Exceptional Case Marking in Standard Arabic: Minimalist View

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This work aims to explain how Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) in Standard Arabic (SA) is licensed via checking features theory within the minimalist framework. I will account that Fin^0 includes $mood^0$ can license NPs case of the embedded clause when the finite heads (AGR^0 & T^0) fail to account optimally to case by the features of [ϕ] and [T] that found to be deficient. The subjunctive mood of a verb is assumed to assign nominative case to the embedded subject rather than accusative case and the NP receives accusative case by Agree Relation with the matrix $v*^0$ as base-generated NP in the matrix clause.

Keywords: *Case, minimalist, license, checking, feature, Arabic*

1. Introduction

Case theory adopted Chomsky's (1995) Minimalist Program (MP) with new merits distinguished from his earlier version of Generative Grammar (GG) in (1981-1989). This advancement abandoned the head government model due to valid drawbacks cross-linguistically to account for case assignment. MP follows Case Checking applications as represented in the Theory of Feature Checking utilized as a technique to check the morpho-syntactic features. The Checking process takes place in Specifier-head relation wherein the Spec-AGRSP to check nominative case and Spec-AGROP for accusative case as represented in tree diagram (1. a, b):

(1) a.   AgrSP   b.   AgrOP

        Spec   AgrS'   Spec   AgrO'

        NP   AgrS   ……   NP   AgrO   ……
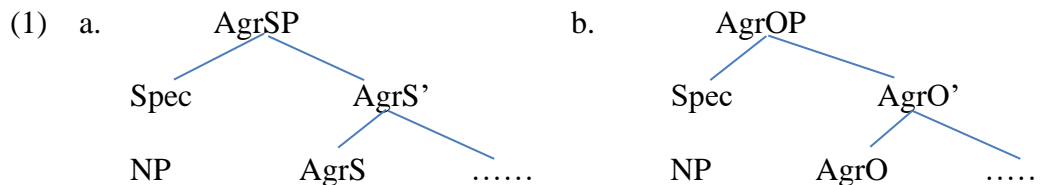
Case within this view is said to be assigned as a reflex of ϕ-features valuation on case license head. The proposal involves T^0 and V^0 as functional heads with interpretable and uninterpretable features that must be checked with the NPs to value the uninterpretable feature(s) in both T and V head. Other heads can be valid to account for case feature checking. The checking process potentially results in licensing the case to the NP.

Following the basic structure clause model of checking formulated by Pollock (1989), modified later by Chomsky (1993), inflectional functional head includes agreement, tense, and mood features adopted to license structural case. The process occurs when the NP enters in Logical Form (LF) of derivation process and undergoes agree relation with valued ϕ-features of T-head to acquire value for uninterpretable case feature.

The ultimate goal of NP features checking is to get it licensed for nominative case at Spec-subject position and object NP is to be licensed for accusative case at Spec-object position via NP-V agree relation. As a result, the object receives accusative case license if verb ϕ-features match with the counterpart of object. Thus, the inflectional finiteness as a domain including features of AGR, T, and mood is adopted in this paper as functional heads to license

structural cases as proposed by Rizzi (1997). In some structures, however, Complementizer Phrase (CP), on the base of Complementizer (Comp) presence is seen to occupy the Spec-head position whereby NPs can be checked for case in association with Comp ϕ- features with goal features to result in case license. For the features of checking, agreement plays a central role in licensing the structural case ECM in SA. Agreement in SA exhibits the same counterpart property of ϕ-incomplete to that of English, but there may be no persuasive account to disagreement in some forms of VSO order to justify such deviation. The deficiency of agreement legitimizes revising ϕ-complete and proposes a spare other Fin^0 heads to case checking. This is in consonance with Chomsky (2001) proposal that ϕ-defective of probe ϕ-incomplete on I^0 results in unlicensed case to the goal.

Tense as an essential feature to case proposed to carry intrinsic features needed to be checked in order to assign nominative and null case to the subject and PRO, respectively. Therefore, tense presence is necessary to case license. In SA, [tense] is manifested primarily through verbal part. Hence the absence of verb in structures such as equational sentence (non-verbal sentence) reflects [T] absence. I assume, with reference to incomplete inflection of feature, the defective tense such as in infinitival clause does not necessarily result in case unvalued, but rather, as in defective agreement, T-incomplete might be reduced into the minimum inflectional level, and legitimized to value case accordingly.

