On Negation and Focus in Standard Arabic: Interface-based Approach

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Abstract

This paper addresses the interface between syntax and information structure by interpreting focus under negation. To this end, data will be examined from the Arabic negative marker *laysa*, which exhibits interesting focus features that broaden our knowledge of syntactic and semantic aspects of negation and deepen our understanding of what information structural effects play a role at the interface. Focus typology can be expressed by *laysa* in its two major types, namely the information focus and contrastive focus, resulting in three different ways in which negation and focus can interact at the Syntax-Information Structure Interface. These ways

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are of three different readings of focus (wide, bound, and free). Each of these foci involves a different derivation which reflects how the autonomous notions of information structure – topic, focus, and contrast – interact in systematic ways with syntax as shown by the proposed minimalist analysis for each type.

1. Introduction

The expression and interpretation of negation in natural language have long fascinated philosophers, logicians, and linguists. One important issue that has attracted much interest in recent linguistics is the interaction of negation with other syntactic and semantic phenomena such as modality, tense, aspect, ellipsis, and information structure (see for example, Ouhalla 1993, de Haan 1997/2013, Zanuttini 1997, Taleghani 2006, Hinterhölzl & van Kemenade 2012, Al-Horais 2013). In this paper, I consider the interaction between negation and information structure by interpreting focus under negation in Standard Arabic (Arabic, for short) via its negative marker (laysa) that has different patterns to express negation. One of these significant patterns, which has not been explored much before, is its distribution of focus features and its role in mapping the syntactic structure to the semantic interpretation.

By borrowing the terminology from the important insights of Herburger (2000) and Etxepare & Uribe-Etxebarria (2008), the current paper argues that laysa uses three different ways to show the interaction between negation and focus. Under the first way, negation takes scope over the whole clause, which is interpreted as focalized

(wide focus). Whereas in the second way, negation takes scope only over the element in final position, which constitutes the focus of the sentence (bound focus). Finally, in the third way, the focus in final position is out of the scope of negation (free focus). Each of these foci (wide, bound, free) involves a different derivation and a different syntactic structure located at the syntax-information structure interface. In order account for the derivation of these three types of focus, the paper, by looking at information structure from the vantage point of generative syntax (especially, in its latest theoretical model 'the Minimalist Program'), argues for a licensing mechanism which is strongly tied to the focus properties interacted in systematic ways with syntax.

   The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 begins by laying out data providing an overview of the richness of the Arabic negation system which is expressed in various ways. As a starting point, section 3 briefly touches on the linguistic origin of laysa and then gives a detailed description and explanation of the two syntactic functions exhibited by laysa to express sentential negation (verbal and particle laysa). Section 4 clarifies what exactly the term information structure denotes and how its autonomous notions (topic, focus, and contrast) can be defined and distinguished. The rest of the section discusses and analyzes the interaction between negation and focus in Arabic via accounting for the range of focus interpretations expressed by the negative marker laysa. Section 5 concludes with a summary that concisely recaps the paper's most important results.

2. The Distribution of Arabic Negative Markers

   Arabic has, morphologically, six negative markers. These are **laa,**

lam, lan, lammaa, laysa, and **maa** (see Fassi Fehri 1993, Benmamoun 2000, Al-Tamari 2001, among others). The distribution of these negative markers falls into three broad classes, which give rise to three main strategies for negating a clause in general:

(i) Negative markers specified only for a [+V feature] (laa, lam, lammaa, lan)[1]:

(1) a. qadima   r-rijaal-u.
        came-3m-past   the-men-Nom
        'The men came.'

   b. lam   ya-qdum-Ø   r-rijaal-u.
        Neg   3m-come-JUS   the-men-Nom
        'The men did not come.'

(2) a. ʔarsala   Ahmad-u   r-risalat-a.
        sent-3ms   Ahmad-Nom   the-letter-Acc
        'Ahmad has sent the letter.'

   b. lammaa   yu-sel-Ø   Ahmad-u   r-risalat-a.
        Neg   3m-send-JUS   Ahmad-Nom   the-letter-Acc
        'Ahmad has not sent the letter yet.'

(3) a. sa-yu-safir-u   r-rijaal-u   ghadan.
        fut-3m-travel-IND   the-men-Nom   tomorrow
        'The men will travel tomorrow.'

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[1] The abbreviations, which will be commonly used in the gloss for the examples throughout the paper, are the following: Nom = nominative case; Dat = dative case; Acc = accusative case; Gen = genitive case; 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; s = singular number; p = plural number; f = feminine; m = muscular; Q = question particle; Neg = negative marker; IND = Indicative; JUS = Jussive; SUB = Subjunctive; Pres = present; Pastperf = past perfect.

   b. lan   yu-safir-a   r-rijaal-u   ghad-an.
         neg-fut   3m-travel-SUB the-men-Nom   tomorrow-Acc
         'The men will not travel tomorrow.'

(4) a. ya-naam-u   l-ʔawlad-u   bakir-an.
         3m-sleep-Pres   the-children-Nom   early-Acc
         'The children sleep early.'

   b. laa   ya-naam-u   l-ʔawlad-u   bakir-an.
         neg-Pres 3m-sleep-IND   the-children-Nom early-Acc
         'The children do not sleep early.'

  (ii) A negative marker specified only for a [+N feature] (laysa):

(5) lays-at   l-bent-u   fii   l-madrasat-i.
     neg-3fs   the-girl-Nom   in   the-school-Gen
     'The girl is not in the school.'

