

Discourse Particles in Hijazi Arabic: A Minimalist Approach

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This paper investigates three discourse particles, namely tara, ʕa:d, and ʔah- in Hijazi Arabic (HA). It argues that they are C-related particles located in different projections in the split C-system in the sense of Rizzi (1997) and Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007). Tara is a particle heading the Focus Phrase (FocP). ʕa:d is a particle heading the Contrastive Topic Phrase (C-TopP). ʔah- is a particle that forms a constituent merged in the Shifting Topic Phrase (S-TopP). Evidence is provided based on their semantics and syntax. Semantically, both tara and ʕa:d evoke a contrastive interpretation marking an entity as contrasted focus and topic, respectively. On the other hand, ʔah- marks an entity as a main topic that the discourse is about. Syntactically, the three particles differ in their compatibility with focussed constructions, their compatibility with S-Top marking expressions, their ability to occur in embedded clauses, and their syntactic positions relative to each other. Having analysed the three particles, the paper proposes a distinctive property between Focus (Foc) and Topic (Top) heads with respect to the edge feature. While the phonetically overt Foc⁰ tara seems to have no edge feature that triggers the move of the focussed element to [Spec, FocP], both C-Top⁰ and S-Top⁰ motivate the marked constituent to merge/move to the specifier position.

Keywords: CP-split domains, topic typology, left periphery, discourse particles, Hijazi Arabic.

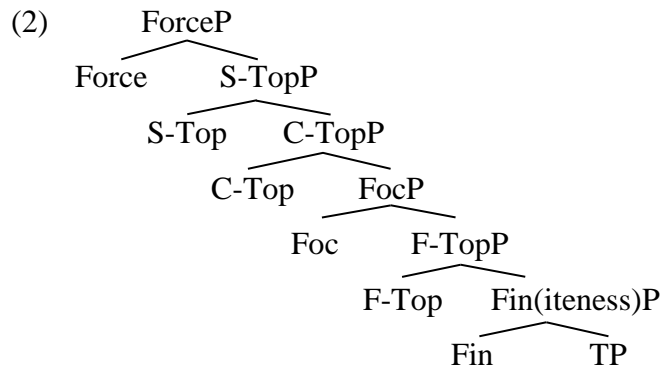
1 Introduction

Arabic (including Standard variety and spoken dialects) is a well-known example of a language with C-particles (the so-called *ʔinna wa ʔaxawatiha* ‘*ʔinna* and its sisters’) (see Ibn Aqil 1964; Ibn Jinni 1979; Al-Zajjaji 1984). Although *ʔinna* is the most commonly discussed C-particle, others are also licensed under certain syntactic and/or pragmatic conditions. Little attention has been paid to particles in the Arabic dialects whose syntactic structures are still under-investigation. Except for very few attempts to locate discourse particles in the recent cartographic structure (see Alshamari 2017), studies of Arabic C-particles analyse them in a non-split-CP model, which is widely proven to be inadequate to capture the left-periphery (Jarrah & Alshamari 2017). Cross-linguistically, there is an increasing interest to analyse discourse particles. These elements are seen as windows into the structural hierarchy of the CP area in natural languages. In Italian and Japanese, for example, discourse particles are taken as evidence for splitting up the Force Phrase (ForceP) (Dohi 2020). In North Hail Arabic, a variety of Najdi Arabic, Alshamari (2017) analyses them as marking Shifting Topics (S-Top), Contrastive Topics (C-Top), and Familiar Topics (F-Top). This paper tackles discourse particles in another Arabic dialect, namely Hijazi Arabic (HA), which constitutes one of three major Saudi Arabian dialects and is spoken in the Hijaz region (or the western coast of Saudi Arabia) including Jeddah, Taif, and the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah (Sieny 1978; Bakalla 1979). The contribution of the current study is to analyse three HA particles: *tara*, *ʕa:d*, and *ʔah-* as in (1a), (1b), and (1c), respectively, within the recent assumptions

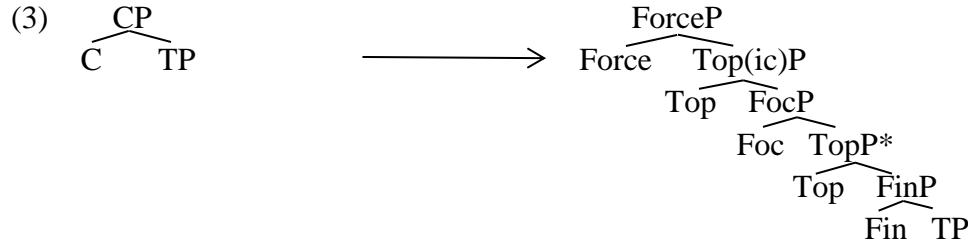
of the minimalist framework (Chomsky 2000, 2001, 2008) and in light of the cartographic approach.

- (1) a. *Tara* MOHAMMED sa:ʕad-ni.
 PRT Mohammed helped-me
 ‘MOHAMMED helped me.’
- b. *OMAR ʕa:d ma ysa:ʕad ʔaħad.*
 Omar PRT NEG help anybody
 ‘OMAR does not help anybody.’
- c. *ʔah-o* Mohammed gader yuwafiq bain d-dirasah wo r-riyad^ʕa.
 PRT-3SM Mohammed managed compensate between the-studying and the-exercising
 ‘Speaking of Mohammed, he managed to compensate between studying and exercising.’

By doing so, the paper distinguishes between focus and topic particles. The targeted language in this research is the HA dialect that is spoken, specifically, in the city of Jeddah which ‘has been designated “urban” Hijazi to distinguish it from Bedouin dialects also native to the Hijazi region’ (Omar 1975: v). This dialect is among the least discovered languages compared to, for example, Egyptian Arabic, Jordanian Arabic, and Najdi Arabic. While *tara* and *ʕa:d* are both analysed in North Hail Arabic by Alshamari (2017), I propose a different analysis of the corresponding particles in HA spoken in Jeddah. My analysis embodies three projections in the C-system: S-TopP, C-TopP, and FocusP (FocP) of the split-CP structure in (2), postulated by Rizzi (1997) and by Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007), and sheds light on the semantic properties of these functional projections.



For Rizzi (1997), the traditional CP projection is viewed as separate heads, whose order is fixed as follows:



ForceP is the highest projection that, through the head Force, specifies the (illusionary) force of the clause. FinP at the bottom of the structure marks the specification of finiteness and the non-finiteness of the IP/TP. Sandwiched between ForceP and FinP are TopP and FocP which are only projected when the clause has a feature Top or Foc. Topicalised and focussed phrases move to the specifier of TopP and FocP valuing their Top and Foc features, respectively. Top⁰ and Foc⁰ are phonetically null in Italian, but they may be pronounced in other languages. The asterisk indicates that Top is a recursive category. Another TopP can be projected below FocP (Rizzi 1997).

In Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl's (2007) topic typology, Top belongs to different types. Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007) assume the existence of three types of topics: S-Top, C-Top, and F-Top. Each Top is associated with a distinct meaning. Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007) define the three topics as follows:

- (4) i. S-Top (or Aboutness Topic, in the sense of Frascarelli (2008)): The constituent refers to an entity (topic) that the sentence is about (Reinhart 1981) and that is newly introduced or reintroduced in the discourse.
- ii. C-Top: an entity that indicates alternatives (or topics) and creates oppositional pairs with respect to other topics (Krifka 2007; Chocano 2012).
- iii. F-Top: a constituent that is contextually given and D-linked with a pre-established Aboutness Topic.

Syntactically, Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007) propose that each type of Top⁰ is endowed with a distinct topic feature and occupies a fixed position in the left periphery with reference to FocP. The structural positions of the three types of topic projections are schematically represented in (2) above. The S-TopP, which is the highest projection, is merged with the feature (+Aboutness). Below S-Top and above FocP lies the C-TopP, which has the feature (+Contrastive). F-TopP is the lowest projection and is endowed with (+Familiar). The specifier positions of the three TopPs are landing sites for the topical constituents that share the features to move or merge in order to check the functional feature: (+Aboutness), (+Contrastive) or (+Familiar).

Adopting both Rizzi's (1997) Split-CP and Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl's (2007) topic typology, this paper aims at exploring the particles *tara*, *ʕa:d*, and *ʔah-* in the HA spoken in Jeddah and distinguishing between Top and Foc particles. It attempts to locate the syntactic positions of these particles and reveals how it brings insights into the CP-zone of HA.

The discussion is structured as follows. Section 2 investigates the particle *tara* proposing that it heads the left peripheral projection FocP. Evidence is provided from the semantics and syntax of the particle. Section 3 explores the particle *ʕa:d* suggesting that it is a C-Top head. Both

the syntactic and semantic properties are analysed. Section 4 examines the particle *ʔah-* and argues that it is an S-Top particle. Section 6 is a conclusion.

2 Tara as a Foc head

Tara is a particle that occurs clause-initially in the HA sentence, as the following sentence demonstrates.

- (5) a. *Zaid xaraʒ.*
 Zaid left
 ‘Zaid left.’
 b. ***Tara*** *ZAID xaraʒ.*
 PRT Zaid left
 ‘ZAID left.’

Given the initial position of *tara* in its clause, it can be postulated that this particle is merged in the C-zone above TP. One immediate observation that gives credence to the suggestion that *tara* is a discourse particle is that *tara* does not contribute to the descriptive, i.e. propositional or truth-functional, content of the utterance, but to its expressive content. By considering its semantic and syntactic properties, I claim that *tara* is a Foc head. By doing so, I deviate from Alshamari (2017), who analyses *tara* as a C-Top⁰ in North Hail dialect.

Semantically, the merge of *tara* adds a discourse-related meaning to the proposition as illustrated in (6):

- (6) a. ***Tara*** *ZAID (illi) xaraʒ, mu Omar.*
 PRT Zaid that left NEG Omar
 ‘ZAID left, not Omar.’
 b. ***Tara*** *Zaid BIYZA:KIR mu nayim.*
 PRT Zaid studying NEG sleeping
 ‘Zaid is STUDING, not sleeping.’
 c. ***Tara*** *DUBU Zaid xaraʒ, mu min ʔawwal.*
 PRT just now Zaid left NEG from before
 ‘Zaid left JUST NOW, not before.’

Tara evokes a contrastive interpretation by marking a unit, which can be a DP as Zaid in (6a), a verb as *biyza:kir* ‘sleeping’ in (6b), or a temporal adverb as *dubu* ‘just now’ in (6c) with a contrastive stress. The speaker can include an alternative that stands in contrastive relationship with the marked unit. Based on Rizzi’s (1997) hypothesis on the Split CP as well as Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl’s (2007) proposal on the topics typology, this semantic contribution of *tara* entails that *tara* represents either C-Top or Foc. One piece of evidence in favour of analysing *tara* as a Foc comes from the fact that it does not appear in contexts that license contrastive topics as shown in (7), but appears in contexts that allow a contrastive focus as in (8).

(7) CONTEXT: parents are discussing whether or not their two children left the house

Speaker A: *Hal Zaid wo Omar humma l-?itnain xara?u ?*
Q Zaid and Omar they the-both left-3P
'Did both Zaid and Omar leave?'

Speaker B1: *Zaid xara? bas Omar la?*
Zaid left but Omar no
'Zaid left, but Omar didn't.'

Speaker B2: ***Tara** *Zaid xara? bas Omar la?*
PRT Zaid left but Omar no
'Zaid left, but Omar didn't.'
(Lit. 'Zaid left, but not Omar.')

(8) CONTEXT: parents are discussing whether or not their child, Omar, left the house

Speaker A: *?d'on Omar xara?*
1s.think Omar left
'I think Omar left?'

Speaker B1: *Zaid xara? mu Omar.*
Zaid left NEG Omar
'Zaid left, not Omar.'

Speaker B2: **Tara** *Zaid xara? mu Omar.*
PRT Zaid left NEG Omar
'Zaid left, not Omar.'

The contexts in (7) and (8) can be taken as a test to distinguish between a contrastive topic and a contrastive focus. Zaid used by Speaker B's utterance in (7) is a contrastive topic because it is already mentioned in the question. In contrast, Zaid as used by Speaker B in (8) is a contrastive focus. *Tara* cannot be used to mark Zaid in the former answer but can be in the latter.

Another piece of evidence is that *tara* is used to contrast an element that is not necessarily a given information as seen in (9).

(9) a. **Tara** *WALAD fa:z bi-l-?a?iza, (mu bent).*
PRT boy won with-the-award, NEG girl
'A BOY won the award, (not a girl).'

b. **Tara** *MAHAD fa:z bi-l-?a?iza.*
PRT nobody won with-the-award
'NOBODY won the award.'

In (9) above, the elements signalled by *tara* are not definite. In (9a), *walad* 'a boy' in (9a) has an indefinite reading and *mahad* 'nobody' in (9b) has a quantificational reading. In both cases, *tara* marks non-given, indefinite entities that cannot be topics because topics are strictly definite.

Syntactically, there are three properties in support of the argument that *tara* is a Foc head. One is the fact that *tara* can be combined with a S-Top Phrase *bixs^fu:s^f* 'as for' + DP. This is illustrated in (10).

