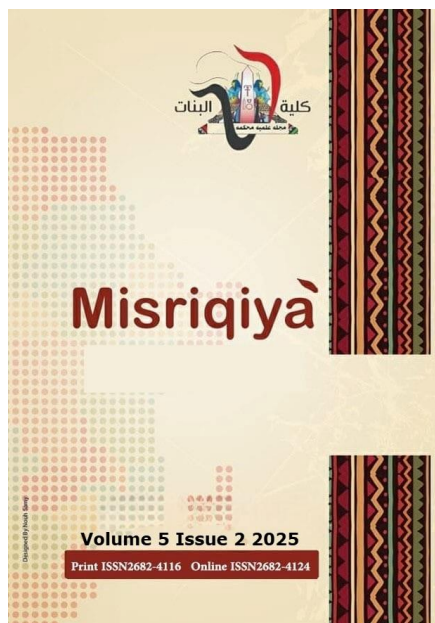




Split CP, Functional Categories, and Logical Form (LF) in Standard Arabic (SA): A Minimalist Approach

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Abstract

This research paper aims to explore the hierarchy of functional and lexical categories that occur under the complementizer phrase (CP) in the syntax of Standard Arabic (SA) according to Chomsky's (1981, 1986a) Principles and Parameters (P&P) theory along with his Minimalist Program (MP) (1995, 2000a, 2004). Rizzi (1997) proposes a strict hierarchy of phrases under a split CP according to which the Force phrase comes as the highest, the Focus phrase as the lowest, and the Topic phrase comes in the middle. The Arabic data provides concrete evidence that this strict hierarchical structure doesn't hold in the syntax of SA. This paper presents two pieces of evidence against the strict hierarchy in Rizzi (1997). The first counterargument derives from conditional sentences where a topicalized expression moves higher than the Force phrase. The second argument derives from the interaction between free relatives and conditionals. A moved wh-operator in a free relative may move higher in the projection. It is assumed to have the role of a conditional particle that mimics conditionals in assigning the jussive mood marker to both verbs in the conditional sentence. The universal constraint on barring multiple complementizers that serve the same semantic function in English is also observed in SA concerning affirmative complementizers.

Keywords: Split CP, Conditionals, Functional categories, Free relatives, Standard Arabic (SA)

1.0. Introduction

This research is conducted within the framework of the Minimalist Program (MP) (Chomsky 1995, 2000a, 2004) to the CP domain in Standard Arabic (SA), drawing on the cartographic model proposed by Rizzi (1997), which splits CP into hierarchically ordered functional projections, such as ForceP, TopicP, and FocusP. The analysis examines the distribution and interpretive roles of functional elements like *ʔinna*, *lam ʔal-ʔibtida:ʔ* “the Initiation [I]”, henceforth, *IL*, interrogative markers, conditional particles, free relatives, and exceptive constructions. These elements are evaluated concerning the cross-linguistic predictions of the Split CP hypothesis and their interpretive scope at LF. This paper is organized as follows: the first section presents the introduction. It is divided into two subsections: the first section explores research objectives, and the second investigates data collection and methodology. The second section presents the theoretical framework, whereas the third section represents the literature review. The fourth section analyzes the data and the last one concludes the findings of the study.

1.1 Research objectives:

This research aims to:

- i. investigate how Force, Topic, and Focus elements are distributed in SA within the Split CP framework, and what constraints govern their positioning.
- ii. examine how interrogative structures, multiple operators, and free relatives reflect the hierarchical organization proposed by Rizzi’s Split CP Hypothesis.
- iii. explore how exceptive and negative constructions in SA interact with the scope hierarchy in the left periphery.
- iv. analyze how functional heads such as *ʔinna* “indeed” and *lam ʔal-ʔibtida:ʔ* encode logical and discourse relations within the CP domain.
- v. compare the CP structure of SA with English to identify cross-linguistic insights into clause structure and left-peripheral architecture.

1.2 Data Collection and Methodology

This dissertation focuses on SA and English. SA is used in literature, academia, print and mass media, and law. Its word order is VSO and is a pro-drop language, i.e., the subject can be dropped because of the richness of inflectional morphology in Arabic. The methodology adopted in the study is a qualitative comparative between SA and English within Chomsky’s (1995)

Minimalist approach concerning Rizzi's (1997) Split CP hypothesis. In addition, the study uses a cartographic approach to explore the structure of the CP domain in SA. The data collected in this work relies on well-established Arab grammarians' books on SA such as, Hassan (1975) and Ibn Jinni (1988) and adds new examples to support or question the original ones. In some cases, similar constructions in English are used for comparison. All Arabic examples are presented with interlinear glosses to clarify their morphological and syntactic properties. Moreover, syntactic tree diagrams are provided to show the structure clearly.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical background of the paper. The Minimalist Program (MP) builds on the Principles and Parameters (P&P) model, as investigated by Chomsky (1981, 1986a), and aims at deriving syntactic structure through minimal steps, linking syntactic computation directly to interface levels, such as Logical Form (LF) and Phonetic Form (PF). This study adopts the (MP) as its core theoretical framework. MP (Chomsky 1993, and 1995) assumes that only linguistically necessary elements should be retained in syntactic analysis. Chomsky (1993) argues for eliminating non-essential theoretical constructs such as, Deep Structure and Surface Structure (Chomsky 1992). Minimalism assumes that language arises from simple operations like Merge, which builds structure, and Agree and Move, which handles feature valuation and movement. This structure interfaces with meaning in Logical Form (LF). Hence, The Minimalist approach is about eliminating steps as minimal as possible and reducing redundancy while still accounting for the richness of syntactic variation across languages.

The study adopts the cartographic approach to clause structure, particularly the Split CP hypothesis proposed by Rizzi (1997). Instead of viewing CP as a single projection, the Split CP model decomposes it into multiple, hierarchically ordered functional projections, as illustrated in the following section. In this study, the Minimalist approach is applied to investigate the structure of the layered CP domain in SA, the behavior of those functional projections in Arabic syntax, and whether their order and function align with or diverge from cross-linguistic hierarchies.