(6) *laysa*   xalid-un   ya-ktubu   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
     neg-3ms   khalid-Nom 3m-write-Pres   the-poetry-Acc
     'Khalid does not write poetry.'

  (iii) A negative marker specified for both [+N/+V feature] (maa):

(7) maa   ʔanta   mujtahid-un.
     neg   you-Nom   hardworking-Nom
     'You are not hardworking.'

(8) maa   ʔa-arif-u.
     neg   1s-know-Pres
     'I do not know.'

  Leaving the classes in (i) and (iii) aside as they are beyond the

scope of current paper, I turn, in the next section, to illustrate some basic facts about laysa before getting down into the discussion of major aim of this paper, namely, the interaction of the negative laysa with the three types of focus.

3. Syntactic Functions of Laysa

Originally, laysa is typically taken to be the result of incorporation of the negative morpheme laa[2] and the word ʔysa 'existence'. For morphological reasons, the second vowel **a** in **laa** and the glottal stop in "ʔysa" are omitted, allowing la to be merged with **ysa** and ending up yielding the form laysa (al-Faraaheedi, 8th Century, 1998 edn, also see Wright 1896). Laysa exhibits two main syntactic functions to express negation: (i) The first function is by means of negative auxiliary verb; (ii) the second one is via functioning as just a negative particle. The intent of the next subsection is to explain the properties of these two functions.

3.1. Verbal Laysa

In its main function as a negative verb, *laysa* occurs with nonverbal predicates (NP, AdjP, advP, PP) and imperfective verbs as shown respectively in (9) and (10) below. Thus, *laysa* is neither compatible with future tense interpretations (11), nor with verbs inflected for past tense (12) (Fassi Fehri 1993: 208, n. 25).

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[2] *Laa* is considered to be the default form of negation in Arabic *laa* is the original source of all negative markers, apart from *maa*. (see Benmamoun 2000).

(9) a. hum   laysuu   Tullab-an.
        they-Nom   neg-3mp   students-Acc
        'They are not students.'

   b. heia   *lays-at*   hulwat-an.
       she-Nom   neg-3fs   beautiful-Acc
       'She is not beautiful.'

   c. ?al-walad-u   *laysa*   huna.
       the-boy-Nom   neg-3ms   here-Acc
       'The boy is not here.'

   d. *laysa*   T-Tulab-u   fii   l-madrasat-i.
       neg-3m   the-students-Nom   in   the-school-Gen
       'The students are not in the school.'

(10)   *laysa*   xalid-un   ya-ktubu   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
        neg-3ms   Khalid-Nom   3m-write-Pres   the-poetry-Acc
        'Khalid does not write poetry.'

(11)   lays-at   fatimat-u   *(sa-takoonu)   fii   l-bayt-i.
        neg-3fs   Fatimah-Nom   will be   in   the-house-Gen
        'Fatimah will not be in the house.'

(12)   *laysa*   xalid-un   *(kataba)   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
        neg-3ms   Khalid-Nom   3m-write-past   the-poetry-Acc
        'Khalid did not write poetry.'

   From the above examples, it can be noted that *laysa*, as being specified for +N feature, must select NP as pointed out in section 2. Thus, it is ungrammatical for verbal sentences to be negated directly by *laysa* as illustrated in (13).

(13)   *laysa   ya-ktubu   xalid-un   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
       neg-3ms   3m-write   Khalid-Nom   the-poetry-Acc

This selected NP by *laysa* can be a full NP as in (9-12) above or a null pronoun that is incorporated with *laysa* and has a feature bundle (i.e., 3M/F. S/P) indicated by the agreement as in the following examples:

(14)   xalid-un   *laysa*   ya-ktubu   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
       Khalid-Nom   neg-3ms   3m-write   poem-Acc
       'Khalid is not writing a poem.'

(15)   lays-at   jamilat-an.
       neg-3fs   beautiful-Acc
       'She is not beautiful.'

(16)   ʔaT-Tulab-u   laysuu   fii   l-madrasat-i.
       the-student-Nom   neg-3mp   in   the-school-Gen
       'The students are not in the school.'

As can be observed in the above examples, *laysa* cannot act as a full lexical verb since it is not inflected for tense, although it carries number and gender agreement (i.e., enters into agreement with the subject) (al-Khawalda 1997, Ouhalla 2008). This leads early Arab grammarians to treat it "an incomplete verb" (see e.g., Sibawayhi 8th Century, 1938 edn; Abū Ḥayyān 14th Century, 2001 edn). And because *laysa* assigns nominative case to the subject and accusative case to the predicate as in (17) below, it is reasonable to be considered as an auxiliary verb (al-Khawalda 1997).

(17) a.   ahmad-u   muʕallim-un.
          Ahmad-Nom   teacher-Nom
          'Ahmad is a teacher.'

b. *laysa*   ahmad-u   muʕallim-an.
   neg-3m   Ahmad-Nom   teacher-Acc
   'Ahmad is not a teacher.'

The other justification to consider *laysa* as an auxiliary verb is its mobility in the sense that it can be separated from the verb by the subject. Moreover, it displays the same word order alternations as verbs namely, Neg Subject order and Subject Neg order. Consider the following examples in (18) & (19) below.

(18) a. *laysa*   xalid-un   ya-ktubu   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
        neg-3ms   Khalid-Nom   3m-write-Pres the-poetry-Acc

   b. xalid-un   *laysa*   ya-ktubu   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
      Khalid-Nom   neg-3ms   3m-write   the-poetry-Acc
      'Khalid does not write the poetry.'

