1. Introduction

This paper is an initial investigation of the CP layer in Sason Arabic in comparison to other Arabic dialects. It aims to introduce and discuss the complementizer system of the language and the interaction of complementizers with other components, e.g. topic or focus, which occur in the Left Periphery within the research program Cartography following mainly (Rizzi 1997, 2001; Cinque 1999; Cinque and Rizzi 2008).

Sason Arabic is one of the many Arabic varieties spoken in Anatolia. These dialects are part of the larger Mesopotamian dialect area, in other words they can be considered as a continuation of the Iraqi Arabic dialects. Jastrow (1978, 2005, 2006) classifies the dialect in the Sason area as a member of Kozluk-Sason-Muş group.

2. Complementizers in Sason

Sason has two complementizers: le, ta.1,2 Let us begin with a description of the distribution of these complementizers. Consider (1).

(1) a. ali  īddā  ī-si  le  a-habb-u
     Ali claim 3m-do that 1sg-love-him
     ‘Ali claims that I love him.’

   b. ali  īddā  ī-si  ta  a-habb-u
     Ali claim 3m-do that subj 1sg-love-him
     ‘Ali claims that I love him.’

   c. ali  īddā  ī-si  le  a-habb-u
     Ali claim 3m-do that 1sg-love-him
     ‘Ali claims that I love him.’

1 The subjunctive marker in Sason is homophonous with the complementizer ta. I will not go into its discussion here.

2 Some speakers, including Ibrahim Akkuş, pronounce it as ne, but for the sake of consistency, I will use the le throughout, which also reflects my pronunciation. Moreover, le has other functions as well.

   i. *irə-nni  leyla  ta  tə-či
      want-1sg Leyla subj 2f-come
      ‘I want Leyla to come.’

   ii. *irə-nni  ta  leyla  tə-či
       want-1sg subj Leyla 2f-come

   i. le  sabi  içi ...
      that  boy 3m.come
      ‘when the boy comes…’

   ii. bont  le  kemal
       daughter of kemal
       ‘kemal’s daughter’

See Talay (2001) for a discussion of similar contexts in Hasköy dialect.
b. *ali  iddā  i-si  ande  i-habb-u
Ali  claim  3m-do  who  3sg-love-him
‘Ali claims who loves him.’

c. *ali  iddā  i-si  ta  a-habb-u
Ali  claim  3m-do  if  1sg-love-him
‘Ali claims if I love him.’

In (1)a, le appears in embedded declarative clauses with the main verb ‘to claim’, in (1)b the thematic verb is followed by an wh-phrase, which makes the sentence ungrammatical, and (1)c ta also leads to ungrammaticality. Note that le is different from Standard Arabic (StA) indicative complementizer ʔanna although they both take a finite clausal complement. For instance, in StA the order VSO is the unmarked order, as illustrated in (2)a, however, it is not possible in a clause embedded under ʔanna, as shown in (2)b (Shlonsky 2000).³

(2)  a.  kataba ʔal-walad-u ʔal-risaalat-a.  
    wrote  the-boy-nom  the-letter-acc
    ‘The boy wrote the letter.’

    (I) claimed  that  wrote  the-boy-nom  the-letter-acc
    ‘I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.’

The comparison shows that unlike le, the Standard Arabic ʔanna cannot be followed by a verb, which makes VSO, the unmarked constituent order of StA, impossible in embedded finite clauses. Let us now discuss the distribution of the complementizer ta.

(3)  a.  ali  meraq  i-si  ta  a-habb-u  mo-habb-u⁴
    Ali  wonder  3m-do  if  1sg-love-him  neg-1sg-love-him
    ‘Ali wonders if I love him.’

    b.  *ali  meraq  i-si  le  a-habb-u
    Ali  wonder  3m-do  that  1sg-love-him
    ‘Ali wonders that I love him.’

The example (3) shows that embedded polarity interrogatives are introduced with the complementizer ta ‘if’ and that le ‘that’ cannot be embedded under a verb like ‘wonder’ which

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³ See section 4.1 for the discussion of the complementizer layer in Standard Arabic.
⁴ This is reminiscent of the Turkish coordination in this type of constructions, which has the following form:

    Ali  he-acc  love-and  love-neg-nmlz-poss-acc  wonder  do-prog
    ‘Ali wonders if I love him or not.’
belongs to a class of verbs that require an interrogative complement (Huang 1982). The example (4) shows that the verb RF ‘to know’ has no selectional restrictions, that is, may optionally take an interrogative complement.