Mood is a feature of finiteness taken on I^0 to be a basic feature whereby case can be licensed. On the basis of Rizzi (1997) proposal, mood, tense, and agreement represent finiteness that can license SC of the embedded clause of ECM in association with the verbal case of mood. In such proposal, INFL-finiteness can project moodP. For SA, modality instantiates mood through force such as subjunctive and jussive represented by particles use such as 'qad-may' and 'sawfa-will' potentially indicate mood as Fassi Fehri (1993) argued. In ECM, one tries to account for the embedded Iº to license nominative case to the embedded subject NP or *pro* and $v*^0$ to license accusative case to the embedded object. Thus, on the basis of Finº as proposed by Sultan (2006), subjunctive [mood] rather than [ϕ] and [T] utilized in such structures to license case are due to the incomplete set of [ϕ] and [T].

The functional head v* is proposed to license accusative case and assign θ-role in ditransitive verb and embedded clause structures. The motive of this proposing is that the indirect object agrees with [T] but the direct object does not. Therefore, the $v*^0$ is offered to organize multi-agreement relation as Ura (2010) suggested. This multiple-agree relation is established between one probe-v* and two goals of indirect and direct object. On the other hand, the subject of the imperfective tense of the embedded infinitival clause does not move to the specifier-position of case license. Hence case association with v* is licensed in VP-shell due to the reason that the embedded clause exhibits T/ϕ – incomplete to the subjunctive NP. Case, now, is base-generated in Spec-VP where accusative case is received by agree relation $v*^0$ (See Sultan 2007). The I^0 licenses nominative case to the subject NP. On the other side, Finº selects MoodP which then selects v*º for accusative case. The $v*^0$ proposed to license accusative case to the internal object in embedded clause rather than to raise, see Koizumi (1995) into matrix clause to get licensed by virtue of matrix lexical verb.

Based on the finiteness preview, SA ECM analysis evidently accounts for features, agreement, and tense and case interpretation associated with case license in the view of MP. Finiteness is the feature whereby structural cases are licensed cross-linguistically within the framework of MP. One issue with finiteness is that no consensus cross-linguistically by which finite head/feature can license structural case to any particular language. However, inflectional – finiteness includes features of tense, agreement, aspect, and mood where all are applicable to

test their presence or heads compatibility as a valid evidence to case license. These features were debatable among linguists who effortlessly try to account finite features validity to license structural case. Uchibori (2000), Caresten (2005), Baker (2007) and Al-Balushi (2011) who evidentially introduced, through the languages they studied, evidences that inflectional-finiteness failed to be a licenser since the feature is either lost such as [T] or defective as in [ϕ].Therefore, they alternate between these finite heads in order to account for case license.

To add a further fundamental issue of case license, agree based checking mechanism, Chomsky (2005, 2006) admits that case license is a property of phase heads C^0 and $v*^0$. To clarify, T^0 and V^0 are said to be inherent case checking from their respective Phase Heads, C^0, $v*^0$, respectively. Inheritance, in this scenario, assumes that [T] and [ϕ] features are inherent on C^0 and $v*^0$, and derivative on T^0 and V^0. However, the problem of inheritance raises with relevance to accusative case which is assumed to be licensed by v* that inherits the properties from $v*^0$. This property of case checking process is based on Chomsky (2001, 2005, 2006) and Schütze (2007) assumption that structural case is licensed by agreement. So, case is licensed as reflex of [ϕ] features valuation on case assigning head that does not necessarily have case features. Therefore, in this paper we will adopt the structural case where case is licensed by functional head(s), following the case model feature inheritance approach that represents Agree Theory.

2. Why exceptional case marking

The core of Exceptional Case Marking refers to case-marking across a clause boundary as Pesetsky (1989) defined. The lexical verb of the matrix clause is proposed to assign accusative case to the subject of the [- Tense] embedded clause and θ-marked by the predicate in the subordinate clause. In sentence (1) the verb 'want' assigns accusative case to the subject 'him' but is θ-marked by 'to be brave'. The internal argument can be checked for structural accusative case at AGRO- in minimalism- by virtue of main clause lexical verb contribution and adjacency which requires certain movement. Why exceptional, here, is for being pronominal marked accusative case but functioning semantically as the subject of the infinitival verbs to their right. The NP acquires theta roles from the verb of the matrix clause. This indicates the bold pronouns in (1-2) as determiner phrases have a specifier and the entire dependent clause can be proposed as an IP that verbs such as 'want' and 'judge' can mark case for.

(1) I wanted **him** to be brave.

(2) She judged **them** to be good players.

The complex structure of ECM sentence represents a virtual challenge to case checking process. The complicity roots back to GB where a verb such as 'believe' as in sentence (3) assigns case to 'her'. The problem lies in that no thematic relation between the verb of the matrix clause 'believe' and the subject of the non-finite clause 'her'. Hence, case can be assigned to 'her' through the verb 'arrive' in the embedded clause. The NP 'her' is said to be a determiner which has a specifier before, and the embedded clause must have IP where verbs such as 'believe' can assign case to 'her'. However, this is a brief explanation to the earlier GB assumption to how case is assigned in such forms.

