arabic (Ouhalla 1997, Aoun & Benmamoun 1998, Ouhalla & Shlonsky 2002, Shlonsky 2000, Aoun *et al.* 2010).

Back to the issue of CLLD, what had been analysed as CLLD was then analysed as a topicalised item that occupies Spec TopP that is merged to the left of FocP in the tree (Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Shlonsky 2000). In addition, triggered by the fact that in some dialects, including Lebanese, focused items can appear to the left of CLLD, in addition to the right, hence, giving rise to free relative order rather than strict relative order as the case in SA, Shlonsky (2000) along the lines of Rizzi's (1997) split-CP, proposed an additional TopP so it can easily accommodate the Lebanese Arabic data. In his analysis, Shlonsky (2000) proposes that the focus phrase (FP) is sandwiched between two topic phrases (TopP), which are the projections that typically host CLLD elements, as illustrated in the following schematic representation, from Shlonsky's (2000: 327): (* = recursive).

²⁰ The existence of other projections has been suggested. For instance, Rizzi (2001b, 2005) argues for the existence of what he calls 'Interrogative Projection'. Rizzi (2004) argues for the existence of a recursive Modifier projection positioned between the Focus Phrase and the lowest Topic Phrase. See Belletti (2001) and (2004) for an argument that there exists another left-periphery below the TP-domain.

[ForceP > TopicP* > Focus > TopicP* > FinP]

Figure 2: Shlonsky's (2000) refined Split CP

This structure accommodates data from SA and Lebanese. Consider the following examples where the topic precedes the focus, as in the Standard Arabic example (10b) from Shlonsky (2000: 327-330) while the topic follows the focus as in the Lebanese examples (10) from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 215).

- (10) a. **ʔal-risaalat-u** kataba-**ha** ʔal-walad-u SA
 the-letter-NOM wrote-3FEM.SG the-boy-NOM
 ‘The letter, the boy wrote it.’
- b. **zayd-un** ʔayna qaabal-tu-**hu?** SA
 Zayd-NOM where (I) met-3MASC
 ‘Zayd, where did I meet him?’
- c. ʕA KARIIM **zeina** ʕarrafnee-**ha**
 to Karim Zeina introduced.1p-her Lebanese Arabic
 ‘It is to Karim that we introduced Zeina.’
- d. Zeina ʕA KARIIM ʕarrafnee-ha
 Zeina to Karim introduced.1p-her Lebanese Arabic
 ‘It is to Karim that we introduced Zeina.’

In light of these analyses of CLLD in Arabic, let us now investigate the environment in which *mar* and *ʕad* occur. One observation is that *mar* and *ʕad* consistently appear preceding a *wh*-phrase, as the following sentences show:

- (11)
 Q: (*wif) l-mumaθili:n **mar**, wif s²a:r baʕd
 Def-staff **PRT** what happened after
 ʔal-maʕhad ʔas-saʔb
 Def-scene Def-hard
 ‘As for the staff, what happened after the difficult scene?’

A: badal-uh ʔal-muxridʒ
 Changed.he-it Def-director
 ‘The director replaced it.’

(12)

Q: (*wif) l-mumaθili:n **ʕad**, wif s²a:r baʕd ʔal-maʕhad ʔas-saʔb
 Def-staff **PRT** what happened after Def-scene Def- hard
 ‘As for the staff, what happened after the difficult scene?’

A: badal-uh ʔal-muxridʒ
 Changed.he-it Def-director
 ‘The director replaced it.’

These sentences show that the particles *mar* and *ʕad*, along with the items they mark, only appear to the left of the *wh*-phrases, in line with CLLD data from SA. It follows from this observation, in principle, that the projections hosting the particles and the items they mark is the TopP, in the sense of Rizzi (1997), the highest TopP in the sense of Shlonsky (2000), adjoining the FP in the sense of Ouhalla (1994b).

Having characterised the items the particles mark as a topic, paralleling with CLLD, the other issues we are to tackle now is the observation that there can be more than one occurrence of CLLD topic in a single clause (Shlonsky 2000; Aoun *et al.* 2010), as in the following sentences from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 193):

- (13) a. **kariim zeina ʕarrafnnee-ha ʕal-ee Lebanese Arabic**
 Karim Zeina introduced.1p-her to-him
 ‘Karim, Zeina, we introduced her to him.’
- b. **hind-un saalim-un ta-dribu-hu. SA**
 Hind-NOM Salim-NOM she-hit-3MASC.SG
 ‘As for Hind, she beats Salim.’

- c. **saalim-un** **hind-un** ta-dribu-hu. SA
 Salim-NOM Hind-NOM she-hit-3MASC.SG
 ‘As for Hind, she beats Salim.’

The other observation is that a CLLD can occur in embedded clauses, in addition to main clauses in the sense of Heycock (2006), as in the following sentences from Aoun *et al.* (2010: 192):

(14)

- a. fakkart ʔanno **naadia** ʃeef-**a** kariim mbeeriḥ Lebanese Arabic
 thought.1s that Nadia saw.3ms-her Karim yesterday
 ‘I thought that Nadia, Karim saw her yesterday.’
- b. zaʃamtu ʔanna **r-risaalat-a** al-walad-u kataba-**ha** SA
 claimed.1s that the-letter-Acc the-boy-Nom wrote.3ms-it
 ‘I claimed that the letter, the boy wrote it.’

In keeping with the analysis of the syntax and discourse function of the topic CLLD we just proposed, the generalization we can formulate is that the item marked by *ʃad* or *mar*, which is definite and specific, expresses a topic and is merged in the higher topic phrase in the structure, to the left of FocP in Rizzi’s (1997) sense and in line with Ouhalla’s (1994b) and Shlonsky’s (2000) analyses. However, the last two characteristics of CLLD topic we raised above, that is, the observation that there can be more than one occurrence of CLLD topic in a single main clause (Shlonsky 2000: 328; Aoun et al. 2010: 193) and the observation that CLLD occurs in both main and embedded contexts (Aoun et al. (2010: 192) are not characteristics of the items marked by *mar* and *ʃad*, as the following NHA sentences show:

- (15) a. *l-radʒa:l **mar**, Omar **ʃad** ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar **PRT** see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’
- b. *l-radʒa:l **ʃad**, Omar **mar** ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar **PRT** see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘As for the man, Omar saw him.’

- (16) a. *Firas ?iʕtaraf ?in l-walad **mar** Ali ʃaf-uh
 Firas conceded that Def-boy **PRT** Ali see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘Firas conceded that as for the boy, Ali saw him.’
- b. *Firas ?iʕtaraf ?in l-walad **ʕad** Ali ʃaf-uh
 Firas conceded that Def-boy **PRT** Ali see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘Firas conceded that as for the boy, Ali saw him.’

Hence, a clause can have either *ʕad* or *mar*, not both (15), and neither of them can occur in embedded clauses (16).

To resolve this complication, it is relevant to shed light on the interpretive properties of topics that are marked by the discourse particles *ʕad* or *mar* and the constraints imposed on their syntax, regarding the number of their occurrence in a single clause and the type of clause they occur in. As has been shown, the analyses advanced above for CLLD items and topicalised subjects deal with the syntax and the interpretive property of the topic as being the entity that the sentence is about in Reinhart’s (1981) sense, what is traditionally known as the general aboutness topic. It should be noted that those analyses showed that the general aboutness topic is recursive, with multiple instances of it in a single clause. They also analysed the derivation of the general aboutness topic, being internally/externally merged and its position being to the left of FocP on top of the hierarchy of the left periphery. In light of these analyses, it turns out that the items that the discourse particles *ʕad* or *mar* mark, though they express topic, have properties different from the general aboutness topic. Considering the dialogues provided in (2,4) above, we can see that the constituent that *ʕad* or *mar* marks, though it expresses the topic in terms of discourse function, is not simply the topic that the discourse is about. It is rather some topic that has been mentioned, but, at the utterance time, is reintroduced, returned to again, i.e., revitalized as the topic of the current discourse, but without affecting the main topic of the conversation, the general aboutness topic (Reinhart 1981, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). As we have seen, refinements have been advanced to account for the positions of topics in SA, as opposed to Lebanese dialect of Arabic (Shlonsky 2000). Following the same path of research and building on it, nothing in principle precludes the assumption that the different pragmatics of topics entails different syntax, which can be accounted for by proposing different positions in syntax. Therefore, given these facts about the topic particles, *mar* and *ʕad*, along with the interpretive properties of the items they mark, we

need a theory that accounts for the syntactic position they occupy in the structure and the interpretive properties they have.

The approaches advanced by the scholars mentioned above have been fruitfully used to analyse a huge set of data from several dialects of Arabic as well as SA. They have been used to account for the different relative orders of the topic and focus. However, none of these approaches has tackled the issue of different topic pragmatic values, beyond the aboutness topic of Reinhart (1981). For instance, as we have seen, Shlonsky (2000) postulated an additional topic positioned below FocP, in addition to the one above FocP, to make room for Lebanese data, thereby refining the structure. However, Shlonsky's (2000) refined left periphery spine still treats both instances of topic as aboutness, with the difference being only syntactic; that is, this topic is recursive. Furthermore, though contrastive focus has been considered, neither of the proposed approaches mentioned contrastive topic, which is an item that is being contrasted to a set of alternative items, but is discourse-given, not discourse-new as focus is (see Lee 2003). Under the approaches advanced, contrastive focus and contrastive topic would have the same position. This is against the spirit of the cartographic approach; the two concepts need different positions where their meaning is encoded. Hence, there should be a head dedicated to hosting a contrastive topic and another head dedicated to hosting a contrastive focus. All these issues require more structure that can accommodate such various types of discourse functions. In this regard, in the current literature on the left periphery, it has already been argued that the topic notion in Rizzi (1997) is too coarse (see Belletti 2004, Benincà and Poletto 2004, Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010, and Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007). Given that the constituent the discourse particles *šad* or *mar* mark has the discourse property of being returned to, it seems like a natural move, then, to give up the assumption that this constituent expresses the general aboutness topic, in the sense of Reinhart (1981).

The generalisation we can formulate at this point is that the DP associated with/marked by the topic particles *šad* or *mar* behaves like a CLLD, expressing topic, being definite and specific, and occupying the highest TopP in Rizzi's (1997), Ouhalla (1994b, 1997) and Shlonsky's (2000) architecture of the left periphery. However, it seems that there are constraints imposed on it by NHA grammar: in addition to its different pragmatic value, it is a root phenomenon and limited to a single occurrence per clause.²¹ These different characteristics of the topic item

²¹ The DP marked by *šad* or *mar* behaves like what Cinque (1990) calls left-dislocated phrase (LD), being a root clause phenomenon and allowed to have only a single instance per clause. However, I still assume that Cinque's

marked by *ǰad* or *mar* suggest that it is not the type of topic that has been heavily scrutinized, the general aboutness topic. As hinted at above, recent studies have indicated that there are several notions of topic, which differ in terms of interpretive discourse properties, a linguistic issue that has led to the rise of a new conception of the information structure value, topic. However, no study with empirical, morphological, evidence has shown that this is true (Abels 2012). One well-known recent cartographic approach to such discourse functions is advanced by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) topics typology. Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) approach was motivated by the observation that while every topic expresses, in some sense, pragmatic 'general aboutness' (Reinhart 1981), there are other functions that a topic has. For instance, the topic can have the property of shifting/reintroducing a topic in the discourse (cf. Givón 1983), as opposed to the familiar, continuing topic. In their topics typology, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) assume the existence of three types of topic, which are distinguished by their interpretive discourse properties: Shifting Topics (S-Topic), Contrastive Topics (C-Topic), and Familiar Topics (F-Topic). They are detected via the intonational contours they maintain and the rigid relative order they have in syntax.²² Building on and carrying over Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) diversification of topics, I assume that the discourse function of the DP marked by *mar* and *ǰad* is plausibly characterised as S-Topic.²³

In this regard, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) acknowledge that there can be more than one Topic Phrase projection, and therefore more than one topical element, but argue convincingly at the same time that different Topic Phrases encode different things. Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007) take all their examples from spoken corpora, in part because intonation plays an important part in their theory as an independent criterion of topic typology. Based on a detailed intonational contour and syntactic analysis of corpus data, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) show that there are some topics which are not recursive (contra Rizzi 1997). They assume that topics fall into three types that are distinguished phonologically and realized in different syntactic positions. They show that there is a systematic correlation between the formal properties of topics and their function in the discourse, which is encoded in a strict hierarchy in the C-domain and provides intonational and syntactic evidence that different types of TopP

LD expresses what Reinhart (1981) called general aboutness topic, making it stand apart from the discourse function of the DP marked by *ǰad* or *mar*.

²² The aspect of intonational contours as a criterion is outside of the scope of this research, which relies on the rigid syntactic relative order of the three types of topics.

²³ This includes other categories which have the topic feature, PP, VP, v, AdvP.

projections must be posited in the left periphery of the sentence,²⁴ as Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007: 89) put it:

“Discourse properties have structural correlates both in phonology and in syntax. In other words, evidence will be provided that different types of topic show different intonational properties and are realized in a specific order in the CP-system. A free recursion analysis will thus be refuted and a hierarchy [is] proposed in which different functional projections are distinguished in terms of prosodic and syntactic properties.”

One final note to bear in mind before I discuss the three proposed types of topics is in order. As will be discussed, the common place is that the topic of the sentence is Reinhart’s (1981) traditional general aboutness topic, which is referred to as the entity the sentence is about. Reinhart’s (1981) general aboutness topic is assumed in Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Frascarelli (2008). They assume that every topic in their typology expresses pragmatic ‘general aboutness topic’ but, as will shortly be shown, they show different discourse-interpretive functions. For them, Reinhart’s (1981) general aboutness topic is termed ‘Aboutness topic’. This type of topic is triggered when the topic is void of any pragmatic effects other than aboutness, where such pragmatic effects include Shifting, Contrastive and Familiar or given. As for its position in syntax, Aboutness topic is merged above FocP, on top of the hierarchy that Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) advances, possibly in complementarity with Shifting topic. In this case, the TopP above FocP is merged with Aboutness Top feature or Shifting Top feature, depending on the featural grid in the numeration of the given sentence. In the next section, I introduce Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007) topics typology. It will become clear that the NHA main clause involves all of these topics with the same syntactic hierarchy, as in Italian and German discussed by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007).

2.3.2 *Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007) topics typology*

2.3.2.1 *Introduction*

Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) propose that there are several types of Topic Phrase, each associated with a different discourse meaning and/or speaker’s attitude. Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) hypothesize that the different types of topics differ both phonologically and

²⁴ I will not investigate the phonological aspect, intonational contour that Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl used to detect the proposed types of topics. I adopt, though, the rigid relative order of the syntactic positions they provided.

syntactically. As for the phonology, they state that each topic type maintains a unique intonational contour used by the speaker when articulating the topic under discussion. As for the syntax, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) maintain that each topic is delimited to a specific syntactic position which can be detected with reference to the position of the Focus Phrase, at least for languages whose left periphery configuration is fixed, such as German and Italian (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007). For instance, topics that indicate the element that is being returned to/shifted to appear in a position above the Focus Phrase, while topics expressing contrastive ‘given’ information and topics expressing familiar information appear below the Focus Phrase, as I will explain below. In relation to this, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) work out the Italian and German left peripheries, arguing that three types of topics must be differentiated. The topics are the Shifting Topic, the Contrastive Topic, and the Familiar Topic. In the next sub-section I will introduce these topics with their definitions and some examples. It will become clear later that this division of topics is compatible with NHA data, and discourse particles can be subdivided accordingly.

Before proceeding, let’s engage with a typical example involving the proposed topics from Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007) analysis. Consider the following Italian text from Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007: 88-89), in which the three proposed types of topics are present in the left periphery of the sentence, namely, the direct object *questo*, the subject *io* and the indirect object *ai ragazzi*.

(17)

La situazione è questa: l'insegnante come ho detto *ai ragazzi* è in maternità ha una gravidanza difficile e sta usufruendo di quella legge particolare della maternità anticipata per ora ha avuto un mese *io* penso che non tornerà però lei m'ha detto ah di non dirlo ancora *ai ragazzi* perché per motivi suoi- comunque *io* signora penso di chiudere l'anno [...] questo comunque io ai ragazzi non l'ho detto direttamente.

‘This is the situation: the teacher, as I told students, is pregnant, she’s having a difficult pregnancy and she is now having benefit from a specific law that allows for an early maternity-leave. So far, I was given one month of teaching supply. I don’t think she is coming back this year, however she told me not to tell students, because- well, she has her reasons. However, I think I will keep the class till the end of the year [...] anyway I did not tell this fact to students directly.’

(18) Questo, io ai ragazzi non l' ho detto direttamente.
 this I to.the boys not it(CL) have.1SG told directly
 'I did not tell that fact to my students directly.'

The speaker is a teacher who is talking with the mother of one of his students (his '**ragazzi**') about a temporary difficult situation concerning his position in the school. As we can see, the indirect object **ai ragazzi** is the background topic of the conversation: it is mentioned at the beginning of the text and then repeated several times as a familiar element. On the other hand, the topicalized subject **io** has a contrastive value, since the teacher wants to stress that, as for him, he has not told anything to his students (since he was asked to keep it secret). Finally, the direct object topic **questo** displays aboutness and, in particular, it marks a shift in the conversation to draw the addressee's attention to that entity, **questo**. These three different types of topics are represented in a rigid order in (18).

Having provided a view on how the proposed topics are present in a single clause, and, hence, how their interpretive properties affect the interpretation of the proposition expressed by the clause, let's now look at Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) typology of topics in detail.

2.3.2.2 *Shifting Topic*

The Shifting Topic (or Aboutness-shift Topic, Frascarelli (2008) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010)), (henceforth, S-Topic) is defined as the constituent referring to an entity (topic) which is reintroduced/returned to in the discourse. For instance, imagine a conversation that already targets a certain topic. In order to divert from the currently ongoing topic, the speaker reintroduces the topic that was the main topic of the discourse at a previous point of time. Similarly, in situations where the ongoing discussion is about one topic, but, for some reason, the conversation digresses from this topic to a different one, the speaker may return to the original topic. To get a better understanding of S-Topic in this sense, consider the following example from Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007: 90-91).

- (19) a. Il materiale era tantissimo quindi all'inizio l'ho fatto tutto di corsa cercando di impiegarci il tempo che dicevate voi magari facendolo un po' superficialmente pur di prendere tutto- l'ultima unit la sto facendo l'ho lasciata un po' da parte perché ho ricominciato il ripasso...

‘The material was quite a lot, so at the beginning I did it in a rush, trying to do it all in the time that you had fixed, maybe a little superficially, so as to do everything- I’m doing the last unit now, I put it aside before because I had started to go through the program again...’

b. **L’ultima unit** la sto facendo.
the last unit it(CL) be.1SG do.GER
 ‘I’m working on the last unit.’

In (19a), the speaker talks in general terms about the material, and proceeds talking about other tasks involved in doing the material, including the time and the way she would do the material. Then, she shifts the conversation and reintroduces the material the DO *l’ultima unit* again (‘the last unit’) which is resumed by the clitic *la* in the sentence, as seen in (19b).

Consider the following further example, extracted from Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010: 61).

(20)

a. Era tutto molto nuovo nel senso che comunque la lingua inglese attraverso i programmi sul computer diciamo non l’avevo mai- [...] comunque l’inglese risultava anche facendolo da solo più interessante [...] io, inglese non- premetto non l’avevo mai fatto.

Everything was totally new to me in the sense that I had never studied English through computer programs [...] and through self-learning English appeared more interesting to me [...] ***I must say that I had never studied English before.***

b. [S-top io] [F-top inglese]_k non- l’ avevo mai fatto
 I English not it.CL had.1SG never do.PART
 ‘I had never studied English before.’

In (20b), while the speaker is talking about English *inglese*, the direct object resumed by the clitic *lo*, he reintroduces the subject-Topic *io* marking a shift in the conversation, at which point she wants to comment on her personal relation to that language.

In the light of the examined Italian data, consider the following English example.

(21)

Speaker A: fares for public transport are so high; I can't even afford to go to the neighbouring city.

Speaker B: Everything is so expensive. My daughter told me how expensive her books were.

Speaker C: How old is your daughter?

Speaker B: She is fifteen.

Speaker A: Back to fares, are any discounts available?

As is clear from this dialogue, Speaker A initiates a conversation on transportation prices. When the conversation diverts from this topic (notice Speaker C's utterance), Speaker A re-introduces the transportation prices once again, functioning here as an S-Topic, in terms of definition proposed by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007).

2.3.2.3 *Contrastive Topic*

Contrastive Topic (henceforth, C-Topic) is a type of topic that indicates alternatives (Krifka 2007). It is an element which creates oppositional pairs with respect to the other elements belonging to a restrictive discourse-given or contrastive set (Chocano 2012: 143). A typical view on C-Topic is that it is triggered by raising a question, about what is called 'the potential topic referent', which can be cut into partitions (sets/members) (Krifka 2007; Lee 2003). In some cases, where the respondent presupposes a conjunctive question, the respondent's answer is partial, and it is this partial answer that serves as a C-Topic.²⁵ This is in line with Büring (2003) who claims that every declarative clause containing a contrastive topic must be the answer to a question belonging to a set of alternative questions – either explicitly asked or implicitly introduced – which are all part of a strategy to solve a super-question. Though both have the property that they occur in contrastive contexts, it should be stressed that contrastive topic is different from focus, in particular contrastive focus. Contrastive

²⁵ According to Lee (2003), a conjunctive question triggers an answer that might only satisfy part of it, as in the following example from Lee (2003: 2).

Q: What did Bill's sisters do?

A: Bill's youngest sister kissed John.

Topic belongs to a restrictive discourse-given contrastive set; it doesn't introduce any referent expressing new, non-discourse-given information, as contrastive focus does (Büring 1997, 1999, 2003; Lambrecht 1994; Krifka 2007). To see what a C-Topic means in a discourse context, consider the following Korean example (adapted from Lee 2003: 2):

(22) a. Speaker A: What do your siblings do?

Speaker B: [MY SISTER] Top [studies MEDICINE] FOC, and [MY BROTHER]
Top is [working on a FREIGHT SHIP] FOC.

b. Speaker A: ne ton iss ni
you money have Q
'Do you have money?'

Speaker B: na tongceon-un iss-e
I coins-CT have-DEC
'I have coinsCT, (but not bills).'

To illustrate informally, the question in (22a) raises an inquiry about the potential topic referent: *your siblings*, and entails two discourse-given entities: *the sister* and *the brother*, which provide a complete answer to the sub-question in A's question. The conversational common ground keeps track of the questions that are introduced in the discourse. That is, when the question is introduced by a speaker (speaker A), it commits the participants to providing an answer, and remains the 'question under discussion' until it has been answered or it has been shown to be presently unanswerable, at which point it will be removed, along with any sub-questions that it entails. Under this view, once Speaker A's question is given by which the speaker asks about the potential topic referent set *your siblings*, particular entities are established in discourse, composing the common ground content (Chafe 1976, and Stalnaker 2002). At this point of discourse, the common ground content is created - being composed of the discourse-given entities: *my sister* and *my brother*, of which the entire topic referent *siblings* consists. In the first conjunct of Speaker B's utterance, the entity *my sister* is stressed, indicating the existence of an alternative, which is given in the second conjunct, *my brother*, both of which together are part of the felicitous answer to Speaker A's question.

Given these properties of the C-Topic, we can conclude, following Haliday (1967) Chafe (1976), Roberts (1996, 1997), Büring (1997, 1999, 2003) and Lee (2003), that a plausible criterion for determining contrastive topic-hood is the availability of a limited number of candidates, which are familiar in the discourse, with which the entity expressing the C-Topic is being contrasted. Consider now the following English dialogue, which shows how a C-topic is contrasted to a limited set of given entities:

(23)

Speaker A: We are planning to give the students with outstanding averages a bursary.

Speaker B: It is encouraging. However, the majority of the students have achieved Distinctions this semester; around 75%.

Speaker C: They are too many. Obviously, we cannot afford to pay for all of them. What shall we do?

Speaker A: Well, the students with High Distinction, let us support them. So, we get a smaller number that we can afford to pay.

Speaker C: That is a good idea. Let us go for it.

? Speaker D: Well, the students with Merit, let us support them.

? Speaker E: Well, the students with a Pass, let us support them.

The A-topic in the common ground of the discourse is *the students with outstanding averages*. As a reaction to Speaker B's and Speaker C's utterances, Speaker A, in his second utterance, updates the common ground content (Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). This is due to contrasting *the students with High Distinction* (part of and implied by the A-topic) to *the students with outstanding averages* (the A-topic). *Students with Distinction* still expresses the aboutness topic of the discourse, but at the same time, exhibits contrastiveness. It expresses the entity that is contrasted to the overall number of students with outstanding averages. An infelicitous statement in this context is proposed by speaker D and speaker E, who suggest the entities *students with Merit* and *students with Pass*, both of which are rejected by Speaker A as they fall outside of the common ground.

Consider the following further, Italian dialogue (adapted from Bocci 2007: 44):

(24)

Speaker A: Sai se Gianni venduto la macchina ieri mattina?
do you know if Gianni sold DEF-car yesterday morning?
'Do you know if Gianni sold the car yesterday morning?'

Speaker B: La moto l'ha venduta quattro giorni fa.
DEF motorbike [he]it sold four days ago.
'The motorbike, he sold it four days ago.'

Speaker A: Si, ma la macchina? L'ha venduta ieri mattina o no?
but what DEF car? Did [he] it-sell yesterday morning or not?
'But what about the car? Did he sell it yesterday morning or not?'

Speaker A raises an inquiry, mentioning *the car*, which serves as the potential topic referent. At this point of discourse, the common ground content is created, containing discourse given items related to the entity *the car* such as *truck, lorry and motorbike*. Speaker B contrasted *the motorbike* against these items. However, Speaker A has in mind another item *the car*, which also functions as C-Topic. This explains why in syntax C-Topics are prosodically distinct from other types of topics, by means of contrastive stress.

2.3.2.4 Familiar Topic

Familiar Topic (henceforth, F-Topic) is a syntactic category referring to an entity which is contextually given and d(iscourse)-linked in the ongoing conversation. It either resumes background information or is used for topic continuity (Givón 1983). Unlike Shifting Topic and Contrastive Topic, Familiar Topic does not affect/update the common ground, by means of shifting or contrasting, but, rather marks a contextually given element (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). To substantiate this point, consider the following dialogue from Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007).

(25)

- a. il problema secondo me di questo autoapprendimento è stato affrontare la grammatica proprio no quindi lì ti trovi davanti ad argomenti nuovi nei quali avresti bisogno appunto di qualcuno [...] invece **l'autoapprendimento questo** non- non me l'ha dato ecco.

‘In my opinion the problem of this self-learning course was the grammar part- you deal with new topics for which you would exactly need someone [...] on the contrary, self-learning could not give it to me, that’s it.