3.0 Literature Review

The research paper presents The Split CP hypothesis, as presented by Rizzi (1997, 2004 a&b). He suggests that the CP in a sentence can be divided into multiple distinct functional projections, each serving different roles in the syntactic structure of a sentence. The CP layer of clause structure should be split into several different projections: Force Phrase (ForceP) projection, Topic Phrase (TopP) projection, and Focus Phrase (FocP) projection. The Foc node is dominated by another Top node which is in turn dominated by the Force node heading the entire clausal structure. During the last decade, E. Hoekstra (1993), and Cinque (1999), have suggested a more expanded functional projection to accommodate the complementizer and other elements appearing on the left edge of the sentence. For example, topics and sentence adverbs, in McCloskey (1991) and Lasnik and Saito (1991), are considered as adjoined to the main clause. Adjunction can be eliminated from the grammar because it is not very restrained. One way to accommodate the "adjoined" elements is to occupy separate functional categories, as part of an expanded or split CP, as follows:

- ... *Force* ... (*Topic*) ... (*Focus*) ... *Fin IP* (Rizzi 1997, P.288)

The split of CP into several projections is diagrammed, as follows:

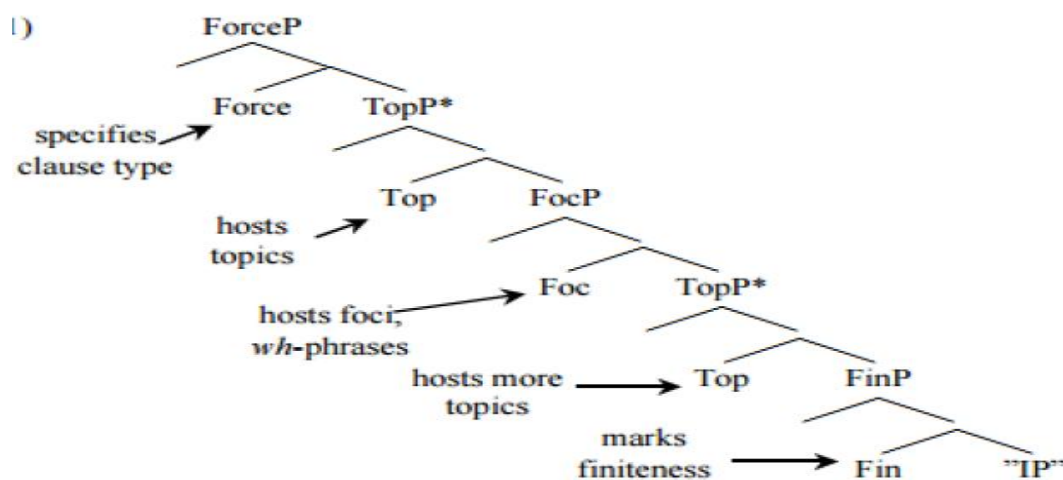


Figure 1: The Split CP projections proposed in (Rizzi, 1997, p. 297)

Source: Paul Hagstrom 2001, CAS LX 523 Syntax II

In addition, Alazzawie & Abdelaal (2022) support the split-CP hypothesis in SA, demonstrating that object cliticization and object displacement are

realized through movement to the Focus projection. They investigate that MSA has both in-situ FocuP below the TP and a high FocP outside the TP. This proves that object Focus is flexible in MSA. Furthermore, they use tests, such as Binding theory, conjunction, and substitution to prove that the pronominal objects behave syntactically and functionally like lexical objects. Both can be moved outside the TP triggered by the EF on the head Foc. Hence, it is consistent with the hierarchical Split CP hypothesis in Rizzi's (1997) framework.

Furthermore, Alatawi (2016) analyzes the left periphery in Standard Arabic and Tabuki Arabic within the Minimalist Program. He argues that Rizzi's (1997) Split-CP hypothesis is necessary to account for the distribution of Topics, Focus, and complementizers. His findings show that Topics and Focus occupy distinct projections, and that dialectal variation in agreement, word order, and complementizers supports the existence of multiple projections in the CP domain. Overall, his study provides strong support for the Split-CP model in Arabic.

On the contrary, Bakir (2011) challenges Rizzi's (1997) Split-CP hypothesis, proposing instead a more economical left periphery in Arabic. He argues that projections such as ForceP, TopP, and FocP are unnecessary because Topic and Focus can be explained as discourse-pragmatic phenomena rather than as distinct syntactic positions. Hence, his conclusions argue against Rizzi's layered CP model. In contrast, the present study adopts Rizzi's framework and analyzes left-dislocation structures in Standard Arabic within the Split-CP hypothesis.

4. Data Analysis

This section analyzes the data from SA concerning Rizzi's (1997) Split CP Hypothesis. It is divided into five main sections. The first section investigates Yes/ NO (Y/N) Questions and the second demonstrates multiple affirmative complementizers and universal grammar (UG) in SA. The third section explores conditionals and the Split CP hypothesis in SA, and the fourth one discusses free relatives, conditionals, and Split CP. The final section analyzes the exceptive construction in SA within Split CP.

4.1 Y/N Questions and Focus

This section aims to illustrate how the Split CP Hypothesis offers a comprehensive account of interrogative constructions in SA. The phenomenon

of focus through fronting and inversion is discussed, as shown in (1), adapted from Al-Jurjani (2000, P.106):

1. a. dʿarba zaid-un ʕamr-an (VSO)
 hit-3Sg Zaid-Nom Amr-Acc
 “Zaid hit Amr.”
- b. dʿarba ʕamr-an zaid-un (VOS)
 hit-3Sg Amr-Acc Zaid-Nom
 “Zaid hit Amr.”