(4) a. a-ref le kemal ja
   1sg-know that Kemal came.3m
   ‘I know that Kemal came.’

   b. a-ref ta kemal ja
   1sg-know if Kemal came.3m
   ‘I know if Kemal came.’

The data from (1) to (4) shows that the choice of the complementizer depends on the thematic verb of the matrix clause. However, this is not the whole picture. Consider (5), where the two complementizers co-occur.

(5) a. ali meraq i-si ta le a-habb-u mō-habb-u
   Ali wonder 3m-do if 1sg-love-him neg-1sg-love-him
   ‘Ali wonders if I love him or not.’

   b. *ali iddā i-si ta le a-habb-u
   Ali claim 3m-do if 1sg-love-him
   ‘Ali claims that I love him.’

The contrast between (5)a and (5)b shows that with a verb such as ‘wonder’ that requires an interrogative complement, the complementizers ta and le co-occur, whereas the co-occurrence is ruled out when embedded under a verb such as ‘claim’, which does not permit an interrogative complement. The following sentences with the main verb ‘to know’, which imposes no selectional requirements, support this conclusion.

(6) a. sabi mi-y-are (*ta) le abun mat fā-harp
   boy neg-3m-know if that father-his died.3m in-war
   ‘The boy doesn’t know that his father died in the war.’

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5 The dubitative complementizer ta appears in some clause types as well, e.g. optative or conditional clauses. See J. Hoekstra (1993) for similar functions of the Modern West Frisian complementizer oft.

(i) gallu-a ta t-spki
    let.3pl-her ta 3f-cry
    ‘Let her cry.’

(ii) ta (le) raçu ye, čo-go mi-ći maitabe.
    if (that) sick be.3 then neg-3m.come school
    ‘If he is sick, he will not come to school anyway.’

6 Note that this sentence is grammatical in the conditional reading if followed by an appropriate context, but out in the intended meaning. I will rule out the other meanings throughout unless related to the discussion.
b. sabi mi-y-are ta (le) abun mat fo-harp
   boy neg-3m-know if that father-his died.3m in-war
   ‘The boy doesn’t know if his father died in the war.’

In (6)a, the intended meaning is factive and as such $ta$ is excluded, whereas in (6)b an embedded interrogative interpretation is intended and complementizers co-occur. The order of the complementizers is fixed, that is, $le \ldots ta$ order is ruled out.

(7) *ali meraq isi le ta ahabbu mō-habb-u.
    Ali wonder 3m-do if that 1sg-love-him neg-1sg-love-him

Note that multiple complementizers with the same sequence are encountered in some Germanic languages (Haegeman 1992:46–47), which also exhibit a fixed order.

(8) Dat is niet zo gek als of dat hij gedacht had
    this is not as crazy as if that he thought had
    ‘This is not so crazy as he had thought it.’
    (Dutch dialect; E. Hoekstra 1992:191)

(9) ?Vi kender mange lingvister som at der vil laese denne bog
    we know many linguists CO CO CO will read this book
    ‘We know many linguists who will read this book.’
    (Danish; Vikner 1991:112)

3. Interaction of Complementizers with Other Elements in CP

The data thus far indicates that $ta$ $le$ is a possible sequence in embedded polarity interrogatives, let us now look at the interaction of these two complementizers with other constituents in the left periphery.

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7 Sometimes in embedded interrogative it is possible to use only $le$, as illustrated below:

(i) ostağor-tu le ali ja mā-ja
    asked-2sg that ali came.3m neg-came.3m
    ‘I asked if Ali came or not.’

One might suspect that this indicates that $le$ is compatible with both embedded declaratives and interrogatives. However, I argue against on the basis of the fact that (i) the opposite pattern is out, i.e. $ta$ is excluded in declaratives (see (1c)), and (ii) that when embedded under verbs like $know$, which do not have selectional restrictions, the interrogative meaning is excluded in cases where only $le$ is used.

(ii) *a-ref le kemal ja
    1sg-know that Kemal came.3m
    Intended: ‘I know if Kemal came.’