- (10) a. *Bixs^fu:s^f l-zaʔiza, tara MAHAD fa:z bi:-ha.*
 as for the-award, PRT nobody won with-it
 ‘As for the award, NOBODY won it.’
- b. **Tara MAHAD bixs^fu:s^f l-zaʔiza fa:z bi:-ha.*
 PRT nobody as for the-award won with-it
 ‘As for the award, NOBODY won it.’
 (Lit. ‘NOBODY as for the award won it.’)

There is a good reason to believe that *bixs^fu:s^f* marks the entity that functions as a S-Top. The DP it introduces serves as a revived entity, which the sentence is about. Consider the following dialogue as an example.

- (11) CONTEXT: students discussing the award and the tests they have
- Speaker A: *Ybral-ana n-gaddim ʕala l-zaʔiza fi ʔasraʕ wagt.*
 need-1P 1P-apply for the-award in sooner time
 ‘We need to apply for the award as soon as possible.’
- Speaker B: *Xalli:-na n-rakkiz ʕala l-ʔixtiba:r-a:t ʔaham.*
 let-1P 1P-focus on the-test-PL more important
 ‘Let’s focus on the tests. They are more important.’
- Speaker C: *ʔaif ʕinda-na ha:da l-ʔusbu:ʕ?*
 what have-1P this the-week
 ‘What do we have this week?’
- Speaker B: *ʕinda-na ʔixtiba:r-ain fiyziya wo ʔaḥiya:ʔ.*
 have-1P test-DUAL physics and biology
 ‘We have two tests: physics and biology.’
- Speaker A: *Bixs^fu:s^f l-zaʔiza, n-gdar n-gaddim ʕalai-ha baʕdain ʔa:xer f-fahr.*
 as for the award, 1P-can 1P.apply for-it later end the-month
 ‘As for the award, we can apply for it later by the end of the month.’

In the dialogue (11), the conversation was first about the award that the speakers want to apply for. Then the conversation turned to the test that students have. Using the expression *bixs^fu:s^f* ‘as for’, Speaker A’s utterance shifts the conversation back to the award marking it as a S-Top. The observation that concerns us here is that the particle *tara* can co-occur with the S-Top construction *bixs^fu:s^f* + DP. Given the fact that S-TopP is located above FocP, I can formulate the initial generalisation that *tara* is a Foc particle.

Another syntactic property is that *tara* does not tolerate the existence of another focused expressions in a sentence. The incompatibility to wh-words is evident as illustrated in (12).

- (12) a. **Tara ʔaif ʔaftara MOHAMMED?*
 PRT what bought Mohammed
 ‘What did MOHAMMED buy?’
 (Lit. ‘What bought MOHAMMED.’)

- b. *ʔaif *tara* ʔaftara MOHAMMED ?
 what PRT boutgh Mohammed
 ‘What did MOHAMMED buy?’
 (Lit. ‘What bought MOHAMMED.’)

Following the assumption that wh-words move overtly to the specifier of FocP (Alazzawie 2018; Rizzi 1997; Zubizarreta 1998; Szendrői 2004), the ill-formedness of (11a) and (11b) indicates that *tara* can neither be higher nor lower than FocP. Note that the sentence is grammatical without *tara* as illustrated in (13).

- (13) ʔaif ʔaftara Mohammed ?
 what buy Mohammed
 ‘What did Mohammed buy?’

As shown in (13), the sentence is grammatical in the absence of *tara* which supports the analysis that both *tara* and the wh-word are located in the same projection (i.e. FocP). Another focused expression, which *tara* cannot tolerate is the verb that bears a contrastive stress in VSO sentences. Consider the following sentence.

- (14) *ʔAFTARA *tara* MOHAMMED l-kita:b mu ʔSTAṢA:R-uh ZAID min l-maktaba.
 bought PRT Mohammad the-book NEG borrowed-it Zaid from the-library
 ‘It was MOHAMMED who BOUGHT the book but it was not ZAID who BORROWED it from the library.’
 (Lit. ‘BOUGHT MOHAMMED the book not BORROWED it ZAID from the library.’)

The ungrammaticality of (14) implies that *tara* marks the DP ‘Mohammed’ as a focused element, which therefore cannot co-occur with the focussed verb. Sentence (14) above would be grammatical if the particle *tara* had not been used and, accordingly, the stressed nominal ‘Mohammed’ is interpreted as a contrastive topic, and, in turn, occurs pre-verbally:

- (15) MOHAMMED ʔAFTARA l-kita:b.
 Mohammed bought the-book
 ‘MOHAMMED BOUGHT the book.’

Sentence (15) is interpreted as follows: ‘Mohammed’ as an entity being contrasted with other given entities in the conversational common ground bought the book and did not borrowed it. This suggests that ‘Mohammed’ is a contrastive topic expression and the verb is a focused one.

The third syntactic property is that the nominal selected by *tara* can be a cleft where it is immediately followed by the word *illi* ‘that’ as illustrated in (16) below.

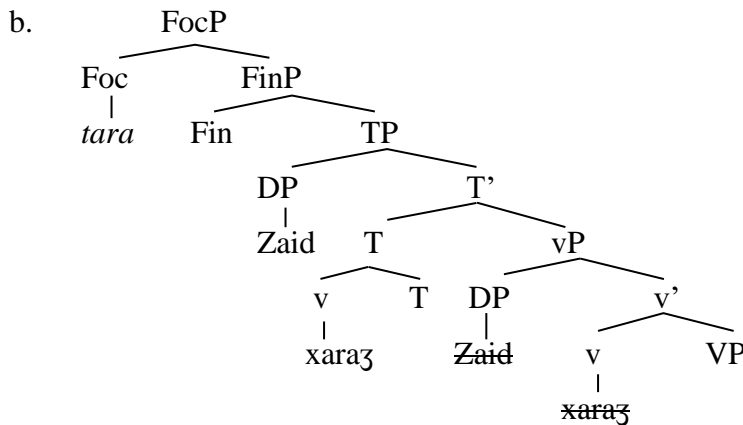
- (16) a. *Tara* WALAD illi fa:z, mu bent.
 PRT boy that won NEG girl
 ‘It’s a BOY who won, not a girl.’

- b. WALAD *tara* illi fa:z, mu bent.
 boy PRT that won NEG girl
 ‘It’s a BOY who won, not a girl.’

Gussenhoven (2007) argues that clefts are focus constructions. Given the argument that a cleft construction terminates at a dedicated FocP (Belletti 2009), it is clear in (16b) that *tara* does not block the movement of the nominal *walad* ‘boy’ to the Spec of FocP, because the latter is an XP rather than X^0 .

