

Assertion and Negation: Restrictions on the occurrence of the post-verbal Enclitic –š in Jordanian Arabic

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This paper accounts for the complementary distribution found in Jordanian Arabic between the post-verbal negative enclitic –š and elements from two categories: (i) expressions used, prima facie, in oaths such as *whyaatabooy* 'by my father' and (ii) Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs), particularly when they occur in a preverbal position. The study shows that these elements from the two categories have one characteristic in common, i.e. assertivity. The use of either category asserts the positive or negative value of the accompanying proposition. We argue that such assertive operators are similar in function to the post-verbal negative enclitic–š which is also assumed to have an assertive function. The account of the complementary distribution of either category with –š is that both compete for the same position (at LF), namely Assertive Projection (AssP).

Key words: *Assertion, Negation, Jordanian Arabic, LF.*

Negation in Jordanian Arabic

Clausal negation in Jordanian Arabic (henceforth JA) is expressed by the negative adverbs *maa*, *laa*, *maa...š*, *laa...š*, and *miš*. The preverbal negative adverb *maa* occurs with past and non-past tense verbs as exemplified below:¹

¹JA is an Arabic dialect that is spoken in Jordan with approximately 10 million speakers. JA is a pro-drop language with the SVO as the predominate word order (see Jarrah 2019a,b,c). JA has four main sub-dialects (Cleveland 1963); however these dialects share the observation explored in this paper.

(1) a. omar maa bookl tiin
 omar neg 3ms.nonpast.eat figs
 ‘Omar does not eat figs.’

 b. omar maa ?akal tiin
 omar neg 3ms.past.eat figs
 ‘Omar did not eat figs.’

Similarly, the bipartite negative adverbs *maa...š* occur with past and non-past tense verbs:

(2) a. omar maa bookli-š tiin
 omar neg 3ms.nonpast.eat-neg figs
 ‘Omar does not eat figs.’

 b. omar maa ?akali-š tiin
 omar neg 3ms.past.eat-neg figs
 ‘Omar did not eat figs.’

In verbless sentences, the bipartite *maa...š* is fused together forming thereby *miš*, consider:

(3) a. omar miš Taweel
 omar neg tall
 ‘Omar is not tall.’

 b. omar miš bi-l-daar
 omar neg in-the-house
 ‘Omar is not at home.’

The negative adverb *laa* is different from *maa* in two main aspects. First, *laa* occurs only with non-past tense verbs:

(4) a. laa tookl tiin
 neg 2ms.nonpast.eat figs
 ‘Do not eat figs!’

 b. *laa ?akal tiin
 neg 2ms.past.eat figs
 Intended: ‘He did not eat figs.’

The same applies to the bipartite *laa...š*:

(5) a. laa tookli-š tiin
 neg 2ms.nonpast.eat-neg figs
 'Do not eat figs.'

b. *laa ʔakali-š tiin
 neg 2ms.past.eat-neg figs
 Intended: 'He did not eat figs.'

Second, *maa...š* can form one negative unit *miš* (see (3) above), whereas *laa...š* cannot form **laaš* as *laa* requires a verb to be present in the structure. Thus, *laa...š* does not occur in so-called verbless sentences:

(6) a. *omar laaš Taweel
 omar neg tall
 Intended: 'Omar is not tall.'

b. *omar laaš bi-l-daar
 omar neg in-the-house
 Intended: 'Omar is not at home.'

In the next section, we explore the constraints on the distribution of the enclitic *-š* in Jordanian Arabic.

Constraints on the occurrence of the enclitic *-š*

The main observation which is the focus of this paper is the absence of the post-verbal negative enclitic *-š* in particular contexts. The distribution of enclitic *-š* is constrained, even when the negative element *maa* is present. This phenomenon is attested in the following examples:

(7) a. **wallah** ma ʔakal
 by God Neg 3ms.past.eat
 Literally: 'By God, He did not eat'
 Meaning: 'I assert herein that he did not eat.'

b. ***wallah** maa ʔakali-š
 by God Neg 3ms.past.eat-neg

- (8) a. **whyaat abooy** maa šuft-uh
 by my father neg 1s.past.saw-him
 Literally: 'By my father, I did not see him.'
 Meaning: 'I assert herein that I did not see him.'

- b. ***whyaat abooy** maa šuftuhuu-š
 by my father neg 1s.past.saw-him-**neg**

The absence of -š in what appears as oaths is also attested in Libyan Arabic as illustrated by the following examples from Borsley & Krere (2012):

- (9) a. w-allahi ma-xdiit-ha
 and-Allah NEG-took.1.SG-3.F.SG
 'I swear to God I did not take it.'

- b. *w-allahi ma-xdiit-ha-š
 and-Allah NEG-took.1.SG-3.F.SG-NEG

They attribute the absence of -š to what they call weak negation and strong negation. Weak negation without -š is akin to Classical Arabic: "It is not surprising that the older pattern should survive in semi-formulaic oaths invoking God" (p.4). Likewise, Hoyt (2005: 6) observes a similar phenomenon in Palestinian Arabic. He gives the following example:

- (10)
 kaal il-badawi: wallahi ma bintam fi baladčim
 say.perf.3MS-the-bedu.MS by-God not sleep.pass.imperf.3MS in village-cl2MP
 "The Bedu said 'By God, your village can't be slept in'."

In JA, the absence of the enclitic -š is, in addition to oaths, attested in contexts containing assertive words such as *whyaatabooy* 'by my father', *wšarafummy* 'by my mother's honour', *wšarəxawaaty* 'by my sisters' decency', etc. as exemplified below (in the following examples we insert the intended meaning of each sentence; the literal meaning includes these expressions as we have shown in examples (7-8):

- (11) a. *whyaat abooy* ma ija
 by my father neg 3ms.past.come
 'I assert herein that he did not come.'
- b. *wšaraf xawaaty* ma šuft-uh
 'by my sisters' decency neg 1s.past.see-him

'I assert herein that I did not see him.'