Hence, I will assume that in cases like (i), the complementizer $ta$ is there, but is left unpronounced.

8 As has already been pointed out in the literature, the embedded interrogative in this case is licensed through the presence of negation or question in the matrix clause Adger and Quer (2001).

9 Rizzi (2001:290) points out that languages like Spanish permit the sequence in the opposite order $que$ si ‘that if’ in some embedded questions, which he interprets as the overt cooccurence of the force head with Int.
3.1. Order with respect to FOCUS

The two elements have certain properties in common: for instance, both are compatible with f(ocus)-phrases which must follow them, similar to the properties of *se ‘if’ and *che ‘that’ in Italian (Rizzi 2001:289).

(10) a.  iddā i-si le ALA adi-t-lu (aya la).
      claim 3m-do that THIS gave-2m-him (not that one)
      ‘He claims that you gave him THIS, not that one.’

      b.  *iddā isi ALA le adiltlu (aya la).
          claim 3m-do THIS that gave-2m-him (not that one)

(11) a.  meraq i-si ta ALA adi-t-lu, (aya la).
      wonder 3m-do if THIS gave-2m-him (not that one)
      ‘He wonders if you gave him THIS, not that one.’

      b.  *meraq isi ALA ta adiltlu (aya la).
          wonder 3m-do THIS if gave-2m-him (not that one)

Based on the similarity, we can assume the following:

(12) a.  ta ... FOC

      b.  le ... FOC

Now let us discuss the position of f-phrase in cases where the complementizers co-occur.

(13) a.  ali meraq i-si ta le ALA KITAB adit ša kemal, ay nağar la.
      Ali wonder 3m-do if that THIS BOOK gave.2m to Kemal (not the other one)
      ‘Ali wonders if you gave kemal THIS BOOK, (not the other one).’

      b.  *ali meraq isi ta le adit ALA KITAB ša kemal, ay nağar la.
          Ali wonder 3m-do if that gave.2m THIS BOOK to Kemal (not the other one)

      c.  *ali meraq isi ta ALA KITAB le adit ša kemal, ay nağar la.
          Ali wonder 3m-do if THIS BOOK that gave.2m to Kemal (not the other one)

      d.  *ali meraq isi ALA KITAB ta le adit ša kemal, ay nağar la.
          Ali wonder 3m-do THIS BOOK if that gave.2m to Kemal (not the other one)

Amongst the (at least) four combinations, only (13)a is possible. The contrast between (13)a and (13)b indicates that contrastive focus interpretation is not available in post-verbal, i.e. in-situ, position. This contrast has been articulated for other Arabic dialects, e.g. Standard Arabic, Lebanese Arabic. For instance, Moutaouakil (1989) argues that the two types of focus constructions are not equivalent in discourse: while the in-situ focus functions as presentational focus, fronted f-phrases can only be understood contrastively, that is, as opposed to a
presuppositional/pre-existing information, which they deny (Ouhalla 1994; Aoun et al. 2010). Hence, only (14)b represents a felicitous answer to the question in (14)a.

(14) a. šu šərib zayd? Lebanese Arabic (Aoun et al. 2010:202) what drank.3ms Zayd ‘What did Zayd drink?’

   b. šərib zayd ŠAY drank.3ms Zayd tea ‘Zayd drank TEA.’

   c. *ŠAY šərib zayd tea drank.3ms Zayd ‘Zayd drank TEA / It was tea that Zayd drank.’

The example (13)c shows that a focused phrases cannot intervene between ta and le, whereas (13)d indicates that a configuration where an f-phrase precedes ta is also disallowed. Thus, the ordering restrictions gives the following sequence.

(15) ta >> le >> FOC

3.2. Order with respect to wh-elements

Another property that has important implications for the analysis of the left periphery in Sason concerns the position of le with respect to the different kinds of operators hosted by the C-system. Relative operators in headless relative clauses in Sason may be followed by the complementizer le, but cannot be preceded by.10

(16) a. qay ta-saddeğ ta-ğul-ni amma (le) ta-mme int. 2m-believe 3f-tell-me where (that) 3f-go ‘Do you believe that she tells me where she goes to?’

   b. ma-ta-ğul-ni (*le) šone (le) ki ta-qri neg-3f-tell-me that what that be.3f 3f-read ‘She doesn’t tell me what she is reading.’