(19) a. ʔaT-Taqs-u   *laysa*   jamiil-an.
        the-weather-Nom   neg-3ms   nice-Ace
        'The weather is not nice.'

   b. Jamiil-an   *laysa*   T-Taqs-u.
      nice-Acc   neg-3ms   the-weather-Nom
      'The weather is not nice.'

Additional evidence to sustain this argument is that *laysa* can be replaced by *kaana* or *maa kaana* which both function in Arabic as an auxiliary verb (El-Rakhawi 1982). Reconsider the example in (19) above, with *laysa* being replaced by *kaana* in (20) and *maa kaana* in (21):

(20) kaana   xalid-un   ya-ktubu   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
     was-3ms-pastperf   Khalid-Nom 3m-write-pres the-poetry-Acc
     'Khalid had written the poetry.'

(21) maa   kaana   xalid-un   ya-ktubu
     neg   was-3ms-pastperf   Khalid-Nom   3m-write-Pres
     Ŝ-Šiʕr-a.
     the-poetry-Acc
     'Khalid had not written the poetry.'

   In both sets of examples in (20) and (21), it can be seen that *laysa* can be replaced by *kaana* and *maa kaana*. This is strong evidence that *laysa*, in all the previous contexts, must be treated as an auxiliary verb.

3.2. Particle Laysa

   Laysa, in its second function as a negative particle, does not select a particular tense or carry agreement features. Its lack of inflection singles it out from the negative verb *laysa* mentioned earlier in the previous section. Laysa functioning as a particle occurs in two different constructions: **(i) stripping constructions** and **(ii) negative-contrast constructions**. In both constructions, the particle laysa behaves like a focusing adverb. The following subsections outline the syntactic and semantic properties of laysa as a focusing adverb before dealing with its focusing function in section 4.

3.2.1. Laysa in Stripping Constructions

   Stripping is defined as "a rule that deletes everything in a clause under identity with corresponding parts of a preceding clause, except for one constituent (and sometimes a clause-initial adverb or negative" (Hankamer & Sag 1976: 409, cf. Ross 1969). Stripping always occurs with two-place connectives or determiners which require two paired constituents such as *not* (22) *but not* (23), *except*

for (24), *too* (25) ..., and so on (Kempson 1993: 64).

(22)   John speaks German, not French.
(23)   Sammy played the piano but not Lisa.
(24)   No-one kissed his mother, except for me.
(25)   The critics liked your book, and your poem too.

There are three major ways of expressing stripping constructions by *laysa*. The first one is that of negating the remnant by laysa contingent to coordinator particle *wa*. This *wa* conveys the meaning of English *but* or *and*. The second one is via *laysa* alone without *wa*. The third way is via negating the remnant with the meaning of *except for*. In the last way, laysa is traditionally called 'exceptive particle' and occurs in Exceptive Sentences that contain two parts: the general thing from which the exception is made, that is, the antecedent, which is the part that generally precedes the particle *laysa*, and the excepted element. The three ways are spelt out in the following examples respectively.

(26) a. Gabal-tu xalid-an   fii l-Gahirat-i wa *laysa* fii a-rrabat-i.
        met-I-3s Khalid-Acc in Cairo-Gen and neg   In Rabat-Gen
        'I met Khalid in Cairo, but not in Rabat.'

    b. tatakallmu Hind-un   al-engliziat-a wa laysa al-faransiat-a.
       speak-I-3f Hnid-Nom English-Acc and neg   French-Acc
       'Hind speaks English, but not French.'

    c. kaana   xalid-un   wa *laysa* fii
       was-past-3ms   Khalid-Nom   and neg   in
       zaid-un   al-jamiʕat-i.
       Zaid-Nom   the-university-Gen
       'Khalid was in the university, but not Zaid.'

(27) a. Gabal-tu xalid-an   fii l-Gahirat-i *laysa* fii a-rrabat-i.
         met-I-3s Khalid-Acc in Cairo-Gen   neg   in Rabat-Gen
         'I met Khalid in Cairo not in Rabat.'

   b. tatakallmu Hind-un   al-engliziat-a **laysa** al-faransiat-a.
       speak-I-3f Hnid-Nom English-Acc neg   French-Acc
       'Hind speaks English not French.'

   c. kaana   xalid-un   *laysa*   zaid-un
       was-past-3ms   Khalid-Nom   neg   Zaid-Nom
       fii   al-jamiʕat-i.
       in   the-university-Gen
       'Khalid was in the university not Zaid.'

(28) a. hadhar   l-ʔawlaad-u   *laysa*   zaid-an.
         came-past   the-boys-Nom   except Zaid-Acc
         'The boys came expect (for) Zaid.'

   b. raʔit-u l-ʔawlaad-a   laysa   zaid-an.
       saw-I   the-boys-Acc except   Zaid-Acc
       'I saw the boys expect (for) Zaid.'

   c. garaʔ-tu li-l-ʔawlaad-u   l-giSat-a   *laysa*   zaid-an.
       read-I-past for the-boys-Gen the-story-Acc except Zaid-Acc
       'I read the story for the boys expect for Zaid.'