(3) I believe [her to arrive by 9:00 pm.]

The Agree operation proposed by Chomsky (2001) establishes a relation between the functional categories that have uninterpretable features of the so-called probe and goal and enables I^0 and $v*^0$ to value case feature of the subject and object as nominative and accusative. The operation is expected to value the uninterpretable features of probe element by the interpretable features of goal element. Thus, abandoning GB model, structural case is assumed to be checked on the subject Spec- $v*^0$ and object complement to v^0 position as a reflex of valuing ϕ-features on the case checking heads: I^0 and $v*^0$, respectively. These two heads are seen to probe goal to value their ϕ-features potentially having then an independent case feature which is valued by Fin^0, hence case is then checked and valued to the subject and object when they are forced to probe upward to get [case] feature valued by I^0 and $v*^0$. Hence, we assume that feature checking might take place without A-movement.

In Arabic, the Agree- based operation tries to explain the presence of the functional head extracted from Fin^0. However, the structure of ECM sentence is observed [-T] equivalent, as it has T-deficient. Thus, the T-deficiency and ϕ- complete imply the subjunctive I^0 of the verb of wish '?rāda-want' to assign the nominative case to the subject of the embedded clause instead of being exceptionally assigned an accusative case. This subject remains in situ (No raising to check case and agreement). The subject of the sentence is the null *pro* which is base-generated in Spec- $v*^0$. So, case can be licensed without A-movement. It has the schematic representation [V S *pro* O]. A further issue is that the definite NP does not occur preverbally, and this results in odd structures and can undermine the idiomatic representation of the sentence. On the other side, the accusative case of the NP is marked in thematic object, and no raising of the object via co-indexation is expected to the post-verbal position in the embedded clause (the accusative case is thus base-generated in embedded clauses), given that finite I^0 can license case as shown in (4):

(4) ?rāda-Ø   ?l-malik-u   ?an   yahdur-a   ?l-wizarā-u
    PST.want.3.SG.IND *pro* the-king-NOM   COMP IMPRF.attend.3.SG.SUBJ the-ministers-NOM

    ?l-?jtimāʕ-a
    the-meeting-ACC
    'The king wanted that the ministers to attend the meeting.'

The NP '?l-malik-u' is observed to be controlled by the post-verbal *pro*-subject which indicates the subjunctive mood in the clause. The acc-marked NP '?l-?jtimāʕ-a' is base-generated in the matrix clause [Spec-VP] position. This NP is, thus, receives the accusative case via agree relation with the matrix $v*^0$. This goes against exceptional case marking for the NP, now it receives ACC case by agree relation with the matrix head $v*^0$ while being base-generated in the matrix clause.

3. The verb *want* and ECM

As in English, SA has verbs of desire and expectations such as '?rāda-want', 'yara-view', and 'yatwaqʕ -expect' are functioning as ECM verbs. The embedded clause with Iº is T-deficient but ϕ- complete as demonstrated before. The verb '?rāda' as in (5.a) appears to assign nominative case to the embedded subject 'Ali-un' instead of being assigned accusative as it