10 Note that another function of the complementizer le is the same as the English that in relative clauses. It appears in cases where the head noun is overtly expressed.

(i) mā-daš-tu ayu kitabād le qarit neg-saw-1sg those books that read.2m ‘I didn’t see those books that you read.’

(ii) mā-daš-tu šone le qarit neg-saw-1sg what that read.2m ‘I didn’t see what you read.’
In (16) the complementizer le follows different relative operators, one referring to a place and the other to a thing, object, hence giving us the order Rel-Op … le. Notice that the opposite order is disallowed, as illustrated in (16)b.

In embedded interrogatives, the reverse order is observed. The question operator must follow the complementizer if it is overtly realized.

(17) a. *meraq asi le amma tə-mme wonder 1sg-do that where 3f-go
   ‘I wonder where she goes.’

   b. *kalлом i-stağbər mi-nni (le) šone (*le) a-si
      everyday 3m-ask from-me that what that 1sg-do
      ‘He asks me every day what I read.’

Note that the position of the complementizer with respect to the operator and the choice of the main verb determine the relevant reading in the following contrast.

(18) a. *moša le a-qri kullu čax i-cib-ni (*le) šone le irən-ni
      for that 1sg-read every time 3m-bring-me that what that want-1sg
      ‘Every time he brings me what I want to read.’

   b. *kalлом i-stağbər mi-nni le šone (*le) irənni a-qri
      everyday 3m-ask from-me that what that want-1sg 1sg-read
      ‘Every time he asks me what I want to read.’

The word order restrictions give us the following pattern, which is also what is observed in Italian (Rizzi 2001), with the difference that in Italian it is the complementizer se that displays this distribution.

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11 I should note that speakers, me included, prefer to overtly express the complementizer.

12 Rizzi (2001:290), after mentioning in passing that in languages allowing if that order, presumably ‘that’ expresses a position different from and lower than Force, points out that these languages also exhibit Wh that sequence as in the many Romance and Germanic varieties. This holds for Sason as well, as long as we consider the wh in Rizzi (2001) to be a relative operator in Sason since I will show that the order of that with respect to a relative operator and wh-phrase is different in Sason.

13 Another piece of evidence for the order restriction between the relative operator and the complementizer le comes from the conditional clauses.

(i) (ta) [šone le a-qri] subj (ta) kotti ye, daha bašt ye le/ta mo-qri-yu
    if what that 1sg-read bad be.3 more good be.3 that/if neg-1sg.read-it
    ‘If what I am reading is bad, it is better that I don’t read it.’

In this context again the order between the wh-operator and le is fixed, and in fact the complementizer is no longer optional, an issue I will leave for further research. The parentheses are meant to show that ta is allowed to surface in either position.

(ii) (ta) [šone le qall-ey] (ta) baştəyn ye ...
    if what that said.3m-2sg.m if real be.3
    ‘If what he told you is true, …’
In this section I investigate the occurrences of Topic in the left periphery, its position with respect to the other constituents.

The previous section concluded that focus phrases must follow the complementizers. On the other hand, topics may occur in different positions.

(20)  

a. \textit{meraq a-si kitab ta le qarit-u}  
    wonder 1sg-do book if that read.2m-it  
    ‘I wonder if you read the book.’

b. \textit{meraq a-si ta le kitab qarit-u}  
    wonder 1sg-do if that book read.2m-it

c. \textit{meraq a-si ta kitab le qarit-u}  
    wonder 1sg-do if book that read.2m-it

The examples in (20) show that unlike focus, topic can precede (20)a, or follow (20)b, or come between the complementizers (20)c. They also support the view that \textit{ta} and \textit{le} occupy two distinct positions, and the former is higher than the latter.

One question that arises regarding (20)c is whether an ordering restriction exists between topic and relative \textit{wh}-pronoun, which may both precede the complementizer \textit{le}. The contrast in (21) provides a hint about the relative position of TopP with respect to the relative operator and the following \textit{le}. (21)b indicates that TopP cannot intervene between the two elements.