   As can be noted, the remnant preceded by *laysa*, in the first two types, has syntactic features appropriate to its being a part of a sentence which is structurally identical to the antecedent clause such as having case-marking appropriate to the particular verb or predicate in the antecedent clause. This syntactic requirement, which is met in (26) and (27), proves that the syntactic structure of the remnant is fully projected but not phonologically realized and hence

that remnant must be licensed as a part of a full clause[3]. As for the third type, the excepted element (Zaid) is excluded from the action and therefore has default dependent case (always in accusative case) as indicated by the gloss in (28) above. That is, Zayd is excluded from the action and so cannot agree in case with *al-walaad* 'the boys'. To summarize, the remnant must have syntactic features that are either identical to the antecedent clause such as having case-marking as in the first two types or both being homogeneous, namely the antecedent and excepted element as in the third type.

3.2.2. *Laysa* in Negative-Contrast Constructions

In some contexts, *laysa* as a focusing adverb negates negative-contrast constructions. It behaves like an indeclinable negative particle, stronger than *laa*, to deny the sentence part which is merged with (Wright 1896). This special function of laysa is illustrated by the following examples:

(29) *laysa*   li-haatha   l-ʔamr-i   daʕao-tu-ka.
      neg   for-this   the-matter-Dat   invite:I-Nom:you-Acc
      'Not for this matter, I invite you.'

(30) *laysa*   li-ʔjli-ka   faʕal-tu   thalika.
      neg   for-sake-your   did-I   that
      'Not for you, I did that.'

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[3] This is called deletion approach to ellipsis. This approach defines all ellipsis contexts (including stripping) as an interface phenomenon at PF (as a deletion procedure) (Chomsky 1965; Hankamer & Sag 1976; Depiante 2000; Merchant 2001, 2003, 2004). In contrast, movement approach defines stripping as an interface phenomenon. However, it is not at PF as a deletion procedure as claimed by the deletion approach, but at LF as a covert movement (Reinhart 1991). For more detailed and recent discussion about these approaches, see Konietzko (2016: 29-54). The current study adopts the first approach as will be demonstrated later in section 4.

From the above examples in (29) and (30), the prepositional phrase (PP) must be merged with laysa as one constituent to create greater negative emphasis. This use of *laysa* with negative-contrast constructions results in having a contrastive focus negation. Accordingly, the presupposition in (29) and (30) implies contrastiveness and can be read respectively as follows:

(31)   *the man was invited for another matter not for that matter which was thought to be the reason for the invitation*.

(32)   *for someone else, something was done.*

Note that *laysa* here cannot be substituted by either *kaana* or *maa kaana*. This means that it is not an auxiliary verb and differs from verbal laysa discussed in section 3.

(33) a. **kaana*   li-haatha   l-ʔamr-i   daʕao-tu-ka.
          was   for-this   the-matter-Dat   invite:I-Nom:you-Acc

     b. *maa *kaana*   li-haatha l-ʔamr-i   daʕao:tuːka.
          neg   was   for-this   the-matter-Dat   invite:I-Nom:you-Acc

(34) a. **kaana*   li-ʔajli-ka   faʕal-tu   thalika.
          was   for-sake-your   did-I   that

     b. *maa   *kaana* li-ʔajli-ka   faʕal-tu   faʕal-tu.
          neg   was   for-sake-your   did-I   that

Moreover, verbal laysa does not imply contrastive focus negation in compared with laysa as a focusing adverb. Consider the contrast in (35) and (36):

(35) laysa   min-ka   ʔakhafu.
      Neg   from you   I-fear
      'Not from you, I fear.'

(36) **las-tu**   ʔakhafu   min-ka.
      Neg-I   I-fear   from-you
      'I do not fear you.'

In (35) when laysa used as a focusing adverb, the contrastive focus reading is obvious and can be read as:

(37) *for someone else, I fear.*

By contrast, in (36) when laysa is verbal, the contrastive focus reading does not exist. The kind of focus there is merely information focus as will be explained in the following section.

4. Information Structure and Focus Typology

It is appropriate here to provide a clear definition of Information Structure before illustrating the focus typology within the generative syntax framework. Zimmermann & Féry (2010: 1) define Information Structure[4] as a "cognitive domain that mediates between

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[4] According to Gupton (2010: 73), the idea of the notion of Information Structure goes back to Weil (1844/1879: 29), when he proposes an informational split distinct from that of subject-predicate. He describes this split as starting with "the ground upon which the two intelligences (speaker and hearer) meet". For more discussion aboutthe main theories of the information structure and their distributions to syntactic theory, see the edited book by Schwabe & Winkler (2007): *On Information Structure, Meaning, and Form: Generalizations across Languages.*

the modules of linguistic competence in the narrow sense, such as syntax, phonology, and morphology, and other cognitive faculties which serve the central purpose of the fixation of belief by way of information update, pragmatic reasoning, and general inference processes".

   In generative tradition, it is a widely accepted view that focus provides a highlighted piece of information with respect to the rest of the sentence (e.g., Chomsky 1957). Many recent works on focus typology have shown that two types of foci can be distinguished: information focus and contrastive focus[5] (Kiss 1998, López 2000, López & Winkler 2000, Drübig 2003, Winkler 2005, Biezma 2014, among many others). According to Winkler (2005: 28) the essential differentiation of these focus types "is seen in the way these foci are licensed: while information focus, which marks new information in the sentence, is assumed to involve *in situ* licensing […], contrastive focus is assumed to involve LF-movement of the focus phrase in an appropriate A-bar position". To explain this syntactic distinction more precisely, she (p. 29) suggests the derivation represented in (38) below:

(38) a. information focus:
          Licensed *in situ*: $[X^i [...Focus^i...]]$

     b. contrastive focus:
         formation of an operator-variable chain at LF
         $[Focus^i [...t^i ...]]$

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[5] It should be here noted that this distinction relates to the pragmatic nature of focus. But for the semantic approaches to focus, focus is always contrastive because it conveys a contrast between the actual element in focus and the potential alternatives (Rooth 1992).