Finally, in verbless sentences, the enclitic *-š* is also absent in the presence of assertive words:

- (12)
- | | | | | |
|----|--|-----------|----------------|------|
| a. | ʔil-binit | miš | hoon | |
| | the-girl | neg | here | |
| | 'The girl is not here.' | | | |
| | | | | |
| b. | Wallah | ʔil-binit | ma-hii | hoon |
| | By God | the-girl | neg-she | here |
| | 'I assert herein that the girl is not here.' | | | |
| | | | | |
| c. | *wallah | ʔil-binit | ma-hii-(*š) | hoom |
| | By God | the girl | neg-she-(*neg) | here |
- (13)
- | | | | | |
|----|---|------|---------------|--------------|
| a. | omar | miš | bi-d-daar | |
| | omar | neg | in –the-house | |
| | 'Omar is not at home.' | | | |
| | | | | |
| b. | wḥyaat abooy | omar | ma-huu(*-š) | bi-d-daar |
| | By my father | Omar | neg-he(*neg) | in-the-house |
| | 'I assert herein that Omar is not at home.' | | | |

wḥyaatabooy 'by my father', *wšarafummy* 'by my mother's honour', *wšarðxawaaty* 'by my sisters' decency' have one feature in common, namely assertivity. We propose that when these items occur pre-verbally, they assert the validity or falsity of the proposition. Such assertive expressions are, we propose, operators (henceforth **Ass.Op**) which are linked to a presupposed proposition. The question that arises here then is why the enclitic *-š* does not co-occur with assertive expressions. The answer is actually given straightforwardly by Jespersen's observation of the fluctuation affecting negation in languages. Jespersen (1917: 4) mentions that 'the original negative adverb is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened, generally through some additional word'. The key word here is 'strengthened'. We take this word to indicate assertion of negation in the quotation cited.

Indeed, a closer look at Stage II of Jespersen's Cycle in JA shows that the use of the negative enclitic *-š* alone is assertive as shown in the following dialogue:

- (14)
- | | | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Speaker A: | teeji | maŋ-na? |
| | 2ms.come | with-us |
| | 'Would you (like to) come with us?' | |

Speaker B: la la , šukran
 Neg, Neg, Thanks
 'No, No, Thank you!'

Speaker A: ya zalimeh tašaal
 vocative man 2ms.come
 'Oh man! common!'

Speaker B: golt-l-ak badii-š (Assertive)
 2ms.said-to-you 1ms.want-Neg
 'I told you I don't want to.'

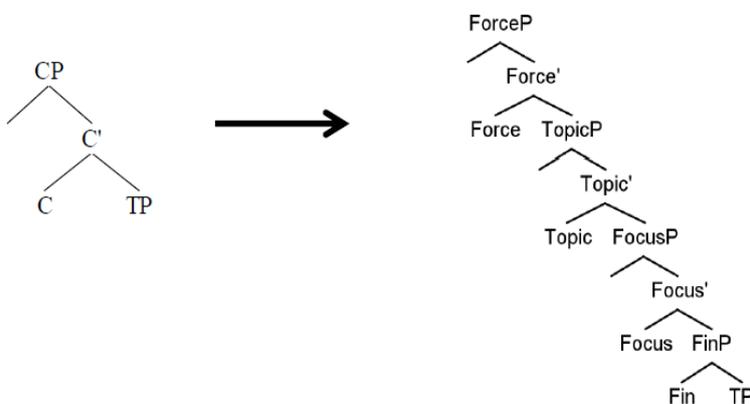
The previous dialogue shows that the use of the enclitic –š, when stressed and given prominence, can be used for assertive purposes. This observation lends support to our proposal that the enclitic –š is indeed an assertive operator. Therefore, it comes naturally that an assertive word does not co-occur with the ‘enforcer’ or ‘strengthener’ enclitic –š. We propose that they both compete for the same position at the LF.

The discussion to follow is to show the position that the enclitic –š and the assertive expressions occupy in the structure.

Structural position of assertive expression in JA

Rizzi (1997) proposes that CP splits in different projections including FinP, TopP, FocP, and ForceP. This taxonomy of the left-periphery is now well-known as the cartographic analysis. Consider the following figure the shows Rizzi's (1997) Split CP:

(15)



Rizzi assumes that ForcP hosts the complementiser which indicates whether the sentence is declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamative in force. Furthermore, ForcP is suggested to reflect the status of the information contained in the proposition such as new, asserted, and presupposed, among other possibilities. However, assuming that the enclitic $-\text{š}$ raises to Spec ForcP would be incorrect on empirical grounds.

Let's first consider the status of ʔinn in JA and ʔinna in SA. The latter is referred to as ʔadaat Tawkiid , i.e. 'an emphatic marker' (see Ibn Maalik 1100-1172, among others). Indeed, the two sentences below differ only in terms of emphasis:

- (16) a. ʔal-walad-u saafara (Non-Emphatic)
the-boy-Nominative 3ms.travelled
'The boy travelled.'
- b. ʔinna ʔal-walad-a saafara (Emphatic)
Comp. the-boys-Accusative 3ms.travelled
'The boy travelled.'

We cannot test our hypothesis that the enclitic $-\text{š}$ is in complementary distribution with the emphatic marker ʔinna since SA does not have this post-verbal negator.² If, on the other hand, we assume that ʔinnu ³ in JA is also an emphatic marker, we should expect to find that ʔinnu and $-\text{š}$ do not co-occur together in the same structure, contrary to fact:

- (17) smiʕit ʔinnu omar maa safari-š .
1ms.heard that omar Neg 3ms.travelled-Neg
'I heard that Omar didn't travel.'

Why should this be the case? The answer is that JA ʔinnu is different from SA ʔinna in the sense that the latter is emphatic, whereas the former is simply a complementiser that links two CPs/VPs/XPs. Note that, JA speakers never begin a declarative sentence with ʔinnu unless it is preceded by another CP/VP/XP (see Jarrah 2019a,b):

- (18) a. smiʕit ʔinnu omar maa safari-š .
1ms.heard that omar Neg 3ms.travelled-Neg
'I heard that Omar didn't travel.'
- b. $*\text{ʔinnu}$ omar maa safari-š^4
that omar Neg 3ms.travelled-Neg

²Negation in SA is primarily signaled by *laa*, *lam*, *lan*, *laysa*, and *maa*.