(21)  

a. \textit{mə-tə-gul-ni ša kemal šone le ada ali\textsuperscript{14}}  
    neg-3f-tell-me to Kemal what that gave.3m Ali  
    ‘She doesn’t tell me what Ali gave to Kemal.’

b. *\textit{mə-tə-gul-ni šone ša kemal le ada ali}  
    neg-3f-tell-me what to Kemal that gave.3m Ali

c. \textit{mə-tə-gul-ni šone le ša kemal ada ali}  
    neg-3f-tell-me what that to Kemal gave.3m Ali

On the basis of the discussion thus far, we have the following configuration.

(22) \textit{TopP >> ta >> TopP >> Rel. Op >> le >> TopP}

Before continuing with the discussion, I would like to dwell on the properties of topicalized elements in Sason Arabic. This will make the ensuing discussion more clear.

\textsuperscript{14} Note that in line with the earlier discussion, if the fronted constituent is focused, it must occur after \textit{le}, otherwise the sentence is rendered bad by the speakers.
3.4. The Nature of Topics in Sason Arabic

Sason Arabic is a VS(O)/SV(O) language both in matrix and embedded clauses with permutations to these basic orders also being allowed (Akkuş 2014, 2015, Akkuş and Benmamoun 2015).

(23) a. kemal qar-\text{-a} kitab-\text{-ad} \quad \text{SVO}
   \begin{align*}
   &\text{K read.past.3m book-pl} \\
   &\text{‘kemal read books.’}
   \end{align*}

   b. qar-\text{-a} kemal kitab-\text{-ad} \quad \text{VSO}
   \begin{align*}
   &\text{read.past.3m K book-pl}
   \end{align*}

The orders illustrated in (24) are not allowed in Sason Arabic, as in many other Arabic dialects.

(24) a. *kitab-\text{-ad} qar-\text{-a} kemal \quad \text{OVS}
   \begin{align*}
   &\text{book-pl read.past.3m K} \\
   &\text{‘Kemal read the books.’}
   \end{align*}

   b. *kitab-\text{-ad} kemal qar-\text{-a} \quad \text{OSV}
   \begin{align*}
   &\text{book-PL K read.past.3m}
   \end{align*}

   c. *kemal kitab-\text{-ad} qar-\text{-a} \quad \text{SOV}
   \begin{align*}
   &\text{K book-pl read.past-3m}
   \end{align*}

In (24)a the object precedes the V-S sequence while in (24)b it precedes the S-V sequence. In (24)c, the object occurs between the subject and the verb. All these orders are not acceptable in Moroccan Arabic (Benmamoun 2000), Lebanese Arabic (Aoun et al. 2010) and, as Mohammad (2000) shows, also in Palestinian Arabic.

However, the OVS, OSV, and SOV orders are possible if the object is resumed by a pronominal clitic/agreement inflection on the verb, a construction known as Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD). This is illustrated in (25) (see also (20)).

(25) a. kitab-\text{-ad} qar-\text{-en} kemal \quad \text{OVS}
   \begin{align*}
   &\text{book-pl read.past-3m-them K} \\
   &\text{‘The books, Kemal read them.’}
   \end{align*}

   b. kemal kitab-\text{-ad} qar-\text{-en} \quad \text{SOV}
   \begin{align*}
   &\text{K book-pl read.past-3m-them}
   \end{align*}

   c. kitab-\text{-ad} kemal qar-\text{-en} \quad \text{OSV}
   \begin{align*}
   &\text{book-pl K read.past.3m-them}
   \end{align*}

It should be noted that the OVS and SOV orders illustrated in (24) also become acceptable if the object is contrastively focused. In such contexts, the object receives focal stress and is not related to a pronominal clitic on the verb. The focused phrase \textit{KITABAD} ‘the books’ is distinguished
prosodically by bearing an extra-heavy pitch accent (indicated in small caps), which is a typical way to mark contrastive foci.

(26) a. KITAB-AD qar-a kemal OVS
   book-pl read.past-3m K
   ‘Kemal read the books.’

   b. kemal KITAB-AD qar-a SOV
      book-pl read.past-3m

It is possible to attach a phrase introduced by laa ‘not’ as a continuation to either clause in (26), thus excluding the other possible alternative that might be provided (i.e., dargiyad ‘magazines’), but it is infelicitous to attach a phrase that includes this other alternative.