remains in situ, but 'Ali-an' can be assigned accusative in case it moves to the preverbal position as in (5.b):
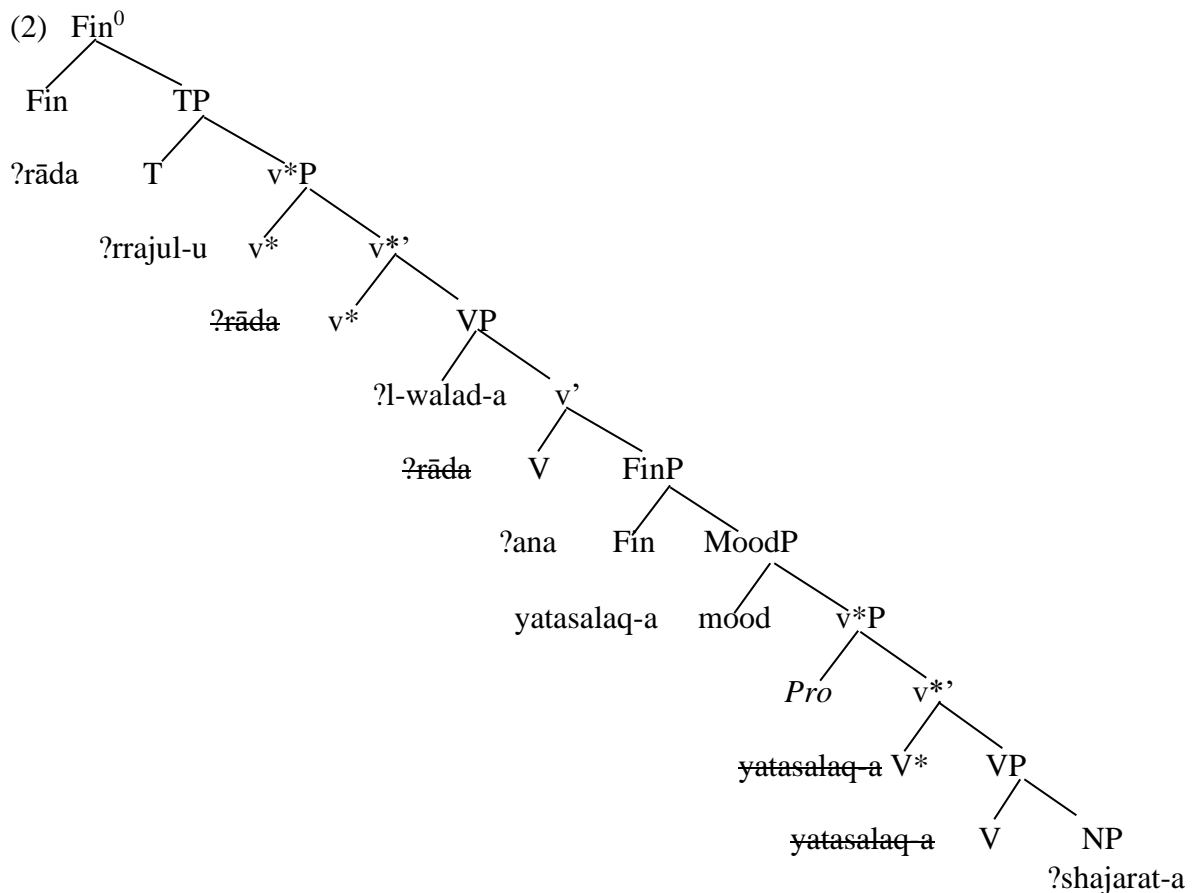
(5). a. ?rāda   ?rrajul-u   ?an yatsalaq-a   Ali-un   ?l-jidār-a
      PST.want.3.SG.MSC the-man-NOM COMP climb.3.SG.MSC Ali-NOM   the-wall-ACC
      'The man wanted the Ali to climb the wall.'

    b. ?rāda   ?rrajul-u   Ali-an ?an yatsalaq-a   ?l-jidār-a
       PST.want.3.SG.MSC the-man-NOM Ali-ACC COMP climb.3.SG.MSC the-wall-ACC
       'The man wanted Ali to climb the wall.'

To explain the process of case assignment, we say that the verb 'yatsalaq-a' located in the embedded clause is [-tense] imperfective due to being preceded by the complementizer '?an'. However, it has a full agreement with the subject 'Ali-un' and the object '?l-jidār-a'. In contrast to English in which defectiveness of the embedded infinitival [T] triggers the ECM subject to get its case valued from the lexical verb in the matrix clause, this doesn't apply to SA as Sultan (2007) stated because SA embedded subjunctive [T] exhibits ϕ-complete. Based on this view, the NP 'Ali-an' receives nominative case in the post-verbal position within the subjunctive clause. Therefore, one can state that subjunctive [T] can assign a nominative case to the embedded subject in situ refuting the proposal of raising to object position as a requirement to case assignment.

4. Mood and accusative case marking

Following Sultan's (2007) footsteps, we say that the accusative NP 'Ali-an' in (5.b) is marked via the thematic object position of the matrix clause and no raising to the post-verbal position in embedded clause. This indicates that the accusative case marked to the NP occurs in the matrix clause rather than in the embedded clause. Hence, the accusative case marked NP is base-generated in the matrix [Spec-VP] position where 'Ali-an' in (5.b) receives case through agree relation from the matrix $v*^0$ without moving to Spec-v*P. To sum up, the embedded I^0 is to license nominative case to the embedded subject NP or *pro* and the embedded $v*^0$ to license accusative case to the embedded object. In such a structure, I argue that the subjunctive [mood] feature of Fin^0 is the central feature which has a supremacy over [ϕ] and [T] due to the reason of being deficient to assign case by. This proposal has been proved by Sultan (2007), Fehri (1988), and Benmamoun (2000) who also admitted that the embedded clause of ECM selects [mood] represented by the complementizer '?an' to establish moodP as a head to case license. To illustrate, see the following tree diagram (2) that refers to sentence structure (6):

(6)?rāda   ?rrajul-u   ?l-walad-a   ?an yatasalaq-a *pro* ?shajarat-a
   PST.want.3.SG.MSC the-man-NOM ?l-walad-a-ACC COMP climb.3.SG.MSC EC   the-tree-ACC
   'The man wanted the boy to climb the tree.'