³This is the JA counterpart of SA ʔinna

⁴JA speakers can start a proposed phrase with ʔinnu , as in $\text{ʔinnu omar maa safari-š}$, *haD iši mustahiil*.

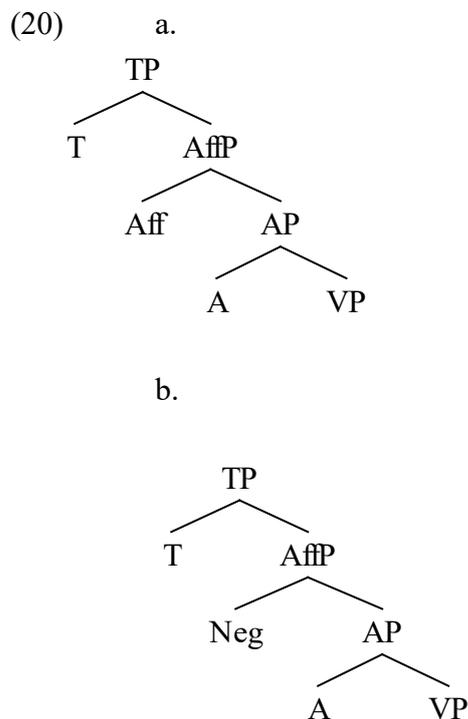
With this being the case, JA *ʔinnu* does not assert the proposition; hence, the occurrence of the enclitic *-š* (18) above. Moreover, we can rule out the correlation between ForcP and Assertion tentatively and propose another functional projection, higher than ForcP (as the data will show later), namely, Assertive Projection (AssP).

In fact, the incompatibility between negation and ‘affirmation’ is not novel as cross-linguistics evidence tells.⁵

Laka (1990: 88) follows Chomsky’s (1957) proposal that there is an Affirmative morpheme that ‘induces do-support in the exact same way that negation does’ as illustrated in the following examples taken from Laka (1990: 86)

- (19) a. Mary didn’t leave
b. Mary did leave.

However, Laka (1990: 92-93) elaborates on Chomsky’s Affirmative morpheme and suggests that this morpheme “is a functional head...that it projects a functional phrase exactly like Neg does” as shown below:



⁵We are using the term ‘affirmative’ here as it is found in the literature to be presented. Nonetheless, the term ‘affirmative’ is not adequate to our analysis here and subsequently will be changed.

Laka (1990: 95) proposes that Aff and Neg are in complementary distribution as exemplified below:

- (21) a. I didn't, as Bill thought, go to the store.
b. I did, as Bill thought, go to the store.
c. *I did not, as Bill thought, go to the store.

The sentence in (21a) is a neutral negative sentence whereas the sentence in (21b) is emphatic and hence entails the existence of Aff. The sentence in (21c) involves both Aff and Neg and hence ungrammatical.

Furthermore, Laka (1990) observes the same phenomenon in Basque in that affirmation and negation are in complementary distribution. Consider the following examples (p.86):

- (22) a. Mari joan da
Mary left has
'Mary has left.'
- b. Mari ez da joan
Mary not has left
'Mary hasn't left.'
- c. *Mari da joan
Mary has left
('Mary has left.')
- d. Marie da joan
Mary has left
'Mary has left.'

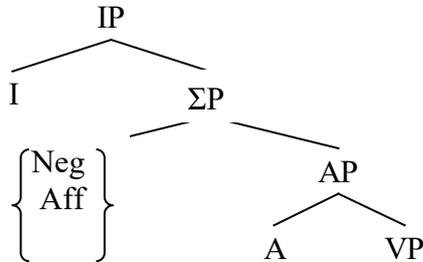
The auxiliary *da* does not precede the verb unless it occurs in emphatic or negative contexts; hence the acceptability of the examples (a, b, and d above) and the unacceptability of (c). The sentence in (22b) is an instance of sentential negation just like the English sentence in (21a) above.

Laka (1990: 101) introduces ΣP^6 which host both Aff and Neg. Thus, the English and Basque Structures can be schematised, according to Laka, as follows:

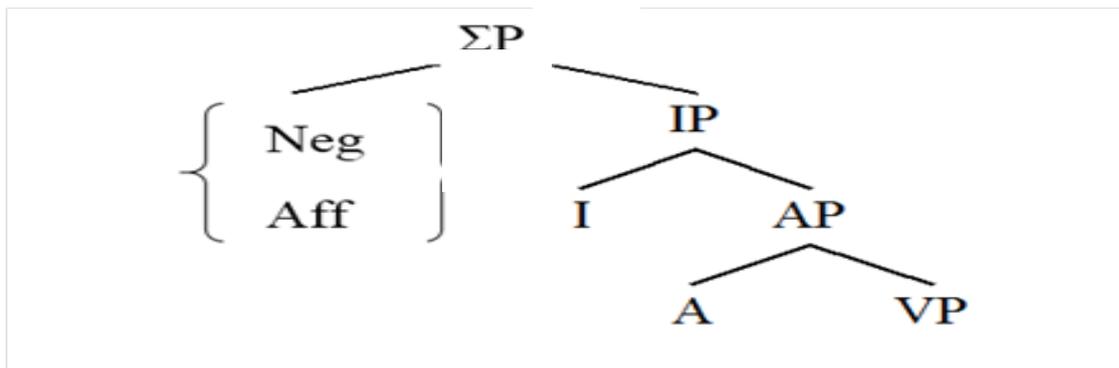
⁶ Holmberg (2001) adopts ΣP in his analysis of the syntax of Yes/No questions in Finnish. According to Holmberg, ΣP is a polarity focus phrase "which either attracts a PolP to its specifier or generates a focus polarity particle"