- b. **l'autoapprendimento questo** non me l' ha
self-learning this not to-me it.CL have.3SG
dato
give.PART

‘Self-learning did not give this to me.’

The subject-Topic *l'autoapprendimento* ‘self-learning’ and the direct object topic *questo* in (25b) both are familiar to the conversation interlocutors. Neither topic provides an instruction for the hearer (inquires, asserts etc.). Being F-topics, they simply refer to the existing common ground content with a retrieval function. It should be noted here that there is near unanimity among researchers that the F-Topic can always be pronominalized, given its property of being backgrounded and its saliency in the utterance common ground (cf. Givon 1983, Chafe 1987, and Pesetsky 1987). Consider the following dialogue from NHA, which shows how an F-topic is accessible throughout the conversation and is retrieved by a pronominal item.

(26)

Speaker A: ?al-maharah muktasabah mu karizijah.
Def-skill acquire.3S.F PASS Neg innate.3S.F
‘Skill is acquired, not innate.’

Speaker B: *ħasab ʔal-madʒa:l. iða kan badani miθil*
 Depending on Def-field if be.3S.M physical like
ʔal-ku:rah tkun muktasabah.
 football be.3S.F acquire.3S.F.PASS
 ‘It depends on the field of practice. If the field is physical like football, it is
 acquired (it = the skill).

Speaker C: *ʔana ʕiʔtibr-ah ʕarizij-ah ib-kil ʔal-ʔaħwal*
 I consider.I-3S.F innate-3S.F in-all Def-cases
 ‘I consider it innate in all cases (it = the skill).’

The syntactic category referring to the skill functions as an F-Topic as the skill is contextually given. The conversation is about this entity. Throughout the whole discourse, the same entity, the skill, is the topic familiar to all the interlocutors of the conversation. No other entity has been reintroduced as a Shifting-topic, or is selected out of a set of familiar entities, referred to by a category bearing contrastive stress, a C-topic. As such, this entity of the skill can be referred to by a pronoun as is the case in Speaker’s C utterance, where the clitic *ah* spelled out on the verb *ʕiʔtibr* ‘consider’ refers back to the entity ‘the skill’.

Up to here, I have highlighted the main characteristic of the three types of topics proposed by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007), which will be crucial as my analyses of the particles proceed in the following chapters. Prior to turning to the discussion on the discourse particles *mar* and *ħad*, one remark on the recursivity and hierarchical relations between these three types of topics is in order (see section 2.3). Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) show that S-Topics and C-topics are non-recursive while F-Topics are recursive, with a possibility to have many realizations of F-Topic per clause. Unlike S-Topics, C-Topics and F-Topics can occur in embedded contexts (Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) point out that these three different types of topics are hierarchically ordered in a fixed rigid order, as seen in Figure 3 (adapted from Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007: 89):

S-Topic >>>> C-Topic >>>> F-Topic

Figure 3: The hierarchical order of topics in Italian and German

What Figure 3 shows is that the S-Topic c-commands the other two topics, whereas the C-Topic c-commands F-Topic. This view on the discourse interpretive function of the notion topic makes inroads into the role of the topic in the interpretation of the derived sentence, depending on its role.

Let's return to the analysis of the syntactic positions and functions of the topic particles *mar* and *ʕad*. Consider the following sentences:

(27)

- a. al-hazi:mah **ʕad** ʔal-laʕibi:n lazim jidʒtahdu:n
the-defeat **PRT** Def-players must work harder
l-taweet-ah
to-compensate-it
‘As for the defeat, the players must work harder to compensate for it.’
- b. l-mubarah, **mar** ʔal-ahdaf kan ʔafzʕal ʃae
Def-match **PRT** Def-goals be.PST best thing
‘As for the match, the best thing was the goals.’

With the assumption that topics encode given information (Chafe 1976, Rizzi 1997, and Radford 2009) and Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) proposal on the typology of topics in place, I argue that *mar* and *ʕad* mark the constituent expressing the S-Topic. I base my argument on the fact that, rather than the general aboutness topic which the ongoing discourse is about, *mar* and *ʕad* only mark elements that are re-introduced and which can be accessed within the common ground of the sentence. In both (27a) and (27b), this element is the main topic of the ongoing discourse but had been digressed from and is now being revived (see (2) and (5) above for the complete discourses). What corroborates this hypothesis is the fact that the discourse particles *mar* and *ʕad* are not used with topics being currently discussed by the interlocutors, a characteristic property of F-Topics. Furthermore, the presence of *mar* and *ʕad* does not evoke any set of alternatives, as C-Topics do.

Taking that the items that *mar* and *ʕad* mark is an S-Topic, a characteristic which makes it discrete from the general aboutness topic, let's return to the issue of the two characteristics of the Arabic CLLD which showed that CLLD does not show the characteristics of the items marked by *mar* and *ʕad*.

Let's first discuss the observation that there can be more than one occurrence of CLLD in a single main clause, as in (13) above, while the constructions involving *mar* and *ʕad* tolerate only a single instance of them, as in the following sentences:

- (28) a. *l-radʒa:l **mar** Omar **ʕad** ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar **PRT** see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: 'As for the man, Omar saw him.'
- b. * l-radʒa:l **ʕad** Omar **mar** ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** Omar **PRT** see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: 'As for the man, Omar saw him.'

Nothing in principle would militate against the possibility of the occurrence of the two topics in the above sentences (Shlonsky 2000), if we consider Reinhart's (1981) general aboutness topic and Rizzi's (1997) cartographic approach, which postulates the possibility of multiple topics in the left periphery of the sentence. However, a sentence cannot contain more than one S-Topic, as shown by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010). Hence, only one S-Topic can be realized in a single clause. Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010: 62-63) present evidence that English, too, displays only a single occurrence of S-Topics, as shown in (29-30).

- (29) [S-Top my son] [C-Top beans] he likes, but [C-Top peas] he hates.
- (30) a. (As for) Rosa, my next book I will dedicate to her.
 b. *(As for) Jack (As for) Jill, he married her last year.
 c. (As for) Jack and Jill, they married last year.

The conclusion Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010) reach to account for the uniqueness of S- and C-Topics, as opposed to the recursive F-Topic, is a direct consequence of the assumption that S- and C-Topics affect the common ground, by updating it. Krifka (2007), in his overview of

information structure phenomena, distinguishes two dimensions of the common ground: the common ground content and the common ground management. The former is the information accumulated up to a given point in the conversation; the latter is the sequence of conversational moves performed by participants (for instance, assertions) that determine the way in which the common ground content develops, and the information about these conversational moves that is reflexively stored in the common ground. Following this logic of Krifka (2007), Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010) argue that S-Topics and C-Topics update the common ground, while F-Topics don't. As for how they update the common ground, the researchers argue that S-Topics do so by shifting, which is represented by a rising tone, while C-Topics do so by the contrastive stress they carry²⁶. This distinction yields different distributional properties of the three types of topics.

In a related vein, Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010) argue that S-Topics are root phenomena in the sense that they cannot occur in embedded contexts (whereas C-Topic and F-Topics can occur in both environments). If we assume that the DP marked by *mar* and *ʕad* is an S-Topic, NHA appears in line with this observation. Consider the sentences in (16) above, repeated below as (31):

- (31) a. *Firas ʔiʕtaraf ʔin l-walad **mar** Ali ʃaf-uh
 Firas conceded that Def-boy **PRT** Ali see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: 'Firas conceded that as for the boy, Ali saw him.'
- b. *Firas ʔiʕtaraf ʔin l-walad **ʕad** Ali ʃaf-uh
 Firas conceded that Def-boy **PRT** Ali see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: 'Firas conceded that as for the boy, Ali saw him.'

The ill-formedness of (31) shows that construct DP+*mar* and DP+*ʕad* is not acceptable in the embedded clause introduced by *ʔin* 'that', supporting the argument that what *mar* and *ʕad* mark is an S-Topic.

²⁶ Krifka (2007) Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010) conclude that S-Topics and C-Topics are different from F-Topics, in that they bear rising tone. F-Topics do not have any tone. They link this property of the F-Topic to its pragmatic function: the F-Topic doesn't bear any tone because it doesn't update the conversation: it doesn't stress an entity, nor does it shift the interlocutors' attention to a revived entity. Discussion of tone is beyond the scope of the current research, so I will not deal with it.

Having determined that the item marked by the topic particles *mar* and *ʕad* is an S-Topic rather than the well-known general aboutness topic, it is now relevant to see how the item expressing S-Topic is derived. In the same way the merger of a CLLD was analysed, I will investigate the merger of an S-Topic: external merge vs. internal merge.

2.4 The DP marked by *mar* and *ʕad*: externally-merged or internally-merged

The grammar of Arabic makes extensive use of topicalisation. This operation has always been accompanied by the question of whether the fronted DP is a result of movement or base-generation. There is mounting evidence in Arabic literature that the latter is what holds true. For instance, Aoun *et al.* (2010) and Ouhalla (1997), analysing data from Lebanese Arabic and SA, respectively, conclude that in CLLDs, the relation between the left peripheral DP and the pronominal clitic violates island conditions if it is assumed to be derived via movement, leading them to generalize that CLLD constructions in Arabic are generated without any movement. The following Lebanese examples illustrate topicalisation of a DP in an adjunct clause (32a), Complex NP island (32b), and Wh-island (32c), respectively (examples from Aoun *et al.* 2010: 201).

(32)

- a. sməʕt ʔanno **naadia** rəħt mən duun ma təħke maʕ-a
 heard.1s that Nadia left.2ms without Comp talk.2ms with-her
 ‘I heard that Nadia, you left without talking to her.’
- b. sməʕt ʔanno ha-l-**kteeb** hkiit maʕ l-walad yalli
 heard.1s that this-the-book talked.2ms with the-boy that
 katab ʕal-ee
 wrote.3ms on-it
 ‘I heard that this book, you talked with the boy that wrote on it.’
- c. sməʕt ʔanno **naadia** byaʕrfo miin ʕeef-a
 heard.1s that Nadia know.3p who saw.3ms-her
 ‘I heard that Nadia, they know who saw her.’

It follows from considerations of the violation of islandhood constraints in (32) (Ross 1967), and the fact that the relevant sentences remain grammatical, that the DPs CLLD phrases cannot have moved from the internal domain of the clause, hence, the argument that CLLD, with the function of being a topic, either originates in the left periphery (merged in left-peripheral position) or has the status of an adjunct to the highest projection of the clause (Ouhalla 1997; Aoun *et al.* 2010).

Given that the constituent that *mar* and *ʕad* mark expresses S-Topic, and, that when this constituent is a DP, it behaves like CLLD in being associated with a clitic realized on the verb, the question arises: can the analysis of CLLD as involving base-generation be extended to the constructions involving *mar* and *ʕad*? Do the syntactic constraints on CLLD also hold for the constituent that *mar* and *ʕad* mark? Let us consider the choice between movement and base-generation, i.e. whether the DP marked by *mar* and *ʕad* is externally-merged or internally-merged, in the sense of Chomsky (2000, 2001). The former means that the given expression enters the derivation directly from the lexicon (when it is a word) or is a result of separate derivation (when it is a phrase), whereas the latter means that the given expression enters the derivation at an earlier stage and then moves (i.e. is re-merged) to the position followed by *mar* or *ʕad* in overt syntax. Based on the behaviour of the DP preceding *mar* or *ʕad*, I argue that this DP is externally merged. Two pieces of evidence can be given for this contention, namely lack of island violations and lack of the thematic role assignment.

Firstly, the assumption that the topic marked by *mar* is internally merged is not valid since it can violate island constraints. If DP+*mar* is the result of movement of the DP, the prediction is that it would be sensitive to island conditions given that the DP marked by *mar* is assumed to be base-generated in the relative clause, which is an island. (33) below is well-formed, so the prediction is false:

- (33)
- | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|-----|---------------|-----------|-------|---------------------------------|
| l-risalah_i | mar | Ali | liga | ʔal-walad | [illi | ʔarsal- ah_i] |
| Def-letter | PRT | Ali | find.PST.3S.M | Def-boy | COMP | send.PST.3S.M-it |
- ‘As for the letter, Ali found the boy that sent it.’

This implies that the DP preceding *mar*, (and *ʕad*) merges externally (i.e., it is derived in a parallel derivation and merged directly with the sentence).

Another piece of evidence in favour of the assumption that the DP following *mar* is externally merged comes from the fact that the DP can appear without any thematic role assigned to it. Consider the following examples where there is no thematic role available for the associate constituent of *mar*, an observation which supports the idea that the associate constituent of *mar* or *ʕad* is externally, not internally, merged.

- (34) a. *l-lijaqah mar ʔat-tamur muhim qabul ʔat-tasxin*
 Def-stamina **PRT** Def-dates important before Def-warm up
 ‘As for stamina, dates are important (to eat) before warming up.’
- b. *l-lijaqah ʕad ʔa-tamur muhim qabul ʔal-tasxin*
 Def-stamina **PRT** Def-dates important before Def-warm up
 ‘As for stamina, dates are important (to eat) before warming up.’
- c. *l-ʔum mar l-awlad dajimn jihtadz-un mutabaʕah*
 Def-mother **PRT** Def-boys always need.PRS-P follow up
 ‘As for the mother, children always require follow up.’
- d. *l-ʔum ʕad l-awlad dajimn jihtadz-un mutabaʕah*
 Def-mother **PRT** Def-boys always need.PRS-P follow up
 ‘As for the mother, children always require follow up.’

As seen from (34a), the DP *l-lijaqah* ‘the stamina’ is not, say, a THEME, PATIENT, or an EXPERIENCER (cf. Baker 1997). No other thematic role can be assigned to the DP *l-lijaqah* ‘the stamina’ as far as sentence (34a,b) is concerned. Lack of thematic assignment to the DP *l-lijaqah* ‘the stamina’ implies that it is not generated within the thematic/semantic domain of the sentence and hence must be externally merged. The same analysis extends to the DP *l-ʔum* ‘the mother’ in sentence (34c,d). Under this view, the constituent marked by *mar* or *ʕad* along with the particles is externally-merged.

The analysis we have now raises expectations about the other particles to be investigated in this research. Against this background, I will show in the next chapters that the other particles mark different types of topics in NHA.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis of two discourse particles, *mar* and *ʃad*, that have the same function and appear to occupy the same syntactic position. Motivated by the fact that the topicalised constituent can be a DP in case the numeration contains *ʃad* or *mar*, I appealed to the previous analyses of syntactic items that appear at the left periphery, most notably Aoun *et al.* (2010) and Ouhalla (1994b, 1997), Rizzi's (1997) and Shlonsky (2000). Against the findings of those analyses, I argued that the constituent marked by *mar* or *ʃad* does not show the same function as CLLD. For this, I adopted Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) topic typology. In line with the analyses proposed by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010) for corresponding facts in Italian, it was shown that the items marked by *mar* or *ʃad* function as Shift-Topic, but not a general aboutness topic, the property of CLLD, based on the analyses previously advanced in the related literature. That the item marked by *mar* or *ʃad* is an S-Topic was evidenced by their syntax: they are non-recursive and root phenomenon.

Having analysed *mar* and *ʃad* and shown that they mark the element functioning as an S-Topic, the topmost TopP in Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) hierarchy of their topic typology, let us now use these particles as a diagnostic to explore the syntactic positions of the other discourse particles and the structure of the left periphery of NHA, the task of the next chapter.

3 CHAPTER THREE: Familiar Topic

In the previous chapter, I have argued that NHA instantiates the so-called shifting topic layer à la Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007), using *mar* and *ʕad*. Following Rizzi's (1997) Split CP system and later refinements made by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) as well as their topic typology, I have argued that *mar* and *ʕad* function as S-Topic particles. The two discourse particles appear sentence initially, preceded by an entity whose informational value must be given, i.e. can be retrieved from the common ground of the sentence and is being reintroduced. It was shown that such an entity occurs only in root contexts and is characterized by its non-recursivity.

In this chapter, we turn to manifestations of the Familiar Topic (F-Topic) in the NHA left periphery with reference to the relevant particles which mark it. Data point to the fact that the F-Topic is situated low in the NHA left periphery as demonstrated by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) for Italian and German. In NHA, this type of topic can be projected through several particles which can be lumped under two types depending on their morpho-syntactic behaviour, namely agreeing particles (*ʕedi* and *tsin*) and non-agreeing particles (*ʔefwa* and *tigil*). The agreeing particles may be attached with an inflectional suffix which I treat, following Shlonsky's (1997) treatment of the weak pronominal forms attached to functional words/heads in Arabic, as a morphosyntactic consequence of an Agree relation between the particle and some entity serving as a F-Topic. I will argue that such particles are endowed with unvalued ϕ -content which is valued by the F-Topic.²⁷ On the other hand, the non-agreeing particles (*ʔefwa* and *tigil*) lack such content but carry, instead, an [EPP] feature that forces the F-Topic to move to the Spec position of the F-Topic Phrase headed by the relevant particle.

This chapter begins by exploring the syntactic behaviour of the agreeing particles. This is followed by discussion of non-agreeing particles.

3.1 The particles *ʕedi* and *tsin*: function and position

Before discussing the functions of *ʕedi* and *tsin* in their sentences, let's first pinpoint the structural position occupied by these two particles, which will help us determine their function and relation with the rest of the sentence. I restrict the discussion here to *ʕedi* with clear

²⁷ See Shlonsky (1992: 456-457) for the assumption that C items such as *illi* in Arabic bear ϕ -features, which is coindexed with the item in Spec CP.

statement that all facts related to the structural position and morphosyntactic status of *vedi* extend to *tsin*. Later, I discuss the difference between *vedi* and *tsin*, which is, as I will show, pragmatic. One important point related to the syntax of these two particles is that, when they co-occur with *mar* (or *ʕad*), they must follow *mar* (or *ʕad*). Consider the contrast between the following two sentences:

- (1) a. a-sayarah **mar** **vedi-h** Ali ʃaf-ah bi-a-sa:ħah
 Def-car **PRT** **PRT-3S.M** Ali see.PST.3S.M-it in-Def-yard
 ‘As for the car, Ali saw it in the yard.’
- b. ***vedi-h** Ali a-sayarah **mar** ʃaf-ah bi-a-sa:ħah
 PRT-3S.M Ali Def-car **PRT** see.PST.3S.M-it in-Def-yard
 Intended meaning: ‘As for the car, Ali saw it in the yard.’

In (1a), the DP *as-sayarah* ‘the car’ functions as an S-Topic, marked by *mar*. The ungrammaticality of sentence (1b) indicates that the construct [DP+*mar*] must c-command *vedi*, not vice versa, something that is indicative of the low structural position of *vedi* in relation to *mar*. note that there is no strict adjacency requirement between the two particles. More than one constituent can intervene between *vedi* and the construct [DP+*mar*], as exemplified in (2).

- (2) a. as-sayarah **mar** bi-a-sa:ħah **vedi-h** Ali ʃaf-ah
 Def-car **PRT** Def-yard **PRT-3SM** Ali see.PST.3S.M-it
 ‘As for the car, in the yard, Ali saw it.’
- b. as-sayarah **mar** Ali bi-a-sa:ħah ʔalbariħ **vedi**
 Def-car **PRT** Ali in-Def-yard yesterday **PRT**
 ʃaf-ah
 see.PST.3S.M-it
 ‘As for the car, Ali, in the yard, saw it last night.’

- c. as-sayarah **mar** bi-a-sa:ħah Ali ʔalbariħ **vedɪ-h**
 Def-car **PRT** in-Def-yard Ali yesterday **PRT-3S.M**
 ʃaf-ah‘
 see.PST.3S.M-it
 ‘As for the car, in the yard, Ali saw it last night.’

In (2a), the adjunct *biasa:ħah* ‘in the yard’ intervenes between *vedɪ* and the *mar* construct. In (2b) and (2c), *Ali*, *biasa:ħah* ‘in the yard’, and *ʔalbariħ* ‘yesterday’ intervene between *vedɪ* and the constituent marked with *mar*, *as-sayarah* ‘the car’, with different orders. With this being the case, *mar* and *vedɪ* are apparently housed in different syntactic projections within the left periphery of the given clause, as the presence of one does not exclude the other and any XP item can intervene between them.

A significant observation here is that sentences (2b and 2c) do not have the same discourse interpretation. In (2b) the speaker conveys that Ali (not another person in the common ground of the sentence, i.e. Firas, Omar, etc.) is the one who saw the car in the yard yesterday. Ali here, being selected out of other discourse alternatives, expresses a C-Topic. The car, which is being reintroduced, is an entity that everybody involved in the conversation is familiar with as being already mentioned in the discourse. The car is thus an S-Topic. Following Krifka (2007), Lee (2003), and Büring (2003) that the C-topic serves as the answer to a question in discourse, and, assuming that (2b) is a response to a question about the person who saw the car in the yard (3a), (3b) is an infelicitous continuation, since (2b) answers the question.

- (3) a. min ʃaf a-ssayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
 who saw.3S.M the-car in-the-yard
 ‘Who saw the car in the yard?’
- b. tʕajib min baʃad ʃaf a-ssayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
 Alright who else saw.3S.M the-car in-the-yard
 ‘Alright! Who else saw the car in the yard?’

This is due to the fact that in (2b) the speaker specifies Ali and stresses that Ali, not somebody else, saw the car in the yard, a message which the speaker uttering (3) does not get; hence, proceeding to ask about other suspects.

On the other hand, sentence (2c) presents a rather different scenario regarding *Ali* and the PP *biasa:ħah* ‘in the yard’. In this sentence, the speaker highlights that the yard is the place where Ali saw the car. This sentence is again about the car but what is different here is that the speaker stresses that Ali saw the car in the yard, not in some other place (e.g., at the school) which is also available in the common ground. This difference between the readings of the sentences in (2) is a strong indication that the left periphery of NHA is configurational in the sense that it is hierarchically ordered and any change in word order between the relevant elements of the left periphery is paired with some difference in interpretation. In addition, such differences between sentences in (2) entail that topics in the left periphery come with different flavours, a matter that can be easily captured using a model where topics may refer to different discursal values (as in Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007).

Following Rizzi’s (1997) hypothesis on the Split CP as well as Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl’s (2007) proposal on the topics typology (see above), it can be posited that *Ali* in (2b) and *biasa:ħah* ‘in the yard’ in (2c) are C-Topics as they induce a set of alternatives in the discourse, being entities that create oppositional pairs with respect to other potential topics. On the other hand, *biasa:ħah* ‘in the yard’ and *ʔalbariħ* ‘yesterday’ in (2b) and *Ali* and *ʔalbariħ* ‘yesterday’ in (2c) are best regarded as F-Topics, expressing discourse-given information which is known to all discourse interlocutors²⁸.

Evidence in support of my assumption that *Ali* in (2b) and *biasa:ħah* ‘in the yard’ in (2c) are C-Topics while they are F-Topics in sentences (2c) and (2b), respectively, comes from the behaviour of what I call ‘contrastive adverbs’, including ‘*wuka:d*’ in relation to their occurrence in the left periphery. These adverbs are literally translated into English as ‘certainly’ or ‘contrastively’. Such adverbs only co-occur with elements which function as C-Topics because they modify only elements that create oppositional pairs with respect to other potential topics. Despite the fact that the adverb *wuka:d* ‘certainly’ is in principle a contrastive adverb, and as such would be expected to be able to mark other contrastive elements, including focused

²⁸ It will be shown that the adjunct *ʔalbariħ* is a case of multiple F-Topic, where it tucks in between the particle and the DP *Ali* in (2c).

elements, *wuka:d* is not used to mark discourse new information (i.e., focused elements). Consider the following dialogue:

(4)

Speaker A1: fiqadt mablak min jantiti
Lost.I amount from bag.my
'I lost an amount of money from my bag.'

Speaker B1: 'fi:h ?ahad ?ib-balak
There in-someone in-mind.your
'Do you have anyone in mind?'

Speaker A2: taqriban
Almost
'Almost.'

Speaker B2: madam qilt taqriban wuka:d ?al-haris
As long as said.you almost certainly Def-guard
'Since you said almost, it is certainly the guard.'

Speaker A3: la. Mu ?al-haris wuka:d ?al-munazif
No. Neg Def-guardian certainly in-Def-cleaner
'No. I don't suspect the guardian. It is certainly the cleaner.'

Speaker A4: *wuka:d harami /min bara ?al-mabna / ?adu
Certainly thief / from outside Def-building / enemy
Intended meaning: it is certainly a thief/ an outsider/ an enemy.'

The ungrammaticality of the occurrence of the adverb *wuka:d* in (A4) indicates that it cannot be used to contrast non-discourse given entities; those that are not familiar and not present in the common ground. Speaker A and B both have particular suspects in mind, once speaker A mentioned that he had lost his money. At this stage of discourse, they both have familiar people in the common ground of the ongoing discourse (cf. Stalnaker 2002). The unacceptability of

the use of *wuka:d* in (A4) implies that *wuka:d* doesn't mark non-given, indefinite entities, which are properties of focus. Instead, *wuka:d* marks only items whose entities express C-topics, an observation supporting the claim that a distinction between focused elements and contrastive topics should be upheld (cf. Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010 and Jiménez Fernández 2011). The use of *wuka:d* implies that the speaker talks about a particular element within a closed/limited set of alternatives. For instance, when one says *certainly my father paid the money*, the speaker implies that his father (not his mother or his friend, who fall within the common ground, and hence, are familiar to the interlocutors) paid the money. Consider the contrast between the following sentences:

- (5) a. as-sayarah **mar** wuka:d Ali bi-a-sa:ħah ʔalbariħ **vedɪ**
 Def-car **PRT** certainly Ali in-Def-yard yesterday **PRT**
 ʃaf-ah
 see.PST.3S.M-it
 'As for the car, Ali (not Omar, Yousef, or Musa) saw it in the yard yesterday.'

- b. *as-sayarah **mar** Ali wuka:d bi-a-sa:ħah ʔalbariħ **vedɪ**
 Def-car **PRT** Ali certainly in-Def-yard yesterday **PRT**
 ʃaf-ah
 see.PST.3S.M-it
 'As for the car, Ali saw it in the yard yesterday.'

Given that the adverb *wuka:d* 'certainly' functions only as an adjunct of the C-Topic phrase, i.e. it is a contrastive adverb, I can account for the contrast between sentences (5a and 5b). In (5a), the adverb *wuka:d* is adjoined to (c-commanding) the C-Topic phrase. The sentence is thus well-formed with the interpretation that the speaker highlights that Ali (not Omar, Yousef, or Musa) might have seen the car in the yard. On the other hand, in (5b) *wuka:d* is adjoined to (c-commanding) the F-Topic phrase, which is inherently non-contrastive, rendering the whole sentence ill-formed.