Sentence (1b) is derived from the unmarked word order in sentence (1a). Sentence (1a) represents the VSO word order, i.e, *dʿarba* “hit” represents the verb (V), *zaid-un* “Zaid” represents the subject (S), and *ʕamr-an* “Amr” represents the object (O). The object *ʕamr-an* “Amr”, in (1b), is fronted for focus. However, the meaning did not change because SA has rich inflectional morphology.

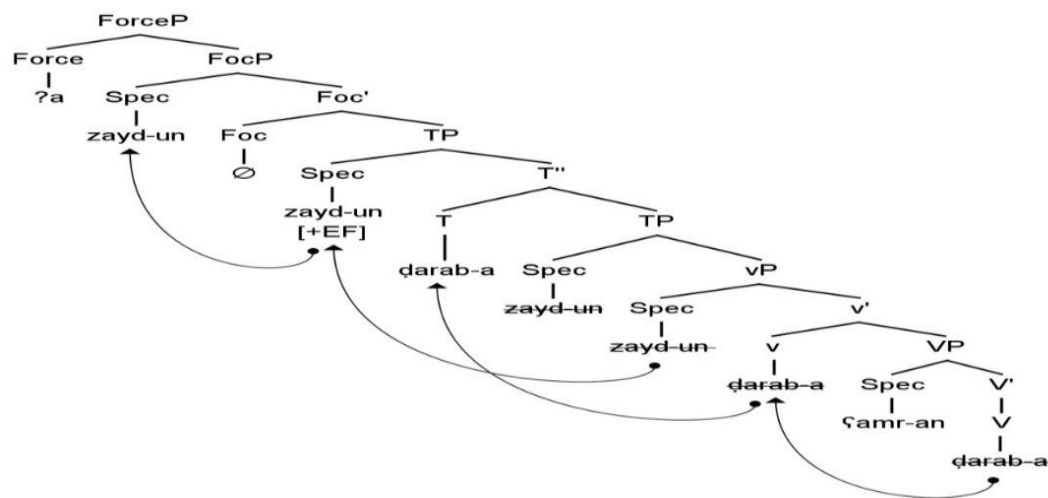
Formatting Y/N questions in SA employs two particles: *ʔa* “Be” and *hal* “Be”. There is a correlation between marked and unmarked word order concerning Y/N question formation in both English and SA. To form a question, the copular “Do” is used. Focus can be included within Y/N questions in SA concerning Rizzi’s (1997, 2004) split CP hypothesis. The following paradigm, derived from (1b), analyzes the Focus phrase dominated by *ʔa* “Be” as a Y/N question particle. According to the Split CP analysis, the Y/N question occupies the Force of the sentence that precedes the Focus phrase like in English. However, Arabic is stronger because the focused element carries along with it its case marker, as shown in the following examples derived from (1):

- 2) a. ʔa-dʿarb- a zaid-un ʕamr-an? (VSO)
 Q-hit-3Sg-past Zaid-Nom Amr-Acc
 “Did Zaid hit Amr?” (Unmarked word order)
- b. **ʔa-zaid-un** dʿarb- a ʕamr-an? (SVO)
 Q-Zaid-Nom hit-3Sg-past Amr-Acc
 “Was it Zaid who hit Amr?”
- c. **ʔa-ʕamr-an** dʿarb-a zaid-un? (SOV)
 Q-Amr-Acc hit-3Sg-past Zaid-Nom
 “Was it Amr whom zaid hit?”

Sentence (2a) represents an unmarked word order, VSO, in the sense that it has no focused elements or movement. The English translation reflects this fact by using the dummy do “*did*”. However, there are focused elements,

in (2b&c), and this is reflected in the English translation by using the clefting transformation which focuses on the fronted element. According to Rizzi (1997, 2004), the focus constituent occupies the specifier position of the focus phrase. The question particle *ʔa* “Be”, which determines the Force phrase as an interrogative, has a wider scope than the Focus phrase. The focus can be *Amr*, as in (2c) or *Zaid*, as in (2b). Sentence (2a) represents the VSO word order. However, (2b) represents SVO word order, as follows:

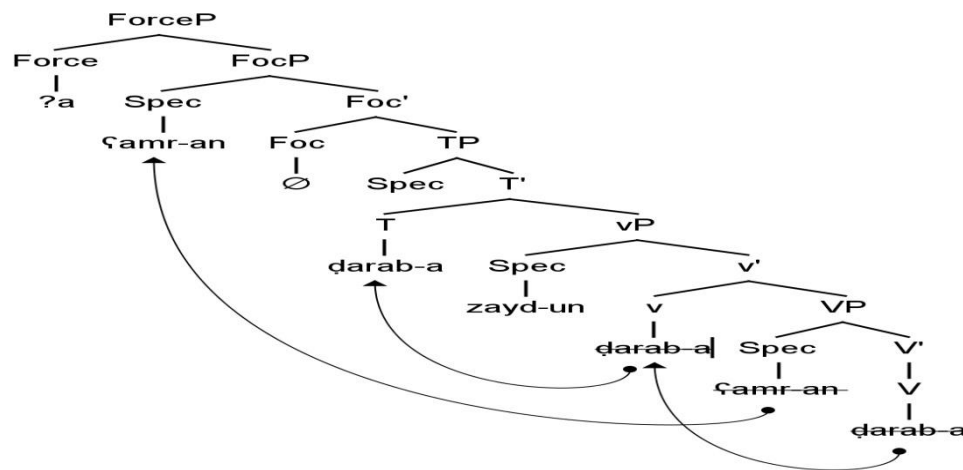
3) a.