(23)

a. English



b. Basque



However, it is not clear what Laka means by 'sentential negation' in examples like (21a,b). Because Aff and Neg are in complementary distribution, these aforementioned examples should not be acceptable – contrary to fact. In other words, Laka identifies three types of sentences: affirmative, negative, and 'neutral (21a,b)'. The problem is with the word 'affirmative', which Laka takes to be only positive. Yet, a fourth type is missing here; namely, the affirmative negative one. This type of sentence, as it sounds, is impossible. Therefore, in this paper, the term 'affirmative' in the fourth type of these sentences is replaced by the term 'assertive'. Accordingly, an assertive sentence is one that asserts the positive or negative value of the proposition of the sentence. Accordingly, in addition to the neutral declarative sentence and the neutral negative sentence, we have two more types of sentences: assertive declarative and assertive negative. By doing so, the paradigm is complete. Thus, according to our informants (21a) has two readings: one neutral (Laka's interpretation) and another assertive where the auxiliary 'did' bear the stress and is marked for tonicity. For simplicity (21) above is modified and rewritten below:

- (24)
- a. I didn't, as Bill thought, go to the store. (Neutral negative sentence)
 - b. I didn't, as Bill thought, go to the store. (Assertive negative sentence)
 - c. I did, as Bill thought, go the store. (Assertive sentence)
 - d. *I did not, as Bill thought, go to the store. (Affirmative negative sentence)

With respect to Modern Standard Arabic, Bahloul (1996: 36) analyses that the particle *qad* as "part of the modal system of Standard Arabic denoting assertive modality". Hence, he observes that 'qad' is incompatible with the negators *maa*, *laa*, *lam*, and *lan* as exemplified below:⁷

- (25)
- a. qad ʔaḥbibtu ḏaalika
 qad like.PF.1s that
 "I liked/did like that."
 - b. *maa qad ʔaḥbibtu ḏaalika
 Neg qad like.PF.1s that
 - c. *qad maa ʔaḥbibtu ḏaalika
 qad Neg like.PF.1s that
 - d. maa ʔaḥbibtu ḏaalika
 "I didn't like that."

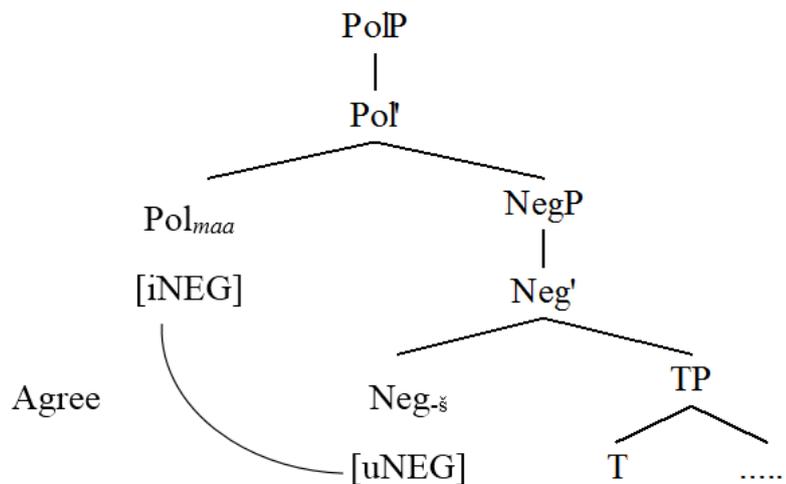
In a related vein, Larriveè (2014) carries out a pragmatic study that analyses 'the case of presuppositional negatives'. This supports our earlier assumption that the postverbal negative enclitic $-ṣ$ is indeed an assertive operator in assertive contexts.

Analysis

Soltan (2012: 246) proposes that negation in Cairene Egyptian Arabic (CEA) splits as follows (irrelevant details are skipped):

⁷ The writer excludes the epistemic aspect of this particle for otherwise it might be compatible with some of these negators.

(26)



Both *maa* and *-š* are heads: the former heads Pol and the latter Neg. According to Soltan, *-š* is specified for uninterpretable negative feature which gets valued via agreement with *maa* in head Pol. Soltan puts forward this proposal to solve the puzzle of the complementary distribution between the NPI *šumur* and the enclitic *-š* as exemplified below.

- (27)
- | | | | | |
|----|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. | šumr-iii | maa-saafir-t | | Masr |
| | ever-my | Neg-Travel-.PERF.1s | | Egypt |
| | | | | ‘I have never travelled to Egypt.’ |
| b. | *šumr-iii | maa-saafir-t-i-š | | Masr |
| | ever-my | Neg-Travel-PERF.1s-EV-NEG | | Egypt |
| c. | šumr-iii | maa | ħa-saafir | Masr |
| | ever-my | Neg | Fut-Travel-.IPFV.1s | Egypt |
| | | | | ‘I will never travel to Egypt.’ |
| d. | *šumr-iii | miš | ħa-saafir | Masr |
| | ever-my | Neg | Fut-Travel-.IPFV.1s | Egypt |

He (p.245) first argues that *sumur* is nonnegative NPI. Second, he (p.246) proposes the constraint *Minimise Formal Feature Mismatch* which reads as follows:

- (28) “At spell-out, minimise formal feature mismatch on licensees of the same licenser within a local domain.”