As we have seen, *vedɪ* can appear as the third or even the fourth constituent in the sentence, eliminating the possibility that *vedɪ* is an S-Topic marker (which must be clause-initial according to the hierarchy proposed by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007). This can be

supported the fact that *ʔedi* is compatible with embedded contexts, where S-Topics do not occur. Consider the following sentence:

- (6) Firas ʔiʕtaraf ʔin **ʔedi**-h Ali ʔaf l-walad
 Firas conceded that **PRT**-3S.M Ali see.PST.3S.M Def-boy
 Intended meaning: ‘Firas conceded that Ali saw the boy.’

With these facts in hand, I propose that the particle *ʔedi* is merged as a head of the F-Topic Phrase. This proposal is motivated by the fact that the elements that *ʔedi* mark are given topics already backgrounded/established/accessible in the discourse, as demonstrated in the following sentences:

- (7) a. **ʔedi**-h l-walad ʔaf as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
PRT-3S.M DEF-boy see.PST.3S.M Def-car in-Def-yard
 ‘The boy saw the car in the yard.’
- b. ***ʔedi**-h walad ʔaf as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
PRT-3S.M boy see.PST.3S.M Def-car in-Def-yard
 Intended meaning: ‘A boy saw the car in the yard.’

Although in the two sentences in (7) *ʔedi* is attached with a suffix whose content is co-referenced with the subject, (7a) is grammatical, while (7b) is not. The explanation of this difference lies in the informational value of the subject in the two sentences. In (7a) the subject expresses given information, while it expresses new information in (7b). The ill-formed sentence (7b) indicates that *ʔedi* can only be co-referenced with an element whose informational value is given. Under this view, I argue that such an element carries the informational value of F-Topic, as it does not induce alternatives, or serves as an S-Topic. Following Bayer (2012); Ouhalla (1997); Bayer and Obenauer (2011); Biberauer and Sheehan 2011; Biberauer *et al.* 2014; Struckmeier (2014) Bayer and Trotzke 2015, Coniglio (2008), Coniglio and Zegrean (2010), in that discourse related particles can function as heads in the C domain, I propose that *ʔedi* instantiates a head, F-Top, in the left periphery of the sentence (see section 1.5.3 for the headedness status of the particles under investigation, including *ʔedi*, where *ʔedi* causes intervention effects to verb movement).

I now turn to the particle *tsin*, showing the difference between *vedi* and *tsin*.

One fact about these two particles is that they do not co-occur in the same sentence, a property that may be attributed to the assumption that they occupy the same structural position in the left periphery (I revise this assumption later).

- (8) **vedi-h/tsin-h** l-walad ʃaf as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
PRT-3S.M DEF-boy see.PST.3S.M Def-car in-Def-yard
'The boy saw the car in the yard.'

The use of *tsin* in the place of *vedi* in the sentences above gives rise to the same discourse-related readings associated with the elements under discussion. Consider the following dialogue:

- (9) A: Ali qal y-zu:r-na l-yaum
 Ali say.PST.3S.M 3S.M-visit.PRS-P Def-day
 bus ma ħadad wuqt
 but Neg specify.PST.3S.M time
 'Ali said that he would visit us today, but he did not specify which time.'

- B: mazal-uh ma ħadad ma ʔazʕin-uh
 As long as-him Neg specify.PST.3S.M Neg think.I-him
 jidʒi l-kaθrat ʔaʃkal-uh ʔal-jaum
 come.PRS.3S.M for-plenty work-his Def-day
 'As long as he didn't specify which time he would come, I don't think he
 will come, for he has a lot of work to do today.'

There is a knock on the door.

- A: **tsin-h** Ali tuq
 PRT-3SM Ali knock.PST.3S.M
 'Ali is knocking on the door.'

Ali is accessible all through the conversation in (9), being talked about in every single chunk of the conversation. The subject *Ali* has a referent here expressing a familiar topic.

In the next subsection, I will explore the syntactic behaviour of *ʔedɪ* (and *tsin*) placing emphasis on the weak form that is sometimes attached to it, and how the agreement operation between *ʔedɪ* and the topicalised item is syntactically accounted for. It will turn out that *ʔedɪ* (and *tsin*) has a valued [F-TOP] feature and a set of unvalued ϕ -features which are valued by the element expressing the F-Topic (for ease of reference I consider the relevant cases only with *ʔedɪ* with the understanding that all observations extend to *tsin*).

3.2 *ʔedɪ* as an agreeing F-topic head in Chomskyan theory of agreement

Let us now explore the syntactic behaviour of *ʔedɪ* in conjunction with other sentence elements. This exploration aims basically at accounting for the spell out of the weak pronominal forms appearing on *ʔedɪ* in some cases and lack thereof in other cases. I firstly examine the relation between *ʔedɪ* and the subject, proposing that *ʔedɪ* agrees with the subject through a probe-goal relation (cf. Chomsky 2000, 2001). *ʔedɪ* acts a probe with unvalued ϕ -features and a valued [TOP] feature whereas the subject acts as a goal with valued ϕ -features and an unvalued [TOP] feature. As the subject has the matching [TOP] feature, *ʔedɪ* agrees with it in the sense that *ʔedɪ* values the unvalued [TOP] of the subject while the subject values the unvalued ϕ -features of *ʔedɪ*, resulting in spelling out the ϕ -features of *ʔedɪ*, the realisation of the inflectional suffix spelled out on *ʔedɪ*. This line of analysis entails a departure from the potential claim that the weak forms attached to *ʔedɪ* are pronominal elements, generated by some incorporation process. For this, I follow Shlonsky's (1997: 175) insight that what appear as pronominal endings on functional elements in Arabic are inflectional suffixes, signalling the presence of an Agree relation between the head and some element in the audible syntax. Shlonsky (1997) argues that pronominal endings are inflectional suffixes which signal the presence of an AgrP. However, given that AgrPs are dispensed with in the minimalist program, as ϕ -features are now treated as properties of the head themselves, then, it follows that such endings are consequences of an Agree relation between the head and some other item.

An alternative to the assumption that pronominal endings on functional elements in Arabic are inflectional suffixes derived by Agree is that they are pronouns, derived by means of movement and incorporation. However, this assumption must be challenged for several

reasons. As briefly shown above, when an agreeing particle, like *vedl*, marks a DP, the subject or object, an inflectional suffix spelling out the same ϕ -feature of this DP is attached to the particle. Let's first consider the cases where the particle agrees with the subject. In this case, the unvalued [TOP] feature of the subject DP is valued by the particle, being assigned the topic value the particle has, once Agree is established between them. Conceptually, then, at the interfaces, it is this DP that carries the topic interpretation. There is, thus, an Agree relation between the particle and the subject, and the agreeing ϕ -features are an overt indication of this. There is little reason to take this to be the result of, not just Agree, but movement of the pronominal element from the subject to the particle. To begin with, this would presuppose postulating a 'big-DP' structure for the subject (Uriagereka 1995), i.e. a pronoun+DP construct from which the pronoun is extracted and incorporated in the particle. But given that the same relation, with the same morphological outcome, can be established by Agree alone, the assumption that movement is additionally involved violates standard economy conditions. By standard minimalist assumptions, movement is a last resort. It applies if a constituent cannot otherwise have an unvalued feature valued, or otherwise cannot be licenced in situ. There is no such constituent involved in the particle-subject relation.

The assumption that the pronominal element spelled on the particle is an inflectional suffix derived by Agree between the particle and the topicalised DP rather than a moved and cliticized pronoun becomes even more plausible when we consider the cases where the particle agrees with the object. As will be seen shortly, when the object is the topic (merged with an unvalued [TOP] feature) its ϕ -features are spelled out as a pronominal clitic or suffix on the verb, (moving along with the verb to T). Note that this is the same pronominal element as is attached to the particle. The paradigm of the pronominal elements that are found attached to the particle is the same as those found attached to the verb, given in section 1.4.2 page 21 in chapter 1. Here, we have a more complicated issue; that is, if the attached item is analysed as a moved and cliticized pronoun, this pronoun (starting out as a co-constituent of the object DP) would have moved twice -- one time from the object DP to the verb in the lower phase and another time from the verb to the particle in the higher phase, but leaving a PF copy on the verb. The latter movement would violate the well-established ban on excorporation (Baker 1988: 73 and Ouhalla 1988). Analysing it as a form of clitic-climbing (a possible exception to the ban on excorporation; Roberts 1991) is highly unattractive since Arabic is known not to have clitic climbing (Shlonsky 1997). There is an alternative which avoids these problems: Both pronominal elements are the result of agreement, that is, they are agreement suffixes. The one

on the verb would be the result of *v* agreeing with the object within the *vP* phase (Shlonsky 1997; see also Roberts 2010), the other one would be the particle agreeing with the object once the object is moved to the edge of the *vP*.

Before elaborating on the Agree operation between *vedi* and the subject and object, I introduce the theory of agreement and syntactic features as implemented in Chomsky (2000, 2001).

3.3 Agreement as probing

In Chomsky's (2000, 2001) approach to Agree, unvalued features are valued via a process termed 'probe-goal' matching, conducted via an operation called Agree. The crux of this operation is that valuing the unvalued features, including [TOP], can be carried out without moving elements from their canonical positions where they are base-generated. In the pre-minimalist and early minimalist model, the Spec-head configuration was central for an Agreement relation to hold, where, for instance, T° agrees with the subject provided that the latter moves, overtly or covertly, to Spec-TP. However, the Spec-head configuration requirement was later dispensed with. One argument was that it would lead to incorrectly predicting that, in (10) below, the T element *BE* would agree with the expletive *there* rather than the subject *several prizes*, contrary to fact.

- (10) There were awarded several prizes.

Chomsky (2001) argues that a relation between two elements is established provided that these elements are syntactically active (i.e., they both have unvalued features). These two elements are a searching probe (typically a head) and a matching goal (typically a phrase). Establishing the relation between the probe and its matching goal is not arbitrary but rather governed by strict conditions. The probe agrees with the closest goal that it c-commands. The ultimate outcome of the Agree operation between the searching probe and its matching goal is that all unvalued features of both of them are valued. Chomsky (2001) set forth specific conditions on the Agree relation between the searching probe and the matching goal (2001: 122). These conditions (referred to in the literature as the Agree conditions) are listed in (11) below:

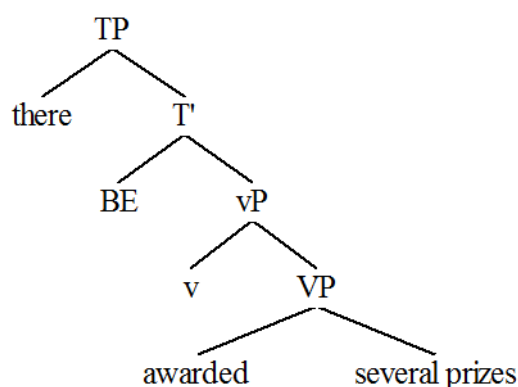
(11)

A probe α agrees with a goal β provided that:

- a- α has an unvalued feature.
- b- β has a matching valued feature.
- c- β is active by virtue of having an unvalued feature.
- d- α c-commands β .
- e- There is no potential goal γ intervening between α and β .
- f- There is no phase-boundary between α and β .

Let us here explore the derivation of sentence (10) with reference to (11) upon the merger of T° . Following Chomsky (2000), T° enters the derivation endowed with unvalued ϕ -content, which makes T° a probe searching for a matching goal in its c-command domain. T° is active by virtue of being specified with unvalued ϕ -features, which are Person/Number/Gender features, which according to Chomsky (2000, 2001), are lexically unvalued. The goal, the nominal element probed by T° , the DP *several prizes*, is specified with ϕ -features, which are lexically valued, and is active by virtue of having an unvalued Case feature, following the conditions in (11).²⁹ T° , *BE*, then, probes and finds the DP *several prizes*, which bears matching valued ϕ -features, as schematised below.

(12)



The unvalued ϕ -features on T° , as a result, are valued, spelled out as *were*. In exchange, the unvalued Case feature on the nominal *several prizes* is valued as Nominative. The Agree relation between T° and *several prizes* eliminates the unvalued features of both of them without forcing movement. Valuing unvalued features is central to the sentence derivation because if

²⁹ Lexically valued = valued in the lexicon. Lexically unvalued = unvalued in the lexicon.

they reach the interface unvalued, they will cause the derivation to crash (Chomsky 2007: 18-19).

In the next sections, I apply the probe-goal mechanism to the analysis of the particle *vedi* and its associated clause. Firstly, I discuss the cases where *vedi* agrees with the subject. Then, discussion proceeds to the case where *vedi* agrees with the object, with attention being paid to the cases of multiple-F-Topics and cases where *vedi* appears bare (without any inflectional suffix attached to it). Focus will be put on the derivation of the inflectional suffix spelled on the verb, and how locality conditions imposed on the agreement between *vedi* the object are met.

Before I discuss how agreement between *vedi* and the subject takes place, I address here the reason why the topicalised item (for instance, the subject with which *vedi* agrees) carries an unvalued [TOP] feature, rather than a valued [TOP] feature. As will be clear, *vedi* carries two sets of features: ϕ -features and a [TOP] feature. Given that ϕ -features are conceptually assumed to be unvalued on a functional head like Top, spelling out the ϕ -features of the subject, for instance, this leaves us with the option that the [TOP] feature that *vedi* carries is valued, originating on the head of topic phrase.³⁰ Notice here that if the [TOP] feature that the topic head carries was unvalued, it would not project, as all the features it carried would be unvalued. This reminds us with Chomsky's (1995, 2000, 2001) dispensing with the AgrPs, on the grounds that the putative head Agr would only contain unvalued features, which must be valued in the course of the derivation, leading to the collapse of tree structure because all it has is uninterpreted at the interfaces. Assuming that the ϕ -features on Top are unvalued, then, *vedi* probes by them. Correspondingly, I propose that the head of the TopicP has a valued [TOP] feature and a set of unvalued ϕ -features. Following Chomsky (2000, 2001) and Bošković (2007, 2014) and Holmberg *et al.* (2017), I assume that movement of any item is triggered by an unvalued feature on it, where this movement allows the relevant item to escape its own phase transfer, if buried in; hence, getting into the visible domain of an item that can value its feature, the probe.³¹ Under this analysis, Agree between the probe (the topic particle), carrying unvalued ϕ -features and a valued [TOP] feature, and the goal (the topicalised item) carrying

30 The featural grid of *vedi* consists of two features: ϕ -features and [TOP] feature. But it wouldn't be feasible to assume that ϕ -features are valued on a functional, discourse head like Top, here headed by *vedi*.

31 For example, Bošković (2007) treats *wh*-terms undergoing movement as carrying an unvalued feature that cannot be valued within the phase. See also Holmberg *et al.* (2017) for similar view.

valued φ -features and an unvalued [TOP] feature, results in a chain (the valued topic feature on the head probe and the topic value the goal is assigned via Agree with the probe), which is the source of the topic interpretation. Again, the assumption that a goal has an unvalued instance of a feature which is valued on the probe is not new. Recent work on Iraqi Arabic argues that the goal can have an unvalued feature, rather than a valued feature. For instance, Abdel-Razaq (2015: 147-148), discussing Iraqi Arabic, puts it as follows: ‘C would have, in addition to an [EPP] feature, a valued [WH] feature and an unvalued [Q] feature. It acts as a probe searching for a goal with matching features. The goal is the wh-phrase with an unvalued [WH] feature and a valued [Q] feature. Upon matching in their feature set, Agree between C and the wh-phrase takes place’. Hence, as will be seen in the following chapters, it is not only the probe that is motivated to look for an Agree relation. The goal is too, by virtue of the unvalued [TOP] feature it has. As will be seen, when it is non-local, being buried in its own phase, the goal undergoes phasal movement which is triggered by valuation.

3.4 *vedī* and the F-Topic subject

To recapitulate, *vedī* enters the derivation as a head endowed with a valued [TOP] feature. Given that the weak form attached to *vedī* is variable, depending on the context (here depending on the φ -content of the subject), I postulate that *vedī* has a set of unvalued φ -features (uPerson, uNumber, and uGender) and a valued [TOP] feature, and so can serve as a probe which searches within its c-command domain for an element having valued φ -features and a matching [TOP] feature, which is syntactically active. Once *vedī* finds this element, which, at the same time, needs its unvalued [TOP] feature to be valued, a probe-goal relation is established, resulting in valuing the unvalued φ -features carried by *vedī* and the valuation of the unvalued [TOP] on that element. Consider the following example:

- (13) **vedī**-h Ali ʃaf as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
PRT-3S.M Ali see.PST.3S.M Def-car in-Def-yard
‘Ali saw the car in the yard.’

In (13), *vedī* operates as a probe since it has unvalued φ -features which must be valued before the derivation reaches the PF and LF, due to the demands of the principle of full interpretation, where all unvalued features must be valued before sentence derivation is handed to the interface levels. As a probe, *vedī* searches within its c-command domain for a goal which has a matching

[TOP] feature. *Ali*, bearing a matching [TOP] feature, is a goal within the c-command domain of *kedī*. As a result, an Agree relation between the two elements is established, leading to the valuation of the unvalued ϕ -feature of *kedī*, and the valuation of the unvalued [TOP] feature of the subject, as an F-Topic. The ϕ -features of the subject *Ali* are already valued, as [3SM], so they can value the unvalued ϕ -features of *kedī*, which results in the inflectional suffix *-h* on *kedī* expressing the same ϕ -features values of *Ali*. Compare sentence (13) above with (14) below, where the subject is a feminine plural, while the inflectional suffix on *kedī* has the form expressing the same ϕ -content of the subject.

- (14) **kedī**-hin l-banaat ʃaf-an as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah
PRT-3P.F DEF-girls see.PST-PL.F Def-car in-Def-yard
‘The girls saw the car in the yard.’

It follows from my analysis here that the F-Topic subject is not required to move to the left periphery (occupying Spec, F-Topic Phrase), as the head of this phrase agrees with the subject through probing. This indicates that topics are not required to move to the left periphery if they, in situ, can value the ϕ -content of the head of the F-Topic Phrase and have their unvalued [TOP] feature valued. Since valuing the unvalued ϕ -content of *kedī* can mark the F-Topic element by virtue of the inflectional suffix attached to the particle in overt syntax, there is no need for the topicalised subject to move to the left periphery. In the next sections, evidence will be drawn from object movement, supporting my assumption that the [TOP] feature carried by the goal is an unvalued feature, forcing the object to leave its position to be in an accessible position to *kedī*.

Before I discuss how the agreement between *kedī* and the object is derived, there are two important issues worth pausing over at this point. One issue revolves around the assumption, to be discussed shortly, that Agree relations can be established between elements located in different positions, provided that they are in the same phase i.e. the goal is visible to the probe. So, there is no further condition that the probe and the goal must be in a very local relation (cf. Polinsky and Potsdam 2001, Miyagawa 2010).

Agreement between T and the subject with the TP domain has been widely, documented and investigated. However, agreement between a C item and TP items is less common and less well

known. The most famous studies are done on West Flemish (Haegeman 1992: 49) below, where the complementizer *dan* agrees with the subject.

(15)

a. Kpeinzen [CP dan-**k** [TP(ik) morgen goan]] (West Flemish)
 think-1.SG that-1.SG I tomorrow go
 ‘I think that I will go tomorrow.’

b. kpeinzen [CP dan-**j** [TP(gie) morgen goan]] (West Flemish)
 think-1.SG that-2sg (you) tomorrow go
 ‘I think that you’ll go tomorrow.’

As is clear from (15a), C° *dan* ‘that’ agrees with the understood (or overt) subject (*ik* ‘I’) through the clitic *-k* which displays the same ϕ -content as the subject. The same holds true in (15b). In Haegeman’s (2012) words, this is a property of West Flemish, where the ϕ -content of the subject is spelled out on C.

A similar observation is made by Haegeman and Van Koppen (2012) on West Flemish External Possessor Agreement. Haegeman and Van Koppen (2012) propose that both T° and C° are associated with unvalued features. They observe that, when the subject is a possessive construction, C° agrees with the external possessor, which is the most local goal for C°, while T° agrees with the possessum, the subject. Consider the following example, taken from Haegeman and Van Koppen (2012: 4):

(16) ... omda-**n** die venten tun juste underen computer kapot was.
 because-PL those guys then just their computer broken was.SG
 ‘...because those guys’ computer broke down just then.’

The complementizer *omda* ‘because’ agrees with the possessor *die venten* ‘those guys’, resulting in the clitic attached to *omda* coming out specified with the plural form. On the other hand, T° *was* agrees with the possessum *underen computer* ‘their computer’.

Another case is agreement in relatives in SA. A relevant discussion of this is found in Shlonsky (1992), who discusses the well-known observation that SA displays overt agreement between

a relativized object and the complementizer, in restrictive relative clauses. The example is particularly interesting, in this connection, because it features both agreement and movement. Shlonsky (1992) posits that the relative clause complementizer *llaðii* in SA, and its counterparts in other dialects, including Lebanese (where the form is *illi*), carry φ -features and agree with their specifier, the relativized argument. However, only the SA *llaðii* spells out the agreement features. The following examples illustrate these facts (Shlonsky 1992: 457).

(17)

a. ʔal-rajul-u llaðii raʔaytu-(hu) (SA)

the-man-NOM that.Ms (I) saw-(him)

'The man that I saw.'

b. ʔal-marʔat-u llatii raʔaytu-(ha) (SA)

the-woman-NOM that.Fs (I) saw-(her)

'The woman that I saw.'

c. ʔal-ʔawlaad-u lladiina raʔaytu-(hum) (SA)

the-boyS-NOM that.MPL (I) saw-(them.M)

'The boys that I saw.'

d. ʔal-nisaʔ-u llawaati raʔaytu-(hunna) (SA)

the-women-NOM that.FPL (I) saw-(them.F)

'The women that I saw.'

The relativised DP with which the complementizer agrees is merged at the spec-position of the complementizer, which shows overt agreement with the relativised DP.

The other issue I take up here relates to the weak form that is associated with the object and is spelled out on the verb in (18) below. This syntactic phenomenon has been discussed by Ouhalla (1996), treating the object suffix attached to the verb as a variable that needs to be

bound by an antecedent. However, recall that a special property of NHA is that this weak form is spelled out on the verb while the verb is followed by a lexical DP, as in (18a) below. This phenomenon is restricted to some Arabic varieties. For instance, in Levantine Arabic, in what is called clitic doubling of accusative objects, the object is prefixed with a dative preposition which, according to Shlonsky (1997), is used to assign case to the object, given that the accusative case on the verb is assigned to the clitic, as in (18b).

- (18) a. ʔal-laʕib lmisa-ah ʔal-ku:rah NHA
 Def-player touched-3SG.F Def-ball
 ‘The player touched the ball.’
- b. ʔal-laʕib lamas-a **la** l-ku:rah Levantine
 Def-player touched-3SG.F **P** Def-ball
 ‘The player touched the ball.’

However, this system does not extend to NHA. This variety of Arabic does not allow the merger of a preposition in constructions like (18b); that is, (18b) is ungrammatical in NHA. The fact that NHA grammar does not allow the merger of this preposition leads me to propose that the inflectional suffix on the verb is not a pronominal item, as treated in Levantine Arabic. In line with the Shlonsky’s (1997) analysis of the Levantine clitic doubling constructions, (18a) is predicted to be ungrammatical, since the accusative case would be assigned to the suffix, leaving the case of the object DP unvalued. For this, I assume that this weak form, following Shlonsky’s (1997) treatment of weak pronominal forms attached to functional words/heads in Arabic as a morphosyntactic consequence of an Agree, is an inflectional suffix being spelled out on the verb as a result of an Agree relation established between *v* and the object, derived by an Agree operation through which the object values the ϕ -features of *v* (see Roberts 2010).

Note that the object can be null (19a), or in a position preceding the verb (19b).³²

³² I will elaborate on this issue when I discuss the interaction between the verb and the object in object topicalization.

- (19) a. ?ana ?alalt-**hin**
 I analysed.I-3P.F
 ‘I analysed them.’
- b. ?ana ?ar-riwajah qareit-**ah**
 I Def-novel read.PST-it
 ‘I read the novel.’

I will argue that the inflectional suffix is an agreement marker derived by the spell out of φ -features on v, agreeing with a topicalised object which in (19a) is a pro, a null object, and which in (19b) is the fronted object; fronted after having valued the φ -features of v. The generalisation formulated now is that the object argument position is merged with either a lexical DP or a pro, both of which, when topicalised, value the φ -features of v.^{33, 34}

Having highlighted the issues of the inflectional suffix that is spelled out on the particle and the verb, let’s us now launch the discussion on the agreement between *vedt* and the object, exploring, among other things, the position of the object and exploring in more detail the source of the weak form attached to the verb in such cases.

3.5 Agreement between *vedt* and the object

3.5.1 Introduction

As I proposed earlier, both the particle with unvalued φ -features and the item with unvalued [TOP] feature seek valuation. In case the item with unvalued [TOP] feature is the object, an Agree relation between *vedt* and the object can be established provided that the object appears to the left of the subject but to the right of the verb. Consider the following sentence:

- (20) **vedt**-ah rkub-u-ah (V) as-sayarah (Obj) ?al- ?i?jaal (Sj).
PRT-it drive.PST-3PM-it Def-car Def-boys
 ‘The car, the boys drove it.’

³³ See Abdel-Razaq (2012, 2015) on the issue of object pro in Lebanese Arabic.

³⁴ See Roberts (2010: 59-62) for a theory of pronominal cliticization as an effect of Agree.

In (20), the inflectional suffix on *kedɪ* is the spell out of the valuation of φ -features of *kedɪ* by the object rather than the subject. The overt realization of the object inflectional suffix *ah* specified as [3SF] on *kedɪ* is not a realization of the agreement between *kedɪ* and the subject *al-ʔiʃjaal* ‘the boys’ since it carries the same φ -features as the object rather than the subject. Here, the constituent functioning as an F-Topic is the object *assayarah* ‘the car’. Consider the following dialogue where (20) is uttered:

(21) Speaker A: *ħarakt sajart-uk tau?*
 Moved.2S.M Def-car-Gen.you. now
 ‘Did you just move your car?’

Speaker B: *la min sʰufatʰn-ah ʔa-zʰuhur ma ħarakt-ah. Zae ma*
 Neg since parked.we-it Def-noon Neg moved.I-it as what
qalau li-na bi-ʔas-sʰijanah lazim tabga wagfah
 said.they to-us at-Def-maintenance must remain park.3S.F .
li-l-leil li:ʃ tasʔal
 till-Def-night why ask.you?
 ‘No. I have not moved it since we parked it at noon. As they told us
 at the maintenance department, it must remain parked till tonight.
 Why are you asking?’

Speaker A: *liqet-ah mħarikah tau. Ma hi ʔib-mikan-ah*
 Found.I-it moved.PTCPL-it now Neg it in-place-it
illi sʰufadʰn-ah b-uh
 that parked.we-it in-it
 ‘I just found it moved. It was not in the place where we parked it.’