Based on its semantic/pragmatic and syntactic properties, I argue that *tara* embodies Foc^0 of Rizzi’s (1997) split-CP structure that, once it merges, it probes an entity, and an Agree relation is established between the particle and the entity it marks. The Agree relation is realized as a stress spelled on the item that *tara* marks and is interpreted at the PF interface. The following schematic representation in (17b) shows the Agree relation of (5b), repeated here in (17a), where the particle in Foc^0 probes the DP in the subject position:

- (17) a. *Tara* ZAID xaraʒ.
 PRT Zaid left
 ‘ZAID left.’



It is worth noting that the movement of the XP to the edge of FocP is optional, given that the focused element remains in situ which suggests that the movement to the edge is not motivated. This may yield to another conclusion that *tara*, as a realization of Foc^0 in HA, has no edge feature that triggers the movement of the XP to its specifier.

In the next section, I investigate the particle *fa:d*, proposing that it represents another left-peripheral projection in the Hijazi Clause.

3 *ʕa:d* as a C-Top head

ʕa:d is another particle that does not contribute to the propositional content. In sentences in which the particle occurs, it follows a nominal showing a word order *SPrtV(O)* as illustrated (18).

- (18) a. *OMAR ʕa:d ʔʕtaraf bi-ʕalatʕ-uh.*
 Omar PRT admitted by-mistake-his
 ‘OMAR admitted his mistake.’
 b. **ʕa:d OMAR ʔʕtaraf bi-ʕalatʕ-uh.*
 PRT Omar admitted by-mistake-his
 ‘OMAR admitted his mistake.’
 (Lit. ‘OMAR admitted by his mistake.’)

At a first glance, the word order in (18a) reveals that *ʕa:d* is in a position following the subject. However, I argue, along the lines of Alshamari (2017), that *ʕa:d* is not clause internal but left-peripheral. One piece of evidence comes from the status of the pre-*ʕa:d* DP.

- (19) **WALAD ʕa:d ʔʕtaraf bi-ʕalatʕ-uh.*
 boy PRT admitted by-mistake-his
 ‘A BOY admitted his mistake.’
 (Lit. ‘A BOY admitted by his mistake.’)

The ungrammaticality of (19) shows that pre-*ʕa:d* nominal cannot carry an indefinite interpretation. The sensitivity to definiteness suggests that the nominal selected by *ʕa:d* is in a topic position rather than a subject position. This entails that *ʕa:d* is a topicalizer that merges in the left periphery. Another piece of evidence that *ʕa:d* is a discourse particle comes from the pronunciation. Merging *ʕa:d* results in a pause uttered after *ʕa:d* in which DP+*ʕa:d* together bears a rising tone. This pronunciation colours the sentence with a topic-comment interpretation.

Before analysing this particle, I should point out that the left-peripheral *ʕa:d* is semantically and syntactically distinct from the auxiliary-like verb *ʕa:d* that occurs in negated contexts of HA as well as other Arabic dialects such as Yemeni Arabic (YA) and Egyptian Arabic (EA). The auxiliary-like verb *ʕa:d* expresses a meaning identical to ‘anymore/ever’ in English, as illustrated in HA (20a,b), YA (20c), and EA (20d):

- (20) a. *Ra:ħ wo ma ʕa:d rejeħ.*
 went and NEG anymore came back
 ‘He went and never came back.’
 b. *La ʕa:d takallem-ni kada.*
 NEG ever talk to-me like this
 ‘Don’t ever talk to me like this.’
 c. *Mish ʕa:d gaat-na.*
 NEG anymore come.past.3FS-us

- (Lit. She has not come anymore.) (Ahmed 2012: 36)
- d. *Ma ʕud-tif tikarrar-ha.*
 NEG ever-NEG.2MS repeat-it
 ‘Don’t ever repeat it.’

The negated context in (20a), (20b), (20c), and (20d) is one syntactic difference between the discourse particle *ʕa:d* and the auxiliary-like verb *ʕa:d*. The auxiliary-like verb *ʕa:d* is licensed by a c-commanding negative particle (Ahmed 2012) and cannot be used in the affirmative sentences counterparts (21a), (21b), (21c), and (21d), respectively, where the negative particle does not occur unlike the discourse particle *ʕa:d*, which occurs in affirmative contexts as in (18a) above:

- (21) a. **Ra:h wo ʕa:d rejeʕ.*
 went and anymore came
 ‘He went and came back.’
 (Lit. ‘He went and came back anymore.’)
- b. **ʕa:d təkalləm-ni kəda.*
 ever 2.talk to-me like this
 ‘Talk to me like this.’
 (Lit. ‘Ever talk to me like this.’)
- c. **ʕa:d gaat-kum.*
 anymore come.PAST.3FS-you (Ahmed 2012: 36)
 ‘She has come.’
 (Lit. She has come anymore.)
- d. **ʕud karrar-ha.*
 anymore repeat-it
 ‘Repeat it.’
 (Lit. ‘Ever repeat it.’)

Another syntactic difference is evident in conditional contexts. The auxiliary-like verb *ʕa:d* ‘anymore/ever’ seems to also be licensed by a conditional particle *ʔin* ‘if’ in HA as illustrated in (22) and cannot occur without the conditional particle as illustrated in (23).

- (22) *ʔin ʕa:d karrarta -ha, ra:h titʕa:qab.*
 if ever repeated. 2MS-it went punished
 ‘If you ever repeat this, you will be punished.’
- (23) **ʕa:d karrarta-ha; ra:h titʕa:qab.*
 ever repeat. 2MS-it went punished
 ‘You repeat this; you will be punished.’
 (Lit. ‘You ever repeat it; you will be punished.’)

The ungrammaticality of (23) suggests that the auxiliary-like verb *ʕa:d* ‘anymore/ever’ requires a c-commanding head to be licensed in the conditional context. On the other hand, the discourse particle *ʕa:d* does not require a c-commanding head as illustrated in (18a) above.

As for the status of discourse particle *ʕa:d*, I propose that *ʕa:d* is a C-Top marker contrary to Alshamari’s (2017) S-Top analysis of *ʕa:d* in North Hail Arabic. Semantically, *ʕa:d* marks the preceding nominal with a contrastive interpretation against alternatives that are explicitly or implicitly given as illustrated in the following context.

(24) CONTEXT: two teachers are discussing the students’ opinions to postpone the quiz

Speaker A: *ʔaiʕ raʔy t^ʕ-t^ʕullab fi mawd^ʕu:ʕ taʔazi:l l-ʔixtiba:r ?*

what opinion the-students in topic postponing the-test

‘What are the students’ opinions regarding postponing the test?’

Speaker B: *L-kul yeβra yʔazil bas OMAR ʕa:d ra:ʕeð^ʕ.*

the-all want postpone but Omar PRT refuse

‘Everybody wants to postpone but OMAR refuses.’

In (24), *ʕa:d* selects ‘Omar’ among a set of individuals *t-tʕalaba* ‘the students’, who are all known to both participants. *ʕa:d* marks the DP Omar with a stress that sits in contrast to other students.