(2) Fin^0

```
(2)  Fin⁰
     /  \
   Fin   TP
  ?rāda  / \
        T   v*P
    ?rrajul-u / \
           v*   v*'
        ?rāda  v*  \
               v*   VP
            ?l-walad-a  v'
               ?rāda  V   FinP
                    ?ana  Fin   MoodP
                     yatasalaq-a  mood   v*P
                               Pro    v*'
                        yatasalaq-a V*   VP
                              yatasalaq-a  V   NP
                                          ?shajarat-a
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According to the tree diagram (2), the embedded subject dichotomized into internal subject '?l-walad-a' as a post-verbal subject and the external subject of *pro*. The existence of the *pro* as an external argument contributes to mood^0 as exhibited in the diagram. Mood is proposed due to the fact that the embedded verb 'yatasalaq-a' realizes only [person & gender] but not [Number]. The absence of this *pro* can lead to mood^0 defectiveness and hence cannot assign case through, see Al-Balushi (2011). To explain the process of assigning case, the verb 'yatasalaq-a' is merged in v* the valued [v] feature. The object '?shajarat-a' has unvalued [case] feature. Therefore, it has to merge with VP, and *pro* is merged with v*P. The valued [v] is projected to v*P then selects [mood]. To apply agree relation, due to [-ϕ] and [-T], the relation takes place between mood^0 and Fin^0. The match between [V] and [mood] on v*P leads to value both via agree relation. Another agree relation takes place between [mood] feature and v*^{0} results in value mood, and hence moodP is projected from Fin^0. Now agree between mood^0 and Fin^0 takes place, resulting in valuing [V] and [Mood] on Fin^0. The embedded subject *pro* and object '?shajarat-a' enters agree relations with Mood^0 and v*^{0}, respectively. Consequently, *pro* and '?shajarat-a' assigned to case as nominative and accusative, respectively.

5. The case of matrix clause

In contrast to the embedded clause, the matrix clause displays [T] feature. Therefore, I expect T of Fin^0 to license nominative case to the lexical subject. On the other side, I assume accusative case of the same clause via v*^{0} to be licensed to the NP '?l-walad-a' in the VP as in (7). To

explain the process of assigning case in matrix clause, I-finiteness is [T] where I^0 is valued on [T^0]. Hence, the nominative case is assigned to the lexical subject '?rrajul-u'. On the other side, the accusative case is assigned to the NP '?l-walad-a' by virtue of CP represented by the Complementizer '?an'. The object is A-bar and can be ACC-marked NP by co-indexation with *pro* in A-domain.

(7) ?rāda   ?rrajul-u   ?l-walad-a   ?an yatasalaq-a   *pro* ?shajarat-a
     PST.want.3.SG.MSC the-man-NOM ?l-walad-a-ACC COMP climb.3.sg.MSC EC the-tree-ACC
     'The man wanted the boy to climb the tree.'

One proposal arises, here, with regard to the accusative case in [Spec-VP] where the case can be licensed to the NP of the CP due to the fact that case is licensed to the CP complement and no NP is found as seen in (8):

(8) ?rāda   ?rrajul-u   ?an yatasalaq-a   ?l-walad-u   *pro* ?shajarat-a
     PST.want.3.SG.MSC the-man-NOM COMP climb.3.SG.MSC ?l-walad-a-NOM EC the-tree- ACC
     'The man wanted the boy to climb the tree.'

To explain case license with reference to (8), the matrix verb $v*^0$ is expected to assign the accusative case to the NP '?shajarat-a'. The CP – argument '?l-walad-u' may receive no case, in such scenario, due to remaining in A-domain. However, in applying A-domain notion to case license in which such NP as '?l-walad-u' is not deemed as an argument of the matrix verb '?rāda'. Instead, it receives a lexical case when this NP merges in [Spec-VP]. To tackle that and get it receive a structural case, I propose the accusative case NP '?shajarat-a' to co-index with the *pro* to get case licensed. One raising issue in this regard is that co-indexation with adjacent categories can or cannot grant case to that NP. To justify, I claim that a PP acc-marked NP as in (9) can be a non-argument wherein the Gen-marked NP '?l-walad-u' receives θ-role from the preposition 'min' that can also assign the it oblique inherent case.

(9) ?rāda   ?rrajul-u   min ?l-walad-u   ?an yatasalaq-a   ?shajarat-a
     PST.want.3.SG.MSC the-man-NOM to   the-boy-NOM COMP climb.3.SG.MSC the-tree-ACC
     'The man wanted to the boy to climb the tree.'

6. The verb *yaʕtaqid* and ECM

The verb 'yaʕtaqid' found in ECM construction has been observed to contribute to accusative case marking to the NP of the embedded clause. The embedded clause is introduced by the Complementizer '?an'. This distinctive feature of the clause structure gives a privilege of clause completeness. The presence of comp provides a rational evidence to the accusative case marked NP '?a-tālib-a' to occur within the embedded clause according to Arabic grammar the NP of the embedded clause can receive lexical accusative case by the comp as seen in (10). However, concerning structural case, CP is seen to have unvalued case features. So, case feature in this clause can be valued to this NP by the functional head $v*^0$ via agree relation:

(10) ?ʕ taqad-a   ?al-muʕalim-u   ?ana ?a-tālib-a   marīḍ-an
      PST.believe.3.SG.MSC the-teacher-NOM that the-student-ACC sick
      'The teacher thought that the student is sick.'

In the same vein of clause completeness, and regardless its association with embedded NP case license, the absence of overt complementizer is seen- in such clause structure- to result in acc-marked NP in the embedded [Spec-TP] to be checked and licensed accusative case by the matrix v^{*0} through agree relation between '?a-taqs-a' and the v^{*0} in its base-generation without movement process as seen in (11):

(11) ? ʕtaqad-a   ?nnas-u   ?a-taqs-a   barīd-an
      PST.believe.3.SG.MSC the-people-NOM   the-climate-ACC cold
      'The people thought the climate is cold.'

In the view of the previous examples (10-11), there seems a consensus among linguists that acc-marked NPs '?a-tālib-a' & '?a-taqs-a' are within the domain of embedded clauses. This conclusion contrasts with Sultan (2007) and Al-Balushi (2011) proposals who claimed that ACC-marked NPs are to be checked for case at TP position where the embedded clause they occur in is full CP. Their claim could be considered due to the speaker intuition that a sentence such as (10) is odd but not ill-formed, and indeed lacks the complementizer. However, such a clause is advocated by many ways as being tensed, but tensed CP. This proposal is based on the evidence that the verb of the embedded clause can realize the past tense as in (12):

(12) ? ʕtaqad-a   Samir-un   ?a-tālib-a   ghab-a ?l-barehat-a
      PST.believe.3.SG.MSC Samir-NOM the-student-ACC absent   yesterday
      'Samir thought the student was absent yesterday.'

According to this sentence, SA has- contrasting to English- an embedded independent [T] in the embedded clause which comes from the inflected verb as underlined in (12). This property seems different from the infinitival verb form in English which has [-T]. Moving to agreement, it has been shown earlier that I^0 exhibits φ-complete between the subject '?a-tālib-a' and the verb 'ghab-a'. These two heads are fully inflected for finite features and encode the inflectional property that indicates and proves existence of CP layer. Far from tensed clause property, ACC-marked NP is seen to be within the domain embedded clause but not in the matrix clause. The evidence for that –See Al-Balushi (2011)- is seen in a structure of the embedded clause that is modified by Fin^0 which is represented by a negative particle providing a reasonable evidence to be a CP clause as shown in (13):

(13) Zanna-Ø   Ali-un   ?ttullab-a   lan   yahdur-u-Ø]
      PST.believe.3.SG.MSC Ali-NOM the-students-ACC NEG.FUT IMPRF.attend.PLUR.MSC.SUB
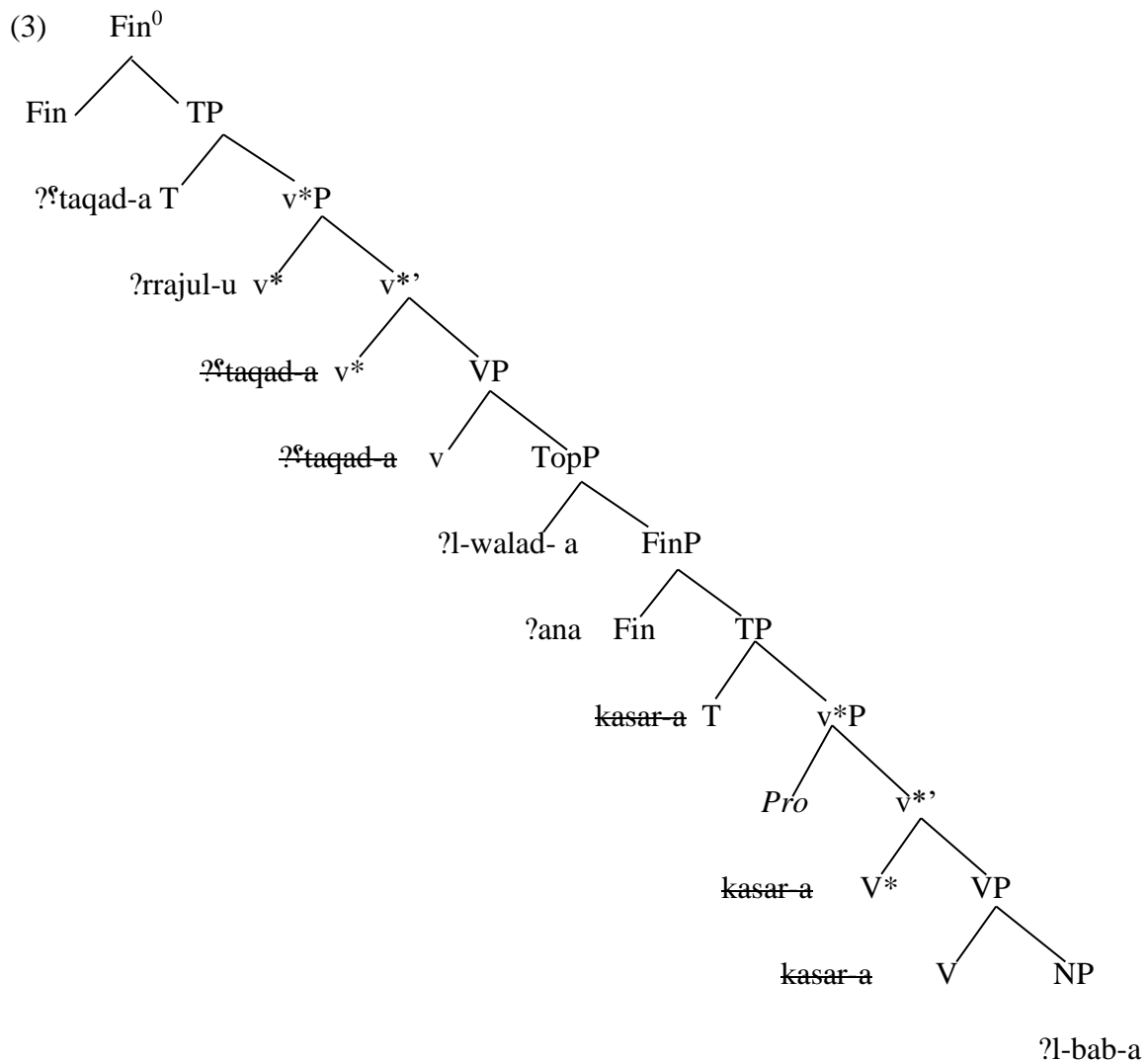   'Ali believed that the students will not attend.'

In sentence (13), the negative particle 'lan'[1] is associated with accusative case license to NP '?ttullab-a' of the embedded clause which occurs to the left periphery of the clause boundary. The negative particle 'lan' occurrence in embedded clause is higher than T^0; the *pro* does not occur at [Spec-TP], rather it occurs at [Spec-TopP]. One significant point in this vein is that having a negative particle is pertained to null CP as shown in (14):

(14)? ʕtaqad-a   Ali-un   (?ana) ?al-mudaris-a   lan   ya?ti
    PST.believe.3.SG.MSC Ali-NOM that-EC the-teacher-ACC NEG.FUT come.3.SG.MSC
    'Ali believed (that) the teacher will not come.'

The structure of sentence (14) has a CP, and thus manifests Fin^0 feature of [T] and [φ] which legitimizes to check the structural case as further explained in (15) followed by the diagram (3) where null C co-occurs with the null subject of the embedded clause.

(15)? ʕtaqad-a   ?rrajul-u   [(?ana) ?l-walad-a   kasar-a   *pro* ?l-bab-a
    PST.believe.3. SG.MSC the-man- NOM (that)-*ec* the-boy-ACC break.PST EC   the-door-ACC
    'The man believed (that) the boy broke the door.'

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[1]. According to Benmamoun (2000) functional categories such as negative particles occupy a projection that encodes [T]. However, incomplete inflection of the feature can result in unvalued tense, and hence case unlicensed. In this vein, the sentence negation particle carries temporal information located between tense and verbal projection. Hence, in sentence (13), tense interpretation as encoded in the particle 'lan' shows that imperfective verb doesn't carry tense. Therefore, the imperfective paradigm in SA displays a mood feature such as indicative, subjunctive, and jussive which are followed here to account for case license.

(3) Fin^0