Contrastive focus (also known as "identificational focus": Kiss 1998) does not introduce new information in the same way that information focus does. Contrastive focus may use to correct information or to mark information that contrasts with previously stated (or implicit) information (see Biezma 2014: 95, and references therein). To put it differently, contrastive focus[6] is connection with exhaustive answers in question-answer pairs (39a), contrastive statements (39b), or instances of corrective focus (39c) (Zimmermann 2007: 147).

(39) a. Q: Who did you invite?
            A: PAUL, I invited (but nobody else).

     b. I did not invite PETER, but PAUL.

     c. A: You invited PETER?
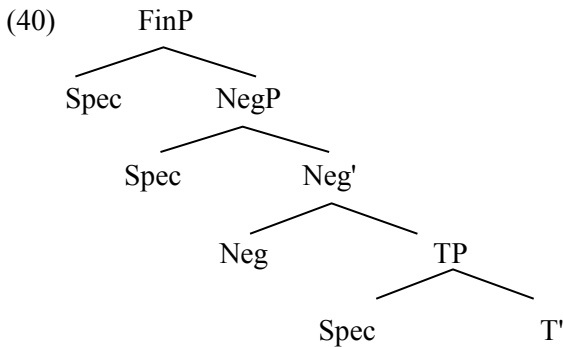   B: No, I invited PAUL.

4.1. Laysa and Focus

Interpreting focus under negation by laysa is achieved in various types, depending on its function as explained in the preceding section. The two types of focus: information and contrastive focus can be distributed by laysa via three readings of focus. These are wide,

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[6] Contrast is a notion that is frequently in connection with focus or topic (Repp 2009, Molnár & Winkler 2010). There are some interpretive differences between contrastive topic and contrastive focus, which derive from the widely held view that focus is a propositional notion, while a topic is an utterance level notion (Tomioka 2010, Neeleman & Vermeulen 2012). I will not go into the details of the syntactic and semantics of the notion 'topic', due to the paper specific aim (about focus), but I will, in section 4, touch on some representative discourse contexts of contrastive topic with negative laysa in compared with the contrastive focus.

bound and free. The following subsections take up these three readings in more detail.

4.1.1. Wide Focus

Wide Focus is distributed by *laysa* used as a verbal negative to take scope over the whole clause. That is, negation with verbal laysa, like the other Arabic negative markers negating verbal sentences (as shown in section 2), **is sentential negation** which is realized in the clausal spine as NegP[7] positioned between FinP and TP (40), and a result of   being in this derivational position, it has wide scope: it negates the whole clause. Let us consider the sentence in (10), repeated here as (41):

(40)   FinP
         /   \
     Spec   NegP
              /   \
          Spec   Neg'
                   /   \
                 Neg   TP
                          /   \
                       Spec   T'

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[7] "The NegP Hypothesis" is a result of a more general hypothesis known as "Split Inflection Hypothesis" which was first suggested by Pollock (1989) and later adopted by Chomsky (1991, 1995). According to this hypothesis, sentential negation receives its own functional projection, NegP. That is, neg is an element which is syntactically encoded as a functional head, on a par with tense, agreement, mood, and aspect.
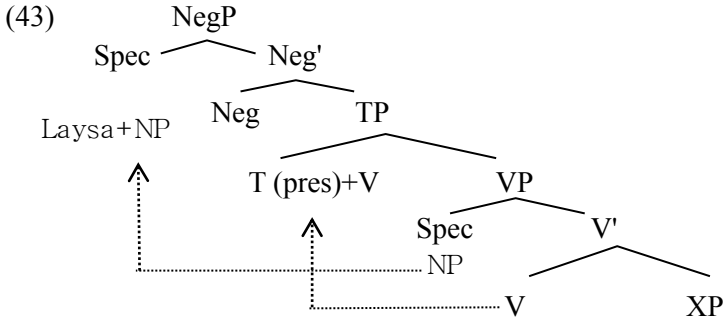
(41) *laysa*   xalid-un   ya-ktubu   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a.
       neg-3ms   Khalid-Nom   3m-write-Pres   the-poetry-Acc
       'Khalid does not write the poetry.'

   The negation, by laysa, in (41) above, takes scope over the whole clause, which is focalized. This is shown by the fact that the kind of focus in (41) is information focus as it gives new information that is assumed not to be common knowledge between the speaker and the hearer. The sentence in (41) is the expected answer for the following question in (42):

(42) hal   xalid-un   ya-ktubu   Ŝ-Ŝiʕr-a?
       Q   Khalid-Nom   3m-write-Pres   the-poetry-Acc
       'Does Khalid write poetry?'

   As wide focus reading in verbal laysa is always associated with information focus, there is no movement involved. It is, as assumed by Winkler (2005), involved *in situ* licensing. Based on this assumption, I propose that the wide focus reading by verbal laysa is derived as follows. Verbal laysa, by virtue of selecting a particular type of tense (present tense interpretation) and having a NEG feature occupies the head position of the negative projection (NegP) located above TP[8], and hence it can attribute the right selectional properties, and their complement is TP, not VP as shown in the simplified derivation in (43) below:

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[8] I am adopting here the important insight of Fassi Fehri (1993, cf. Ouhalla 1994, Bahloul 1996, Benmamoun 2000) that NegP in Arabic is located above TP.