Speaker B: *sʰidz ʃlu:n taħarik-at w l-dzalantʰ mashu:b*
 Really! How moved-it while Def-break held
 ‘Really! How could it have been moved during the break?’

Speaker A: **ʋedi**-ah rkub-u-ah as-sayarah ʔal- ʔiʕjaal.
PRT-it drive.PST-3PM-it Def-car Def-boys
 ‘The boys drove the car.’

Speaker B: ʔal-ʔiʕjaal! La! Nisi:t la ʔanabih-hum w maʕ-hum
 Def-boys No! forgot.I to inform-them and with-them
 nisxah min ʔal-miftah
 copy of Def-key
 ‘The boys! Oh! I didn’t tell them (not to move the car) and they had
 a copy of the key (of the car).’

What is being discussed throughout the conversation is the object *as-sayarah* ‘the car’ rather than any other element. Speaker A’s last utterance singles out the object as an F-Topic. Note here that the object cannot intervene between *ʋedi* and the main verb as in (22a) or remain *in situ* (to the right of the subject) as in (22b). VOS is obligatory.

(22) a. ***ʋedi**-ah as-sayarah rkub-u-ah ʔal- ʔiʕjaal.
PRT-it Def-car drive.PST-3PM-it Def-boys
 Intended meaning: ‘The boys drove the car.’

b. ***ʋedi**-ah rkub-u-ah ʔal- ʔiʕjaal as-sayarah.
PRT-it drive.PST-3PM-it Def-boys Def-car
 Intended meaning: ‘The boys drove the car.’

The descriptive statement we can make on *ʋedi*-object interaction is that *ʋedi* agrees with the object on the condition that the object move to a position to the left of the subject but to the right of the tensed verb. In order to account for this statement, I appeal here to Phase Theory (Chomsky 2000, 2001), as discussed in the following section.

3.5.2 Phase Theory

For Chomsky (1999, 2001 and 2005), the phase is defined as a unit of syntactic computation with a head responsible for the syntactic operations within the phase. The derivation of a given sentence is claimed to proceed phase by phase, with the spell-out of the phases forming a given

sentence applying cyclically. This new understanding of sentence derivation and spell-out changes the implementation and workings of several syntactic operations, including Agree. The phase structure is schematically represented in Figure 4 below, adapted from Boeckx (2008:45)

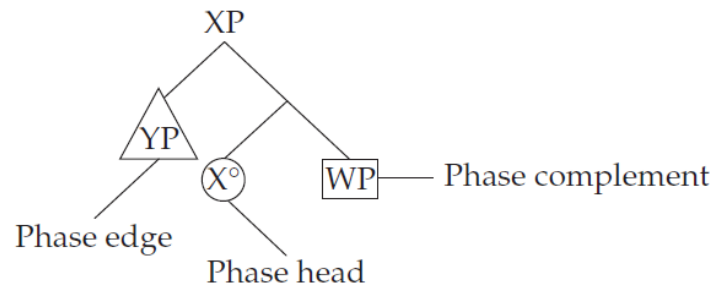


Figure 4: The phase structure

Once the derivation of a given phase is completed, the phase complement is transferred to the PF and LF interface levels. At this point, the phase complement becomes inaccessible for any further syntactic operations, including Case assignment and Agree. However, the edge of the phase is still accessible to higher probes for further operations (Gallego, *et al.* 2008, Frank 2006 and Oonk 2012). This state of affairs is captured in what Chomsky formulates as *the Phase Impenetrability Condition* (PIC), a cyclicity condition whose effect is to guarantee that the movement of elements from inside one phase to another phase is successive-cyclically conducted. The PIC is formulated as follows:

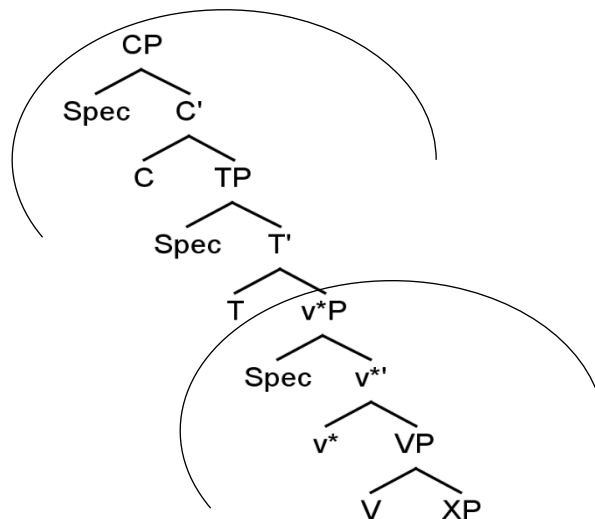
- (23) In Phase α with head H, the domain of H is not accessible to operations outside α , only H and its edge are accessible to such operations (Chomsky 2000: 108).

In line with the PIC, Chomsky (2000: 108) argues that "the cycle is so strict that operations cannot 'look into' a phase below its head H°. H° itself must be visible for selection and head-movement, hence its SPECs as well". This condition entails that if an element in a lower phase is motivated to leave its in-situ position and move to a position in a higher phase, as is the case when an object wh-phrase needs to move to Spec CP, this element cannot be directly displaced to this dedicated position in the higher phase unless it moves first to the head of the lower phase (if it is a head) or its Spec (for non-head syntactic objects). If it does not undergo this movement, otherwise, it will be transferred to PF and LF as part of the phase complement, without a chance to move.

As regards the types of elements or projections that instantiate phases, Chomsky (2000, 2001) postulates that both CP and *v*P are phases. For CP, there are no specific conditions it must meet to be counted as a phase. On the other hand, Chomsky states that the *v*P phase (or *v**P phase as he labels it) must be headed by *v** which is a functional head associated with full argument structure, including transitive and experiencer constructions (Chomsky 2005: 10). Under this approach, TP, VP, AdjP, AdvP, and unaccusative predicates are not phases due to their lack of full argumental structure.³⁵ This being so, a sentence with a transitive verb consists of two separate phases: CP and *v**P.

This division of phases is schematically represented as follows, where the lines demarcate the phase boundaries:

(24)



In addition to the property that the head of the phase is accessible to further operations outside its phase, the head carries unvalued ϕ -features which must be valued according to the Principle of Full Interpretation, stated below:

(25) ‘*The principle of Full Interpretation* is assumed as a matter of course in phonology; if a symbol in a representation has no sensorimotor interpretation, the representation does not qualify as a PF representation. This is what we called the "interface condition". The same condition applied to LF also entails that the principle is every element of the representations LF and PF must have a (language independent) interpretation (Chomsky 1995: 27).’

³⁵ See Mallen (2001) and Cornilescu and Nicolae (2011) for argument that DP might function as a phase.

Both C° and v° have such features which must be properly valued.

Having introduced the major assumptions of phase theory, let us make use of them, accounting for the cases where a probe-goal relation is established between *kedɪ* and the object on the one hand and between the verb and the object on the other hand.

3.5.3 *kedɪ* probing the object

As indicated above, a probe-goal relation between *kedɪ* and the object is established if the object appears to the left of the subject but to the right of the verb as represented in the following configuration:

(26) *kedɪ*+ObjINFL >> main verb+SjINFL + ObjINFL >> object >> subject.

Consider sentence (20), repeated here as (27):

(27) **kedɪ**-ah rkub-u-ah as-sayarah ʔal- ʔiʃjaal.
PRT-it drive.PST-3PM-it Def-car Def-boys
'The car, the boys drove it.'

In (27), the object *as-sayarah* 'the car' has raised to a position where it asymmetrically c-commands the subject, which accounts for its left position with respect to the subject. Following the general lines of Kayne's (1994) proposal for antisymmetric syntax, the fact that the object *assayarah* 'the car' in (27) precedes the subject *alʔiʃjaal* 'the boys' means that the object c-commands the subject.

A pause is motivated here. Before we start the analysis of the agreement between *kedɪ* and the object, it is relevant to shed more light on the status of the inflectional suffix *ah*, associated with the object, spelled out on the verb *rkub*. As discussed in section 3.4, the object is realized on the verb as an inflectional suffix, in which case *ah* on the verb expresses a discourse-given entity, most plausibly an F-Topic, as in the following examples:

- (28) a. ?al- ?iʕjaal rkub-u-**ah**
 Def-boys drive.PST-3PM-it
 ‘The boys drove it (it = the car).’
- b. rkub-u-**ah** ?al- ?iʕjaal
 drive.PST-3PM-it Def-boys
 ‘The boys drove it (it = the car).’

By contrast to (28), elements expressing non-discourse given entities do not appear as an inflectional suffix on the verb (cf. Shlonsky 1992, Ouhalla 1997: 11-14; Aoun et al. 2010: 201). For instance, the verb does not host an object inflectional suffix in wh-questions involving object wh-extraction (where the object movement is conceived of as Focus movement rather than topicalization), as the following sentences show:

- (29) a. wif rkub-u-(***ah**) ?al- ?iʕjaal.
 What drive.PST-3PM-it Def-boys
 ‘What did the boys drive?’
- b. ?al- ?iʕjaal, wif rkub-u- (***ah**).
 Def-boys what drive.PST-3PM-it
 ‘(as for) the boys, what did they drive?’
- c. wif ?al- ?iʕjaal rkub-u- (***ah**).
 What Def-boys drive.PST-3PM-it
 ‘The boys, what did they drive?’

In addition to the fact that the verb doesn’t host an inflectional suffix of the focalized object, *ʕedi* does not agree with the focalized object either in such sentences:

- (30) a. *wif ʕedi-**ah** rkub-u ?al- ?iʕjaal.
 What PRT-it drive.PST-3PM Def-boys
 Intended meaning: ‘What did the boys drive?’

b. *ʔal- ʔiʕjaal , wif ʕedi-**ah** rkub-u.
 Def-boys What PRT-it drive.PST-3PM
 Intended meaning: ‘The boys, what did they drive?’

c. *wif ʕedi-**ah** ʔal-ʔiʕjaal rkub-u.
 What PRT-it Def-boys drive.PST-3PM
 Intended meaning: ‘The boys, what did they drive?’

d. *wif ʔal- ʔiʕjaal ʕedi-**ah** rkub-u.
 What Def-boys PRT-it drive.PST-3PM
 Intended meaning: ‘The boys, what did they drive?’

This discrepancy between the spell-out and non-spell-out of the object inflectional suffix on the verb in the above examples (28-30) is accounted for if we assume that the inflectional suffix of the object on the verb marks a topicalized object in (28), but not in (29-30), a matter which is cross-linguistically corroborated, where topicalization, in many languages, incurs an inflectional suffix, which is not allowed when focalization occurs (Bakir 1980, Moutaouakil 1989; Ouhalla 1994b, 1997; Shlonsky 2000, Aoun *et al.* 2010; È Kiss 1995; Gundel and Fretheim 2004).

To formulate a unified generalisation that accounts for the syntactic behaviour of the object inflectional suffix on the verb, I assume that, once V moves to v, Agree is established between v^o and the object, which is either a lexical DP or a pro. The head v^o at this point probes the object, and the object values the unvalued φ-features of v. In turn, v assigns accusative case to the object. Given that the inflectional suffix (as a result of v-object Agree) appears on v only when the object expresses given information, I propose that in case the object is endowed with a [TOP] feature, the chain (v, object DP) has the feature [TOP], in which case the valued φ-features of v are spelled out in PF as an inflectional suffix on the verb, while the valued φ-features of v are not spelled out in PF if the chain (v, object DP) does not have the feature [TOP]. So, it is the [TOP] feature in the featural grid of the object that is responsible for (non) spell-out of the valued φ-features of v. This generalisation, which in this research I term as the ‘topical clitic generalisation’, challenges the mainstream assumption that the object-related weak forms on the verb are resumptive pronouns cliticized on the verb when the object is not

first-merged in the thematic object position (see, among many others, Shlonsky 1992, Soltan 2007, Aoun *et al.* 2010).

This generalisation provides empirical evidence for the analysis that once Agree is established between the probe v° and the goal object, the valued ϕ -features of the object value the unvalued ϕ -features of v° . When the chain now composed has [TOP], as a result of the featural make-up of the object, the valued ϕ -features of v are spelled out as an object inflectional suffix. We can conclude here that the ϕ -features of v are always valued, but are visible at PF only when [TOP] is present on the object.

Let's now turn our attention to the issue of how the object inflectional suffix is derived on *kedī*. Consider again sentence (27), repeated below as (31):

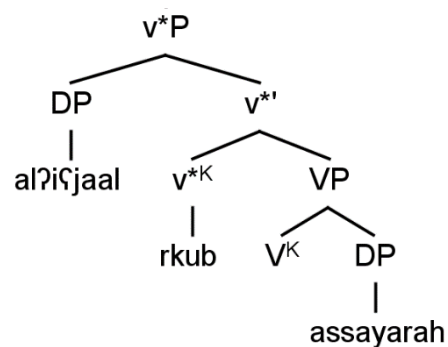
- (31) **kedī**-ah rkub-u-ah as-sayarah ʔal- ʔiʕjaal.
PRT-it drive.PST-3PM-it Def-car Def-boys
 'The car, the boys drove it.'

Under the analysis just advanced, the derivation of (31) proceeds as follows. The object *assayarah* 'the car' is merged with the verb. v° probes the object, leading to an Agree relation between v° and the object. Since the object is endowed with valued Φ -features, it values the unvalued Φ -features of v° . In turn, v° values the unvalued case feature of the object as Accusative, as a reflex of Agree. Given our analysis above, since the object is endowed with a [TOP] feature, the chain (v , object DP) has the feature [TOP], which results in the Φ -features of v° being spelled out as an inflectional suffix on the verb. Now, given that the object has the unvalued [TOP] feature, it must move to be visible to a possible probe, a potential valuator. *kedī*, once merged with its unvalued Φ -features, operates as a probe, and establishes an Agree relation with the object (rather than the subject).³⁶ However, this is impossible at the stage of the derivation where the object remains *in situ*, inside the phase complement of the v^*P phase. The object will be transferred to PF and LF along with the phase complement before *kedī*, as an F-Topic head in the C-domain, has a chance to probe it, due to the effects of the PIC (recall that *kedī* is situated in the CP phase rather than v^*P phase). According to the linear/surface

³⁶ It can be assumed that the F-Top feature and the Φ -features on F-Top are spelled out as *kedī* + inflectional suffix.

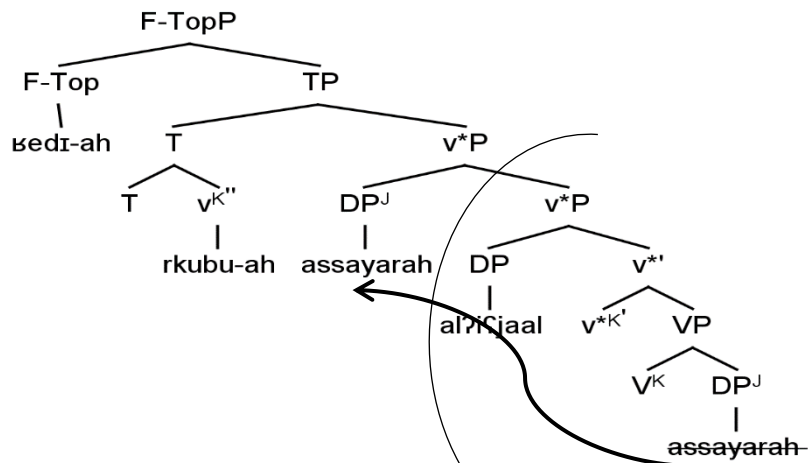
considerations, the object leaves its thematic position as the complement of the lexical verb *rkub* and lands in the outer Spec of v^*P where it will c-command the subject (hence its left position in relation to the subject) and, most importantly, be accessible to *kedl*. According to the PIC stated above, the edge of the phase, the head and the specifier of the v^*P , is accessible to further operations triggered by elements in a higher phase. Consider the schematic representation of (31) prior to the movement of the object *assayarah* ‘the car’ to the Spec position of v^*P , which functions as an escape hatch for the object to move so that it is accessible for further probes:

(32)



The only way possible to establish a probe-goal relation between *kedl* and the object *assayarah* ‘the car’ is by movement of the object to a position where it is accessible/visible to *kedl*. This can be accomplished by the object’s landing in the outer Spec of v^*P , given that the inner Spec of v^*P is already occupied by the subject *al?i?jaal* ‘the boys’. Consider the following schematic representation:

(33)



By moving to outer Spec of v^*P , the object becomes, according to the PIC, accessible to further syntactic operations outside the v^*P phase. Consequently, a probe-goal relation between *bedi*, which will probe by virtue of its ϕ -features once it is merged, and the object which has an unvalued [TOP] feature, is established. This Agree results in the valuation of the unvalued ϕ -features of *bedi* against the matching valued ϕ -features of the object, resulting in an inflectional suffix on *bedi*, cross-referenced with the object. At the same time, the unvalued [TOP] feature of the object is valued and assigned a value of F-Topic at the interfaces. What this analysis entails is that the element which values the unvalued ϕ -features of *bedi* must have [TOP] feature, hence the assumption that valuing unvalued ϕ -features of *bedi* must be implemented through identity. That is, only the item that carries an instance of [TOP] feature which is unvalued can value the unvalued ϕ -features of the topic head, the particle (I will consolidate this assumption when I address cases of V topicalisation).

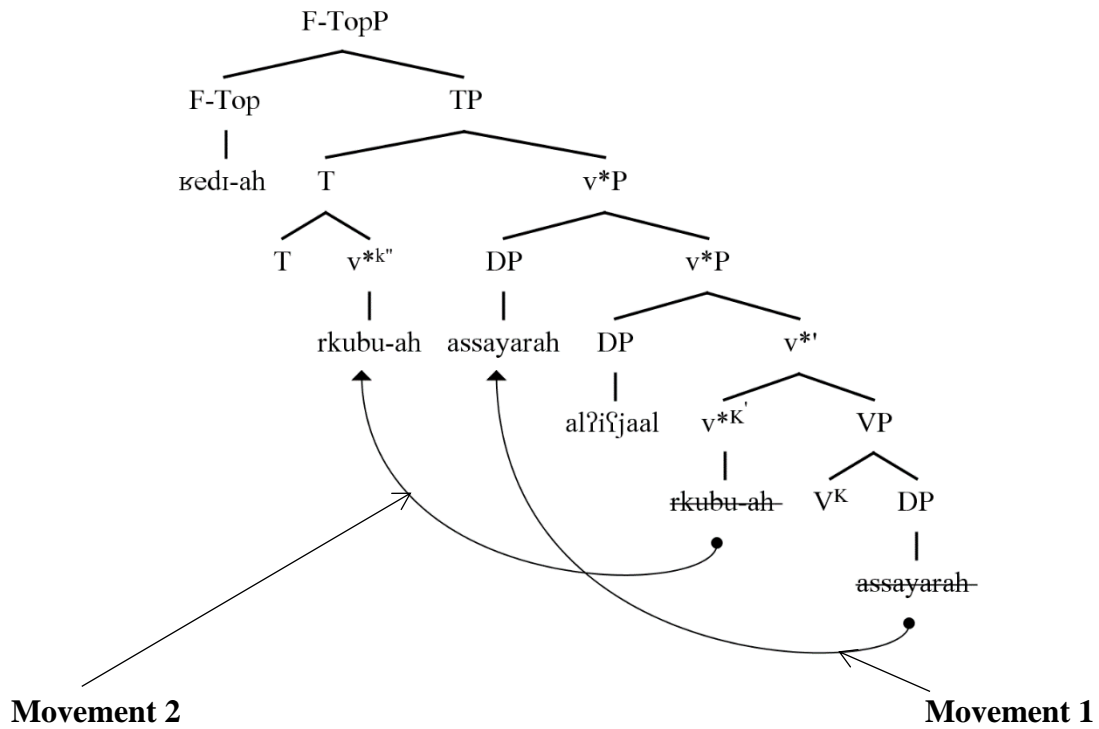
As for the timing of the object movement to Spec, vP , it follows from the derivational model that this movement occurs prior to the movement of the verb to T° . This consecutive order of both movements (the object to the outer Spec position of v^*P and then the verb to T°) is governed by a UG principle, termed Earliness Principle (Pesetsky 1995 and Rezac 2003), and formulated as follows:

(34) Operations apply as early in a derivation as possible.

Due to this principle, the object moves to the outer Spec of v^*P before T° is merged. Then the derivation proceeds and the whole v^*P merges with T° . At this point of the derivation, the

amalgamated head (a result of movement of V° to v°) moves to the T° , as schematically represented in (35):

(35)



Note that the unvalued ϕ -features of T° which it acquires from C° (Chomsky 2007, 2008) are valued against the valued ϕ -features of the subject while the latter is *in situ*. This accounts for the subject agreement marker appearing on the verb *rkub* (-u) which is 3rd person plural masculine.

Two questions arise at this point concerning the construction involving the topicalised object in (31) above. One question is why T agrees with the subject while the object intervenes between the two. According to locality conditions on Agree, T should agree with the object rather than the subject, as the former is closer to T. Agreement between T and the subject follows, however, if T only agrees with entities whose unvalued case feature is not already valued; that is, T's unvalued ϕ -features probe a DP with an unvalued case (Chomsky 2000), which is the case with the subject, but not the object. I have shown above that the object position between T and the subject is a result of movement of the object to the edge of v^*P after its case is valued by V°/v° . As such, the object does not count as an intervening goal between T and the subject because the case of the object is valued. On the other hand, *kedI* does not pose a similar constraint on the element that values its ϕ -content. For *kedI*, the element that it agrees

with must have a matching [TOP] feature. I will return below to the cases where *vedi* agrees with both the subject and the object, both of which carry [TOP].

The other question is why the subject in (30) does not move to Spec-TP. As we have seen throughout this research, the subject is expected to move to Spec TP in NHA, triggered by an [EPP] feature on T. Given that the subject does not move to Spec-TP in (31), what satisfies the [EPP] feature on T? To resolve this puzzle, I assume merge of an expletive in Spec TP to satisfy this feature.³⁷

With this analysis in hand and the generalizations so far formulated, the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (22) repeated below as (36), is straightforwardly accounted for.

(36) a. ***vedi**-ah as-sayarah rkub-u-ah ʔal- ʔiʕjaal.
PRT-it Def-car drive.PST-3PM-it Def-boys
 Intended meaning: ‘The car, the boys drove it.’

b. ***vedi**-ah rkub-u-ah ʔal- ʔiʕjaal as-sayarah.
PRT-it drive.PST-3PM-it Def-boys Def-car
 Intended meaning: ‘The car, the boys drove it.’

In (36a), the object *assayarah* ‘the car’ shows up between *vedi* and the main verb *rkub-u* where there is no structural position available for it. The object doesn’t move there because there is no feature triggering it to move to Spec TP. In (36b), a probe-goal relation between *vedi* and the object *assayarah* ‘the car’ cannot be established while the object remains *in situ*. This relation violates the PIC stated above since *vedi* agrees with an element which is not accessible to it, whence the ungrammaticality of this sentence.

Alongside the idea that the particle acts as a probe, I have been assuming that the movement of the object is forced by the unvalued [TOP] feature on it, making it undergo a phasal movement (Chomsky 2000, 2001; Bošković 2007, 2014, Holmberg *et al.* 2017). Within

³⁷ Lack of movement of the subject to Spec TP might be explained by Starke’s (2001) proposal of intervention effects. He argues that intervention by Z blocking movement of Y is overcome if Y has a richer feature set than Z. Under this view, the subject can’t cross the object in (31) because it has a smaller feature set than the object: the object has a [TOP] feature, the subject doesn’t.

minimalist reasoning, the object moves to get any remaining unvalued features it bears valued before convergence at PF and LF (cf. Chomsky 2000, 2001). The movement of the object entails that this valuation cannot take place in the lower phase where the object is first merged (cf. Bošković 2007, 2014; Holmberg *et al.* 2017). Once the object resides in the outer Spec position of v*P, it becomes visible to *kedt*, the active probe searching for an element with a matching [TOP] feature. The movement of the object indicates that the [TOP] feature of the object is unvalued, forcing the object to leave its base position if it is not valued *in situ*.³⁸ What this indicates is that discourse features on lexical elements (but not on the functional heads) are unvalued, forcing the relevant lexical elements to move to get them valued. Such movement is governed by economy principles in that lexical elements move to a position where such features are valued. If we assume that the object has an unvalued [TOP] feature, then, it follows that it must move to a position where it can enter an Agree relation resulting in the valuation of this feature, which I assume is Spec, v*P.³⁹ In view of this, the Agree relation between *kedt* and the object is beneficial to both. Since both seek valuation, the unvalued ϕ -features of *kedt* and the unvalued [TOP] feature of the object are valued.

However, one may ask the question whether movement of the object to the outer Spec of the v*P is triggered by the needs of its own (an unvalued feature on object itself that needs valuation) or to value a feature on a target item higher in the structure, which is here *kedt*, within an ‘Altruism’ approach (Lasnik 1995) and Chomsky (1993, 1995). Under this assumption, *kedt* has an unvalued ϕ -feature which must be valued before the derivation convergence at PF and LF. Movement of the object *assayarah* ‘the car’, under an Altruism analysis, would thus be triggered not to value a feature on the object itself, but to assure in a pure Altruism-motivated fashion that *kedt*’s unvalued ϕ -feature are valued. However, this assumption is ruled out when instances of multiple F-Topics are factored in, as I will show in the next section (and, as predicted so far, the goal has the unvalued [TOP] feature), hence, supporting my assumption that the [TOP] feature on the goal, the object, is unvalued. The main

³⁸ The assumption that topicalized elements may carry unvalued features is embedded in several recent works on movement to the left periphery. For instance, Jarrah (2017) states the following to account for movement of topicalized elements to the edge of v*P in Jordanian Arabic:

‘..... what makes the Topic criterion attracts the topicalized element not any other element in the sentence? One assumption is that the attracted element would have a matching feature with the attractor. Such a feature would be unvalued; hence the attracted element can move to a higher position if this feature is not valued *in situ*’.

³⁹ The assumption that (unvalued) discourse-related features can be checked or valued *in situ* is cross-linguistically supported. See, e.g. Ouhalla (1997) analysis of focus particles in SA, Bruening’s (2001) discussion on focus agreement in Passamaquoddy and Legate (2005) for evidence and discussion.

argument will be that if movement of the object to the outer Spec of v*P is not motivated by a feature on the object itself, this movement is predicted not to occur given that the unvalued ϕ -features of *vedɪ* are valued by another element, as we will shortly witness. Details of this assumption are explained in the next section.