The DP *zajd-un* “Zaid”, in (3a), moves along with its valued nominative case. It indicates that under the focused element, there is movement and the evidence is that the moved element carries the nominative case. The head T assigns the nominative case to the c-commanded *zajd-un* “Zaid”. According to Pesetsky's (1989) Earliness Principle, operations apply as early as possible in a derivation. In addition, according to Chomsky's (1981) Locality Principle, the head T, within the TP, assigns the nominative case to the c-commanded subjects. Case assignment is always local within the TP. Hence, before *zajd-un* “Zaid” gets moved, it has to carry its case which is crucial evidence that there is focus in Arabic. In addition, before moving the verb *dʿarb-a* “hit”, it has to assign the accusative case to *ɣamr-an* “Amr”. Therefore, the timing of operations and adjacency are very crucial. After the valuation of the subject's *zajd-un* “Zaid” nominative case, it gets moved to the specifier of the focus phrase, as shown in (3a). The Y/N question particle *ʔa* “Be”, as argued by Alazzawie (2018, P.123), being a force marker, occupies the head of the Force

phrase to satisfy the function of the sentence. This is explained also in (2c) which represents a SOV order. Whereas the subject is focused in (2b), the object is focused in (2c), as illustrated in (3b).

3) b.



The question particle *ʔa* “Be” has a wider scope than the focus phrase. The force of the sentence is the Y/N question and the Focus movement is within the scope of the higher *ʔa* “Be”. In (3b), there is a split CP with a Y/N question operator and a focused DP. Sentence (3b) has a marked word order (OVS). The verb *dʕarb-a* “hit” gets moved from the lexical V to the light v with agent external argument *zajd-un* “Zaid” dominated by the head T to get the nominative case. The DP *zajd-un* “Zaid” stays in situ. When the verb *dʕarb-a* “hit” gets raised, it assigns the accusative case to the nearest c-commanded DP *ʕamr-an* “Amr” and agrees with it in phi features (ϕ features). Then, the verb *dʕarb-a* “hit” gets raised to the head T because it has a strong tense feature in Arabic. According to the (VP + vP) split projection, the verb *dʕarb-a* “hit” merges with the DP *ʕamr-an* “Amr” to form *dʕarb-a ʕamr-an* “hit Amr”. The resulting VP, in turn, merges with a light affixal v forming the intermediate projection v’. The probe “T” finds its goal *zajd-un* “Zaid” in its c-commanding domain to assign the nominative case. After the DP *ʕamr-an* “Amr” gets its accusative case; it is triggered to the specifier of the Focus phrase. This focus operation is reflected in the English translation through clefting.

In addition, the Split CP hypothesis can account for multiple elements under the same CP in SA. There are multiple functional categories in the

following example. Each particle has its scope and function. The domain of the Y/N question is the entire sentence, as shown below:

4) *ʔa-lam* tula:ħið^s-u: ma: qi:l? *ʔa-fa-la:* tafham-u:n?
Q-Neg notice-2nd Pl what was said? Q-Coord- Neg understand-2nd Pl?

"Didn't you notice what was said? Don't you understand?"

In (4) there are two questions. Both are headed by the Y/N question particle *ʔa* “Be”. However, in the first question, there are only two functional categories, whereas there are three functional categories in the second one. On the one hand, the first sentence includes the question particle *ʔa* “Be” and the Neg operator *lam*. On the other hand, the second sentence introduces three functional categories: the rhetorical question particle *ʔa* “Be”, the coordinator particle *fa:*, and the Neg operator *la:*. The coordinator particle *fa:* relates two sentences, i.e., the first one expresses a fact that provides an answer to the second sentence or an incentive to the second statement. In other words, the coordinator particle *fa:* is preceded by an explanatory sentence. The Y/N question particle “*ʔa* “Be” operates at the Force head, determining the force of the sentence as interrogative. However, it is a rhetorical question that denotes denial.

Thus, the Split CP Hypothesis offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the syntactic behavior of Y/N questions focus constructions in SA, and the interaction of multiple functional heads: Force, Foc, and Neg within the CP domain in SA. This layered CP structure successfully confirms the applicability of the Split CP Hypothesis to Arabic syntax.

4.2 Multiple Affirmative complementizers & Universal Grammar (UG) in SA

This section is divided into three subsections. The first section investigates the distribution of the complementizer *ʔinna*. The second section examines the distribution of *lam ʔal-ʔibtida:ʔ* “IL”. The third section illustrates the distribution of the two affirmative complementizers *ʔinna* “IL” in the same clause.

4.2.1 The distribution of the complementizer *ʔinna* “indeed”

Ibn Jinni (1988) investigates *ʔinna* “indeed” as *Harf tawkiid* “a confirmation particle”. It represents the class of particles *ʔinna wa akhawa:tuha:* “*ʔinna* and its sisters”. He argues that the Complementizer *ʔinna* “indeed” is a case assigner as it assigns the accusative case to its subject and the nominative case to its predicate. However, *ʔal-kufa*’s school of grammar refutes this

hypothesis. They suggest that *ʔinna wa akhawa:tuha*: “*ʔinna* and its sisters” assigns only the accusative case to its subject and the predicate is assigned the nominative case by default, as shown in the following examples:

- 5) a. Zajd-un qa: ʔim-un
 Zayd.NOM standing.M.NOM
 “*Zayd is standing.*”
 b. **ʔinna** Zajd-an qa:ʔim-un
 indeed Zayd.ACC standing.M.NOM
 “*Indeed, Zayd is standing.*”

(Ibn Jinni, (1988, P.40)

The subject Zajd-un “Zayd”, in (5a), is assigned the nominative case by default because it is not preceded by any case assigner. However, the subject Zajd-an “Zayd”, in (5b), is assigned the accusative case because it is preceded by the complementizer *ʔinna* “indeed” as a case assigner.

In addition, the complementizer *ʔinna* “indeed” cannot be preceded by its subject or the predicate. It must dominate the whole sentence. Hence, sentences (6a&b) are ungrammatical.

- 6) a.* Zajd-an **ʔinna** qa:ʔim-un
 Zayd-Acc indeed standing-Nom.
 “*Indeed, it is Zayd who is standing.*”
 b.* qa:ʔim-un **ʔinna** Zajd-an
 standing-Nom indeed Zayd-Acc .
 “*Indeed, it is Zayd who is standing.*”

Both sentences are ungrammatical because *ʔinna* “indeed” as a complementizer has to c-command the entire proposition underlying the nominal sentence. The subject *Zajd-an* “Zayd”, in (6a), is fronted to precede the complementizer *ʔinna*. The predicate *qa:ʔim-un* “standing”, in (6b), is fronted to precede the complementizer *ʔinna*. Both sentences are not acceptable.

