

The Low IP Area in Arabic: A Reappraisal

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INTRODUCTION. One of the celebrated accounts in the generative literature aspiring to argue for the syntactic role of discourse-related notions can be found within the cartographic traditions (Rizzi 1997; Cinque 1999). A variant of this approach is the claim that there is a discourse-laden low IP, specifically in the area between IP and vP (Belletti 2001, 2004). A rough representation of the low IP analysis is depicted in (1).

(1) [IP [TopP [FocP [TopP [vP]]]]]

CLAIM. In this paper I motivate an analysis, which is inspired by Samek-Lodovici (2006), arguing that Right Dislocation (RD) in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), *qua* a discursive articulation, is at odds with the argument that there is an information-structural area sandwiched between IP and vP, and in favour of a clause-external analysis. To this end, I provide three pieces of evidence. First, as per the complement-adjunct asymmetry exhibited in the realm of Condition C of Binding Theory (Lebeau 1988; Chomsky 1995; Fox 1999), MSA does display such an asymmetry: a Condition C violation would ensue in (2b) but not in (2a), for the claim that a RD-ed element within an *adjunct* as in (2a), contrary to (2b) involving RD with a *complement*, is merged late in a clause-external position, thereby obviating a c-command relation with the *pro* subject in the matrix clause. Under analyses arguing for the low IP, however, where a Condition C violation would incur across the board (Cecchetto 1999; Villalba 2000), this contrast would be unexpected, since RD is incorrectly concluded to be below IP.

- (2) a. pro_1 la: yəkdʊ yahtəfiðʊ bi-ha, ʔɯni, təkə ʔiʔuhu:d allti qatəʔ-ha Zayid-un₁ fi iʔtməʔeɪ-nə
(He) no ever keep with-it, namely, those promises that make-it Zayid-NOM in meeting-our
ʔ-lmadⁱ
the-previous
'Zayid never keeps the promises that he makes in our previous meeting'
- b. * pro_1 laa yəkdʊ yahtəfiðʊ bi-ha, ʔɯni, təkə ʔiʔuhu:d altati qatəʔ-ha Zayid-un₁ biʔna-hu sa-ykoun
(He) no ever keep with-it, namely, those promises which make-it Zayid-NOM that-him will-be
ameena-n
faithful-ACC
'Zayid never keeps the promises that he will be faithful'

Second, Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) resist to be right dislocated in MSA as in (3). Building on the proposal that NPIs must be in the scope domain of Neg-words at the surface form for the sake of licensing (Zanuttini 1997; Moscati 2006), that is what is expected under a clause-external analysis: since NPIs are merged TP-externally, there is no way for the NPI to be c-commanded by the Neg-marker. The example is drawn from Alqassas (2021: p.38) with a slight mortification to signal RD.

- (3) *lam yaʔtari-ha, ʔayya fayʔ
NEG.PAST buy.3MSG-PFV-it, any thing
Intended meaning: 'He did not buy anything'

A third piece of evidence speaking in favor of an external-clause analysis of RD in MSA comes from agreement alternations: when the subject in MSA undergoes right dislocation, the verb exhibits rich agreement morphology as shown in (4a).

- (4) a. raʔu-u Zaid-an, l-ʔawlaad-u
saw.3PL Zaid-ACC, the-boys-NOM
'The boys saw Zaid'
- b. *raʔa-a Zaid-an, l-ʔawlaad-u
saw.3SG Zaid-ACC, the-boys-NOM
'The boys saw Zaid'

(Ouhalla 1994: p.54)

Under the claim that movement to specIP is agreement motivated (Chomsky 2001; Miyagawa 2010; Fernández 2013) contrary to the proposals arguing that movement to specIP is case-triggered (Epstein and Seely 1999; Boeckx 2000), this contrast is explained by maintaining that the RD-ed subject in (4a) is not below I^0 as per the clause-internal analysis (Kayne 1994; Cecchetto 1999), but instead it goes through specIP to check agreement features. Another analysis explaining the contrast in (4) is to assume that the rich agreement is triggered by an clause-external analysis of RD (Cardinaletti 2002): the subject

is simultaneously dislocated clause-externally and doubled by a bound form on the verb in the core IP, serving to identify *pro* arguments (Fassi Fehri 1993).

CONCLUSION. RD in MSA is better analyzed as IP-external. If on track, the analysis crucially proves to present a unified account of focus in MSA (the author, under review): focalization in MSA occurs in situ, with string-initial focus and string-internal focus being a reflex of an interfering right dislocation process targeting an IP-external position.

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