```
            Fin⁰
          /      \
        Fin       TP
              /        \
        ?ʕtaqad-a T      v*P
                    /        \
            ?rrajul-u v*       v*'
                          /        \
                    ?ʕtaqad-a v*      VP
                                  /      \
                            ?ʕtaqad-a  v'
                                      /    \
                                     V      TopP
                                        /        \
                                  ?l-walad- a     FinP
                                              /        \
                                        ?ana  Fin       TP
                                                    /        \
                                              kasar-a T      v*P
                                                          /      \
                                                        Pro      v*'
                                                             /        \
                                                       kasar-a V*      VP
                                                                    /      \
                                                              kasar-a V      NP
                                                                             |
                                                                          ?l-bab-a
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Tree diagram (3) shows sentence (15) structure in which the NPs case for the embedded clause starts in the verb 'kasara' merge in v^0 with the case unvalued object '?l-walad- a'. The $v*^0$ merges with v*P. The argument *pro* is located in Spec- $v*^0$. The $v*^0$ projects [v] and gets its value at Spec- $v*^0$. The $v*^0$ is inevitably selected by T^0. Both $v*^0$ and T^0 enter agree relation that results to value [T] on [Fin^0]. The *pro* as external subject has a co-referential relation with the topic in the embedded Spec-TopP. The *pro* and the object '?l-walad-a' enter agree relation in order to value their cases. So they enter that relation with T^0 and $v*^0$ which results in value nominative case to the *pro* and accusative case to '?l-walad- a', respectively. The topic '?l-walad-a' is assumed to merge at Spec-TopP wherein it can receive the lexical case by occupying A-bar position from the verb '? ʕtaqad-a' in the matrix clause. On the other hand, the NP '?rrajul-u' can get the nominative case by virtue of agree relation with the verb '? ʕtaqad-a' because it encodes [T]. For the CP of the embedded clause, it gets valued through the agree relation with the head $v*^0$ to receive structural case that results in C visibility at LF.

7. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to explain how ECM of various forms in Arabic can be licensed in the view of minimalism. It demonstrates the diverse structures of ECM sentences that all account for case assignment through finiteness. The finite features (Agr and T) have certain limitations to account for case assignment of the embedded clause due to defectiveness. Hence, the subjunctive mood verb of ECM can assign the nominative case to the embedded subject. Rather, the study accounts for the NP in embedded clauses and shows the accusative case through agree relation with the matrix clause $v*^0$. Agreement, on the other hand, is proposed initially to license case, particularly in SVO forms. In contrast, the agreement feature fails- in particular VSO forms- to license case due to deficiency of the feature. Therefore, the study extended Fin^0 to include tense as encoded in the verb to assign both nominative and null cases to the subject and *pro,* respectively. We found also that case license in this exceptional form is structural dependent as in SVO where agreement assigns case but fails in certain forms of VSO. This led to propose [T] to license case after entering agree relation with $v*^0$ results in valuing it on Fin^0. Yet, deficient [T] in imperfective tense clause when preceded by the complementizer makes the issue of case license more complicated.

Mood is proposed through its force as in the subjunctive and jussive constructions represented by modality particles complementizer insertion to enter agree relation with v on $v*^0$ results to value both v and mood and hence project moodP. Now, the embedded subject *pro* and object enter agree relation with $mood^0$ and $v*^0$, respectively which results in assigning them nominative and accusative cases, respectively. As we see, the $v*^0$ has a central role to bridge the agree relation between the functional heads and NPs. We see in embedded clause, an indirect object agrees with T, but the direct object doesn't. Hence, $v*^0$ is functioning to establish a dual agreement between both objects. Furthermore, the $v*^0$ is utilized in imperfective infinitival embedded clauses when the subject remains in VP-shell and case assigned in base-generated Spec-VP in which $v*^0$ assigns the accusative case to the internal object. Rather, $v*^0$ functions in matrix clause where the pre- verb NP has been licensed accusative case in base-generation through agree relation with $v*^0$.

Abbreviation	Interpretation
acc	accusative case
Agr	agreement
AgrOP	agreement object head
AgrSP	agreement subject head
C^0	complementizer head
ec	empty category
fem	feminine
Fin^0	finite Head
fut	future
imprf	imperfective
ind	indicative
I^0	inflectional head
$mood^0$	mood head
msc	masculine
neg	negative
nom	nominative case
plur	plural

pre	present
pro	little null pronoun
pst	past
sg	singular
Spec	specifier
T	tense
TopP	topic Phrase
T^0	tense head
v*	light verb
$v*^0$	light verb head
ϕ	phi-features
Ø	null NP

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