A strong argument in favour of analysing *ʕa:d* as a C-Top and not as a contrastive Foc is that it does not occur in the same context where the Foc particle *tara* occurs.

(25) CONTEXT: parents are discussing whether or not their two children left the house

Speaker A: *Hal Zaid wo Omar humma l-ʔitnain xaraʒ-u ?*

Q Zaid and Omar they the-both left-3P

‘Did Zaid and Omar both leave?’

Speaker B1: *Zaid xaraʒ bas Omar laʔ.*

Zaid left but Omar no

‘Zaid left, but Omar didn’t.’

Speaker B2: *Zaid ʕa:d xaraʒ bas Omar laʔ.*

Zaid PRT left but Omar no

‘Zaid left, but Omar didn’t.’

(26) CONTEXT: parents are discussing whether or not their child, Omar, left the house

Speaker A: *ʔd^ʕon Omar xaraʒ ?*

1s.think Omar left

‘I think Omar left?’

Speaker B1: *Zaid xaraʒ mu Omar.*

Zaid left NEG Omar

‘Zaid left, not Omar.’

Speaker B2: **Zaid ʕa:d xaraʒ mu Omar.*

Zaid PRT left NEG Omar

‘Zaid left, but Omar didn’t.’

(Lit. ‘Zaid left, not Omar.’)

In the context (25), *ʕa:d* is used by Speaker B to mark Zaid, which is a known entity given previously in Speaker’s A utterance. This suggests that Zaid is a contrastive topic constituent rather than a focus. On the other hand, *ʕa:d* in Speaker’s B utterance in (26) is ill-formed because *ʕa:d* cannot be used to mark the DP Zaid, which is not previously mentioned in the discourse. This interpretation differentiates between *ʕa:d* as a C-Top and *tara*, which I argued earlier to be a contrastive Foc⁰.

Syntactically, the distributional properties reveal that this particle is not an S-Top but in a position that is sandwiched between S-TopP and FocP. According to Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007), this position is devoted for the C-TopP. One apparent property is related to its occurrence in embedded sentences. This distribution suggests that *ʕa:d* is not in S-TopP based on the argument claimed by Bianchi & Frascarelli (2010) and Jiménez-Fernández (2011) that S-Top is a root phenomenon. Consider the following context:

(27) CONTEXT: two teachers are discussing the expected performance of three students.

Speaker A: *Sara wo Ahmed wo Lama za:kar-u marra kuayyis li-l-ʔixtibar.*

Sara and Ahmed and Lama study-3P very well for-the-test
 ‘Sara, Ahmed, and Lama studies very well for the test.’

Speaker B: *Bas ʔana mu mutaʔakida ʔiza LAMA ʕa:d ha-tinzah.*

But I NEG sure if Lama PRT will-F.pass
 ‘I am not sure if LAMA is going to pass.’

The well-formedness of Speaker B’s utterance in (27) shows that *ʕa:d* is not situated in the projection S-TopP. This state of affair contrasts with Alshamari’s (2017) argument that *ʕa:d* in North Hail Arabic is a S-Top.

Another distribution that supports the C-TopP position of *ʕa:d* is the fact that *ʕa:d* is lower than S-TopP. This is illustrated in sentences that contain the expression *bixs^fu:s^f* ‘as for’, which marks the entity that functions as S-Top. Consider the following dialogue:

(28) CONTEXT: classmates are discussing how bad the results are

Speaker A: *N-nata:yiʒ marra sayyiʔa.*

the-results very bad
 ‘The results are very bad.’

Speaker B: *Moʕzam t^f-t^falaba yebrɔ yʕi:d-u l-ʔixtiba:r.*

most the-students want.PL retake-3P the-test
 ‘most of the students want to retake the test.’

Speaker C: *ʔana ʔatmanna n-ʕi:d-uh had:a l-ʔusbuʕ.*

I 1S.hope 1P-retake-it this the-week
 ‘I hope we retake it this week.’

Speaker A: *Bixs^fu:s^f n-nata:yiʒ MOHAMMED ʕa:d muqtaneʕ bi-darajat-uh wo ma*
 as for the-results Mohammed PRT satisfied with-grade-his and NEG
ʔað^fn yebrɔ yʕi:d l-ʔixtiba:r.
 1S.think want retake the-test

‘As for the results, MOHAMMED is satisfied with his grade and I don’t think he wants to retake the test.’

As indicated by Speaker A’s utterance in (28) above, *ʕa:d* has a fixed order relative to the S-Top expression *bixs^fu:s^f n-nata:yij* ‘as for the results’. An opposite order yields ungrammaticality:

- (29) *MOHAMMED *ʕa:d* *bixs^fu:s^f n-nata:yiz muqtaneʕ bi-darajat-uh wo ma ʔað^fn yeβra*
 Mohammed PRT as for the-results satisfied with-grade-his and NEG 1S.think want
yʕi:d l-ʔixtiba:r.
 retake the-test

‘As for the results, MOHAMMED is satisfied with his grade and I don’t think he wants to retake the test.’

(Lit. ‘MOHAMMED as for the results is satisfied with his grade and I don’t think he wants to retake the test.’)

The ill-formedness of (29) shows that the construct DP+*ʕad* cannot be higher than S-Top. The immobility of *ʕa:d* offers support for its categorical status as an X⁰ particle (see Struckmeier 2014 for the link between immobility of particles and their treatment as heads).

Moreover, *ʕa:d* can co-occur with the Foc particle *tara*. Consider the following dialogue:

- (30) CONTEXT: two teachers are discussing the fact that students have private tutors to help them
 Speaker A: *Kul l-ʔawla:da illi ʔaʕref-hum ʕinda-hum mudasarris-i:n xus^fus^fi-i:n.*
 every the-boys that 1S.know-them have-they tutor-PL private.PL
 ‘All the boys I know have private tutors.’
 Speaker B: *OMAR ʕa:d tara MAHAD bi-ysa:aʕd-uh.*
 Omar PRT PRT nobody PROG-helping-him
 ‘NOBODY is helping OMAR.’

Speaker B’s utterance in (30) shows that when *ʕa:d* and *tara* co-occur, *ʕa:d* must precede *tara*. The fact that *tara* cannot precede *ʕa:d* as manifested in (31) indicates that *tara* must be c-commanded by *ʕa:d*.

- (31) **Tara MAHAD OMAR ʕa:d bi-ysa:aʕd-uh.*
 PRT nobody Omar PRT PROG-helping-him
 ‘NOBODY is helping OMAR.’
 (Lit. ‘NOBODY OMAR is helping him.’)