3.6 Multiple F-Topics

3.6.1 Introduction

The analysis of Altruism is not on the right track because it fails to account for cases of multiple F-Topics. According to Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010), F-Topics are recursive in the sense that more than one F-Topic can be utilized/realized in a single sentence. Indeed, NHA allows more than one F-Topic in a single sentence. However, this is governed by one condition: all F-Topics (subject or object) must appear to the left of *vedɪ* as in the following example:

- (37) ʔal- ʔiʃjaal as-sayarah **vedɪ**-hum rkub-u-ah.
 Def-boys Def-car **PRT**-3P.M drive.PST-3PM-it
 ‘The boys, the car, they drove it.’

Consider the following dialogue, where the subject and the object serve as F-Topics in Speaker A’s third utterance:

- (38)
 Speaker A: ja axwan-i ʔana galig ʃala ʔal- ʔiʃjaal
 Oh brothers-I.Gen I worried about Def-boys
 ‘Oh my dear brothers! I am worried about the boys.’

- Speaker B: leaʃ?
 Why
 ‘Why?’

Speaker A: s^ʕarau jiḥubu:n ʔat-tagħ:s^ʕ bi-as-sayarah w
became.they love.they Def-cruising in-Def-car and

manaʕt-hum min-ah. gumt ʔas^ʕfud^ʕ-ah bi-l-bajkah
prevented.I-them from-it Asp park-it in-Def-garage
min ḥirs^ʕ-i ʕalae-hum
from care.Gen.I on-them

‘They like cruising, so I have prevented them from driving the car. I have been parking it in the garage because I take care of them.’

Speaker C: murahigi:n. ʕae t^ʕabi:ʕi lakin tabiʕ-hum ʕala.ʔae.ħa:l
Teenagers thing natural but follow.up-them anyway

‘They are teenagers. It is normal. But follow them up, anyway.’

Speaker B: Oh! Bus tau juft bab ʔal-bajkah maftu:ħ
Oh! But now saw.I door Def-garage open

‘Oh! But I just saw the door to the garage open.’

Speaker C: wifu? maftu:ħ
What? Opened.it

‘What? It is opened!’

Speaker A: ʔal- ʔiʕjaal as-sayarah **vedr**-hum rkub-u-ah.
Def-boys Def-car **PRT**-3P.M drive.PST-3PM-it

‘The boys, the car, they drove it.’

The boys and the car are backgrounded in the common ground; the conversation has been focusing on them. Speaker B’s last utterance entails that the boys might have indeed been driving the car because the door of the garage, where the car was kept, was open. Speaker A’s last utterance still categorises both *ʔalʔiʕjaal* ‘the boys’ and *as-sayarah* ‘the car’ as F-Topics, being context-given, accessible and backgrounded in the common ground. This semantic effect is syntactically represented by means of movement of the two elements to the left periphery of the sentence. However, note here that the inflectional suffix spelled out on *vedr* is a result of

Agree between *vedɪ* and the subject rather than the object. Both the subject and the object must show up to the left of *vedɪ* in an ordered fashion: subject >> object >> *vedɪ*. If the object (as an F-Topic) precedes the subject (as an F-Topic), the sentence becomes ungrammatical.

- (39) *as-sayarah ʔal- ʔiʃjaal **vedɪ**-hum rkub-u-ah.
 Def-car Def-boys **PRT**-3P.M drive.PST-3PM-it
 Intended meaning: ‘The boys, the car, they drove it.’

In spite of the fact that *vedɪ* agrees with the subject (by virtue of the subject inflectional suffix *-hum*), the object (as an F-Topic) must intervene between the subject and *vedɪ* in case of multi-F-Topics. In such cases, *vedɪ* cannot agree with the object, i.e., hence, the object does not value the unvalued ϕ -features of *vedɪ*, which is captured by the fact that no object inflectional suffix can be spelled out on *vedɪ* as in (40a), even if the subject remains to the left of the object as in (40b):

- (40) a. *as-sayarah ʔal- ʔiʃjaal **vedɪ**-ah rkub-u-ah.
 Def-car Def-boys **PRT**-it drive.PST-3PM-it
 Intended meaning: ‘The boys, the car, they drove it.’
- b. * ʔal- ʔiʃjaal as-sayarah **vedɪ**-ah rkub-u-ah.
 Def-boys Def-car **PRT**-it drive.PST-3PM-it
 Intended meaning: ‘The boys, the car, they drove it.’

To account for the convergence of (37) and the ungrammaticality of (39-40), I resort again to Phase Theory. As is clear in such cases, *vedɪ* is obligatorily suffixed with the subject inflectional suffix (*-hum*), indicating that a probe-goal relation is established between *vedɪ* and the subject at one point of the sentence derivation. If this is the case, then, the question to ask is what forces the object to intervene between the subject and *vedɪ*, and, in the first place, what triggers object movement to the inner Spec position of the projection headed by *vedɪ*. The object being with a [TOP] feature does not justify the movement of the object if this feature is valued, according to the model we are assuming here, following Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001). Also, *vedɪ* does not require movement of the object since *vedɪ* has its unvalued ϕ -feature

already valued by Agree with the subject (where the spell-out of the subject inflectional suffix on *vedī* is direct evidence of this valuation).

What we need to account for at this point is movement of the object to the outer Spec position of v*P (the lower phase) and to the inner Spec position of *vedī* (the higher phase) on the one hand, and for the lack of an object inflectional suffix on *vedī* on the other hand. I propose that these two interrelated issues can be understood given that, as we have assumed so far, the [TOP] feature carried by the object (and the subject) is unvalued in Chomsky's (2000, 2001) and Bošković (2007, 2014) sense. Therefore, movement of the object is viewed as motivated by Greed, which is movement of an item, the goal, to value its unvalued feature, rather than Altruism to satisfy the features of the probe, *vedī* (see Chomsky (1995) and Bošković (2007, 2014) and Holmberg *et al.* (2017)). Radford (2004) proposes that the discourse features on the object are valued but does not offer a solid argument for this supposition. The alternative is that the topic interpretation, rather than being expressed on the topicalised item DP, is the result of interplay of features of the DP and the sentential topic head, realized as *vedī* in the case we are now scrutinizing. I have already postulated that the topicalized constituent has an unvalued [TOP] feature while the topic particle has a matching valued [TOP] feature; I now reiterate that claim. Following Ouhalla (1997) and Biberauer *et al.* (2014) in that discourse particles affect the interpretation of the sentence, highlighting the proposition of the sentence/markings an item in the sentence, I propose that *vedī* (and other topicalizers), has a valued [TOP] feature, either F-Topic, C-Topic, or S-Topic, contributing to the meaning of the clause they are associated with; hence, they are merged to assign a certain topic value (S-Topic, C-Topic, or F-Topic) to the topicalised item in the clause, which is merged with an unvalued [TOP] feature.

Thus, when *vedī* establishes a probe-goal relation with the object, for instance, the unvalued ϕ -features of *vedī* are valued by the valued ϕ -features of the object. At the same time, the unvalued [TOP] feature of the object is valued by the valued [TOP] feature of *vedī*. That is, in case the particle merged is *vedī*, the value *vedī* assigns to the item carrying the unvalued [TOP] feature is F-Topic, and is read at the interface as F-Topic. Following Chomsky (2000, 2001) and Bošković (2007, 2014), the unvalued feature [TOP] of the object is valued once it enters an Agree relation with *vedī*. Movement of the object to the Spec of v*P, then, is forced by its own needs rather than those of *vedī*. Under this analysis, the source of the topic interpretation of the object as a topic comes from the combination of the [TOP] feature of *vedī* and the DP object as a complex; the [TOP] feature of *vedī* and the topicalised DP combine to determine the relevant topic interpretation.

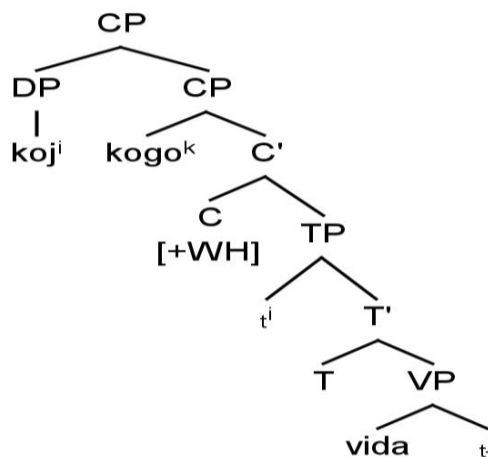
Back to sentence (37), the peculiar order between the subject and the object with respect to *vedī* and the appearance of the subject inflectional suffix on *vedī* is accounted for if both the Phase Theory and the approach to movement and cyclicity known as ‘Tuck-in’ (Richards 1997, 1999 and Richards and Simpson 1998) are taken into consideration. In the next section, I will introduce the main assumptions of the tucking-in approach. Afterwards, I will exploit this approach so as to account for the word order and the syntactic derivation of the sentence in (37) which has two F-Topics, the subject and the object.

3.6.2 Tucking-in

Richards (1997, 1999) proposes a version of Merge labelled Tuck-in for languages like Bulgarian, where more than one *wh*-phrase can be fronted in a question. This version of Merge is part of an explanation for the distribution of Superiority restrictions or their absence; see particularly Safir (2005: 2). Within this theory, after an initial *wh*-movement to the left periphery, the subsequent movement of another *wh*-phrase attracted by the *wh*-feature on C° extends the sister node of the first fronted *wh*-phrase. In other words, each instance of *wh*-movement must “tuck in”, i.e., land in a specifier below all already merged specifiers. Consider sentence (41) and its schematic representation in (42).

- (41) Koj kogo vida (Bulgarian from Rudin 1998 :472-3)
 Who whom sees
 ‘Who sees whom?’

(42)



Commenting on the derivation of (41) within the Tucking-In account, Safir (2005) maintains that *koj_i* moves first to the Spec of CP in order to satisfy the [+wh] feature on C. Afterwards, *kogo_k* moves and tucks in under *koj_i* so as to satisfy the Shortest Move Condition (i.e., the movement must be as short as possible cf. Richards 1997, 1999).

This analysis allows us to entertain the hypothesis that the subject and the object, with their S>O order, have preserved their pre-movement order (Müller 2001), or, following Fox and Pesetsky (2005), that the subject and the object preserve the linear order from their own phase. However, neither assumption can, again, account for the realization of the inflectional suffix (attached on the particle) of the subject rather than the object in (37). As is made clear below, the Tucking-In analysis provides us with a straightforward account of the interference of the object (as an F-Topic) between the subject (as an F-Topic) and *ved_I* (as an F-Topic head). Once it enters the derivation, bearing unvalued ϕ -features, *ved_I* searches for an element with a matching [TOP] feature within its c-command domain. Both the subject and the object have [TOP], but *ved_I* finds the subject closer than the object. Note here that I postulate the subject is in Spec, TP rather than in the inner Spec of v*P, contra to cases where *ved_I* agrees with the object. So, the probe-goal relation is established between *ved_I* and the subject rather than between *ved_I* and the object, due to the effects of the so-called *Minimal Link Condition* (MLC) (Chomsky 1995: 355-356).

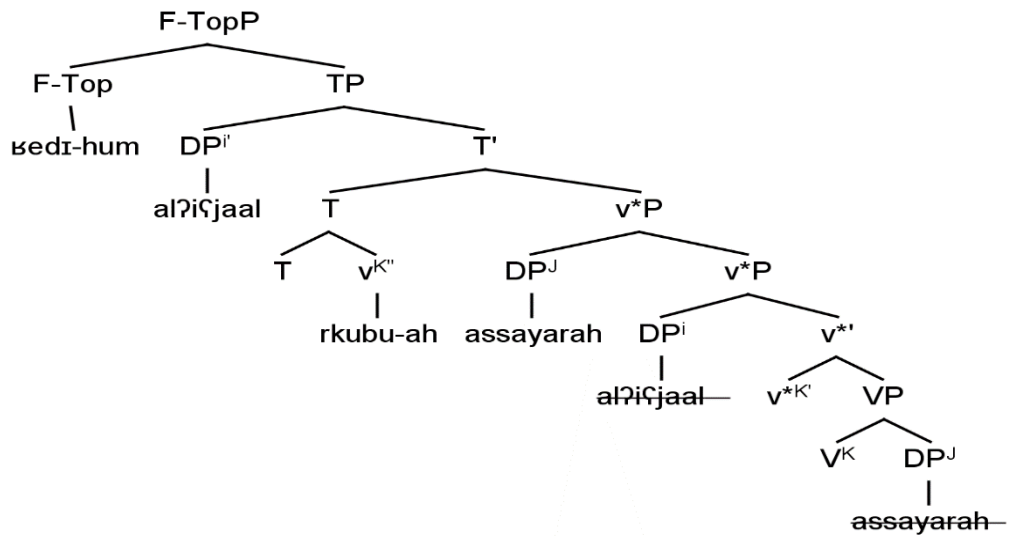
(43) *Minimal Link Condition*

A feature F attracts the closest feature that can check F.

According to (43), *ved_I* finds the subject, which in normal cases moves to Spec TP, with valued ϕ -features and an unvalued [TOP] feature, the point of derivation at which both *ved_I* and the subject are looking for valuation. A probe-goal relation between *ved_I* and the subject is established ending up with valuing the [TOP] feature of the subject as F-Topic and valuing the ϕ -feature of *ved_I*, which are spelled out as an inflectional suffix on *ved_I*.

At this point, having already moved out of its canonical position to reside in the outer Spec of v*P, the unvalued [TOP] feature of the object has not yet been valued (note that this movement of the object to the outer Spec of v*P takes place before *ved_I* enters the sentence derivation). Consider the schematic representation of sentence (37) up to the point of the derivation where *ved_I* has a probe-goal relation with the subject:

(44)



The question to ask here is, since the particle agrees with the subject, and given that the unvalued [TOP] feature of the object is not valued, what accounts for the sentence convergence? The answer to this question lies in the fact that the object undergoes further movement to occupy the inner Spec of *kedɪ*. I argue that the movement of the object and the subject to the left of *kedɪ* is forced by locality and the intervention effect caused by the subject against the object.

To illustrate, for the object to have its unvalued [TOP] feature valued by entering an Agree relation with *kedɪ*, there should not be any intervening element with a [TOP] feature between them. In case of multiple F-Topics, *kedɪ* cannot agree with the object unless the subject leaves its position to move to a higher position, i.e., Spec of Topic Phrase. This is because the subject is in Spec of TP and the subject and the object have the same featural content including the feature needed to Agree with *kedɪ*, that is [TOP]. The subject therefore counts as a barrier against a probe-goal relation between *kedɪ* and the object (Rizzi 1990).⁴⁰ In terms of the probe-goal relation, if X probes for a property shared by both Y and by Z, where X c-commands both Y and Z, both are within the same phase as X, but Y asymmetrically c-commands Z, then X will always find Y and will not be able to reach Z. In terms of movement, Y would block movement of Z to X. In the case at hand, *kedɪ* cannot agree with the object since the subject is

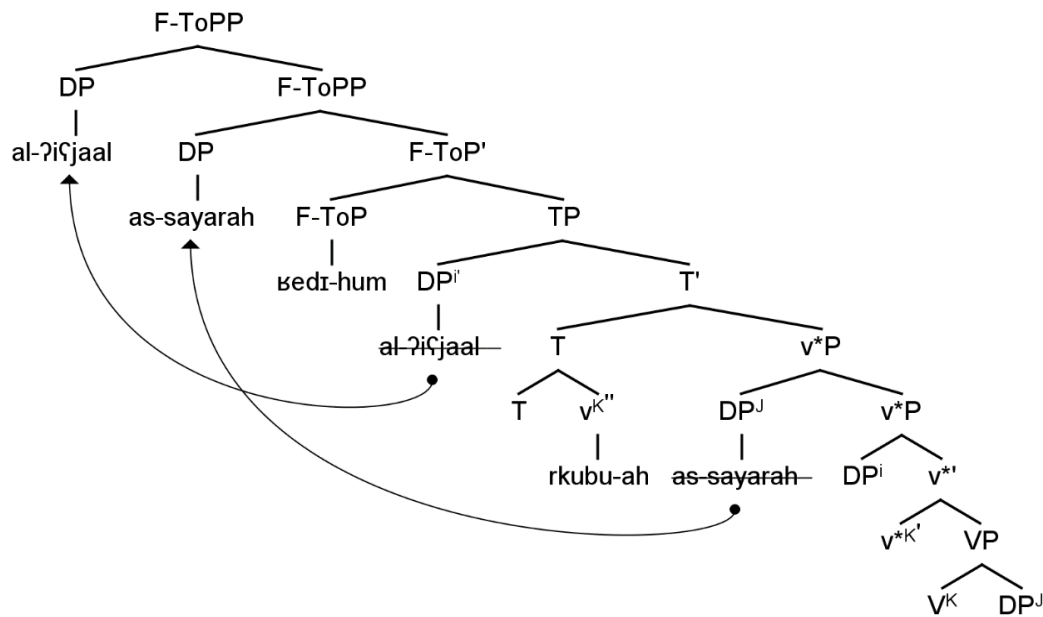
⁴⁰ Rizzi (1990) set forth an influential mechanism by which syntactic movement is constrained, Relativized Minimality, which states that, in the following configuration, a local relation cannot hold between X and Y if Z is a potential bearer of the relevant relation and Z intervenes between X and Y:
[X.....Z.....Y]

between the two and has the same features the object has. The consequence here is, on the one hand, that *vedɪ* cannot agree with the object and, on the other hand, the object cannot move across the subject.

Therefore, I claim that *vedɪ* agrees with the subject, once the subject was in Spec of TP being the closest item, resulting in the spell-out of the ϕ -features of *vedɪ* as the subject inflectional suffix *-hum*. Afterwards, the subject leaves its position to the Spec of Topic Phrase headed by *vedɪ*. This movement paves the way for a possible probe-goal relation between *vedɪ* and the object. However, *vedɪ* has its unvalued ϕ -features valued by the valued ϕ -features of the subject- spelled out as the subject inflectional suffix *hum-*, and, as a result, *vedɪ* no longer probes the object. Consequently, the only way for the object to have its unvalued [TOP] feature valued at this point, then, is via movement to the Spec of the phrase headed by *vedɪ*.⁴¹ The claim, to be substantiated below, is that there are two ways that a DP can have its unvalued [TOP] feature valued: It can assign ϕ -feature values to a probing topic head, or, when probing is not possible, it moves to the Spec position of a topic head. The object, then, has only one option at this point of the derivation; that is, tucking in between the already raised subject and *vedɪ*. Consider the following structure:

⁴¹ I adopt Miyagawa's (2010: 33) view on movement. In his words, in the Spec-Head configuration of agreement, movement is required by the computational system, which keeps movement in narrow syntax as a record for the interfaces (for semantic and information-structure interpretation) that there has been a functional relation. Following his thought, movement is required because *vedɪ* cannot mark the object after having marked the subject by ϕ -feature agreement. This is also consistent with Ouhalla's (1997) proposal on movement of a focused item when the head hosting the Foc feature is null.

(45)



A question to ask here is why the subject invokes an intervention effect when it and the object are F-Topics, as in (37) repeated below as (46a). In other words, why is (46b) ungrammatical?

- (46) a. ʔal- ʔiʕjaal as-sayarah ʔedi-hum rkub-u-ah.
 Def-boys Def-car PRT-3P.M drive.PST-3PM-it
 ‘The boys, the car, they drove it.’
- b. *as-sayarah ʔedi-hum ʔal- ʔiʕjaal rkub-u-ah.
 Def-car PRT-3P.M Def-boys drive.PST-3PM-it
 Intended: ‘The car, the boys, they drove it.’

In a multiple F-Topic sentence as in (46a), the subject incurs an intervention effect because it has a [TOP] feature just like the object. The subject and the object both have a [TOP] feature, hence, the intervention effect follows. I take this to be a Relativized Minimality effect (Rizzi 1990): The higher [TOP] feature blocks movement of the lower [TOP] feature. If so, the word order in sentences with two F-topics is governed by syntactic principles and constraints rather than being an idiosyncratic language-specific property. The only way to licence both arguments is to move the subject to a position where it cannot invoke any intervention effect against the object. In (46a), agreement between *ʔedi* and the subject (which is in Spec TP) rather than the object (which is in the outer Spec vP), then follows from considerations of Relativized

Minimality (Rizzi 1990), by which, in the case at hand, the intervention effect is relativized to [TOP] features (cf. Rizzi 1990, 2001a; Kim 2002; Villata *et al.* 2014). Thus, considering (46a) analysed in (45), the particle has a valued [TOP] feature, the subject and the object both have an unvalued [TOP] feature. The subject is closer to the particle, and has its [TOP] feature valued by Agree, blocking valuation of the object's [TOP] feature by Agree. The object could have its [TOP] valued by movement to the spec of F-TopP, headed by the particle, but the subject, as it can also move to Spec F-TopP, blocks object movement.

The tuck-in of the object within the phrase headed by *vedɪ* is, then, an epiphenomenon of the locality considerations between the subject and the object. Under this analysis, and with movement of the object being greed-driven, I claim that movement of the object and its tucking in between the subject and the particle *vedɪ*, following Safir (2005), is forced by locality principles; that is, movement must be as short as possible.

Another related question arising here, in case of multiple F-Topics, concerns the movement of the subject to Spec TP across the object after the object has moved across the subject to the outer Spec of v*P phase. I have proposed that in case of multi F-Topics, the subject and the object both have [TOP], which, as we just saw, blocks movement of the object across the subject to Spec of F-TopP. By the same logic, one would assume that the object, once it has moved to the outer Spec of vP, c-commanding the subject in the inner Spec of vP, should block movement of the subject to Spec TP. However, in this case, T has unvalued ϕ -features, looking for a caseless DP to value its ϕ -features and assign nominative case to. The object is not a candidate as it already has accusative case, and once T and the subject Agree, the [EPP] of T can only attract the subject.

The last point to discuss here is the observation that in sentences with an F-Topic but without a particle instantiating this topic such as *vedɪ*, the element functioning as an F-Topic must move to the Spec position of F-Topic. For instance, if *vedɪ* is not merged in (47a,b, and c) below, where the subject *alʔiʔjaal* 'the boys', the object *assayarah* 'the car' and an adjunct are topicalized, respectively, the resulting sentences must have these topicalized elements in the left periphery (the Spec position of F-Topic). Compare (47a) with (47d), (47b) with (47e), and (47c) with (47f).

- (47) a. **ʁedi**-hum al- ʔiʃjaal rkub-u as-sayarah.
PRT-them Def-boys drive.PST-3PM Def-car
 ‘The boys, they drove the car.’
- b. **ʁedi**-ah rkub-u-ah as-sayarah al- ʔiʃjaal.
PRT-it drive.PST-3PM-it Def-car Def-boys
 ‘The car, the boys drove it.’
- c. **ʁedi** al- ʔiʃjaal rkub-u as-sayarah bi-a-sa:ħah.
PRT Def-boys drive.PST-3PM Def-car in-Def-yard
 ‘The boys drove the car in the yard.’
- d. ʔal-ʔiʃjaal, rkub-u as-sayarah .
 Def-boys drive.PST-3PM Def-car
 ‘The boys, they drove the car.’
- e. as-sayarah rkub-u-ah al- ʔiʃjaal.
 Def-car drive.PST-3PM-it Def-boys
 ‘The car, the boys drove it.’
- f. bi-a-sa:ħah al-ʔiʃjaal rkub-u as-sayarah .
 in-Def-yard Def-boys drive.PST-3PM Def-car
 ‘In the yard the boys drove the car.’

This alternation shows that the element functioning as an F-Topic consistently moves to the left periphery of the given sentence when *ʁedi* is not part of the numeration of the sentence. Following the discussion thus far, I claim that when the TOP head is null, i.e not realized by *ʁedi*, the TOP head is endowed with an [EPP]. Hence, the entity with unvalued [TOP] moves to the Spec of Topic Phrase, satisfying the [EPP] feature on the matching TOP head. When *ʁedi* functions as an F-Topic head, it marks the F-Topic element by virtue of its unvalued ϕ -features without any movement on the part of the topicalized element (as long as it is visible to *ʁedi*). This argument is consistent with the standard assumptions of the Minimalism Program in that movement is a Last Resort. On the other hand, when *ʁedi* is not merged, there is no way

The sentence in (50) is spoken when the main (previous) discourse is about Ali's act of seeing the car in question, an issue that the speaker is concerned with. With this analysis in place, I propose that in (50), a probe-goal relation holds between *ƚedi* and the main verb *ƚaf* 'saw'. Consider the following dialogue in (51), where a sentence like (50) is uttered in which the verb is being topicalized:

(51)

A1: Firas jithamal ƚala ʔis^ʔabit-uh dajim w jalƚab mubarajat giwijah
 Firas hold on on symptoms-his always and play.he games tough
 ƚaƚan fariq-uh ma jxasar nugat^ʔ
 in order to team-his Neg drop off points
 'Firas holds on in tough games, asking to play all of them in order to help his team not to drop points.'

B1: ʔaħis ʔin-uh jdawir ƚala ʔaf-ƚuhrah ma gas^ʔd-uh mas^ʔlaħat fari:g-uh
 Feel.I that-he search.he on Def-fame Neg attention-his advantage team-his
 'I think he just shows off. He doesn't attempt to play for his own team's advantage.'

A2: bus kil-na ƚifna ʔat-tagri:r ƚan is^ʔabt-uh w ƚan is^ʔraruh ƚala ʔil-liƚb
 But all-us saw.we Def-report about symptoms-his and insistence-his on playing
 gabl ʔal-mubarat illi fatat w ƚif-na kil-na dƒab li-na ʔil-fauz
 before Def-game that past and saw-we all-we achieved.he Def-victory
 'But we all saw a report today about his injury symptom before the last game and his insistence to play. And as you know he helped us win.'

B2: **ƚedi** (Firas) laƚab ʔal-mubarat laʔin saƚadu:-h zumalaʔ-uh
PRT (Firas) played.3S.M Def-game because helped.them-him colleagues-his
 'He played the game because his team colleagues would help him.'