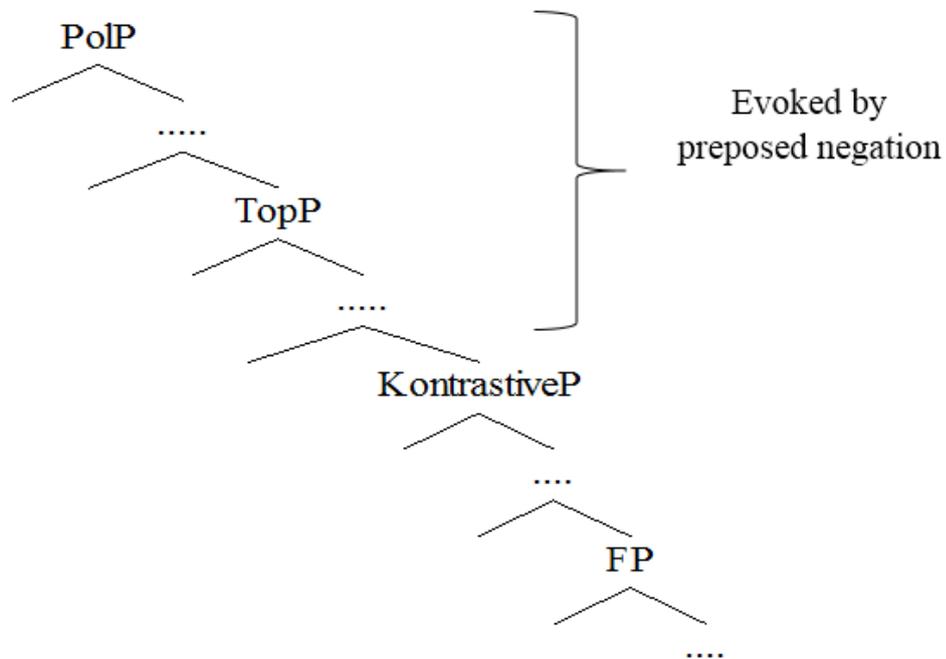
Accordingly, Soltan assumes that *sumur* is in Spec PolP which enters into Spec-Head agreement with *maa* which is in head PolP. Furthermore, the agreement that holds between *maa* and $-\check{s}$ which is in head Neg should not take place according to the constraint mentioned above. Hence, the deletion of $-\check{s}$ in the occurrence of *sumur*. In short, the features on the licensees of the licenser *maa* are different: *sumur* is nonnegative whereas $-\check{s}$ is [uNeg].

Keiser (2006) examines the syntax of ‘negation and the left periphery in Finnish’. She (pp. 317-318) explains the facts of sentential negation in Finnish. Thus, in Finnish, negation appears on the auxiliary which agrees with the subject in Person and Number but does not show Tense. The linear order of negative sentence follows the pattern S Neg-Aux V O.

- (29) a. Liisa ostaa kirjan
 Liisa-Nom buy-sg.3rd book-Acc
 'Liisa buys a/the book
- b. Liisa ei osta kirjaa
 Liisa-Nom neg-sg-3rd buy-sg.3rd book-Part
 'Liisa does not buy a/the book

Keiser states that fronting negation to the left periphery is not ad hoc but rather constrained. Fronting occurs when there is a strong correlation between negation and a presupposed proposition. In her words: ‘this kind of fronted negation marks the rest of the proposition as already asserted or somehow known or presupposed... In other words, when negating an ‘old’ proposition, a speaker can prepose the negation to the front of the sentence’ (p. 317-318). Keiser raises an important question whether the proposition must be mentioned, presupposed, or inferable. “In sum”, she adds (p.330), “we have seen that in Finnish preposed negation can be used to negate propositions that are old information due to discourse contexts in which they occur – either already mentioned, inferable or presupposed”. She (p.334) proposes the following diagram to account for preposed negation:

(30)



As shown in the above diagram, Kaiser (2006: 333) states that fronted negation (to a sentence initial position) occupies a presumably some high polarity phrase (see Laka 1990, Zanuttini 1997, Holmberg 2001).

Two significant conclusions are attested so far. First, fronted negation to the left-periphery is associated with a presupposed proposition. Second, there is a solid correlation between fronted negation and assertion: they are in complementary distribution. Our analysis involves fronting the enclitic *-š* to an assertive projection so the sentence will be interpreted assertive in the LF. Hence, AssP in the most left-periphery hosts the assertive operators.⁸Let's get back to the facts of JA which show that assertive operators such as *wallah* are usually in the most left-periphery:

- (31) a. *wallah* [IP *aboo-y maa šaaf l-binit*
Ass.Op *dad-my Neg 3ms.saw the-girl*
 '(I assert herein that) my dad didn't see the girl.'

⁸We are using here the term Assertive Projection as it sounds more compatible with our discussion. Nonetheless, there might be little difference, if at all, between Polarity Projection and Assertive Projection.

b. *wallah	[IP abooy	maa	šaaŋ-š	l-binit]
Ass.Op	dad-my	Neg	3ms.saw-Neg	the-girl
b. *šaaŋ	maa	wallah	abooy l-binit	
3ms.saw	Neg	Ass.Op	dad-my the-girl	
c. *maa	šaaŋ	wallah	abooy l-binit	
Neg	3ms.saw	Ass.Op	dad-my the-girl	
d. % maa	šaaŋ	abooy l-binit	wallah ⁹	
Neg	3ms.saw	dad-my the-girl	Ass.Op	

Sentence (31a) above is derived as follows:

(32) [AssP wallah.....[IP abooy maa šaaŋ l-binit]]

The unacceptability of (31b) can be captured straightforwardly. The sentence is assertive by virtue of occurrence of *wallah*. This requires the enclitic —š to raise to AssP which is already occupied by *wallah*; hence, the derivation crashes:

(33) [AssP **wallah**[IP abooy maa šaaŋ-š l-binit]]

Empirical evidence in support of this analysis that assertive words/operators are in the most left-periphery, comes from sentences where the DP *l-binit* is topicalised. Thus, abiding by Kaiser's structure, the following sentence shows that the topicalised DP is lower than PolP (hence, lower than AssP):

(34) wallah **l-binit** abooy maa šaaŋ-ha
[AssP wallah [Top**l-binit**[IP abooy maa šaaŋ-ha]]

Interestingly, in JA, when *ʔinuu* occurs with assertive words or operators, it functions as an emphatic word.

(35) Wallah ʔinuu il-binit abooy maa šaaŋ-ha
[Spec AssP wallah [Assʔinuu[Top il-binit [IP abooy maa šaaŋ-ha]]

The emphatic word *ʔinuu* cannot precede the assertive word, as shown in the following ill-formed sentence:

⁹This sentence can be acceptable; however, it involves heavy movement/ right dislocation.