A further distributional support for the argument that *ʕa:d* is in a C-Top is its position in relation to the *wh*-word. In questions, DP+*ʕa:d* as a unit obligatorily precedes the *wh*-word as shown in (32):

- (32) CONTEXT: Two teachers are discussing the children’s gifts to their mothers on Mother’s Day.
 Speaker A: *Mohammed wo Sara ʕa:b-u li-ʔumm-hum warda.*

Mohammed and Sara brought-3P for-mother-their flower
 ‘Mohammed and Sara brought their mother a flower.’

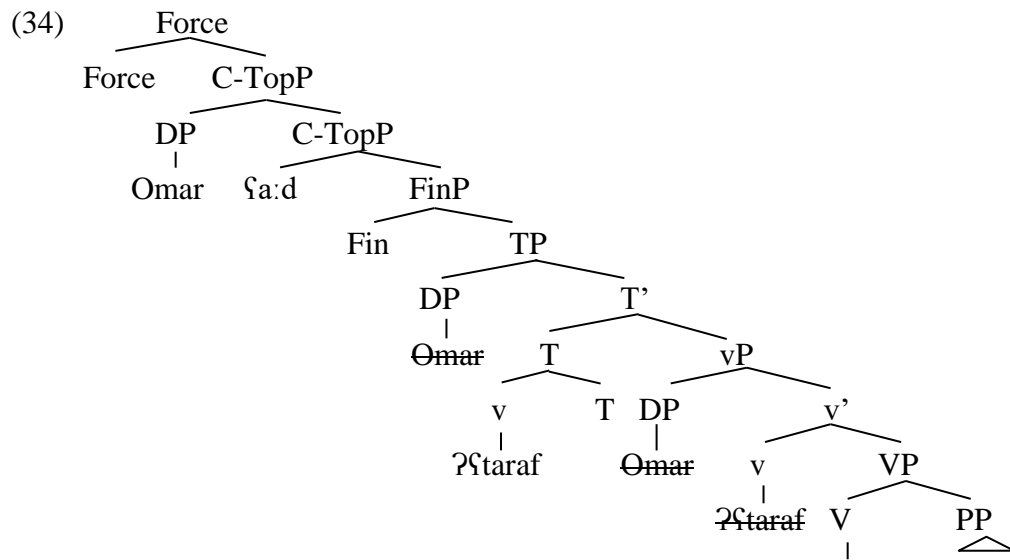
Speaker B: (*ʔaif) AHMED *ʕa:d* ʔaif ʒa:b li-ʔumm-uh ?
 what Ahmed PRT what brought for-mother-his
 ‘What did AHMED buy for his mother?’
 (Lit. ‘What AHMED bought for his mother?’)

The order in (32) proves that the particle DP+*ʕa:d* has a fixed position that is higher than FocP, and that it is not possible for the construct DP+*ʕa:d* to occur in a position lower than FocP.

Having argued that *ʕa:d* is a C-Top⁰, it can be postulated that *ʕa:d* has a C-Top feature probing the DP it marks. An Agree relation is established between the particle and the DP resulting in a contrastive stress spelled on the DP. Additionally, I tentatively assume that *ʕa:d* has another feature: EPP, given the fact that the stressed DP is obligatory in a pre-*ʕa:d* position as illustrated in (18), repeated here in (33).

- (33) a. OMAR *ʕa:d* ʔʕtaraf bi-xalat^ʕ-uh.
 Omar PRT admitted by-mistake-his
 ‘OMAR admitted his mistake.’
 b. **ʕa:d* OMAR ʔʕtaraf bi-xalat^ʕ-uh.
 PRT Omar admitted by-mistake-his
 ‘OMAR admitted his mistake.’
 (Lit. ‘OMAR admitted by his mistake.’)

The ill-formedness of (33b) shows that it cannot remain in the subject position. The contrasted topic DP is motivated to move to [Spec,C-TopP] to check the EPP feature of *ʕa:d* resulting in the order <DP *ʕa:d*> shown in (33a). The schematic representation of (33a) is given in (34).



In the next section, I explore a further C-particle, namely *ʔah-*.

4 *ʔah-* as a S-Top marker

Similar to *tara* and *ʕa:d*, the inflected particle *ʔah-* seems to be a discourse category. Its existence does not affect the proposition. It appears associated with a DP forming a construction. This construction (*ʔah-* + the immediately following DP) occurs clause-initially regardless of whether it is the subject or object.

- (35) a. *ʔah-om l-ʔawla:d kulla-hum muḥas^san-i:n.*
 PRT-PL the-children all-them immune-PL
 ‘Regarding the children, they are all immune.’
- b. *ʔah-om l-ʔawla:d lagaita-hum bi-yilʕab-u barra.*
 PRT-PL the-children found.I-them PROG-play-3P outside
 ‘The children, I found them playing outside.’
- c. **Lagait ʔah-om l-ʔawla:d bi-yilʕab-u barra.*
 found.I PRT-PL the-children PROG-play-3P outside
 ‘The children, I found them playing outside.’
 (Lit. ‘I found regarding the children playing outside.’)

Sentence (35c) is ungrammatical because the construct *ʔah-om*+DP, which functions as an object, appears in situ, the observation that demonstrates the high position that this construct occupies in the sentence where it shows up. Another observation is related to the topical status of the nominal that is linked to the particle. The nominal shows sensitivity to definiteness, given the ungrammaticality of the particle to introduce an indefinite nominal as shown in (36b) and (36c):

- (36) a. *ʔawla:d daxal-u baita-na.*
 children entered-3P house-our
 ‘Children entered our house.’
- b. **ʔah-om ʔawla:d daxal-u baita-na.*
 PRT-PL children entered-3P house-our
 ‘Children entered our house.’
 (Lit. ‘Regarding children, they entered our house.’)
- c. **ʔah-om ʔawla:d s^sura:r daxal-u baita-na.*
 PRT-PL children young entered-3P house-our
 ‘Young children entered our house.’
 (Lit. ‘Regarding young children, they entered our house.’)

The use of *ʔah-om* in (36b) and (36c) is infelicitous because the nominal associated with *ʔah-om* is indefinite. Note that sentence (36c) is ungrammatical even though the nominal linked with *ʔah-om* is specific. The generalisation we can reach to is that the element associated with *ʔah-* is a topic

because it is obligatorily definite which is a main characteristic of topics in Arabic (see, e.g. Fassi Fehri 1993; Ouhalla 1997; Soltan 2007; Aoun et al. 2010).