In this conversation, the entity being available throughout the conversation is Firas's act of playing the game. In every aspect of the discourse, the accessible, familiar and available topic is Firas's playing the game. For this, it can be assumed that the main verb *laƚab* '(he) played' has an unvalued [TOP] feature which matches the valued [TOP] feature of *ƚedi*. Note here that

the verb *laʕab* ‘(he) played’, at the time of *te* derivation where *ʕedi* is merged, does not have ϕ -features, even after it undergoes a head-to-head movement with (little) *v* to T° (where the unvalued ϕ -features of T° have already been valued via agreement with the subject). The ϕ -features of *ʕedi* are therefore not spelled out. It can be generalized, at this point, that presence or absence of an inflectional suffix on *ʕedi* is determined by which element in the sentence derivation has the unvalued [TOP] feature. If it is the subject that has the matching [TOP] feature, then, in (48-50-51B2) *ʕedi* must agree with it, given that the subject (lexical DP or *pro*) is visible to *ʕedi*, an assumption that would be supported by the interpretive properties of the subject in the sentence, expressing F-Topic and the ϕ -features of *ʕedi* that would have otherwise been valued by the subject, matching the ϕ -features of the subject. This also applies to the sentence in (51B2), where *ʕedi* would have agreed with a *pro* or *Firas* in Spec, TP (Holmberg 2010). In other words, by locality, the fact that *ʕedi* does not probe the subject in (48, 50) and the *pro* in (51B2), I argue, is attributed to the fact that the subject or *pro* is not the item that has the matching the topic feature; it is rather the verb that does. The same observation holds true of the object, had it had the unvalued [TOP] feature. As we have seen, if the object had the unvalued [TOP] feature, it would have undergone a phasal movement and spelled out the ϕ -features of the verb as an inflectional suffix attached to the verb. However, based on the analysis proposed for object topicalization, the sentences in (48-50-51B2) don’t display an VOS word order, neither do they contain an object inflectional suffix spelled out on the verb. It can be concluded here that the lack of an inflectional suffix on *ʕedi* is because *ʕedi* agrees with a non-nominal item, the verb, in which case the verb expresses F-Topic.

There is an order of valuation processes (valuing T ’s unvalued ϕ -features and *ʕedi*’s unvalued ϕ -features) which is governed by the Earliness Principle (Pesetsky 1995 and Rezac 2003), given in (34) in section 3.5.3 above, repeated as (52) below:

(52) *Earliness Principle*

Operations apply as early in a derivation as possible.

Following this principle, in (52), the probe-goal relation between T° and the subject *Ali* in (50) occurs earlier than that between *ʕedi* and the main verb. Once T° enters into the derivation with its unvalued ϕ -features, it starts searching for an active goal within its c-command domain. It finds the subject with its case being unvalued in addition to valued ϕ -features. As a result, agreement between T° and the subject occurs, resulting in valuing the unvalued ϕ -features of

T°. Consequently, when the verb moves to T°, no φ -features of the T° are active anymore, resulting in the amalgamated head [T+v], becoming devoid of any unvalued φ -features.⁴³ In line with this analysis, *vedl* can agree with non-nominal elements, including the lexical verb. A deduction that can be drawn here is that, unlike the case with nominal elements, Agree with non-nominal elements results in non-spell out of the φ -features of *vedl* (I will shortly turn to the account of valuation of the φ -features of *vedl* in this case).

Regarding the second interpretation (the speaker topicalizes a prepositional phrase, i.e. the sentence must include an adjunct), in such cases, *vedl* establishes a probe-goal relation with PPs which appear to carry the unvalued [TOP] feature. What is topicalized here is the adjunct whose matching, unvalued [TOP] feature, is valued by that of *vedl*. Consider the following dialogue, showing that the PP is the element for which the speaker uses *vedl*:

(53)

Speaker A1: ?qadir ʃabab ʔarat-na illi tsu:q ʔib- hudu:ʔ
 admire.I young people neighbourhood-our that drive.3P in-slowness
 ‘I admire the young people of our neighbourhood who drive slowly.’

Speaker B1: bus glal. ʔakθar-hum jisriʃu:n
 But few.P majority-them drive.fast
 ‘But they are few. The majority of them drive fast.’

Speak A2: fi:h wadzid. ʃ-raj-uk ib-Ali?
 Existential many what-opinion-Gen.you in-Ali
 ‘There are many. What do you think about Ali?’

Speaker B2: bsʔarahah ʔafu:-uh jisriʃ
 Frankly see.I-him drive.fast
 ‘In fact, I consider him a fast driver.’

⁴³ The main reason for discussing the lack of φ -features of the main verb is because the probe-goal relation between *vedl* and the verb is established while the verb adjoins T° with which the verb forms an incorporated head that includes the feature of both heads, the verb and T°.

Speaker A3: ʔafu:f-uh tamam w dajim jsu:q ʔib-hudu:ʔ
 see.I-him perfect and always drive.3S.M in-slowliness
 ‘I consider him as a good driver, and he always drives slowly.’

Speaker B3: **vedɪ** *(ʔib-hudu:ʔ) jsu:q mazal-uh
PRT in-slowliness drive.PST.3S.M as long as-3S.M
 bi-l-ħarah w la tʕalaʕ
 in-Def-neighbourhood and when leave.3S.M
 ʔasraʕ.
 drives fast
 ‘He drives slowly as long as he is in the neighbourhood, and when he gets
 out of the neighbourhood, he drives fast.’

Speaker A4: la sʕadig-ni ʃift-uh kaða marah
 No believe-me saw.I-him many times
 ‘No! Believe me. I’ve seen him many times (driving slowly).’

The obligatory presence of the PP *ʔibhudu:ʔ* in (53B3) indicates that it is the element which has the matching, unvalued [TOP] feature. The utterance in question is understood as being about the PP *ʔibhudu:ʔ* ‘slowly’ which is accessible from the previous discourse all through the current state of the discourse. Thus, this PP, whose referent here expresses the F-Topic of the conversation, should be accessible within *vedɪ*’s c-command domain, so that the valued [TOP] feature of *vedɪ* can value it. In addition, because PP’s do not have any ϕ -features, no spell out of the unvalued ϕ -features of *vedɪ* takes place, resulting in the lack of an inflectional suffix appearing on *vedɪ*.

This analysis raises one essential question related to the theory of interface convergence/non-convergence. According to Chomsky (1993, 1995: ch. 4, 2000) unvalued features need to be valued in the course of the derivation for the derived representations to be legible at the interfaces LF and PF. This need serves as a driver of syntactic operations, particularly movement. In Chomsky (2001) and subsequent work, valuation of unvalued features is an essential driver of syntactic operations. As just shown, when *vedɪ* agrees with a verb or a PP, the ϕ -features of *vedɪ* are not spelled out. Consequently, it can be assumed that the ϕ -features

of *ʔedi* are unvalued. This triggers the question: how does *ʔedi* satisfy the legibility condition, though, if its ϕ -features remain unvalued in the case when it probes a non-nominal category? To answer this question, I assume that the unvalued ϕ -features of *ʔedi* are valued via ‘default agreement’, which is typical of cases when unvalued ϕ -features cannot be valued.⁴⁴ However, default agreement is not visible, hence, at PF, it can be assumed that no inflectional suffix is spelled out on *ʔedi*. In other words, at PF, the valued ϕ -features receive null spell out.

Recall that I have been assuming that the topicalised item has an unvalued [TOP] feature, rather than a valued [TOP] feature, which I claim is consistent with the facts that (i) when the topicalised item is the object, which is in the lower, vP phase, it must undergo a phasal movement and that (ii) if the [TOP] feature on the Top headed by the particle were unvalued, this head wouldn’t project. Looking at (51B2) and (53B3), the topic is the verb and the PP, respectively. In (51B2), the verb is visible to the valuator, *ʔedi*, hence, Agree applies without any movement in overt syntax (which, if it would occur, would be via a phrasal XP movement, since the verb cannot cross the particle, see section 1.5.3 in chapter 1). In (53B3), on the other hand, the PP surfaces adjacent to the particle, adjoining TP, which I assume is a result of movement. Hence, I reiterate the claim that it has an unvalued [TOP] which triggered this movement.

To sum up, in the previous sections I have provided a syntactic analysis of the behaviour of the particle *ʔedi* (and *tsin*). *ʔedi* is an F-Topic particle, heading the F-Topic Phrase. *ʔedi* has a valued [TOP] feature and a set of unvalued ϕ -features which are valued by either the subject, the object, verb, or PP adjuncts. In the first two cases, where the element is represented by a DP, the ϕ -features of this DP value the ϕ -features of *ʔedi*, resulting in spelling out the latter as an inflectional suffix on *ʔedi* at PF. Given that verbs and PP adjuncts do not have ϕ -features, no inflectional suffix is spelled out on *ʔedi* when the F-Topic is a V or PP, where I assume that default agreement applies, hence, the ϕ -features of *ʔedi* are valued but assigned null spell out at PF. In addition, an account for multiple F-Topics in light of the Tuck-in approach (Richards 1997, 1999) was provided. It was shown that the elements that *ʔedi* marks move to the left of

⁴⁴ Aoun *et al.* (1994) note that in Lebanese Arabic, the complementizer *ʔinn* does not agree with the preverbal, lexical DP subject; taking, instead, a default 3rd person singular value, as shown in the contrasting examples below (Aoun *et al.*’s 1994: 201-202).

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|----|---|---------|-----------|---------|
| a. | Fakkar | ʔinno | 1-baneet | raaho. | b. | *Fakkar | ʔinnun | 1-baneet | raaho |
| | thought.3M | that.3Ms | Def-girls | left.3p | | thought.3M | that.3P | Def-girls | left.3p |
| | 'He thought that the girls left.' | | | | | Intended meaning: 'He thought that the girls left.' | | | |

vedɪ, where this movement conforms with principles related to locality. Evidence that the goal bears an unvalued instance of the [TOP] feature was adduced from the object movement in constructions involving multiple F-Topics and object topicalization. Another issue tackled is the mechanism of the derivation of the inflectional suffix on the verb, arguing that it is the spell out of the unvalued φ -features of the verb, more precisely v , the transitivizer head of the verbal predicate, when Agree is established between the verb and a DP, lexical or *pro*, with [TOP] feature.

In the next section, I investigate φ -less C-particles that instantiate F-Topics, i.e. *ʔefwa* and *tigil*. I provide further evidence that Move in NHA is motivated when Agree is not possible.

3.8 φ -less F-particles

Surveying the contexts where *ʔefwa* and *tigil* appear, it is clear that they act as F-Topic markers, where the element expressing F-Topic must appear to their left. The main difference between these two particles and *vedɪ* (and *tsin*) is that no inflectional suffix is spelled out on them, a matter I take to mean that these two particles are not endowed with φ -features. According to the assumptions, made in the previous sections, that *vedɪ* (and *tsin*) can have a probe-goal relation with the element expressing a F-Topic, the prediction is that *ʔefwa* and *tigil* can only agree with the F-Topics via movement of the latter. NHA data bear out this prediction, since *ʔefwa* and *tigil*, unlike *vedɪ* (and *tsin*), cannot appear sentence-initially. They must always be preceded by the element acting as an F-Topic.

I argue that *ʔefwa* and *tigil* are heads projecting F-Topic Phrases. They all probe an element having an unvalued [TOP] feature. This probe-goal relation results in movement of the goal to the Spec position of the F-Topic Phrase. In descriptive terms, *ʔefwa* and *tigil* are preceded by a definite element whose content has to be given, backgrounded in the common ground and accessible to both the speaker and the hearer, hence, expressing F-Topic. In what follows, I first introduce some information about the pragmatic behaviour of these two particles, then I provide a syntactic analysis.

3.8.1 *The particles ʔefwa and tigil: pragmatic functions*

ʔefwa and *tigil* are used to introduce an element that is being talked about, an entity from which the conversation has not diverted, and that does not need to be selected out of a closed set of alternatives. Consider the following dialogue for *tigil*:

(54)

Son: waʕat t-iftiri l-i:
 Promise.PST.2S.M 2S.M-buy.PRS to-1S
 kura-t ʔadidas
 football Adidas
 ‘You promised to buy me an Adidas football.’

Dad: fiʕlan waʕat-uk bus bi-l-ʔidzazah
 Of ‘course promise.PST.1S-2S.M but in-Def-holiday
 ‘Of ‘course I have promised you, but that is in the holiday.’

Son: tau bida-t ʔal-ʔidzazah w bida
 now begin.PST-3S.F Def-holiday and started
 maʕ ʔal-ʔidzazah mausim ʔal-liʕb w l-ah ʔaʕka:l
 with Def-holiday season playing and for-it designs
 w ʔanwa:ʕ
 and types

‘The holiday has just begun and the playing season which accompanies the beginning of the holiday has started with a lot of designs and types of it (it = the ball).’

Dad: kurat ʔal-ʔadidas **tigil** t-anzil ib-nis^ʕ
 Def.ball Def-Adidas **PRT** 3S.F-launch.PRS in-middle of
 ʔal-ʔidzazah
 Def-holiday

‘The Adidas football is (normally) sold by the middle of the holiday.’

In (54), the conversation is about the Adidas brand of football. Throughout the discourse, this entity is accessible; no other topic (be it Familiar, Contrastive or Shifting) has been introduced or reintroduced into the conversation. Hence, this DP expresses an F-Topic of the conversation.

One piece of evidence in favour of this claim is that in (54), in the son’s second utterance, the son mentions the DP *kurat ʔal-ʔadidas* by means of a weak pronoun, which is a property of F-Topics (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007). In Dad’s last utterance, this DP is marked by the particle *tigil*.

Consider now the following dialogue, illustrating the pragmatic function of *ʔefwa*:

(55)

Speaker A: ʔal-*imtiḥanaat* **ʔefwa** taʔadzalan. ma
 Def-examinations **PRT** postpone.PASS Neg
 ḥazʕart
 prepared.I

‘The examinations, it is good that they were postponed. I have not prepared.’

Speaker B: ʔint maḥzʕu:zʕ
 You lucky
 ‘You are lucky.’

In (55), the speaker talks about the exams having been postponed, and implicitly expresses his attitudes that this incident is to his own advantage. As we can see, the subject *ʔalimtiḥanaat* ‘the exams’ is definite, established in and accessible from the previous discourse (which is normal since exams would have normally been scheduled), expressing an F-Topic.

Let’s now turn our attention to the syntax of these two particles.

3.8.2 *The Syntax of the particles ʔefwa and tigil*

As hinted at above, these particles are F-Topic markers, implying that these particles are not S-Topic nor C-Topic markers. One piece of evidence is that they can co-occur with *mar* or *ʕad*, the two particles I argued to mark the element serving as an S-Topic Phrase. Consider the following sentences:

- (56) a. *kurat* *ʔal-ʔadidas* **mar**, *ib-nis^ʕ* *ʔal-ʔidzazah* **tigil**
 Def-ball Def-Adidas, **PRT** in-middle of Def-holiday **PRT**
t-anzil
 3SF-launch.PRS

‘As for the Adidas ball, in the middle of the holiday, it will be launched.’

- b. *kurat* *ʔal-ʔadidas* **ʕad** *b-nis^ʕ* *ʔal-ʔidzazah* **tigil**
 Def-ball Def-Adidas, **PRT** in-middle of Def-holiday **PRT**
t-anzil
 3SF-launch.PRS

‘As for the Adidas ball, in the middle of the holiday, it will be launched.’

- (57) a. *l-dira:sah* **mar** *ʔal-imtiḥana:t* **ʔefwa** *taʔadzalan*
 Def-study **PRT** Def-examinations **PRT** postpone.PASS
ma *ḥatz^ʕart*
 Neg prepared.I

‘As for the study, the examinations, it is good that they were postponed. I have not prepared.’

- b. *l-dira:sah* **ʕad** *ʔal-imtiḥana:at* **ʔefwa** *taʔadzalan*
 Def-study **PRT** Def-examinations **PRT** postpone.PASS
ma *ḥatz^ʕart*
 Neg prepared.I

‘As for the study, the examinations, it is good that they were postponed. I have not prepared.’

Sentences (56-57) indicate that *ʔefwa* and *tigil* do not head the S-Topic Phrase. This follows from the fact that the head of S-TopP, which is non-recursive, is already filled by *mar* (56a) *ʕad* (56b) carrying the feature [S-Top], where *tigil* occurs and in (57) where *ʔefwa* occurs (see chapter 2). What this immediately shows is that, given that the S-Topic is not recursive, *ʔefwa* and *tigil* are not S-Topic heads in the sense of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010).

Furthermore, *ʔefwa* and *tigil* can appear in embedded contexts where *mar* and *ʕad*, being S-Topic markers, cannot appear, implying that *ʔefwa* and *tigil* are not S-Topic markers which have the property of being barred in non-root contexts. Consider the following sentences:

- (58) a. Firas ʔiʕtaraf ʔin kurat ʔal-ʔadidas **tigil**
 Firas conceded that Def.ball Def-Adidas **PRT**
 t-anzil ib-nihajat ʔal-ʔidzazah
 3S.F-launch.PRS in-end Def-holiday
 ‘Firas conceded that, the Adidas football, it will be launched by the end of the holiday.’

- b. Firas ʔiʕtaraf ʔin ʔal-imtihana:t **ʔefwa** taʔadzalan
 Firas conceded that Def-examinations **PRT** postpone.PASS
 ma ʕazʕart
 Neg prepared
 ‘Firas conceded that the examinations, they were postponed. He had not prepared.’

Further evidence that *ʔefwa* and *tigil* are F-Topic markers is the fact that they can co-occur with one another. Recall that the F-Topic is recursive; so more than one F-Topic can be permitted in a single clause (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010), see section 2.3.2.4. Consider the following sentences:

- (59) a. ib-nisʕ ʔal-ʔidzazah **ʔefwa** kurat ʔal-ʔadidas **tigil**
 in-middle of Def-holiday **PRT** Def-ball Def-Adidas **PRT**
 t-anzil
 3S.M-launch.PRS
 ‘By the end of the holiday, the Adidas football, will be launched.’

b. *ib-nihajat* *ʔal-ʔidzazah* **ʔefwa** **tsin-ah** *kurat* *ʔal-ʔadidas*
in-middle of Def-holiday **PRT** **PRT-3SF** Def-ball Adidas
t-anzil
3S.F-launch.PRS

‘By the end of the holiday, the Adidas football, it will be launched.’

In (59), *ʔefwa* and *tigil* can co-occur, indicating that they are F-Topics. As discussed above, when the F-Topic particle is *ʔefwa* or *tigil*, the element with the matching unvalued [TOP] feature must appear to the left of the particle. Consider the following examples with *ʔefwa* (60a with the subject, 60b with the object, 60c with the entire event, and 60d, with an adjunct).

(60) a. *ʔal-walad* **ʔefwa** *ħub* *ʔal-bint*
Def-boy **PRT** love.PST.3S.M Def-girl
‘The boy, he loved the girl.’

b. *ʔal-bint* **ʔefwa** *ʔal-walad* *ħub-ah*
Def-girl **PRT** Def-boy love.PST.3S.M-3SF
‘The girl, the boy loved her.’

c. *ʔal-walad* *ħub* *ʔal-bint* **ʔefwa**
Def-boy love.PST.3S.M Def-girl **PRT**
‘The boy loved the girl.’

d. *ʔib-quwah* **ʔefwa** *ʔal-walad* *ħub* *ʔal-bint*
with-sincerity **PRT** Def-boy love.PST.3S.M Def-girl
‘Sincerely, the boy loved the girl.’

One point here about cases like (60c) when *ʔefwa* agrees with the verb is in order. When the verb has the matching unvalued [TOP], the whole TP moves to the Spec of *ʔefwa*. That is because the verb cannot move to the Spec of *ʔefwa* (by ‘chain uniformity’ (Chomsky 1995:253)) and so cannot incorporate into *ʔefwa*. Therefore, Agreement between *ʔefwa* and the

verb holds through phrasal movement where the maximal projection housing the verb, i.e. TP, moves to the Spec of the F-Topic phrase headed by *ʔefwa*. The same analysis extends to *tigil*.⁴⁵ We have already seen that *ʔedi* (and *tsin*) can probe a DP (where they host the inflectional suffix of such DP's, taken as the spell-out of the valued ϕ -features of the particles) and other categories like PP and Adverbs (with no inflectional suffix on the particle). On the other hand, although they can probe DP's and other categories, *tigil* and *ʔefwa* require movement of the probed constituent (in case of V topicalization, phrasal movement to TP is required).

The final observation I address here before winding up this section is that *ʔedi* (or *tsin*) can occur with either *tigil* and *ʔefwa* but not with one another, as exemplified below.

- (61) a. ***tsm-h** Ali **ʔedi-ah** ʔal-bint ʔan-nas jihtarmun-hum
PRT-3SM Ali **PRT-3SF** Def-girl Def-people respect-3P
Intended meaning: ‘Ali, the girl, the people respect them.’

- b.* **ʔedi-ah** ʔal-bint **tsm-h** Ali ʔan-nas jihtarmun-hum
PRT-3SF Def-girl **PRT-3SM** Ali Def-people respect-3P
Intended meaning: ‘The girl, Ali, the people respect them.’

- (62) a. **tsm-h/ ʔedi-h** ʔams **tigil** Ali ʃa:f ʔan-nas
PRT-3SM yesterday **PRT** Ali saw.3SM Def-people
‘Yesterday, Ali, he saw the people.’

- b. ʔams **tigil** **tsm-h/ ʔedi-h** Ali ʃa:f ʔan-nas
yesterday **PRT** **PRT-3SM** Ali saw.3SM Def-people
‘Yesterday, Ali, he saw the people.’

On the basis of NHA data, it is clear that no combination of more than one agreeing C-particle is allowed in the left periphery, even if these C-particles have different topic values (as I will corroborate in the next chapter). The generalization I introduce here accounting for this

⁴⁵ I, again, consider Miyagawa's (2010: 33) view on movement as requirement of the computational system, which keeps movement in narrow syntax as a record for the interfaces that there has been an (agreement) functional relation when Agree in situ cannot take place. Since *ʔefwa* and *tigil* lack ϕ -features, functional relations represented as movement are preserved as a note to the interfaces.

observation is that the left periphery of NHA tolerates no more than one particle endowed with ϕ -features. On the basis that F-Topic is recursive, it would be expected that *ƙedi* and *tsin*, as F-Topic particles could co-occur. However, the sentences in (61) are ungrammatical, which I argue is because the sentences contain two agreeing particles, endowed with ϕ -features. This is directly supported by the grammaticality of the sentences in (62), which is due to the fact that they contain an agreeing particle and a non-agreeing particle.

3.8.3 Conclusion

In this section, I have argued that *ƙefwa* and *tigil* particles are F-Topic heads, rather than S-Topic heads, where evidence is drawn from the observation that they co-occur with *mar* or *ƙad*, the two particles I argued to mark the element serving as an S-Topic phrase. As for why *ƙefwa* and *tigil* are not attached with a suffix, I assume these particles lack any ϕ -content but are endowed with an [EPP] feature which forces the element carrying an unvalued [TOP] feature to move to its Spec. Movement to the left periphery is thus determined by whether the functional phrases therein are endowed with ϕ -content or not. Additionally, I have shown that NHA permits only one particle with ϕ features per sentence.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a syntactic analysis of the behaviour of the F-Topic particles in NHA (*ƙedi*, *tsin*, *ƙefwa* and *tigil*) which head the F-Topic Phrase, and all carry a valued [TOP] feature. In addition, *ƙedi* (as well as *tsin*) carries a set of unvalued ϕ -features which are valued by either nominal items like the subject and the object or non-nominal items such as a verb or PP adjuncts. When the goal has ϕ -features, i.e. is a nominal item, an inflectional suffix is spelled out on *ƙedi* as a reflex of the Agree operation; otherwise, the ϕ -feature of *ƙedi* are valued via default agreement in which case they are spelled out as null at PF as in the case when *ƙedi* agrees with non-nominal items, verbs and PP adjuncts. It was shown that the topicalised item which *ƙedi* marks and agrees with has an unvalued [TOP] feature which is valued when it enters an Agree relation with *ƙedi*. In addition, this chapter has provided a new account for the weak form that is spelled out on the verb and agrees with the object, the topical clitic generalisation. It was shown that this clitic is the spell out of the unvalued ϕ -features of the verb, as a result of being valued by the valued ϕ -features of the object, and that this only happens when the object has [Top] feature. Additionally, this chapter introduced an account for multiple F-Topics, where both the subject and the object express F-Topic and appear to the left of the F-

Topic particle *vedi*, following the general lines of the Tuck-in approach (Richards 1997, 1999). As for *Ɂefwa* and *tigil*, I have shown that these are F-Topic heads but, unlike *vedi* and *tsin*, they lack ϕ -content. They are instead endowed with an [EPP] feature which forces the element carrying the unvalued [TOP] feature to move to their Spec. In view of this, I have concluded that movement to the left periphery is thus dependant on whether the functional phrases in it are endowed with ϕ -content or not. Furthermore, it was shown that an NHA clause does not tolerate more than a single agreeing particle.

So far, I have shown that NHA exhibits S-TopicP and F-TopicP, where the S-TopicP c-commands the F-TopicP, in line with Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) topic hierarchy. I have accounted for the syntactic behaviour and the pragmatic distribution of the particles under investigation; *vedi*, *tsin*, *Ɂefwa* and *tigil* are F-Topic particles, while *Ɂad* and *mar* are S-Topic particles.

Recall from chapter 2 that the particles *tara* and *Ɂaktin*, though they show agreement like *vedi* and *tsin*, display a property which makes them slightly stand aside from the other particles. Namely, when *tara* and *Ɂaktin* mark an item, this item bears contrastive stress, implying alternatives. In the next chapter, I investigate the C-particles that project the so-called Contrastive Topic Phrase.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: Contrastive Topic

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I analysed the syntactic behaviour of the C-particles that instantiate the F-Topic layer in the left periphery. I have argued these C-particles all carry a valued [TOP] feature. In addition, I have argued that *vedi* and *tsin* carry unvalued ϕ -features, making these two particles agreeing heads, i.e. probes. They enter into an Agree relation in the sense of Chomsky (2000, 2001) with the category carrying a matching unvalued [TOP] feature. This Agree operation results in valuing the unvalued [TOP] feature on the relevant items *in situ* (in Spec TP for the case of the subject and in Spec vP for the case of the object, where movement of the object to the edge of vP is forced by the need to be close enough to the particle to value its unvalued [TOP] feature). On the other hand, *tigil* and *ɣefwa*, as non-agreeing particles, carry an [EPP] feature forcing the element that carries unvalued [TOP] feature to move to their Spec. In view of this, I have argued that movement to the left periphery occurs only when the functional head lacks unvalued ϕ -features (in case of a single topic phrase). Furthermore, the previous chapter has addressed cases of multiple F-Topics, using the Tuck-in approach (Richards 1997, 1999).

In this chapter, I will investigate the C-particle *tara* (and *ɣaktin*), arguing that this particle is a head projecting the Contrastive Topic Phrase (C-Topic Phrase) in the sense of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). I will show that this particle is, like *vedi* and *tsin*, endowed with a valued [TOP] feature and unvalued ϕ -features, turning it into an agreeing head, i.e. a probe whose feature valuation is implemented by the same mechanism we have shown for *vedi* and *tsin*.