(43)

```
              NegP
   Spec               Neg'
                 Neg        TP
 Laysa+NP
                  T (pres)+V        VP
                               Spec       V'
                                NP
                                      V          XP
```

Note that the derivation in (43) further illustrates that the verb moves from V to T achieving the VSO order[9], and then the NP moves into Neg to satisfy + N that laysa is specified for as illustrated in section 2. This being the case, the whole clause in (41) is focalized by laysa and no element of the sentence escapes its scope.

4.2. Bound Focus

The bound focus reading occurs with laysa functioning as a focusing adverb. This reading is realized with contrastive focus distributed by laysa in stripping constructions and negative-contrast constructions as illustrated, respectively, in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. In the bound focus construal, negation takes scope only over one element and lets the rest of the sentence escape its effect. This element is either located in the final position as in stripping constructions in (26-28), reproduced here once again in (44-46), or in the initial position contingent to the negative by being merged with it

---

[9] VSO order is unmarked word order in Arabic. It is assumed to be derived by merging the subject in Spec VP, and raising the verb to T to inflect for the tense and agreement features which the functional category T is valued with (see among many others, Fassi Fehri 1993, Ouhalla 1994).

as in negative-contrast constructions in (29) and (30) repeated here for convenience as (47) and (48).

(44) a. Gabal-tu xalid-an   fii l-Gahirat-i wa *laysa* fii a-rrabat-i.
     met-I-3s Khalid-Acc in Cairo-Gen and neg   in Rabat-Gen
     'I met Khalid in Cairo, but not in Rabat.'

   b. tatakallmu Hind-un   al-engliziat-a wa laysa al-faransiat-a.
     speak-I-3f Hnid-Nom English-Acc   and neg   French-Acc
     'Hind speaks English, but not French.'

   c. kaana   xalid-un   wa   ***laysa***   zaid-un
     was-past-3ms   Khalid-Nom   and   neg   Zaid-Nom
     fii   al-jamiʕat-i.
     in   the-university-Gen
     'Khalid was in the university, but not Zaid.'

(45) a. Gabal-tu xalid-an   fii l-Gahirat-i *laysa* fii a-rrabat-i.
     met-I-3s Khalid-Acc in Cairo-Gen neg   in Rabat-Gen
     'I met Khalid in Cairo not in Rabat.'

   b. ta-takallmu   Hind-un   al-engliziat-a laysa al-faransiat-a.
     3fs-speak   Hnid-Nom English-Acc neg   French-Acc
     'Hind speaks English not French.'

   c. kaana   fii   l-jamiʕat-i   xalid-un
     was-past.3ms   in   the-university-Gen   Khalid-Nom
     laysa   zaid-un.
     neg   Zaid-Nom
     'Khalid was in the university not Zaid.'

(46) a. hadhar   l-ʔawlaad-u   *laysa*   zaid-an.
     came-past the-boys-Nom   except   Zaid-Acc
     'The boys came expect (for) Zaid.'

b. raʔit-u   l-ʔawlaad-a   laysa   zaid-an.
   saw-I   the-boys-Acc   except   Zaid-Acc
   'I saw the boys expect (for) Zaid.'

c. garaʔ-tu   li-l-ʔawlaad-u   l-giSat-a   *laysa*   zaid-an.
   read-I-past for the-boys-Gen   the-story-Acc except   Zaid-Acc
   'I read the story for the boys expect (for) Zaid.'

(47) *laysa*   li-haatha   l-ʔamr-i   daʕao-tu-ka
     neg   for-this   the-matter-Dat   invite:I-Nom:you-Acc
     'Not for this matter, I invite you.'

(48) *laysa*   li-ʔjli-ka   faʕaltuthalika
      neg   for-sake-your   did:Ithat
      'Not for you, I did that.'

In the above examples, contrastive focus with laysa gives information which is in conflict with questioner's expectation, and represents a felicitous answer to disjunctive yes/no questions by delivering a bound negation reading that takes scope only over one element. To illustrate this more, let us, for instance, have the questions of (44c) and (48) to see how the contrastive focus with laysa gives information that is in conflict with questioner's expectation, and consequently, yields the bound reading over the element in initial or final position which constitutes the focus of the sentence.
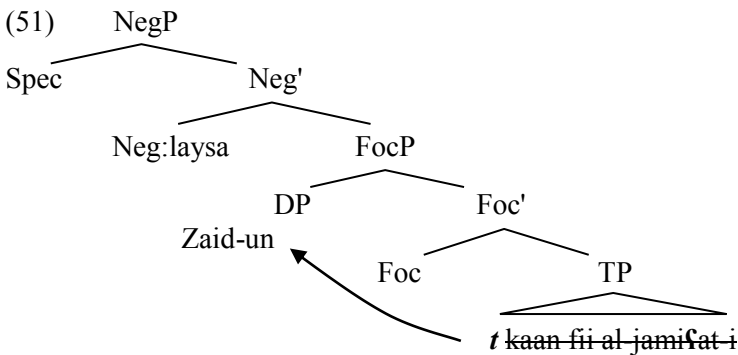
(49) Q: hal   Gabal-ta   xalid-an   fii   r-rabat-i?
        Q   met-you   Khalid-Acc   in   rabat-Gen
        'Did you meet Khalid in Rabat?'