To conclude, this section demonstrates the complementizer *ʔinna* “indeed” as a particle of affirmation that has some structural constraints. It represents the class of particles *ʔinna wa akhawa:tuha*: “*ʔinna* and its sisters”. Hence, the particle *ʔinna* “indeed” consistently assigns an accusative case to its subject while leaving the predicate in a nominative case, either through direct assignment, as suggested by ʔal-kufa’s school of grammar or by default, as proposed by Ibn Jinni (1988). The data reveal that *ʔinna* “indeed” must occupy the initial position of the clause, c-commanding both the subject and predicate.

The following subsection considers the internal structure of both *ʔinna* “indeed” and *IL* in relation to the Split CP analysis.

4.2.2 The distribution of *lam ʔal-ʔibtida:ʔ* “the (IL)”

The concept of *lam ʔal-ʔibtida:ʔ* “IL”, is presented by Hassan (1975), as a crucial element in Arabic grammar. This particle is used at the beginning of nominal sentences to introduce a topic or highlight its significance. It emphasizes the most important information, enabling speakers and writers to convey their ideas more effectively. Both *ʔinna* “indeed” and *la* “IL” are complementizers, both are functional and both have the same meaning, and both complementizers c-command the entire TP, as follows:

7) a. **ʔinna** Zajd-an qa:ʔim-un

Indeed Zayd-Acc standing.

“Indeed, it is Zayd who is standing.”

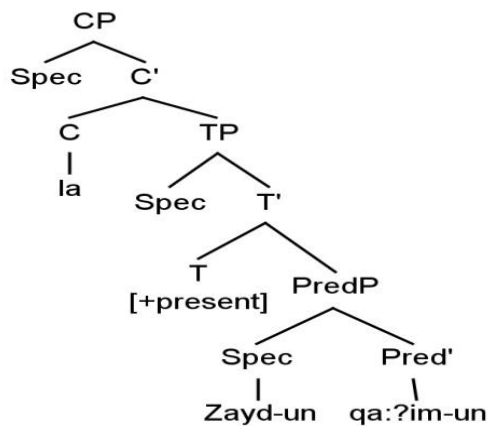
(Al-Uthaymeen, 2013, Vol.2, P.5)

b. **la-** Zajd-un qa:ʔim-un

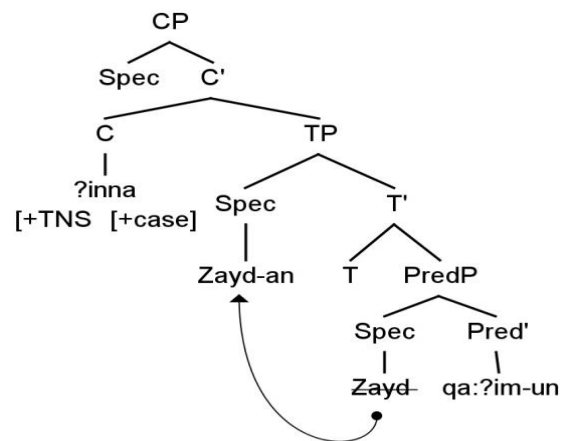
IL- Zayd-Nom standing-Nom.

“Indeed, it is Zayd who is standing.”

The complementizers *ʔinna* “indeed” and the *IL* in (7a&b) serve the same emphatic function. They originate under the matrix CP. *ʔinna* “indeed” enters the derivation with two-valued features: case and tense. Sentence (7a) is illustrated in (8a) and (7b) is illustrated in (8b), as follows:



8) a.



b.

The *IL* is an emphatic particle that has to c-command the entire TP because it emphasizes the entire proposition. The *IL* doesn't affect the case in (8a). The *IL* is a non-case assigner. However, *ʔinna* “indeed” is a case assigner,

as in (8b). Unlike, the affirmative complementizer *ʔinna*, the IL can be followed by a subject, as in (9a), or a predicate as long as it is fronted, as in (9b). Both (9a&b) are adapted from Hassan (1975, Vol.1, P.659), as follows:

- 9) a. **L-jadd-un** ka:sibat-un xajr-un min jadd-in ʕa:ṭilat-in
 IL- hand-Nom working-Nom better than-Nom hand oblique-obli.
“Indeed, it is surely a working hand that is better than an oblique one”

- b. **L-sadi:d-un** raʔj-u-ka
 IL- sound-Nom opinion-nom-your
“Indeed, it is your opinion that is sound.”

- c. *raʔj-u-ka **L-sadi:d-un**
 opinion-nom-your IL- sound-Nom
“Indeed, it is your opinion that is sound.”

The affirmative complementizer *IL*, in (9a), has a wide scope over the whole clause because it c-commands the entire TP. However, the affirmative complementizer *IL*, in (9b), has a narrow scope because it c-commands the predicate. The fronting of the predicate, in (9b), is obligatory. Hence, (9c) is ungrammatical because the predicate is in situ, and it cannot be preceded by the *IL*.

4.2.3 The distribution of the two affirmative complementizers *ʔinna* “Indeed” & the “IL” in the same clause

This section investigates the logical relation between the two affirmative complementizers *ʔinna* “indeed” & *IL*. Both *IL* and *ʔinna* “indeed” serve as emphatic particles that originate under the matrix CP, as illustrated in the previous section. However, Arab grammarians assert that both emphatic particles cannot co-occur in the same sentence because they serve the same function, as illustrated in the following paradigm:

- 10) a. **ʔinna** Zajd-an qa:ʔim-un
 indeed Zayd-Acc standing-Nom.
“Indeed, it is Zayd who is standing.”

(Al-Uthaymeen, 2013, Vol.2, P.5)

- b. **la-** Zajd-un qa:ʔim-un
 IL- Zayd-Nom standing-Nom.
“Indeed, it is Zayd who is standing.”