(36) *ʔinnu wallah il-binit abooy maa šaaf-ha

The topicalised DP *l-binit* cannot also precede *ʔinnu*:

(37) *wallah **il-binit** ʔinnu abooy maa šaafha

This indeed leads us to propose that this emphatic *ʔinnu* is in head AssP. There are however cases where the DP *l-binit* can be in the most left-periphery of the structure. In other words, in certain context the proposed DP can precede everything:

(38) a. l-binit wallah ʔinnu aboo-y maa šaaf-ha
the-girl **Ass.Op** that father-my Neg 3ms.saw-her
'The girl, my dad didn't see her.'

b. Speaker A: bigoolu ʔinnu l-binit rasbat
3mp.say that the-girl 3fs.failed
'They say that the girl failed.'

Speaker B: l-binit, kul fikr-i ʔinnu l-walad rasab
the-girl, all thinking-my that the-boy 3ms.failed
'The girl, all I was thinking that the boy failed.'

This can be accommodated by modifying Rizzi's cartographic approach by assuming that a special type of topic can be in TopP projecting higher than anything in most left-periphery as illustrated in the examples above. However, the semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic differences between the landing sites of topics shall not be perused here.

Finally, we conclude that the enclitic *-š*, being assertive in function, competes for AssP in the LF. Hence, the occurrence of one of the aforementioned assertive operators would ban the occurrence of *-š* for otherwise the derivation will crash. We propose that the movement of *-š* to AssP is covert: it takes place in the LF.

Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs) and the enclitic *-š*¹⁰

A widely debated issue in the literature is the complementary distribution between the negative polarity item *šumur* and the enclitic *-š* (see Benmamoun 2006, Aoun et al. 2010).

¹⁰The licensing of NSIs is beyond the scope of this paper. For a detailed analysis of NSIs in Jordanian Arabic, see Alsarayreh (2012).

Benmamoun (2006: 143) observes that, in Moroccan Arabic, *ʕumur* is in “complementary distribution with *š*” as illustrated by the following example:

- (39) a. *nadya ʕəmmər-ha ma-žat*
Nadia never-her NEG-came
'Nadia never came.'
- b. **nadya ʕəmmər-ha ma-žat-š*
Nadia never-her NEG-came-NEG (2006: 144)

ʕumur behaves in same way in JA; it doesn't allow the negative adverb *-š* to appear in the structure:

- (40) a. *ʕumr-uh maa zaar-hum*
never-hr neg 3ms.past.visit-them
'He has never visited them.'
- b. **ʕumr-uh maa zaar-hummu-š*
never-he neg 3ms.past.visit-them-neg

Moreover, an interesting correlation emerges between Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) and the absence of the enclitic *-š* (see Benmamoun, 1996, 1997, 2006: 143): “Interestingly, *-š* is in complementary distribution with NPIs regardless of whether they occur in the pre-negative or the post-negative position”. This is shown in the following Moroccan Arabic examples:

- (41) a. *ma-qrit fiтта ktab*
NEG-read.1S even book
'I didn't read any book.'
- b. **ma-qrit-š fiтта ktab*
NEG-read.1S-NEG even book
- c. *ma-ža fiтта wafəð*
NEG-came.3MS even one
'*Anyone didn't come.'
- d. **ma-ža-š fiтта wafəð*
NEG-came.3MS-NEG even one
- e. *fiтта wafəð ma-ža*
even one NEG-came.3MS
'*Anyone didn't come.'

f. *fiṭṭa	wafiḥəd	ma-ža-š'
even	one	NEG-came.3MS-NEG

According to Alserayreh (2012: 52-64) NPIs in JA include words such as the indefinite pronouns *ḥada*, and *iši*; the adverbial *šumur*; the determiners *walaw* and *ʔay*; and finally the idiomatic expression *filsaḥmar*, as shown in the following examples:

- (42)
- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| a. *(ma)- d̄ʒa | ḥada . | | |
| NEG-came.3S | one | | |
| 'No one came.' | | | |
| | | | |
| b. *(ma)- šār | ijī . | | |
| NEG-happened.3S | thing | | |
| 'Nothing happened.' | | | |
| | | | |
| c. *(ma)-ḥall | walaw ṭālib | s-suʔāl. | |
| NEG-answered.3S | even student | the-question | |
| 'Even (one) student did not answer the question.' | | | |
| | | | |
| d. *(ma)-ḥall | ʔayy | ṭāliab | s-suʔāl. |
| NEG-answered.3S | which | student | the-question |
| 'No student answered the question.' | | | |
| | | | |
| e. Marya | *(ma)-šarafat | fils aḥmar . | |
| Mary | NEG-spent.3SF | cent red | |
| 'Mary did not spend a red cent.' | | | |

Benmamoun's generalisation regarding the relation between NPIs and the enclitic *-š* might be true of MA but not of JA. Thus, the presence of NPIs in JA does not necessarily mean the absence of *-š*. For example, both *ḥada* and *iši* are not normally in complementary distribution with the enclitic *-š*. Here are two examples:

- (43)
- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| a. maa | šufti-š | iši |
| neg | 1s.past.see-neg | thing |
| 'I did not see anything.' | | |
| | | |
| b. maa | Darabti-š | ḥada |
| neg | 3ms.past.hit | one |
| 'I did not hit anyone.' | | |

Some Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs) including Negative Concord Items (NCIs) might in fact be in complementary distribution with the enclitic *-š* in JA. NCIs in JA exemplified below include, according to Alserayreh (2012: 72), words such as the determiner *wala*, the never-words: *bilmarrah*, *nehaayyan*, *ʔabadan*, and the not-yet-words: *lhaddelʔaan*, *lahassa*, and *bafid*. Interestingly, if these NCIs are in preverbal position, they ban the occurrence of the enclitic *-š*. In contrast, if such NCIs occur in a post-verbal position, they do not ban *-š*; compare:

(44) a. *maa* *šuft-uh-(š)* **bilmarrah**
 neg 1s.past.see-him-(neg) **Ass.Op** (at all)
 'I did not see him at all.'

b. *maa* *zaar-naa -(š)* **nehaayyan**
 neg 3ms.past.visit-us-(neg) **AssOp.** (never/at all)
 'He never visited us.'