4.2 The particle *tara* as a topicalizer

In chapter one, I mentioned that, unlike all the particles under investigation, the topicalised element that *tara* agrees with shows up (is spelled out) with contrastive stress, which is widely assumed to be a property of contrastive focus. Motivated by this property of *tara*, let's first look at conceptual (semantic) and empirical (syntactic) grounds for saying that *tara* projects a TopicP, in the first place. One immediate observation that gives credence to the claim that *tara* is a Topic marker is that when it marks an item, this item, in addition to bearing a contrastive stress, is read as the familiar entity the clause in the discourse is about. Consider the following dialogues:

(1)

(a)

Speaker A: min minu-kum ʃaf ʔal-hurmah illi skanat
who amongst-you saw.3S.M Def-woman Comp moved in.3S.F
ib-ħarat-na tau
in-neighbourhood-our now

‘Who (amongst you) has seen the woman who has just moved in in our neighbourhood?’

Speaker B ‘mother’: ʔana ma ʃift-ah li lħi:n
I Neg saw.1S-3S.F till now
lakin ma ʔadri: ʃan ʃjal-na
but Neg know.I about children-our
ʔisʔal-hum θalaθat-hum
ask-them three-them

‘I have not seen her yet, but I do not know about our children.
Ask the three of them.’

Speaker C1 ‘daughter: **tara-h** OMAR ʃaf l-ħurmah.
PRT-3SM Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
‘OMAR, (neither me nor Ali), saw the woman.’

Speaker C2 ‘daughter: (***tara-h**) WAḤID min ʃil-ʔjal
PRT-3SM one of Def-boys
ʃaf l-ħurmah.
see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
Intended meaning: ‘ONE OF THE BOYS, not me, saw the woman.’

(b)

Speaker A: *ʃift-u: ʔar-radʒa:l w l-ħurmah illi*
Saw.2P Def-man and Def-woman Comp
skanau ib-ħarat-na
moved in.3P in-neighbourhood-our
'Have you seen the man and the woman who have just moved in in our
neighbourhood?'

Speaker B1: **tara-ah** *ʃaf-ah L-ĤURMAH Omar.*
PRT-3SF see.PST.3S.M-her Def-woman Omar
'THE WOMAN, Omar saw her.'

Speaker A: *w ʔar-radʒa:l ma ʃift-u:-h*
and Def-man Q Saw.2.P-3S.M
'What about the man! Have you seen him?'

Speaker B2: *la*
Neg
'No.'

In (1a), Speaker A, the father, addresses a set of discourse participants, his family members. He asks whether anyone, amongst them, has seen the woman in question. Upon Speaker A's question, a set of specific entities are now available in the conversational common ground, among whom the interlocutor selects one entity to serve as the felicitous answer to A's question (Kruijff and Steedman 2003; Büring 2003). Speaker B, the mother, as a result of the phrase *minukum* 'amongst you', has in mind only the family members, so she refers the father to the children. Speaker C, the daughter, in turn, asserts that (only) Omar is the one who saw the woman. Using *tara*, Speaker C selects *Omar* out of all the other family members, by which she excludes herself and the other person in the set, *Ali*. In Speaker C's second utterance, (which is an alternative to Speaker C's first utterance), even though the phrase *wahid min ʃilʔyal* 'one of the boys' means that the one who saw the woman might be *Omar* or *Ali*, which are discourse-given, too, *tara* is not possible. It can only mark a single definite, specific discourse given element. The same holds in (1b), where Speaker B selects one entity over the other, both of which compose the set, the woman being the entity that Omar saw. In (1a, C1) and (1b, B1), the DPs *Omar* and *l-ħurmah* 'the woman' express the topic of the clause, respectively; they

denote an entity who is a familiar member of a set of alternative entities that the predicate says something about. Hence, I propose that *tara* is not a focus marker, specifically, contrastive focus marker. It should be noted that *tara* can be substituted by another C-particle, namely *ʔaktin* which shows the same morpho-syntactic behaviour of *tara*. Note that they cannot co-occur, something that points to the fact that they occupy the same syntactic position in the tree, i.e. the head of the C-Topic Phrase. I restrict the discussion in this chapter to *tara* with a clear statement that all assumptions made of *tara* extend to *ʔaktin*.

The dialogues above show that *tara* hosts an inflectional suffix with the same ϕ -features as the subject *Omar* (1a, C1), and the object *lħurmah* ‘the woman’ (1b, B1), each bearing contrastive stress and expressing the topic of the sentence. It can be assumed that the ϕ -features of the subject and the object, respectively, value the unvalued ϕ -features of *tara*, spelling them out as an inflectional suffix on *tara*. Empirical evidence in favour of this assumption comes from the fact that *tara* cannot host an inflectional suffix that shows the ϕ -features of an indefinite entity, an observation which indicates that *tara* is a topic particle rather than a focus particle, as the sentences in (2) show:

- (2) a. ***tara-h** WALAD ʃaf l-ħurmah.
 PRT-3SM boy see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
 Intended meaning: ‘A BOY saw the woman.’
- b. ***tara-ah** ʃaf-ah HURMAH Omar.
 PRT-3SF see.PST.3S.M-her woman Omar
 Intended meaning: ‘A WOMAN Omar saw.’

Due to these observations as well as the initial position *tara* occupies in relation to the associated clause, I argue that *tara* is a topic particle, marking the element expressing the topic (or one of the topics) of the sentence. As claimed above for the case of *vedt*, the ϕ -features of *tara* are spelled out as an inflectional suffix on *tara*, as a result of an Agree operation between *tara* and the topicalized element, in case this element has ϕ -features, i.e. is a DP.

Following our findings on *vedt* and the related literature on topic typology (cf. Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007), there are three possible positions for *tara*, namely: head of S-TopicP, head of C-TopicP, and head of F-TopicP. Let us examine these possibilities and explore which

projection is headed by *tara*. The prediction, based on the discourse-semantic properties of *tara* is that it is a C-topic head.

4.3 *tara* is not an S-Topic particle

Recall that a property of S-topic (as well as C-topic), unlike F-Topic, is that they update the conversational common ground content, the former by shifting and the latter by the contrastive stress it bears (Krifka 2007; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007, Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). Recall also that there is only one S-Topic per clause (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010) (i.e. S-Topics and C-topic are not recursive). However, two pieces of evidence indicate that *tara* cannot be used to mark an S-topic, but only to mark a C-topic. One piece of evidence comes from the pragmatics of *tara*, which is the fact that *tara* selects an entity out of a given set of entities, contrasting it against them, as exemplified by the dialogues in (1a) and (1b) above.

A further piece of evidence supporting the view that *tara* cannot be an S-Topic head comes from syntax. It is based on the fact that *tara* can freely co-occur with the particle *mar*, the particle that I argued marks the element introducing the S-Topic Phrase (see chapter 2). Consider the following sentence:

- (3) l-radʒa:l **mar** **tara-h** OMAR ʃaf-uh.
 Def-man **PRT** **PRT-3SM** Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 ‘As for the man, OMAR saw him.’

Given that S-Topics and C-topic are not recursive (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007, Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010), sentence (3) implies that *tara* does not head the S-Topic Phrase, since that head is already filled by the *mar*, whose Spec is filled by DP *lradʒa:l* ‘the man’.

Another observation here is that *tara* cannot precede *mar*, which indicates that *tara* must be c-commanded by *mar*, as the ill-formed sentence (4) demonstrates:

- (4) ***tara-h** **mar** l-radʒa:l, OMAR ʃaf-uh.
 PRT-3S.GM **PRT** Def-man Omar see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘As for the man, OMAR saw him.’

Furthermore, while *tara* can appear in embedded contexts, *mar* cannot do so, an observation reinforcing my conclusion that *tara* is not a S-Topic. Compare the contrast in the following sentences:

- (5) a. l-walad **mar** Ali ʃaf-uh
 Def-boy **PRT** Ali see.PST.3S.M-him
 ‘A for the boy, Ali saw him.’
- b. *Firas ʔiʃtaraf ʔin l-walad **mar** Ali ʃaf-uh
 Firas conceded that Def-boy **PRT** Ali see.PST.3S.M-him
 Intended meaning: ‘Firas conceded that as for the boy, Ali saw him.’
- c. **tara-h** ALI ʃaf l-walad
PRT-3SM Ali see.PST.3S.M Def-boy
 ‘ALI saw the boy.’
- d. Firas ʔiʃtaraf ʔin **tara-h** ALI ʃaf l-walad
 Firas conceded that **PRT-3SM** Ali see.PST.3S.M Def-boy
 ‘Firas conceded that ALI saw the boy.’

According to Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010), S-Topics are a root phenomenon in the sense that they only occur in root contexts. The construction *lwalad mar* ‘as for the boy’ is therefore allowed in (5a) because it occurs in a main clause, while it is disallowed in (5b) where it appears in an embedded clause. By contrast, *tara* is allowed in both contexts: root and embedded (5c,d), implying that it is not an S-Topic marker. This being so, we are now left with two options: a C-Topic head or an F-Topic head.

4.4 *tara* as a C-Topic particle not an F-Topic particle

Recall first that an F-Topic does not update the conversational common ground content, since F-Topic is a backgrounded entity that is not being shifted or contrasted against another set of entities, hence, it does not have a real impact on the common ground management (Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). Let us start with the observation that *tara* and ϕ -less particles that project

the F-Topic Phrase such as *tigil* co-occur in the same clause.⁴⁶ Consider the following sentences:

(6)

- a. **tara** kurat ʔal-ʔadidas **tigil** T-ANZIL
PRT Def-ball Def-Adidas **PRT** 3S.F-launch.PRS
 b-nis^ʕ ʔal-ʔidzazah
 in-middle of Def-holiday

‘The Adidas football IS TO BE LAUNCHED (not cancelled) by the middle of the holiday.’

- b. **tara** ʔal-imtiħana:t ʔefwa TAʔADʒALAN
PRT Def-examinations **PRT** postpone.PASS
 ma ħaz^ʕart
 Neg prepared.I

‘The examinations were (fortunately) postponed. I have not prepared.’

In the grammatical sentences in (6), *tara* appears in a position c-commanding *ʔefwa* and *tigil*. *ʔefwa* and *tigil* cannot appear to the left of *tara*, as shown in the following examples:

(7)

- a. *kurat ʔal-ʔadidas **tigil** **tara** T-ANZIL ib-nis^ʕ
 Def-ball Def-Adidas **PRT** **PRT** 3S.F-launch.PRS in-middle
 Def-holiday
 ʔal-ʔidzazah

Intended meaning: ‘A new version is TO BE LAUNCHED by the end of the holiday.’

⁴⁶ I cannot test *tara* in sentences with *vedi* as the two elements are agreeing heads; hence their occurrence runs against my postulated constraint: the occurrence of more than one agreeing particle in the same clause is prohibited, see section 3.8.2.

b. *ʔal-imiḥana:t ʔefwa tara TAʔADʒALAN
 Def-examinations **PRT** **PRT** postpone.PASS
 ma ḥazʕart
 Neg prepared.I

Intended meaning: ‘The examinations WERE POSTPONED. I have not prepared.’

If we assume that *tara* is a head that projects the C-Topic layer, the contrast between the grammatical sentences in (6) and the ill-formed sentences in (7) is compatible with the hierarchy of topics proposed by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) in that the C-Topic Phrase c-commands the F-Topic Phrase.

I now turn back to the observation that the element with which *tara* agrees must be read with contrastive stress, implying a set of alternatives as well as updating the conversational common ground content, via the contrastive stress it assigns to the item it marks. We can see that the subject *Omar* in (8) below must be read with contrastive stress on it, as indicating that Omar, not somebody else from some set of alternative persons, saw the woman (see the dialogues in (1)).

(8) **tara-h** OMAR ʃaf l-ḥurmah.
 PRT-3SM Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
 ‘OMAR saw the woman.’

The element with which the inflectional suffix on *tara* agrees is compatible with the definition of C-topic (i.e., the entity which is contrasted with other entities in the conversational common ground and the entity that updates the conversational common ground content (cf. Krifka 2007; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010)). In (8), the agreement between *tara* and *Omar* indicates that Omar was the one who saw the woman, not some other member belonging to the set that includes Omar. Consider the following dialogue for concreteness:

(9) Speaker A: *flu:n maharat Firas bi-l-malʕab*
How skills Firas in-Def-field
'How are Firas's skills on the (football) field?'

Speaker B: **tara-hin** *MUNAWALAT-UH dagigah*
PRT-3P passing-his accurate
'HIS PASSING is accurate.'

Speaker A: *tamam*
Perfect
'Perfect!'

Speaker C: * **tara-h** *HAMAS-UH dajim ʕa:li*
PRT-3S.M passion-his always high
w jilhim zumalaʔ-uh
and inspire colleagues-his
'HIS PASSION is always high which inspires his colleagues.'

In the dialogue above, based on Speaker A's question/inquiry, a specific set of entities is established in the conversational common ground. Both the speaker and the interlocutor(s) have access to this set of entities in the conversational common ground, and among them the interlocutor selects one entity to serve as the felicitous answer to the question raised by the speaker (Kruijff and Steedman 2003; Büring 2003). The conversational common ground's containing specific entities which Speaker A considers shared knowledge between him/her and the interlocutor results in the Speaker's question/inquiry being answered (cf. Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). The entities in the conversational common ground must be familiar, specific and known to all the conversational participants. Under this view, Speaker A, in his first utterance, asks about Firas's football skills, the basic football skills, conventionally considered as characteristics of a physically fit professional player, including passing, dribbling, and controlling etc. Speaker B's utterance contains passing, which is a familiar characteristic factor in making a professional player. Speaker B, hence, selects *MUNAWALATUH* 'his passing' resulting in a felicitous answer to Speaker A's question. The ungrammaticality of Speaker C's utterance is due to the fact that *HAMASUH* 'his passion' is an entity that falls outside the closed set already created in the conversational common ground, which is unfamiliar; *HAMASUH* 'his

passion’, as is known to all footballers, is not a skill. Hence, the incompatibility of *tara* to mark it.

In line with these observations, we are now able to account for the interaction of *tara* with the other elements of the sentence (the subject and the object). Like *bedi*, *tara* has a set of unvalued ϕ -features as well as a valued [C-TOP] feature. However, unlike *bedi*, *tara* has an additional helpful device, that is, the contrastive stress spelled on the item that *tara* marks, which is interpreted at the PF interface. In the next sections, I investigate in detail the interaction of *tara* with the other sentence elements.

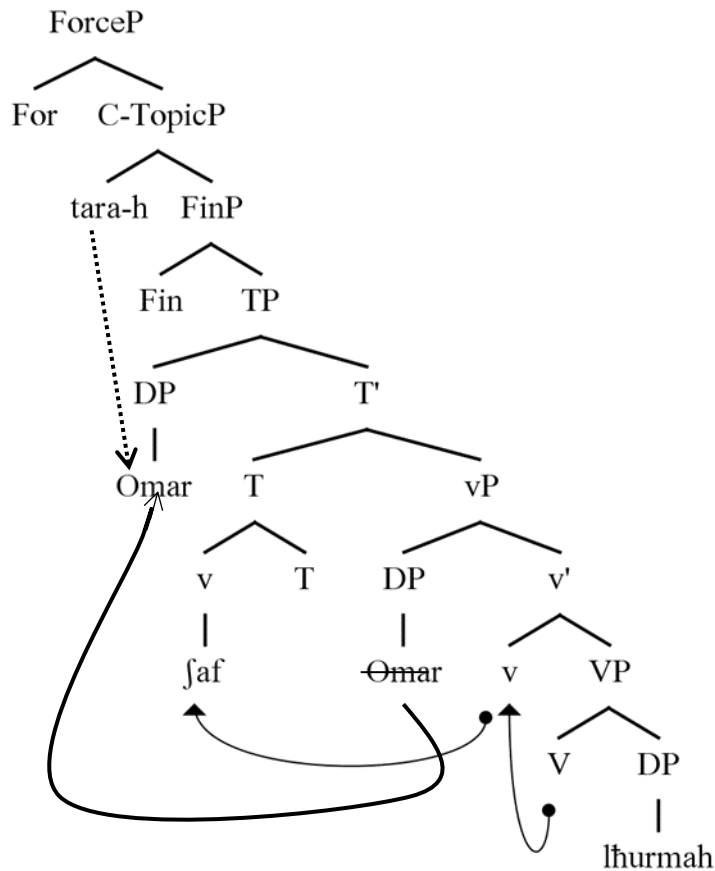
4.5 *tara* as a probe and the subject as a goal

Under the present analysis, *tara*, having a valued [TOP] feature and unvalued ϕ -features, is a probe. Once *tara* enters the syntactic derivation, it starts searching for an active goal within its c-command domain (cf. Chomsky 2000, 2001) to value its unvalued features. Let us explore the following sentence, where *tara* hosts an inflectional suffix that agrees with the subject *Omar*, the element that *tara* marks.

- (10) **tara-h** OMAR jaf l-ħurmah.
 PRT-3SM Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
 ‘OMAR saw the woman.’

In (10), the subject *Omar* is the element that has the matching unvalued [TOP] feature, which also seeks valuation. As a result, a probe-goal configuration is established between *tara* and *Omar*. The unvalued ϕ -features of *tara* are valued by the valued ϕ -features of the subject *Omar*, resulting in spelling out the ϕ -features of *tara* as the subject inflectional suffix *-h* on *tara*. The unvalued [TOP] feature of *Omar* is assigned the value C-Topic. The C-Topic interpretation at LF is achieved through the chain composed by the particle and the topicalised item. Moreover, this DP is also interpreted at PF, by means of the contrastive stress assigned to it. The schematic representation of (10) is given in (11) below:

(11)



Because the C-topic head is filled by *tara* bearing the unvalued ϕ -features, it can mark the element that serves as a C-topic by virtue of the inflectional suffix and the stress spelled out on it in overt syntax. There is no need for the subject (the entity expressing the C-topic) to move to Spec of the C-TopicP. Movement of the subject *Omar* in (10) to the Spec of TP is also not demanded by *tara* but by the [EPP] on T°.

Now, let's account for the cases where *tara* agrees with the object.

4.6 *tara* as a probe and the object as a goal

The *Phase Impenetrability Condition* (Chomsky 2000, 2001) provides us with an elegant account of the cases when *tara* has an inflectional suffix agreeing with the object. Consider the following example:

- (12) **tara-ah** *faf-ah* L-HURMAH Omar.
PRT-3SF see.PST.3S.M-her Def-woman Omar
‘THE WOMAN, Omar saw her.’

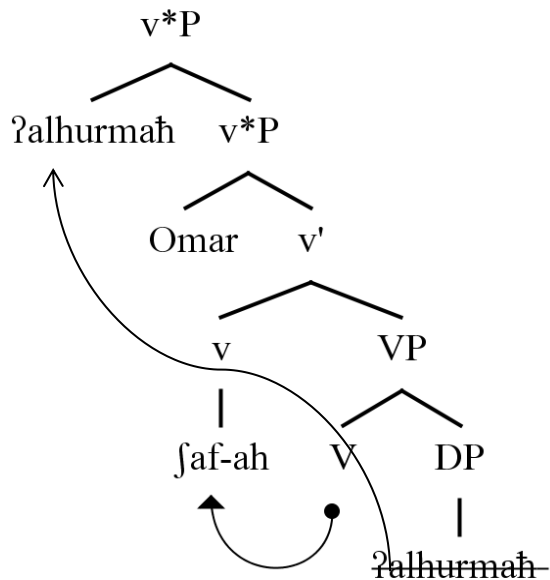
In (12), the inflectional suffix *-ah* spelled out on *tara* is specified as [3SF] rather than [3SM], which means that *tara* agrees with the object *lhurmah* ‘the woman’ rather than the subject *Omar* (see 1b above). As expected, the object must be said with contrastive stress, presupposing some set of alternatives. Therefore, the element that functions as a C-Topic is the object rather than the subject. Moreover, like the cases with *vedi* (when the object serves as the F-Topic marked by *vedi*), the word order of *tara*’s associated clause is VOS. The object (said with contrastive stress and expressing a C-Topic) cannot intervene between *tara* and the main verb as in (13a) or remain *in situ* (to the right of the subject) as in (13b):

- (13) a. ***tara-ah** L-HURMAH *faf-ah* Omar.
PRT-3SF Def-woman see.PST.3S.M-her Omar
Intended meaning: ‘THE WOMAN, Omar saw her.’
- b. ***tara-ah** *faf-ah* Omar L-HURMAH .
PRT-3SF see.PST.3S.M-her Omar Def-woman
Intended meaning: ‘THE WOMAN, Omar saw her.’

In the ill-formed sentence in (13a), the object *lhurmah* ‘the woman’ intervenes between *tara* and the main verb *faf* with an inflectional suffix *-ah* agreeing with the object being spelled out on the verb, whereas in (13b), the object *lhurmah* ‘the woman’ remains *in situ* (to the right of the subject *Omar*). To explain these facts, I extend the analysis of the agreement between *vedi* and the object to the agreement between *tara* and the object. The object is initially probed by *v*. As a result, the unvalued ϕ -features of *v* get valued, and eventually get spelled out as the inflectional suffix *ah* on *v*, while the object gets assigned accusative case. Then, the object leaves its position as the complement of the verb *fafah* ‘saw’ and lands in the outer Spec of *v*P* where it c-commands the subject (hence, the object precedes the subject when the structure is spelled out). The movement of the object to the edge of *v*P* is forced by the unvalued [TOP] feature it bears. Given that this feature is not valued within its source phase, *v*P*, the object moves to the Spec of *v*P* so it is visible for further operations in the CP phase. According to The *Phase Impenetrability Condition* (2000, 2001), only the edge of the *v*P* phase is accessible

to further operations by heads in the next higher phase (i.e. CP). The partial schematic representation of (12) in (14) below shows the movement of the object to the outer Spec of v*P.

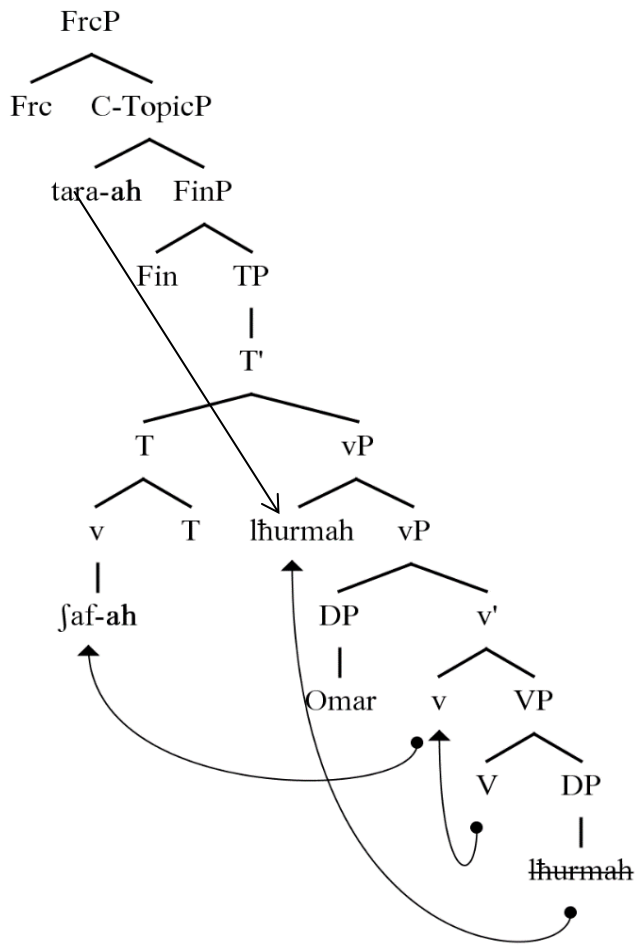
(14)



The object lands in the outer Spec of v*P, escaping its own phase transfer and looking for a potential valuator. Once *tara* is merged, they maintain an Agree relation. The object has valued ϕ -features, which value the unvalued ϕ -features of *tara*, resulting in the spelling out of the ϕ -features of *tara* as the inflectional suffix *ah* on *tara*. Consider the schematic representation of sentence (12), repeated below as (15), in (16):

- (15) **tara-ah** ʃaf-ah L-HURMAH Omar.
PRT-3SF see.PST.3S.M-her Def-woman Omar
 ‘THE WOMAN, Omar saw her.’

(16)



In this way, the unvalued [TOP] feature of the object is valued as a C-Topic, and the object is assigned contrastive stress at PF, hence, there is no need for any extra movement of the object. Given that *tara* has unvalued ϕ -features but not an [EPP] feature, the object remains at the edge of v^*P .

The next issue to be addressed is the cases where *tara* appears bare, without an inflectional suffix spelled on it and how the contrastive stress *tara* assigns to the topicalised item works.

4.7 Bare *tara*

Like *vedi*, *tara* can agree with elements which do not have ϕ -features such as adjuncts and/or the lexical verb. As shown, the presence of an inflectional suffix on *tara* depends on the element that *tara* agrees with. In cases where this element has ϕ -features, i.e. is a DP, its ϕ -features value the ϕ -features of *tara*, and spell them out as an inflectional suffix on *tara*. On the other hand, in cases where the matching item does not have ϕ -features, no spell out of the ϕ -features of *tara* occurs, leading to the lack of an inflectional suffix on *tara*, a fact which presumes that the ϕ -features of *tara* are valued through default agreement which happens to have a null spell out at PF.

Like *vedi*, when *tara* appears bare, it either topicalizes the verb of the associated clause or an adjunct. Consider the following two dialogues, where *tara* agrees with the verb (17) and with an adjunct (18):

(17)

Speaker A: *wif jsawi Firas ?as^s-subuh qabul ?as^s-s^saf*
what does.3S.M Firas Def-morning before Def-line up
bi-l-madrisah
in-Def-school
'What does Firas do in the morning before lining up at school?'

Speaker B1: ***tara***(*-h) Firas JAQRA
PRT Firas read.3S.M
'Firas READS.'

Speaker B2: ****tara*** Firas *jaqra*
PRT Firas read.3S.M
Intended meaning: 'Firas READS.'

(18)

Speaker A: *floan grajat Firas ?as^s-subuh qabul ?as^s-s^saf*
How read.3S.M Firas Def-morning before Def-line up
bi-l-madrisah Jistifi:d?
in-Def-school benefit.3S.M

‘How does Firas read in the morning on the way to the school? Does he benefit from that?’

Speaker B: **tara**-(**h*) *(IB-TARKI:Z) Firas *jaqra* *ʕafan ʕas?ilat ?as^s-subuh*
PRT in-concentration Firas read.3S.M for question Def-morning
‘Firas reads intensively for the pre-class questions/exercises.’

Speaker C: ***tara** Firas *jaqra/JAQRA*
PRT Firas read.3S.M
Intended meaning: ‘Firas READS.’

Speaker D: ***tara-h** Firas *jaqra/JAQRA*
PRT-3SM Firas read.3S.M
Intended meaning: ‘FIRAS reads.’