By considering the semantic and syntactic properties of the particle, I argue that *ʔah*+ DP is a S-Top marker. Semantically, *ʔah*- marks the DP that functions as a salient entity the discourse is about. This entity is accessible from the common ground of the utterance, but it is returned to in the current discourse. This is illustrated in the following context:

(37) CONTEXT: Friends are talking about their old friend Mohammed and the school days

Speaker A: *T-tzakar-u zami:la-na Mohammed ? s^fa:r daħi:n l-wazi:r.*
 2-remember-3P colleague-our Mohammed become now the-minister
 ‘Do you remember our colleague Mohammed? He is now the minister.’

Speaker B: *ʔaki:d ʔ-tzakkur-uh. ka:n zaki wo yħub yesa:ħid n-na:s.*
 of course 1S-remember-him was smart and like help the-people
 ‘Of course, I remember him. He was smart and liked to help people.’

Speaker A: *Ka:n-at ayya:m s^faħba wo kunna netħab fi d-diraasa.*
 was-F days tough and were.1P tired in the-studying
 ‘These were tough days and we used to get tired of studying.’

Speaker C: *S^faħi:ħ bas ʔ-ħtaqid ʔinnu kull-uh yħtamid ħala tand^fi:m l-wagt.*
 right but 1S-think that all-it depend on organizing the-time
 ‘That’s right but I think it all depends on how to organize the time.’

Speaker A: *Fiħlan*
 true
 ‘True’

Speaker C: *ʔah-o Mohammed kan dayman mutħawweq laħinnuh munad^fam.*
 PRT-3SM Mohammed was always excellent because organised
 ‘Speaking of Mohammed, he was always an excellent student because he was organised.’

In (37), Speaker A starts the conversation by talking about their old friend, Mohammed. As the conversation proceeds, the conversation starts to drift away from the main topic, i.e. Mohammed, to a different, though related, topic, i.e. the school days. Wanting to highlight a point related to Mohammed as being an organised student, Speaker C shifts from the current topic to the previous topic marked by *ʔah-o*. This implies that the DP Mohammed associated with *ʔah-o* serves as a S-Top expression.

Syntactically, *ʔah*- has a number of distributional properties in favour of the argument of it being an S-Top marker. The first property is the compatibility with wh-expressions. The particle is compatible with the wh operator and appears in a fixed order as illustrated in (38).

(38) a. *ʔah-o Ahmed mi:n bi-ysa:aħd-uh ?*
 PRT-3SM Ahmed who PROG-helping-him
 ‘Speaking of Ahmed, who is helping him?’

- b. **Mi:n ʔah-o Ahmed bi-ysa:afɖ-uh ?*
 who PRT-3SM Ahmed PROG-helping-him
 ‘Speaking of Ahmed, who is helping him?’
 (Lit. ‘Who, speaking of Ahmed, is helping him?’)

The sentence (38a) is grammatical indicating that *ʔah-o*+Ahmad is strictly higher than FocP, which hosts the *wh* operator. When *ʔah-o*+DP follows the *wh*-expression, the sentence becomes ungrammatical (38b). According to Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007), this position suggests that *ʔah-o* can be an S-Top or C-Top and rules out the possibility of being an F-Top, which is located below FocP.

The second property is the incompatibility with other S-Top expressions. Based on the conclusion drawn by Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi & Frascarelli (2010), no more than one A-Top (or S-Top) expression can occur in a sentence. This is evident in the case of *ʔah-* which does not tolerate the occurrence of the S-Top expression such as *bixs^fu:s^f* ‘as for’ as illustrated in (39).

- (39) a. **ʔah-om l-ʔawla:d bixs^fu:s^f l-ʔum legiat-hum.*
 PRT-PL the-children as.for the-mother found.she-them
 ‘As for the mother, she found the children.’
 (Lit. ‘The children, as for the mother, she found them.’)
 b. **Bixs^fu:s^f l-ʔum ʔah-om l-ʔawla:d legiat-hum.*
 as.for the-mother PRT-PL the-children found.she-them
 ‘As for the mother, she found the children.’
 (Lit. ‘As for the mother, the children, she found them.’)

The ungrammaticality of (39) indicates that the particle *ʔah-om*+DP cannot co-occur with the S-Top expression *bixs^fu:s^f* ‘as for’ which suggests that *ʔah-om* is an S-Top marker.

The third property is related to the root phenomenon which, according to Bianchi & Frascarelli (2010) and Jiménez-Fernández (2011), is a property of S-Top and neither C-Top nor F-Top. The particle+DP is incompatible with embedded context as illustrated in the following sentence.

- (40) **Mani mutʔakida iza ʔah-om l-ʔawla:d lagaita-hum.*
 NEG-I sure if PRT-PL the-children found.I-them
 ‘I am not sure if I found the children.’
 (Lit. ‘I am not sure if the children, I found them.’)

The ungrammaticality of (40) indicates that the particle cannot be merged in C-TopP or F-TopP but can only be in S-TopP.

The fourth property in support of the view, that *ʔah-* is neither projected in C-TopP nor F-Top, is its structural position relative to both *tara*, which I argued to head FocP, and *fa:d*, which I argued to head C-Top. *ʔah-* precedes both of them. This is illustrated in (41) and (42), respectively.

- (41) a. *ʔah-om ʔawla:d-i: tara ʕUMRI ma ʔ-xalli-hum yeshar-u bi-l-lail.*
 PRT-PL children-my PRT never.I NEG 1S-let-them stay up-3P by-the-night
 ‘Speaking of my children, I NEVER let them stay up at night.’
- b. **Tara ʕUMRI ʔah-om ʔawla:d-i ma ʔxalli-hum yeshar-u bi-l-lail.*
 PRT never.I PRT-PL children-my NEG let-them stay up-3P by-the-night
 ‘Speaking of my children, I NEVER let them stay up at night.’
 (Lit. ‘NEVER, speaking of my children, I let them stay up at night.’)
- (42) a. *ʔah-ε Sara ʔANA ʕa:d ʔ-ʕtaqid ʔinna-ha ma ʕa-t-ru.ħ.*
 PRT-SF Sara I PRT 1S-think that-3SF NEG will-SF-go
 ‘Speaking of Sara, I [not Amal, Nada, or Ruba] think she is not going.’
- b. **ʔANA ʕa:d ʔah-ε Sara ʔ-ʕtaqid ʔinna-ha ma ʕa-t-ru.ħ.*
 I PRT PRT-SF Sara 1S-think that-3SF NEG will-SF-go
 ‘Speaking of Sara, I think she is not going.’
 (Lit. ‘I, speaking of Sara, think she is not going.’)

In (41a), the DP *ʔawla:d-i* ‘my children’, which functions as a S-Top, marked by *ʔah-om*, co-occurs with the focussed element *ʕumri* ‘I never’, marked by *tara*. In (42a), the DP *Sara*, marked by *ʔah-ε*, co-occurs with the C-Top pronoun *ʔana* ‘I’, marked by *ʕa:d*. With this being the case, *ʔah-* is apparently housed in a different syntactic projection higher than both *tara* and *ʕa:d*. The ungrammaticality of sentences (41b) and (42b) indicates that *ʔah-* must c-command both *tara* and *ʕa:d* and not vice versa.