(45) a. **bilmarrah** *maa* *šuftuh-(*š)*
 Ass.Op neg 1s.past.see-him-(*neg)

b. **nehaayyan** *maa* *zaar-naa -(*š)*
 Ass.Op neg 3ms.past.visit-us-(*neg)

It is worth adding however that the preverbal negative item *šumur* and the indefinite pronoun *ħada* can be flanked by the discontinuous negative elements *maa...š*:

(46) a. *maa* *šumur-huu-š* *ija*
 neg never-he-neg 3ms.past.come
 'He never came.'

b. *maa* *ħadaa-š* *ħaka*
 neg one-neg 3ms.past.talk
 'No one talked.'

Back to JA, the occurrence of the enclitic *-š* with the preverbal NSI does not change the fact that the finite verb cannot host the enclitic when these NSIs are in preverbal position, cf.:

(47) a. *maa* *šumur-huu-š* *maa* *ija-(*š)*
 neg never-he-neg neg 3ms.past.come-(*neg)

b. maa	ħadaa-š	maa ħaka-(*š)
neg	one-neg	3ms.past.talk-(*neg)

We take these preverbal NSIs to be assertive in function. Hence, they compete with the enclitic *-š* for the same position in the LF. The question that arises here is whether NSIs occupy the same position occupied by the aforementioned Assertive words such as *wallah*, i.e. PolP. The answer is no as the following sentence illustrates:

- (48) wallah ?il-binit ũumr-uh aboo-y ma šaaf-ha
Ass.Op the-girl never-he father-my Neg 3ms.saw-her
 'The girl, never has my dad seen her.'

Alserayreh (2012) take *ũumur* to be an NP with an adverbial function. This being so, Haegeman's (2006) analysis of adverbial clauses and the left-periphery is of much importance to our analysis here. Haegeman (2006), analysing adverbial clauses, decomposes CP into further layers. She (p.1654) draws a distinction between 'central adverbial clauses' and 'peripheral adverbial clauses': "peripheral adverbial clauses, but not central ones, are anchored to the speaker". She (p.1661) elaborates and proposes that central adverbial clauses 'lack manifestations of speaker anchoring' which also entails the absence of ForcP. In contrast, peripheral adverbial clauses 'encode speaker-related phenomena and hence must contain Force and the related projections TopP and FocP'. Accordingly, she (p.1663) replaces 'ForcP' by 'SD' – Speaker Deixis. Thus, the structure for peripheral adverbial clauses is as follows where Sub stands for subordinating conjunction:

- (49) Peripheral adverbial clause:
 Sub >Top> Focus> SD >Fin

No JA speaker starts a sentence with *ũumur* without bearing in mind a presupposed proposition that permits the use of *ũumur*:

- (50) *ũumri maa saafarit
 never Neg 1ms.travelled
 'Never have I travelled.'
- (51) Speaker A: omar... saafarit ũa-ameerka aw UK?
 Omar... 2ms.travelled to-America or UK
 'Omar, have you travelled to America or UK?'
- Speaker B: la ...ũumr-i maa saafarit
 No...never-I Neg 1ms.travelled
 'No, never have I travelled.'

Thus, we will assume that the adverbial *ʕumur* is in SD position. This assumption is supported by different empirical pieces of evidence. First, the position of the topicalised DPs with respect to *ʕumur* shows that the former precedes the latter, viz:

- (52) [il-binit ʕumr-uh [IP abooy maa ʕaaf-ha]
the-girl never-he dad-my Neg 3ms.saw-her
'The girl, never has my dad seen her.'

Second, the position of the assertive operator *wallah* with respect to *ʕumur* shows that the latter is in a position lower than *wallah*:

- (53) [wallah il-binit ʕumr-uh [IP aboo-y maa ʕaaf-ha]
Ass.Op the-girl never-he dad-my Neg 3ms.saw-her
'The girl, never has my dad seen her.'

Third, the emphatic *ʔinnu*, in head AssP, which associated with assertive operators precede *ʕumur*:

- (54) [wallah ʔinnu il-binit ʕumr-uh [IP aboo-y maa ʕaaf-ha]
Ass.Op that the-girl never-he dad-my Neg 3ms.saw-her
'The girl, never has my dad seen her.'

Thus, the question that arises here is why the assertive $-\check{s}$ is incompatible with *ʕumur*, bearing in mind that the former raises to Spec AssP and latter is in the SD projection. The answer is straightforward: *ʕumur* or any other expression, being assertive, must raise to AssP or otherwise no assertive reading is expressed. Thus, *ʕumur* and $-\check{s}$ will eventually compete for the same position – hence, the derivation crashes when both co-occur in the structure, consider:

- (55) a. *ʕumr-uh omar maa zaar-naa-š
never-he omar Neg 3ms.visited-us-Neg
b. [AssP...[SD ʕumr-uh]..[IP omar maa zaar-naa-š]
c. ʕumr-uh omar maa zaar-naa (Assertive negative)
Ass.Op omar Neg 3ms.visited-us-Neg
[AssP...[SD ʕumr-uh]..[IP omar maa zaar-naa]

A significant observation is captured here which supports our proposition that *ʕumur* does indeed undergo movement. If we follow Benmamoun et al. (2013) by assuming that NegP

projects higher than TP, we can then account for the fact that *ʕumur* can be flanked by *maa...š*:

(56)

a. maa ʕumur-huu-š omar zaar-na
Neg **Ass.Op**-he-Neg omar 3ms.visited-us
Never has Omar visited us.

b. [AssP maa ʕumur-huu-š]...[NegP ~~maa ʕumur-huu-š~~]..[SD ʕumur]...[IP
omar zaar-naa]]

It is a well-known fact in the related literature on Arabic negation that an expression must undergo movement through NegP to be sandwiched by the bipartite negative adverbs *maa...š*. Thus, the example above shows that *ʕumur* must have undergone movement so it appears as *maa ʕumur-huu-š*. Another puzzle, namely, the negation of *ʕumur*, is solved here. In order to give assertive reading, *ʕumur* moves from SD through NegP, picking thereby *maa* and *-š*, to AssP as illustrated above. Interestingly, the above sentence contains both *ʕumur* and *-š*. This is normal since once *ʕumur* picks the negative adverbs *maa* and *-š*, it forms one constituent that cannot be dissolved. Hence, the whole constituent *maa+ʕumur+š* undergoes movement to AssP. We suggest here that when *ʕumur* is not in AssP due to the occurrence of another assertive operator, *ʕumur* functions as a normal adverbial NP.