- c. ***ʔinna** **la-**Zajdan qa:ʔim-un

indeed, IL-Zaid-Acc standing-Nom.

"Indeed, it is Zayd who is standing."

(Al-Uthaymeen, 2013, Vol.2, P.41)

- d. *ʔinna la- qa:ʔim-un Zajd-an
indeed IL-standing-NOM Zayd-Acc
"Indeed, it is Zayd who is standing."

- e. ʔinna Zajdan la- qa:ʔim- un
indeed, Zayd-Acc surely- standing-Nom.
"Indeed, it is surely Zayd who is standing."

(Al-Uthaymeen, 2013, Vol.2, P.41)

According to Hassan (1975) and Al-Uthaymeen (2013), it is not acceptable to have two separate phrases that serve the same semantic function under the same CP. Both affirmative complementizers *ʔinna* "indeed" and *IL*, in (10a&b), initiate the sentence. In contrast, sentences (10c&d) are ungrammatical because they cannot be initiated by two separate phrases that serve the same emphatic function. However, once the *IL* is lowered further to c-command the predicate phrase, as in (10e), the sentence is fully grammatical.

This semantic constraint is universal. In English, interrogative wh-expressions in main-clause questions move to the specifier position in a Focus Phrase. There is a universal constraint on barring multiple complementizers, as follows:

- 11) a. **whom where* did you meet?
b. Whom did you meet and where did you meet them?

Sentence (11a) is ruled out because using multiple Wh- words in the same clause is barred. Both the interrogative particles *whom* and *where* should occupy the Spec of the Focus phrase which is barred. In contrast, as long as multiple Wh-words are used in different clauses, the sentence is acceptable, as in (11b). Hence, this constraint is universal. However, the scope of both the *IL* and the lowered *L* is different. On the one hand, the scope of *IL* has a wide scope in the sense that it c-commands the entire clause. On the other hand, the lowered [L] has a narrow scope because it c-commands the predicate phrase in the presence of the affirmative complementizer *ʔinna* "indeed". In addition, the affirmative complementizer *ʔinna* "indeed" is a base-generated complementizer in the sense it cannot be moved. Hence, *ʔinna* "indeed" is genuine, whereas *IL* is mobile because it can be moved to head the predicate phrase in the presence of *ʔinna*.

Unlike *ʔinna* “indeed” which occurs under the CP only, the affirmative complementizer *IL* may occur under the CP or the TP.

To conclude, this section argues that both complementizers *IL* and *ʔinna* “indeed” are affirmative, that occurs under the matrix CP, and occur initially. However, they are in complementary distribution. i.e., they cannot co-occur under the same CP because they serve the same semantic function which is affirmation.

4.3 Conditionals and the Split CP Hypothesis in SA

Although, the Force phrase in English is higher than the Focus phrase according to Rizzi’s Split CP Hypothesis, the order can be different in SA, as illustrated in the following example:

- 12) a. *ʔin* lam tafʔal *ʔn-nafs-a* bi- lhaqq- i, ʔayalat-ka
 if Neg occupy the-self-Acc with-the truth-Obl, occupy -you
 bi- lba:tʔil-i
 with-falsehood-Obl.

“If you do not occupy yourself with the truth, it will occupy you with falsehood.”

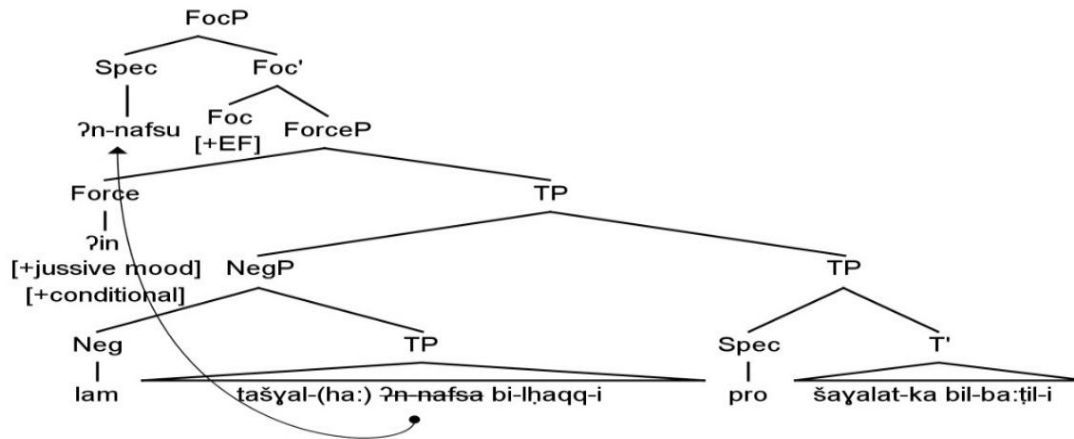
- b. *ʔn-nafs-u* *ʔin* lam tafʔal-ha: bi- lhaqq- i ʔayalat-ka
 the-self-Nom, if Neg occupy- it with the truth-Obl, occupy -you
 bi- lba:tʔil- i
 with falsehood-Obl.

“It is yourself that, if you do not occupy it with the truth, will occupy you with falsehood.”

(Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 1990, P.82)

Sentence (12a) expresses the unmarked order without movement. The conditional particle *ʔin* “if”, which determines the force of the sentence, has to c-command the entire sentence to assign the jussive mood to both verbs *tafʔal* “occupy” and *ʔayala* “occupied”. The anaphor *ʔn-nafsa* gets the accusative case because it is the object of the verb *tafʔal* “occupy”. However, it gets focused in (12b) to precede the conditional particle *ʔin* “if” that occupies the force of the sentence. Hence, the anaphor *ʔn-nafsu* “yourself” will c-command the conditional particle *ʔin* “if”, as shown in the following diagram:

13)



The anaphor *?n-nafsa* “yourself” is the internal complement of the verb *tašyal* “occupy” and the subject of the verb *šayalat* “occupy”. The anaphor *?n-nafsu* “yourself” is not base generated because has to be c-commanded by its antecedent according to Principle A of Chomsky’s (1981, 1982) Binding Theory (BT). It gets moved from the complement of the verb *šayalat* “occupy” to the Spec of the Focus phrase. However, the focus phrase, in (13), is higher than the Force phrase. However, this order violates the strict hierarchical order of Rizzi’s (1997) CP hypothesis which asserts that the Force phrase must be the highest projection, whereas, the Force phrase can be dominated by the Focus phrase in SA. Hence, the Split CP hypothesis should be modified to account for this phenomenon in SA.