   A: laa, Gabal-tu xalid-an   fii l-Gahirat-i *laysa* **fii r-rabat-i**.
      not, met-I   Khalid-Acc in Cario-Gen neg   in Rabat-Gen
      'No, I met Khalid in Cairo not in Rabat.'

(50) Q: *Hal*   faʕal-ta   thalika   li-ʔaj-lii.
         Q   did:you   that   for-sake-my
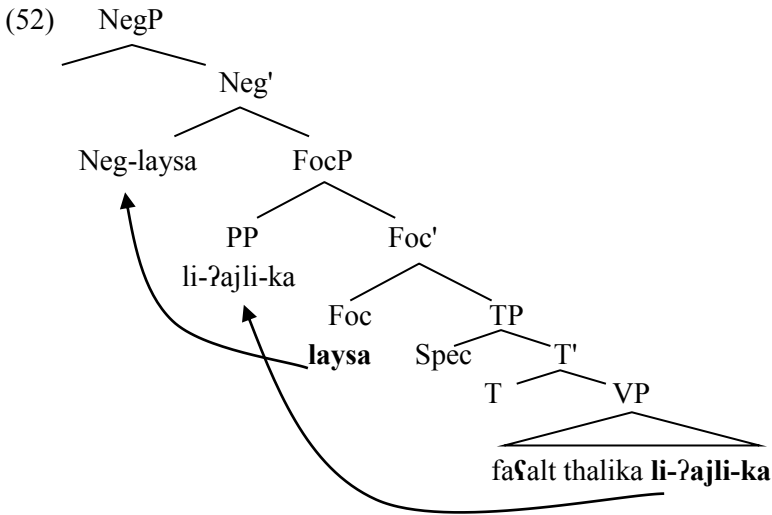   'Did you do that for my sake?'

   A: *Laa,*   *laysa*   **li-ʔajli:ka**   faʕal-tuthalika.
        neg   neg   for-sake-your   did:I that
        'No, not for you, I did that.'

Now, let us turn to give a generative analysis to how bonding reading under contrastive focus is derived with laysa in (44c) and (48). In both constructions, I propose that as laysa is a focusing adverb, it has to select a focus projection as its complement. This requires the movement of the focalized element to the specifier of a Focus Phrase located between NegP and TP. However, this movement in (44c) (stripping) is preceded by a process of deletion,[10] resulting in structure that is not phonetically realized. For instance, the focalized remnant in the sentence in (44c) above will have the derivation in (51) below:

(51)

NegP
Spec   Neg'
        Neg:laysa   FocP
                 DP   Foc'
              Zaid-un   Foc   TP
                              t kaan fii al-jamiʕat-i

---

[10] That is, the overt movement of the remnant to the specifier of focus projection is followed by deletion of TP. This idea is originally due to Depiante (2000, cf. Merchant 2001, 2003), who convincingly argues that the remnant phrase escapes deletion by having moved out of the elided TP into a Focus position.

As for the bounding reading of contrastive focus with laysa negating negative-contrast constructions as in (47) and (48) above, I propose, following Cinque (1999) and Rizzi (2004), who argue that adverbs are licensed in the Spec of dedicated projections, that the bounding reading is derived by movement of the focalized element (PP) to the specifier of a Focus Phrase (FocP). Laysa, as being a focusing adverb, is generated first in the head of FocP then moves to the head of NegP to satisfy its NEG feature and, as a result, it selects a focus projection as its complement. The resulting derived structure is shown in (52) below:

(52)   NegP

Neg'

Neg-laysa   FocP

PP   Foc'
li-ʔajli-ka

Foc   TP
laysa   Spec   T'

T   VP

faʕalt thalika **li-ʔajli-ka**

4.3. Free Focus

The free construal of focus also occurs with contrastive laysa negating stripping constructions, but with those involve a different derivation and a different syntactic structure in contrast with

stripping constructions of bound reading of focus discussed in the previous section. The free reading of focus can be established with laysa negating stripping constructions with two conditions. (i) stripping constructions must have a negation in their two clauses, namely both antecedent and deleted clauses (i.e., laysa must be preceded by a negative clause). (ii) Laysa must be merged with the coordinator particle *wa* which conveys the meaning English *but* or *and*. This can be shown by the following example in (53) below:

(53) lam   yaʔti   Ahmad-u   li-lhaflat-i
      neg-past   3m-come-JUS   Ahmad-Nom   to-the-party
      wa   laysa   Zaid-un.
      And   neg   Zaid-Nom
      'Ahmad did not come to the party but not Zaid.'

   Note that the focused phrase (Zaid) in the final position is out of the scope of negation and the right interpretation is (Zaid DID in fact come to the party) [free reading]. If laysa is preceded by a positive clause, only a bound reading is possible, and this reading results as the negation effectively takes scope over the conjunct containing the focus. This can be shown in (44a), repeated here as (54):

(54) gabal-tu xalid-an   fii l-Gahirat-I (wa) *laysa* fii a-rrabat-i.
      met-I-3s Khalid-Acc in Cairo-Gen and neg   in Rabat-Gen
      'I met Khalid in Cairo, but not in Rabat.'
      (I DID meet Khalid in CAIRO, but not in RABAT.)
      [bound reading]

   Having demonstrated the syntactic structure of the free construal of focus with laysa, let us now turn to propose how this reading is derived. I argue that the cantrastviness in (53) is a sort of contrastive topic and laysa functions as its particle. Fintel (1994), Molnár (1998),

and Lee (2003) define contrastive topic as a combined effect of topicality and focusing 'in the sense that it comes from a potential Topic and somewhat focal in the sense that the choice of the particular part is not known to the hearer' (Lee 2003: 155). In (54), the hearer thought that *Zaid didn't come to the party*, whereas Khalid did. However, the fact was reversed: Zaid DID come to the party, not Khalid. Zaid in the final position is out of the scope of negation, and hence the free reading of focus is only possible.