It should be noted that the particle and the following DP, together, form a constituent that is moved/merged in the phrasal position [Spec,S-TopP]. For one, the construct *ʔah*+DP is strictly adjacent as suggested by the ungrammaticality of (43).

- (43) **ʔah-om lagait l-ʔawla:d bi-yilʕab-u barra.*
 PRT-PL found.I the-children PROG-play-3P outside
 ‘I found the children playing outside.’
 (Lit. ‘The children, I found them playing outside.’)

As shown in (43), it is impossible to separate the particle and the DP it is linked to. In support of this analysis, the particle *ʔah-* does not block the head movement of *mu* from Neg⁰ to Force⁰ in the yes-no question, as illustrated below.

- (44) *Mu ʔah-o Zaid mḏa:kir ? laif bi-t-gu:l huwa mu mḏa:kir ?*
 Q.NEG PRT-SM Zaid studied.he why PROG-2-say he NEG studied.he
 ‘As for Zaid, hasn’t he studied? Why are you saying he hasn’t?’

The grammaticality of (44) suggests that *ʔah-o*+Zaid is a constituent that occupies a phrasal position because if *ʔah-o* occupies a head position, (44) would be ungrammatical, contrary to the fact.

Having analysed *ʔah-* as a S-Top marker, it is predicted that *ʔah*+DP is merged/moved to the specifier of S-TopP. There are two pieces of evidence to argue that *ʔah*+DP is merged. One is the lack of island violation. If the construct *ʔah*+DP is the result of movement, we would expect that it can move out of an island. The sentence in (45) below proves the opposite: that the construct *ʔah*+DP base-generated in the relative clause, which is an island, cannot move out of the island.

- (45) *ʔah-ε Sara ʔana ʔaħtarim l-ʔum illi rabba-t-ha.*
 PRT-SF Sara I 1S.respect the-mother that brought up-F-her
 ‘Concerning Sara, I respect the mother that brought her up.’

This implies that *ʔah-ε* and the following DP merges externally.

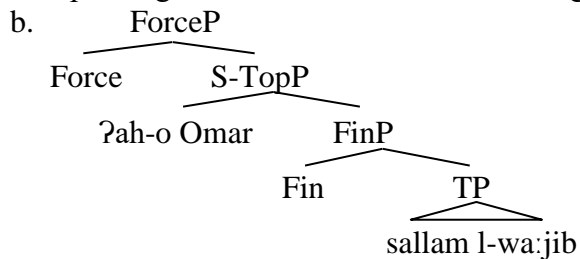
The other piece of evidence is that *ʔah-* and the following DP can occur without any thematic role assigned to it. This is illustrated in the sentences (46) where the constituent *ʔah*+DP has no thematic role.

- (46) a. *ʔah-ε ʔum Sara dayman n-na:s t-ħtaqid ʔinnu xalat^ʕ l-ʔum t-ku:n fadi:d-a.*
 PRT-SF mother Sara always the-people F.assume that wrong the-mother F-be strict-F
 ‘Taking Sara’s mother as an example, people always assume that it’s wrong for mothers to be strict.’
 b. *ʔah-o mudi:r-ana l-wa:ħid mu mafru:d^ʕ yuħkum b- f-fakil.*
 PRT-SM manager-our the-one NEG suppose judge by-the-look
 ‘Speaking of our manager, one should not judge a person by his/her look.’
 c. *ʔah-om Omar wo Salma la:zim n-ħtarif ʔinnu mu kul l-metjawwi3-i:n suħada:ʔ.*
 PRT-PL Omar and Salma have 1P-admit that NEG all the-married-PL happy
 ‘Speaking of Omar and Salma, we have to admit that not all married couples are happy.’

As seen in (46a), the DP *ʔum Sara* ‘Sara’s mother’ has no theta role which entails that it is not base-generated in a position where it is assigned a theta role and, therefore, it must be externally merged. Similar analysis applies to the DP *mudi:r-ana* ‘our manager’ in (46b) and the compound DP Omar wo Salma ‘Omar and Salma’ in (46c). This suggests that the constituent *ʔah*+DP is externally-merged.

In light of what has been said, the sentences introduced by the particle *ʔah-* like (47a) can be schematically represented in (47b), omitting the internal structure of TP for ease of exposition.

- (47) a. *ʔah-o Omar sallam l-wa:jib.*
 PRT-SM Omar submitted the-assignment
 ‘Speaking of Omar, he submitted the assignment.’



5 Conclusion

In the present study, I explore three C-related particles, namely *tara*, *ʕa:d*, and *ʔah-* in HA. Adopting Rizzi's (1997) split-CP hypothesis and Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl's (2007) topic typology, *tara*, *ʕa:d*, and *ʔah-* are argued to embody the three projections FocP, C-TopP, and S-TopP. I propose that *tara* is a Foc particle while both *ʕa:d* and *ʔah-* are Top particles: C-Top and S-Top, respectively. The semantic and syntactic properties of each particle are investigated. *Tara* and *ʕa:d* both evoke contrastive interpretations, but they semantically differ in that *tara* marks non-given and indefinite elements unlike *ʕa:d*, which strictly marks definite and given DPs. Evidence that *tara* is a Foc head is tackled through syntax. The syntactic characteristics have revealed that *tara* can co-occur with S-Top expressions, cannot co-occur with focussed constructions, and can mark a focus cleft. On the other hand, the syntactic properties of *ʕa:d* have revealed that it is a C-Top head. It is higher than focussed constructions and lower than S-Top expressions. It occurs in embedded clauses and co-occurs with *tara*. In both *tara* and *ʕa:d*, I propose that an Agree relation is established between the particle as a head and the element it marks. As for the particle *ʔah-*, I argue that it is an S-Top marker. Semantically, it marks an entity as a revived main topic that the discourse is about. Syntactically, *ʔah-* is compatible with wh-words, incompatible with other S-Top expressions, impossible in embedded contexts, and able to co-occur with both *tara* and *ʕa:d*. I argue that it forms a constituent with the following DP. This constituent is directly merged in [Spec,S-TopP]. By analysing the three particles, the paper pinpoints a significant syntactic difference between Foc⁰ and Top⁰ heads. While the Foc head *tara* seems to have no edge feature that motivates the move/merge of a phrase to the specifier position, Top⁰ seems to have the edge feature. *ʕa:d*, as a C-Top⁰ head, triggers the move of the DP to [Spec,C-TopP] and the S-Top⁰ head triggers the merge of the constituent *ʔah-*+DP to [Spec,S-TopP].

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