4.4 Free Relatives and conditionals in SA

This section examines how free relative clauses are analyzed within the framework of the Split CP Hypothesis. It first introduces the concept of free relatives in English, highlighting their syntactic behavior and how they differ from interrogatives. It then explores the structure of free relatives in SA, with a particular focus on their function in conditional sentences. Special attention is given to the role of free relative pronouns like *man* “whoever” and their interaction with mood and case features in the derivation. Finally, a comparison between free relatives and conditional particles, such as *?in* “if”, is provided to illustrate the distinct syntactic and semantic properties involved.

4.4.1 Free Relatives in English

A free relative clause is a kind of relative clause. Standard relative pronouns refer to antecedents. In contrast, a free relative pronoun is not co-

indexed with an overt antecedent noun phrase, i.e., doesn't have a head. In addition, they function as noun phrases. They often start with relative pronouns, such as "whoever", "what", and "who". These sometimes can be called "headless relatives." Free relatives seem to be similar to interrogatives, as shown in the following examples:

14. a) I'll buy **what** he is selling. (Free relative)

b) I'll inquire **what**he is selling. (Interrogative)

(Bresnan & Grimshaw, 1978, p.334, (19&20))

Although (40a&b) appear to be similar, they can be distinguished by attaching the suffix-*ever* to both of them to make the distinction between them, as follows:

15. a) I'll buy **whatever** he is selling. (Free relative)

b) *I'll inquire **whatever**he is selling. (Interrogative)

(Bresnan & Grimshaw, 1978, p.334, (21&22))

The relative pronoun "Whatever", in (15a), functions as the object of the verb "buy".

4.4.2 Free Relatives in Arabic

This subsection investigates free relatives in SA. They are typically introduced by free relative pronouns, such as *ma*: "what", *man* "who", *kajfuma*: "how", *hajθuma*: "where", etc. They refer to non-explicit antecedent. They can function as a subject and occur often in conditional sentences, as shown in the following example:

16) a. **man** ja-qum ʔa-qum maʕa-hu
Whoever 3SG.M-stand 1SG-stand with-him
 '*Whoever stands, I will stand with him.*'

b. **ʔin** ta-qum ʔa-qum
if 2SG.M-stand 1SG-stand
 '*If you stand, I will stand.*'

(Ibn Jinni, 1988, P.94)

The relative pronoun, *man* "whoever", in (16a), functions as the subject of the verb *ja-qum* "stand" and the verb *ʔa-qum* "I stand". It is a headless relative clause in the sense that it doesn't have an explicit antecedent. The free relative *man* "whoever" originates under the TP, in the specifier of the VP to acquire the case by the head "Tense" T. It enters the derivation as a mood marker and a

conditional particle. Then, it gets raised to the Spec of the TP. After that, it gets moved from the Spec of TP to the relative clause. The edge feature (EF) on the head C requires the Spec of CP to be filled with a maximal projection. Thus, the EF on the head C triggers the movement of the free relative pronoun, *man* “whoever” to the Spec of CP. Once the relative pronoun gets raised to the Spec of CP, It requires an extra semantic function and that is of being a conditional particle that has an internal feature. Hence, it represents the force of the sentence. There is a further movement inside the CP because *man* “whoever” acquires the feature of the jussive mood marker. Therefore, it can assign the jussive mood to the two verbs *ja-qum* “he stand” and the verb *ʔa-qum* “I stand” of the conditional sentence.

However, the particle *ʔin* “if”, in (16b), is only a mood marker and a conditional particle. The particle *ʔin* “if” enters the derivation with its features valued. It is base generated under the head Force phrase, whereas; *man* “whoever” is moved. While *man* “whoever” represents a conditional particle, a free relative pronoun, and a mood marker, the particle *ʔin* “if” functions as a conditional particle and a mood marker. The particle *ʔin* “if” assigns the jussive mood to the two verbs *ta-qum* “you stand” and the verb *ʔa-qum* “I stand” of the conditional sentence. It represents the higher maximal projection in the derivation that determines the force of the sentence as conditional.

In summary, this section has shown that while free relatives in English and SA share the basic property of lacking an overt antecedent, their syntactic behavior differs within the Split CP Hypothesis. Free relatives like *man* “whoever” acts as conditional particles and mood markers. The movement of *man* to the Spec of the CP, driven by the edge feature (EF), demonstrates how Arabic free relatives can simultaneously fulfil multiple grammatical functions.

4.5 The Exceptive Construction in SA

This section investigates the semantic, logical, and syntactic structure of the exception particle *ʔilla:* “except” in SA. Hassan (1975, Vol.1, P.315) compares the concept *ʔistiθna:ʔ* “exception”, in SA, to the process of subtraction in mathematics. He explains that using tools like “*ʔilla:*” (except) means removing an element from an antecedent, just as subtracting a number from a total. The exception structure consists of three main constituents. The First constituent is the antecedent or the subtraction domain, as discussed by Saeed (2023). The second constituent is the exception particle *ʔilla:*. The third one is the excepted element, whereas Postdam & Polinsky (2017) and Al-Bataineh

17) a. ma: takallam-a ?illa: wa:hid-un
NEG speak-3SG.MASC.PAST except one.MASC-Nom
"No one spoke except one"

(Hassan, 1975, Vol.2, P.316-317)