One final point that requires explanation here is what happens when *wallah* is inserted in a structure where *ʕumur* is flanked by *maa...š* as follows:

(57)

a. *wallah maa ʕumur-huu-š omar zaar-naa
Ass.Op Neg never-he-Neg Omar 3ms.visited-us

b. [AssP wallah]...[NegP ~~maa ʕumur-huu-š~~]..[SD ʕumur]...[IP omar zaar-naa]]

This ungrammaticality requires no further explanation. However, it seems wrong to assume that *ʕumur* undergoes movement through NegP as it would violate the Economy Condition since *wallah* in AssP gives the sentence the required assertive reading. Thus, such a movement of *ʕumur* would be superfluous. Consequently, the above example is best structured as follows where *ʕumur* remains in situ in SD:

(58)

*wallah maa ʕumur-huu-š omar zaarna
[AssP **wallah**]...[NegP maa...š]..[SD ʕumur]...[IP omar zaar-naa]]

The occurrence of a preverbal NSI which leads to the deletion of the sentential negator is cross-linguistically found in many languages, particularly Romance languages. However, the analysis adopted in this paper does not necessarily apply to this similar phenomenon found in other languages. For example, Moritz and Valois (1994) observe that the French NPI *personne* ‘nobody’ undergoes an LF covert movement through a licensing NegP which is headed by *ne*.¹¹ Since the negator *pas* is assumed to be in Spec NegP, the incompatibility between *personne* and *pas* is anticipated.

- (59) a. *Jean n’a pas vu personne.
Jean neg-has not seen nobody
Intended: ‘John hasn’t seen anybody.’
- b. *Personne n’a pas mangé de viande.
nobody neg-has not eaten of meat
Intended: ‘Nobody ate meat.’

Such a phenomenon in fact extends JA and French to include other languages, particularly Romance languages. In Romance languages, with the exception of Romanian, the preverbal n-word occurs without negation, and a preverbal n-word can license a post-verbal one.

Finally, the relation between focussed elements, stress, and discourse is well-established and studied thoroughly in the literature. Reinhart (2006: 125) states that “‘identifying the focus of a given derivation is of crucial importance for the context and the interface systems. The focus constituent relates the utterance to context, and has an effect on truth conditions (inference)’”. Reinhart (p.126) highlights the difference between ‘normal stress’ and ‘marked’ stress. The latter is ‘required by discourse needs’. Reinhart (2006:134) adds that ‘sentence accent interfaces with the theory of discourse, via the notion of focus’. Similarly, Reinhart (2006: 134) quotes Cinque who distinguishes between two mechanisms for assigning stress to foci: ‘sentence grammar’ and ‘discourse grammar’. How stress is coded is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to emphasise the relation between context and stress/accent assignment to focused, topicalised, and to, in this paper, assertive operators. Thus, the aforementioned assertive expressions exhibit characteristic features of prosodic prominence, which make them stand out to the ear above the remaining elements of the utterance. Perhaps this justifies ascribing assertive function to such operators in spoken JA.

¹¹Cf. Pollock (1989) for a detailed analysis of negation in French.

Conclusion

We identify in this paper four types of sentences: (60a) declarative (60b) assertive declarative and their correspondents, (61a) negative and (61b) assertive negative as exemplified below:

- (60) a. l-walad saafar
the-boy travelled
'The boy travelled.'
- b. wallah l-walad saafar
Ass.Op the-boy travelled
- (61) a. l-walad maa safari-š
the-boy neg travelled-neg
'The boy didn't travel.'
- b. wallah l-walad maa saafar
Ass.Op the-boy travelled

This paper focusses on the fourth type of the abovementioned sentences. It studies exhaustively the contexts in which the use of $-š$ is inadmissible in the presence of items that mainly belong to two categories. The first category includes items that, *prima facie*, seem to be used in oaths. This category includes expressions such as *wallah*, *whyaat abooy/ummy/xawaaty*, *wšarafummy/xawaaty*, *wšarDy*, *qasamanbillaah*, etc. The literal lexical meaning of these words does indeed entail oaths. However, more importantly, the pragmatic function of these expressions transcends the literal meaning and executes an act of **Assertion**. The latter means that the use of these expressions asserts the validity (60b) or falsity (61b) of the proposition at hand. From a syntactic point of view, these expressions; hence, Assertive Operators, are generated in the most left periphery of the structure in AssP. This observation leads us to think of the postverbal $-š$ as an assertive operator. Accordingly, the complementary distribution between the assertive operators and $-š$ is assumed to be due the proposal that both elements compete for the same position in the Lf; namely, AssP. The assumption that $-š$ undergoes movement is supported by evidence from multiple languages such as Finnish. It must be pointed out that there is a strong correlation between fronted negation and presupposition. Indeed, as discussed at length in this paper, the use of the assertive operators is directly linked to a presupposed proposition. Hence, the use $-š$ and one of the assertive operators together is not possible since both serve the same function and compete for the same syntactic position.



The second category identified in this paper includes negative sensitive items in preverbal position such as *nehaayyan*, *bilmarrah*, *Abadan*, *lhaddel?aan*, *lahassa*, and *sumur*. These items are mostly adverbial constituents. We follow Heageman (2006) in assuming that these adverbials are generated in SD position. However, to serve as Ass.Ops, these adverbials must raise to AssP. Thus again, the complementary distribution between these preverbal adverbials and the enclitic $-š$ is anticipated.



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