Based on the above assumption that contrastive topic is a combined effect of topicality and focusing, and following Krifka (1989), Selkirk (1984), and Winkler (2005) who assume that contrastive topics are actually foci, I propose that free reading of focus with laysa is derived as follows. Like the bound focus reading occurred with laysa functioning as a focusing adverb in stripping constructions, the derivation of free focus reading is a combination of movement and deletion. However, the movement operation with free focus construal operates in two steps. First, the focalized remnant (Zaid) escapes deletion by having moved to Spec of FocP lower than NegP deriving the structure shown in (55) below:

(55)
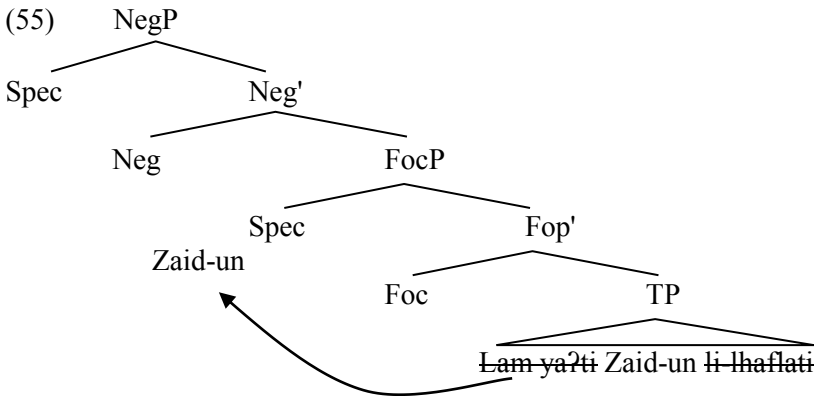
Second, the remnant and the negative laysa (by virtue of having the contrastiveness feature) move to the left periphery, to the specifier of a functional projection (TopP) higher than NegP. This movement is triggered by two motivations: (i) the conjunction *wa* must select (topic), and most importantly, (ii) the Edge-feature in sense of Chomsky's Minimalist Program (1995, 2008) must be satisfied. Following Winkler (2005: 33), contrastiveness consists of two features: F(oc) and T(op) features and, consequently, it is endowed with the Edge-feature. The only way of satisfying this feature is for a nominal constituent to be moved into the specifier of TopP or FocP[11] as what we previously did in both readings of focus: bound and free. If the proposed analysis is along the right lines, this derives the overt structure shown in highly simplified form in (56) below:

(56)   Conj-wa
       [__ topic]

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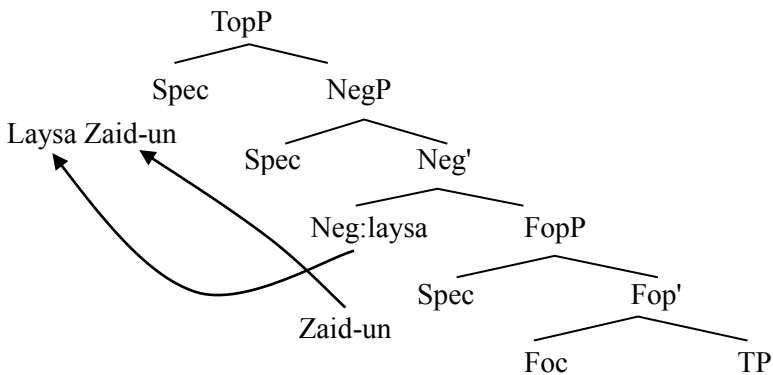
[11]   That is, the Edge-feature in head Foc or Top must be erased via movement of the remnant XP to the spec of FocP/TopP.

5. Conclusion

The paper has considered the role played by the negative laysa in interpreting focus under negation. By fostering an interface-based approach to the interaction between syntax and semantics from a formal generative perspective, the paper has demonstrated that focus can be expressed by laysa in two major types: the information focus and contrastive focus. These major types of focus have led laysa (whether it is verbal or particle) to produce three different readings of focus, namely, wide, bound, and free. These readings, which attributes to the scope of the negation, involve a different derivation in which reflects how the autonomous notions of information structure: topic, focus and contrast interact in systematic ways with syntax. This adds additional support to a large body of empirical and theoretical contributions which cover a wide variety of languages and types of focus to understand what information structural effects play a role at the interface (see, for example, Vallduvi 1992, Rizzi 1997, Vallduvi & Vilkuna 1998, Kennelly 1999, Aboh 2004, Frey 2004, Winkler 2005, Kolokonte 2008, Biezma 2014, Konietzko 2016).

Finally, the paper has proposed a minimalist analysis for each different derivation of these readings and captured the fact that the syntactic position of the negative laysa vis-à-vis negation and its adjacency effect determines the reading of the focus construction as wide, bound, or free. When laysa heads the sentence in its verbal function, the resulting reading is wide, whereas the reading is bound or free in its function as a particle, though they diverge into different derivational directions at the end.

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