In addition, the kind of the exception structure differs if the subtraction domain exists or not. In (17a), the excepted element *wa:hid-un* ‘one’ exists after the exceptive particle *?illa:* ‘except’, whereas the antecedent/subtraction domain that exists before the particle is covert. The excepted element *wa:hid-un* ‘one’, in (17a), is outside the domain of the negation. The semantic domain of the Neg particle *ma:* is the TP. Although the construction in English is full, it is incomplete in SA because the antecedent is null, and null categories are not allowed in English. Hence, the exceptive construction is called *mufray* ‘empty/incomplete’ if the antecedent is implicit. On the contrary, if the antecedent/subtraction domain is overt, the exceptive construction is called *ta:m*

“full”, as in (17b). In (17b), the extraction domain/ antecedent is represented by *ʔan-na:s-u* “people” from which *wa:hid-un* “one” is subtracted or excepted. Hence, (17a) is a negative incomplete/empty exceptive construction, but (17b) is a negative full exceptive construction.

Moreover, Hassan (1975, V.2, P.119) discusses that exceptive elements can be assigned different cases restricted by the type of exception construction. The excepted element, in full negative exceptive constructions, as in (17b), can be assigned either the accusative case or the nominative case. On the one hand, the excepted element *wa:hid-an* “one”, in (17b), can be assigned the accusative case by the c-commanding exceptive particle *ʔilla:* “except”. On the other hand, *wa:hid-un* “one”, in (17b), can be assigned the nominative case as *badl* “an apposition”. The apposition inherits the nominative case of the antecedent *ʔan-na:s-u* “people” because it is the subject. However, the excepted element *wa:hid-un* “one”, in (17a), is assigned the nominative case because it exists in an empty incomplete negative exceptive construction.

In brief, the Arabic exceptive particle *ʔilla* “except” demonstrates a rich and complex behavior both syntactically and semantically. It interacts with the antecedent, the excepted element, and the broader sentence structure. The classification of exceptive constructions reflects the importance of the presence, nature, and case assignment of the antecedent and the excepted element.

5.0 Conclusion

This study has examined functional categories in SA concerning Rizzi’s (1997) Split CP Hypothesis within Chomsky’s Minimalist Program. The analysis reveals that SA exhibits a richly articulated left periphery, but it is also different from the strict hierarchy proposed by Rizzi, i.e., Focus phrases may precede Force heads in SA. The findings highlight several key points: first, functional heads such as the completizers *ʔinna* “indeed” and *IL* are in complementary distribution. Second, free relatives in Arabic do not only fulfill syntactic roles but also act as conditional and mood markers, further supporting the Split CP structure. Third, Y/N questions show that interrogative particles occupy the Force position, while focused constituents move to the Spec of the Focus phrase. Lastly, the behavior of the exceptive particle *ʔilla:* “except” supports how exception particles are syntactically integrated and how case marking is observed based on the structure’s polarity, i.e., negative or positive, and completeness. Overall, this research confirms the applicability of the Split CP framework to SA but also suggests some conditions and constraints to

account for its specific syntactic phenomena. Rizzi's strict hierarchy of the Split CP has to be modified to account for the data in SA. Future research could extend this analysis to other varieties of Arabic or explore the interaction between CP structure and information structure more deeply.

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Appendix A: List of Abbreviations

Below is a list of abbreviations and symbols used throughout this paper:

Abbreviation	Definition
1st	First Person
2nd	Second Person
3rd	Third Person
Acc	Accusative
BT	Binding Theory
C	Complementizer
C-command	Constituent Command
CP	Complementizer Phrase
Coord	Coordinator
EF	Edge Feature
FinP	Finiteness phrase
Foc	Focus
FocP	Focus phrase
IL	Initiation [I]
LF	Logical Form
MP	The Minimalist Program
Nom	Nominative
Neg	Negator
N	No
NP	Noun Phrase
O	Object
Obl	Oblique
P&P	Principles and Parameters
Pers	Person
S	Subject
SA	Standard Arabic
Spec	Specifier
T	Tense
Top	Topic
TopP	Topic phrase
TP	Tense Phrase
UG	Universal Grammar

V	Verb
VP	Verb Phrase
Y	Yes
X	Head
X'	X Bar
φ features	Phi Features

Appendix B: List of Consonants in Arabic

The following table is a chart of the IPA symbols of consonants with their corresponding Arabic letters used in this paper:

Manner Point ➡ ⬇		Labial	Pain		Emphatic		Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pha.
			Dental	Alveolar	Dental	Alveolar				
Nasal		م m	ن n							
Stop	Voiceless		ت t		ط tʕ			ك k	ق q	
	Voiced	ب b	د d		ض dʕ		ج g			
Fricative	Voiceless	ف f	ث θ	س S		ص sʕ	ش	خ x ~ X		ح h
	Voiced		ذ ð	ز z	ظ ðʕ			غ ɣ		ع ʕ
Trill				ر r						
Approximant			ل l ~ l				ي j	و W		

The following symbols do not exist in the chart because of space considerations:

- The symbol for the glottal voiceless fricative (h) (ʕ).
- The symbol for the glottal voiceless stop (?) (ʔ).
- The symbol for the voiceless post-alveolar affricate (tʃ)

(Shariq, 2015, P.148, Figure.2)

Appendix C: Vowels in Arabic

Vowels	Description	Examples	Trans.
/i/	short high unrounded vowel	ʔinna	Indeed
/i:/	long high front unrounded vowel	sadi:d	Sound
/u/	short high back rounded vowel	ʔa-qom	I stand
/u:/	back close rounded vowel	tafham-u:n	You understand
/a/	short mid unrounded vowel	ʔan-nafs	The self
/a:/	long mid unrounded vowel	qa: ʔim-un	Standing
/o/	mid half close back rounded vowel	Hoda:	Proper name

(Ezzat, 1973, pp. XI-XIII)

- Vowel length is indicated by a colon (:), e.g., *sadi:d* “sound”
- Germination is represented by doubling the consonant, e.g., *ʔan-nafs* “the self”