In line with the pragmatic function and syntactic behaviour of *tara* explained above, in (17), Speaker A’s inquiry evokes a set of specific entities which are discourse given, familiar and available in the conversational common ground, (including Firas’s act of reading, eating, drinking, speaking) among which the interlocutor selects one entity to serve as the felicitous answer to A’s question, excluding the other alternatives (Kruijff and Steedman 2003; Büring 2003; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007). In (17), Speaker B1’s utterance contains *tara*, implemented to select one entity (Firas’s act of reading) out of the set of alternatives already established. In this sentence, the incompatibility of the inflectional suffix *h* on *tara* as well as the obligatory contrastive stress the verb *JAQRA* ‘read’ bears serve as evidence that *tara* marks the verb. The same logic holds true for (18), where *tara* marks the adjunct *IBTARKI:Z* ‘intensively’ (witness the position of this PP being adjacent to *tara*, which I assume is due to movement). What is more here is that *tara* assigns the PP (18B) and the verb (17B1) contrastive stress at PF. Under this view and given that neither verbs nor adjuncts have ϕ -features, no spell out of the ϕ -features of *tara* occurs, which I propose, as the case we saw with *vedi*, are valued

by default agreement with the consequence that lack of PF content (null spell out) of the φ -features of *tara* occurs.

In the next subsection, I investigate some residual issues relating to *tara*, including the possibility of having *tara* with a preceding or following subject/object with or without using an inflectional suffix on *tara*. In addition, this subsection investigates the reason for not having multiple C-Topics.

4.8 Residual issues

Firstly, as we have seen, *tara* marks the subject *in situ*, but the subject can precede *tara* with an inflectional suffix on *tara*.

- (19) Firas, **tara-ah** UMMU-H lat^hi:fah
 Firas **PRT-3SF** mother-his gentle
 ‘(As for) Firas, HIS MOTHER is gentle.’

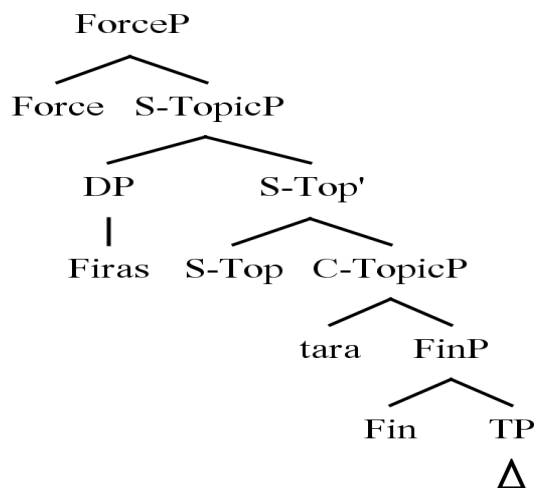
This possibility is predicted by the theory if the item preceding *tara* in (19) expresses an S-Topic rather than a C-Topic (or an F-Topic). What bears out this assumption is the fact that (19) can be phrased using *mar*, which projects an S-Topic phrase, without yielding any difference in the sentence meaning, while *tara* in its position marks the DP local to it, as shown in (20) below:

- (20) a. Firas **mar, tara-ah** UMMU-H lat^hi:fah
 Firas **PRT PRT-3SF** mother-his gentle
 ‘As for Firas, HIS MOTHER is gentle.’
- b. Firas **mar tara-(*h)** UMMU-H lat^hi:fah
 Firas **PRT PRT-3SM** mother-his gentle
 ‘As for Firas, HIS MOTHER is gentle.’

Relying on the hierarchical order of topics (S-Topic > C-Topic > F-Topic), the S-Topic asymmetrically c-commands the other two topics, whereas the C-Topic asymmetrically c-commands the F-Topic. Adopting Kayne (1994)’s antisymmetric approach to linearization,

(*Firas*) in (19) and (20) is an S-Topic that asymmetrically c-commands the C-topic Phrase, which is headed by *tara*, as shown in (21).

(21)



Secondly, as we discussed in cases of bare *tara*, the subject surfaces adjacent to *tara*, to the right of it, in the case in which *tara* probes the verb rather than the subject, as in (17). However, there are cases where the object, rather than the subject, appears to the right of *tara*, but with no inflectional suffix on *tara*, as in (22) below:

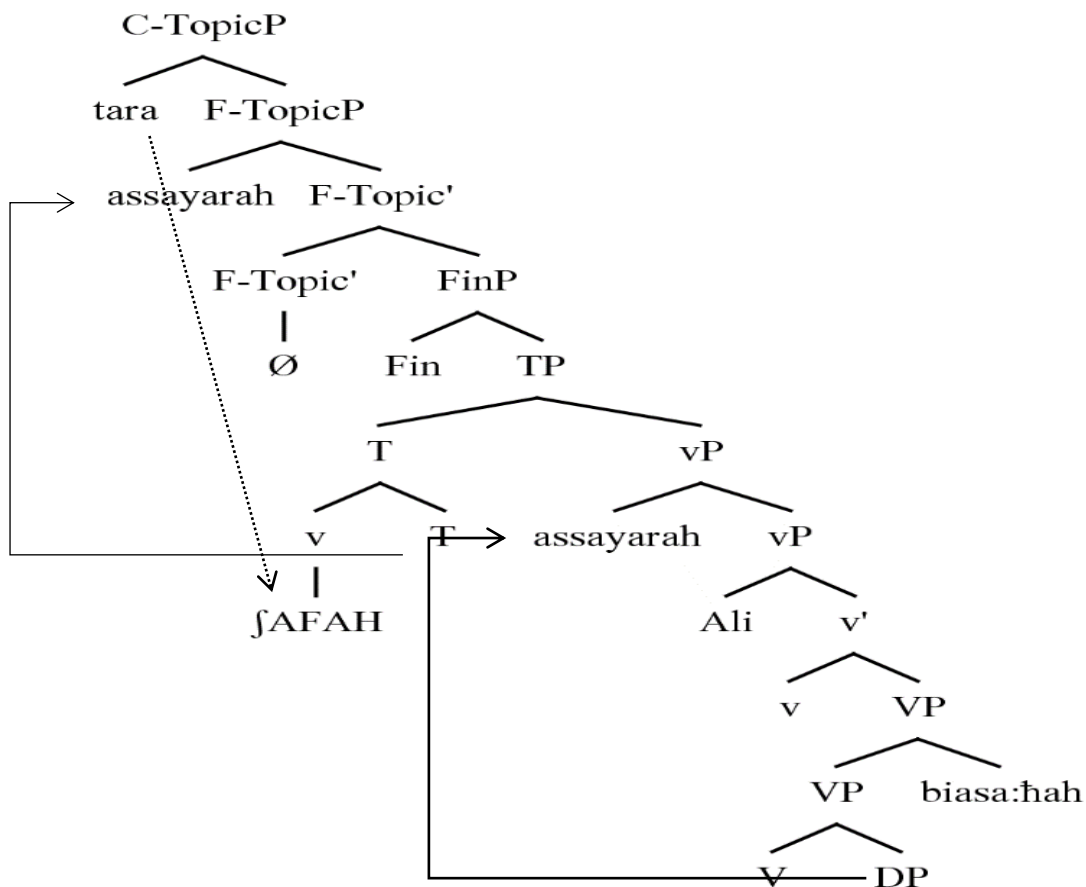
- (22) **tara** as-sayarah ∫AF-AH Ali bi-a-sa:ħah
 PRT Def-car see.PST.3S.M-it Ali in-Def-yard
 ‘Ali SAW the car in the yard (he didn’t imagine it).’

In (22), *tara* is merged and is immediately followed by the object *assayarah* ‘the car’. However, no inflectional suffix is spelled out on *tara*, indicating that *tara* doesn’t maintain an Agree relation with any nominal item (the local object, in which the object would have valued the ϕ -features of *tara*, as an inflectional suffix *ah*, or the visible subject in which the inflectional suffix, would be *h*). Hence, in the first place, given the lack of agreement between *tara* and the object, it follows that movement of the object is not motivated as far as *tara* is concerned. However, given that *tara* has a PF property, the contrastive stress it assigns to the item it marks, we see that the verb bears the contrastive stress, indicating that *tara* marks the verb in (22). What *tara* probes here (the element marked as a C-Topic) is the verb. The question arising here

is what triggers movement of the object to a position to the right of *tara* and to the left of T? Within the approach we are adopting here, one would assume that movement of the object is triggered by an unvalued feature on the object that *tara* can value. But this is not the case because *tara* does not agree with the object. Given that the syntactic position of the object is below *tara*, the lack of an inflectional suffix on *tara* spelling out the ϕ -features of the object, the fact that the object is non-contrastive, and the fact that *tara* assigns contrastive stress to the verb, it would follow that the object *assayarah* ‘the car’ is interpreted as an F-Topic (a backgrounded, given element known for all interlocutors and d(iscourse)-linked with the ongoing conversation).

In this light, we can generalise that (i) *tara* is not an F-Topic particle, but rather a C-Topic particle, and (ii) a null F-Topic head is void of ϕ -features, but, instead, has an [EPP] feature within its featural grid, triggering fronting of the object DP in (22), which is schematically shown as follows:

(23)



Following Ouhalla's (1997) analysis of Focus particles in SA (see chapter one), the generalization we can formulate at this point is that when a clause contains a C-TopicP headed by an overt head like *tara*, and an F-TopicP with a null head, the entity expressing C-Topic (the verb in (23)) is marked *in situ* while the entity expressing F-Topic (the object in (23)) must move to the Spec of the null F-TopicP. In other words, the Topic head overtly realized by means of an agreeing particle is the one that wins, marking the relevant Topic element *in situ*, while the other can only mark by attracting the relevant element to its Spec. Evidence supporting this contention comes from the fact that in (22) above, a T-related adverb adjoining TP can surface to the right of the moved object DP and to the left of the verb, which is adjoined to T, as shown in (24)⁴⁷ below:

- (24) **tara** as-sayarah tau fAF-AH Ali bi-a-sa:ħah
PRT Def-car now see.PST.3S.M-it Ali in-Def-yard
 'The car, Ali (just) SAW it in the yard (he didn't imagine it).'

Deduced from (22-24) is that *tara* probes the verb and marks it as the C-Topic past the closer DP, thereby accounting for the crucial absence of overt agreement between *tara* and the object, which, in turn, crosses the verb in T and moves to Spec of null F-TopicP, forced by [EPP] on the null F-Top^o, hence, expressing an F-Topic. Clear also from (22-24) is the argument I raised earlier that the particle probes a non-nominal item, the verb, which results in the contrastive stress spelled on the verb. This latter observation also consolidates the fact that if the subject (or the object) is the item that has the matching [TOP] feature, which is located in the same phase of and visible to *tara*, *tara* would have agreed with it.

The third observation relating to *tara* is that recursivity, which is a property of F-Topic but not S-Topic or C-Topic, is not possible with *tara* (no multiple C-Topics are allowed). Consider the following ungrammatical sentences:

- (25) a. *ʔal- ʔiʕjaal as-sayarah **tara**-hum rkub-u-ah.
 Def-boys Def-car **PRT**-3P.M drive.PST-3PM-it
 Intended meaning: 'THE BOYS, THE CAR, they drove it.'

⁴⁷ Again, when the object is topicalised, it moves to the edge of the lower phase, blocking movement of the subject to Spec TP, which explains the position of the subject being post-verbally in (22-24). Note here that the object undergoes another movement, to the Spec of null F-TopP once F-Top is merged.

- b. *as-sayarah ʔal- ʔiʕjaal **tara**-hum rkub-u-ah.
 Def-car Def-boys **PRT**-3P.M drive.PST-3PM-it
 Intended meaning: ‘THE BOYS, THE CAR, they drove it.’

Although the corresponding sentence with *vedi* is grammatical (see chapter 3), this sentence is ungrammatical with *tara*. This can be accounted for following the observation made by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010) that C-Topic is not recursive. Sentence (25) is ungrammatical because it has two C-Topics: *al- ʔiʕjaal* ‘the boys’, with which *tara* agrees, and *as-sayarah* ‘the car’ which tucks in with the C-Topic phrase in the sense of Richards (1997 and 1999). This is in accordance with Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007), Frascarelli (2008) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010), who demonstrate that there is only one realization of a C-Topic allowed per clause. The ungrammaticality in (25) lends further support to my claim that *tara* is a C-Topic particle heading a projection which does not allow for multiple realizations.

The last point to mention here is that when *tara* is not part of the numeration of the given sentence, there is no way available to mark the C-Topicalized element apart from movement of the C-topicalized element to the Spec of the C-Topic Phrase, as the following sentences indicate:

- (26) a. **tara**-h tau OMAR ʔaf l-ħurmah.
PRT-3SM now Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
 ‘OMAR just saw the woman.’
- b. OMAR tau ʔaf l-ħurmah.
 Omar now see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
 ‘OMAR just saw the woman.’
- c. *tau OMAR ʔaf l-ħurmah.
 Now Omar see.PST.3S.M Def-woman
 Intended meaning: ‘OMAR just saw the woman.’

The sentence in (26a) has the DP *OMAR* to the right of the temporal adverb *tau* ‘now’, which adjoins TP, c-commanding the subject DP, indicating that this subject DP is in Spec TP. By

contrast, (26b,c) show that the DP *OMAR* must appear to the left, rather than to the right, of the temporal adverb *tau* ‘now’ when *tara* is not merged, which I argue is the Spec of C-Topic Phrase. What forces the C-topicalized element, the DP *OMAR*, to move to Spec of C-Topic Phrase is an [EPP] feature, compensating for the lack of ϕ -features being part of the featural grid of null TOP^o. This line of analysis points similarly to the generalization I made for *vedt*. Following Ouhalla’s (1997) approach on focus particles in SA, then, it becomes clear that the choice between movement of the element expressing the C-Topic to the left periphery or its remaining *in situ* depends on the availability of a C-Topic overt head with unvalued ϕ -features like *tara*. If there is such an overt head, there is no movement to Spec C-TopicP. If there is no such overt head, the element serving as a C-Topic must move to the edge of the C-Topic Phrase, by hypothesis forced by the [EPP] on the null head of C-TopicP, as in speaker’s C. Consider the dialogue (1a) above, repeated below as (27) but lacking *tara*.

(27)

Speaker A ‘father’: min minu-kum jaf ʔal-hurmah
 who amongst-you saw.3S.M Def-woman
 illi skanat ib-ħarat-na tau
 Comp moved in.3S.F in-neighbourhood-our now
 ‘Who (amongst you) has seen the woman who just moved in
 in our neighbourhood?’

Speaker B ‘mother’: ʔana ma jift-ah li lhi:n lakin ma ʔadri:
 I Neg saw.1S til now but Neg know.I
 ʕan ʕjal-na ja ʕjal! Ma jiftu-ah
 about children-our VOC children Q saw.2P-3S.F
 ‘I have not seen her yet, but I do not know about our children.
 You children! Have you seen her?’

Speaker C ‘daughter’: OMAR tau jaf
 OMAR now see.PST.3S.M
 l-hurmah.
 Def-woman
 ‘OMAR, (neither me nor Ali), he just saw the woman.’

In speaker C's utterance, the element expressing the C-Topic, *Omar*, moves to the Spec of null C-TopicP. Evidence for this is, again, provided in syntax, where the relevant DP appears to the left of the T-related adverb *tau* 'now', which is adjoined to TP. Here, I reiterate the generalization I made for *kedɪ*.

Before I close up this chapter, one important note related to the feature-based analysis I have developed in this work is in order, which I discuss it in the following dedicated section.

4.9 Feature valuation and the alternative analysis

As we have seen, I have assumed that the Top head carries two sets of features: ϕ -features and a [Top] feature. As discussed, on the view that functional/discourse heads like Top cannot conceptually be assumed to carry valued ϕ -features, I have proposed that the ϕ -features Top carries are unvalued. Following Chomsky's (1995 *et seq*) in that a projection has to have at least a single valued feature to be licit at the interfaces, I have proposed that the other feature that Top has, that is, [Top] is valued. Consequently, the topicalised item, be it a DP, v, Adv etc. carries an unvalued instance of [Top] while the head Top carries a valued instance of [Top], and the relevant interpretation, be it S-topic, C-topic or F-topic, is achieved by the chain composed of the two items as a result of an Agree relation held between them. For instance, the particle and the subject, under this view, after the former assigns the latter the value S-topic, are sent to the interface in a single chain and phase for S-topic interpretation.

However, one might give up the idea of chain and rather assume an alternative hypothesis that the topicalised item, not the probe head which is realised by the particle, carries the valued feature [Top]. Under this analysis, the particle would inevitably be assumed to have unvalued ϕ -features and an unvalued [Top] feature, thereby ignoring Chomsky's (1995 *et seq*) interface hypothesis. Then, the particle, once merged, would probe its c-command domain and maintain an Agree relation with the item having a valued [Top] feature. If this item is the subject, for instance, Agree holds while the subject is in situ, as has been analysed. As a result, the valued ϕ -features of the subject value the unvalued ϕ -features of the particle and the latter delete at the LF interface, while they might be spelled out as a suffix at the PF interface, in which case this suffix does not affect the interpretation of the sentence. At the same time, the valued [Top] feature of the DP values the unvalued [Top] feature of the particle.

The theory articulated in the present work is consistent with movement being consistently Greed-based. Greed-based movement, together with the PIC, provides an explanation for partial movement of topical constituents, i.e. why a topic constituent moves to the edge of vP, as seen in (15-16) in this chapter, for instance. This follows if, following Chomsky (1995), Bošković (2007, 2014) and Holmberg *et al.* (2017), any constituent with an unvalued feature which is not valued within its minimal phase moves to the edge of the phase. Given the assumption that the object, not the Top head, has a valued [Top] feature, and on the assumption that movement is triggered by greed (Chomsky 1995, Bošković 2007, 2014, Holmberg *et al.* 2017), then, the question is: what motivates the movement of the object in (15-16) in this chapter, given that it expresses topic *in situ*? To avoid this problem, we could make recourse to the altruism approach to movement (Lasnik 1995). In this case, in (15-16) the object moves in order to value the unvalued [Top] of the particle, not in order to satisfy any need of its own. However, this does not account for the partial movement that we see in examples such as in (15-16): What triggers movement of the topic object to the edge of the vP? We could postulate an EPP feature at v, which attracts topics, specifically. However, this would be little more than a stipulation.

This is not the only problem for the alternative hypothesis that the topic constituent, not the Top head, has the valued topic feature. Two other problems are: (i) What accounts for the specific topic interpretation that the object (or the subject) is assigned? In other words, if the DP has a valued [Top], what tells us if this feature is S-topic, C-topic or F-topic, in association with the particle? And (ii) if we assume that the object (or the subject) has a valued [Top] feature, then we run into a violation of the Activation Condition (Chomsky 2000), which states that for an item to operate as a goal in a syntactic derivation, it has to be active, where being active means having an unvalued feature. As is well known, the subject/object item enters the derivation with two types of features: valued ϕ -features and an unvalued case feature, where the latter suffices to make this item active, and, hence, free to enter an Agree relation with T, v, or P and getting its unvalued case feature valued in the process (Chomsky 2001). With this in mind, consider the derivation where the subject/object has the valued [Top] feature and the Top head in the C-domain has the unvalued [Top] feature. At the point where Top is merged in the C-domain, the subject/object will have had its case feature valued. Lacking any unvalued feature, it will be inactive, hence not visible for a probe.

Therefore, I conclude that the analysis that the topic constituent has the unvalued Top, which is valued by the head, overt or null, and is assigned the value that the head carries, i.e. S-topic,

C-topic or F-topic (where the interpretation is achieved by the chain created in the relevant phase, a hypothesis I introduce here as the ‘phase-chain hypothesis’) is preferred over the alternative analysis which states that the topic constituent in TP has the valued [Top] feature, while the head Top has the unvalued counterpart. My arguments against the alternative analysis are that the alternative analysis (i) would require that functional heads like Top bear valued ϕ -features, (ii) would violate the activation condition, and (iii) would not explain partial movement of topical constituents (but would have to stipulate it, for instance by positing a special [EPP] feature which is sensitive to topics).

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the syntactic behaviour of the particle *tara*. It turns out that *tara* is a C-Topic particle that projects a C-Topic Phrase in the sense of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). It has a valued [TOP] feature, valued as C-Topic, and unvalued ϕ -features. The latter features make it a probe searching for a goal in the TP domain. The goal, looking for valuation, has a matching, unvalued [TOP] feature which is assigned a value as a C-Topic in the Agree process, and is thereby interpreted as a contrastive topic at the interface. If the goal has ϕ -features, they will value the ϕ -features of *tara*, which get spelled out as a suffix. If not, the ϕ -features of *tara* have a null spell-out at the PF. In addition, when *tara* agrees with the object, the object moves to the outer Spec of v^*P , resulting in a VOS word order being forced on the sentence. Movement of the object is triggered by the unvalued [TOP] feature it carries, in order to be visible to *tara*, and have its unvalued [TOP] feature valued. It has been shown that, unlike all the particles investigated in this research, *tara* assigns a value spelled out at the PF (contrastive stress) to the item it marks, whether this item is nominal or non-nominal. This chapter accounts as well for the lack of tuck-in (Richards 1997, 1999) in the case of *tara*. It was argued that multiple realization of a C-Topic is not possible, which follows from the rule that the C-Topic is not recursive. That is, only one realization of a C-Topic is tolerated per clause (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007, Frascarelli 2008, and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010)).

5 CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusions

This thesis investigated a set of clause-initial discourse particles in North Hail Arabic. The main conclusion is that the topics typology put forward by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) for German and Italian extends to NHA. The Shifting Topic (S-Topic) is situated above the Focus Phrase, followed by Contrastive Topic (C-Topic), which is in turn followed by Familiar Topic (F-Topic). The discourse particles investigated in this research serve as morphological realisation of the projections of the different topics advanced by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). All the investigated particles were analysed as heads. The particles in this thesis were categorised as agreeing particles (hosting an inflectional suffix) and non-agreeing particles (not hosting an inflectional suffix). It is argued that the topic interpretation triggers syntactic operations. It is achieved either via an Agree relation that is established between the particle (probe) and the topicalised item (goal), or via movement, internal or external, of the goal to the Spec of the projection headed by the probe. In addition, this thesis concludes that the left periphery of NHA doesn't tolerate the realization of two ϕ -feature-bearing particles. If there are two such particles, one is morphologically realized and agrees, while the other is null and triggers movement, in the sense of Ouhalla (1997).

Chapter one discussed the status of the term 'discourse particle', reviewing some of the related literature, with special attention to generative analyses advanced in a cross-linguistic perspective. It also paid attention to the available generative studies on Arabic discourse particles, mostly in Standard Arabic. Further, it briefly reviewed recent literature covering Najdi Arabic, of which North Hail Arabic is a branch, dealing with the pragmatic status of the discourse particles mentioned. This chapter offered an overview of the current literature on the left periphery of Standard Arabic and dialectal Arabic, with special attention on Najdi Arabic. This includes the different word orders these Arabic dialects. Finally, the North Hail Arabic discourse particles under investigation were introduced, with emphasis on their syntactic position and their morpho-syntactic status (distinguishing between agreeing and non-agreeing particles), their headedness property, and their pragmatics function as topicalizers

Chapter two served to discuss and analyse two discourse particles, *mar* and *ʕad*, that have the same function, S-Topic markers, and appear to occupy the same syntactic position. A syntactic analysis was provided to *mar*. It discussed previous analyses of DP fronting to the left periphery in Arabic, most notably Aoun *et al.* (2010) and Ouhalla (1994b, 1997) and Shlonsky (2000), in relation to Rizzi's (1997) Split CP hypothesis. It offered a close investigation of the constituent that *mar* or *ʕad* marks which expresses topic as well as the frequently investigated item in the Arabic literature, the clitic left dislocated item, CLLD. However, it was shown that the constituent that *mar* or *ʕad* marks does not show the same function as CLLD, which is another, functionally distinct topic construction. For this, Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl's (2007) topic typology is adopted, to make available an elegant account of the discourse particles, their function, and their interaction with the main body of the clause (TP-domain). In line with the theory proposed by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010), it was shown that the item marked by *mar* or *ʕad* functions as S-Topic, rather than a general aboutness topic. This conclusion was supported by evidence from syntax in that the item marked by *mar* or *ʕad* is root phenomenon and non-recursive.

Chapter three provided a syntactic analysis of the F-Topic particles in NHA (*ʕedi*, *tsin*, *ʔefwa* and *tigil*) which head the F-Topic Phrase. *ʕedi* (as well as *tsin*) carries a valued F-[TOP] feature and a set of unvalued ϕ -features valued by either the subject, the object, verb, or PP adjuncts. When the goal has ϕ -features, an inflectional suffix appears on *ʕedi* as a reflex of the Agree operation (when *ʕedi* agrees with the subject or the object); otherwise, the ϕ -feature of *ʕedi* have a null spell out at PF, the case in which they are valued by default agreement (when *ʕedi* agrees with verbs and PP adjuncts which don't have ϕ -features). In addition, when *ʕedi* agrees with the object, it was shown that VOS word order is forced, because of movement of the object to the outer edge of v*P so as to be visible to *ʕedi*, and have its unvalued [TOP] valued. Moreover, this chapter introduced an account for multiple F-Topics following the general lines of the Tuck-in approach (Richards 1997, 1999). The multiple F-Topic interpretation, expressed by the subject and the object, is achieved in syntax via movement of the two items to the left of *ʕedi*. As for *ʔefwa* and *tigil*, I have shown that these are F-Topic heads, but without any ϕ -content. They are instead endowed with an [EPP] feature which forces the element carrying an unvalued [TOP] feature to move to their Spec. Moreover, an analysis to the inflectional suffix related to the object and attached to the verb was provided. For this, I have advanced my hypothesis which I term the 'topical clitic generalisation', challenging the previous analyses proposed in the related literature. This hypothesis argues that this inflectional suffix is the spell

out of the unvalued ϕ features on the verb, which are spelled out by the object only when the object has a [TOP] feature. This chapter also proposed an analysis of the inflectional suffix that is spelled out on the agreeing particles when they agree with the subject or the object. Following Shlonsky (1997), it was argued that the inflectional suffix is an outcome of an Agree relation between the particle and the topicalised nominal item, the subject or object DP.

Chapter four investigated the syntactic behaviour of the particle *tara*. It turns out that *tara* is a C-Topic particle that projects C-Topic Phrase in the sense of Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). It has a valued C-[TOP] feature and unvalued ϕ -features which are valued by the element that functions as a C-Topic bearing ϕ -content or by default agreement when the C-topicalized element does not have ϕ -features. Also, the analysis of cases when *tara* agrees with the object is consistent with that of *bedi* when agreeing with the object, that is, VOS word order is derived due to movement of the object to the outer edge of v*P in order to be visible to *tara*, and have its unvalued [TOP] valued. It was shown when *tara* agrees with the topicalised item, be it the subject, the object, the verb or an adjunct, this item bears a contrastive stress, which is spelled at PF. This chapter provides evidence that multiple realization of a C-Topic is not possible, as the C-Topic is not recursive.

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