(27) a. KITAB-AD qar-a kemal, dargiyad laa
       book-pl read.past-3m K magazine-pl not
       ‘Kemal read the books, not the magazines.’

   b. *KITAB-AD qar-a kemal, u dargiyad (inge)
      book-pl read.past-3m K and magazine-pl too
      ‘Kemal read the books, and the magazines as well.’

OSV order, on the other hand, is ungrammatical for some speakers when the object is focused.

(28) %KITAB-AD kemal qar-a OSV
    book-pl K read.past.3m

This shows that the grammar of speakers who find (28) ungrammatical is consistent with Shlonsky’s (2000) adjacency requirement, a constraint that states that in Arabic focus phrases need to be adjacent to the verb (see also Bakir 1980). This adjacency requirement also accounts for subject–verb inversion in Standard Arabic wh-questions under the assumption that those constructions are a subclass of focus constructions (É. Kiss 1998, 2002; Ouhalla 1994).

(29) a. kemal šine qar-a?
     K what read.past.3m
     ‘What did Kemal read?’

   b. %šine kemal qar-a?
      what K read.past.3m

The same holds for embedded clauses as well. Below is an embedded clause that shows that wh-phrase must be preceded by the subject.

(30) a. mō-re leyla wara ande miş-e
     neg-1sg.know L with whom went-3f
     ‘I don’t know with whom leyla went.’
The data suggest that for some speakers no constituent can intervene between the verb and the f-phrase or wh-phrase. I take this fact to argue that for some speakers (indicated via subscript 1), the lower TopP is not instantiated in Sason (Rizzi, 1997), which makes the fronting of a wh-phrase or an f-phrase across a CLLDed phrase impossible. However, the lower TopP is possible for other speakers (indicated via subscript 2). The order of constituents is illustrated as follows:

(31) \[ \text{TopP} \gg \text{ta} \gg \text{TopP} \gg \text{Rel. Op} \gg \text{le} \gg (\text{TopP}_1) \gg \text{Foc/Wh} \gg (\text{TopP}_2) \gg \text{FinP/TP} \]

3.5. *The distribution of focus phrases with respect to wh-elements*

The configuration in (31) makes no claim with respect to exact positions of focus phrases and wh-phrases in the structure, assuming that they most likely occupy the same position. This is in line with Rizzi’s (2001) analysis of the two constituents in Italian main clauses, where he interprets the incompatibility of focus phrases with wh-phrases in main clauses to mean that they occupy the same position, i.e. the Spec,FocP. On the other hand, Rizzi proposes the following configuration for embedded clauses.

(32) \[ \text{ForceP} \gg \text{IntP} \gg \text{TopP} \gg \text{FocP} \gg \text{WhP} \gg \text{FinP} \]

The example (32) shows that FocP and WhP occupy distinct positions in embedded clauses. This is based on the following contrast.\(^15\)

(33) a. \[ \text{Mi domando A GIANNI che cosa abbiano detto (non a Piero)} \]  
   ‘I wonder TO GIANNI what they have said (not to Piero).’  
   (Rizzi’s (14))

b. \[ *?\text{Mi domando che cosa A GIANNI abbiano detto (non a Piero)} \]  
   ‘I wonder what TO GIANNI they have said (not to Piero).’

The incompatibility of focus phrases with wh-phrases has been reported for Lebanese Arabic and Standard Arabic (Bakir 1980, Shlonsky 2000, Aoun et al. 2010)

(34) a. \[ *?\text{paynə saalim-an qaabala xaalid-un}^{16} \]  
   (Standard Arabic)
   where Salim.acc met.3m.sg xaalid.nom
   ‘Where was it Salim that Khalid met?’

b. \[ *saalim-an ?\text{paynə qaabala xaalid-un} \]
Salim-acc where met.3ms xaalid-Nom

(35)  a. *ween saalim šeefit zeina (Lebanese Arabic)
where Salim saw.3fs Zeina
‘Where was it Salim that Zeina saw?’

b. *saalim ween šeefit zeina
Salim where saw.3fs Zeina

This replicates the facts observed in Italian, hence follows from the explanation that question formation is a subclass of focalization, hence the f-phrase and wh-elements target the same position (Shlonsky 2000, Aoun et al. 2010).

Sason Arabic differs from both Lebanese Arabic and Standard Arabic in that f-phrases and wh-elements are permitted to co-occur in main clauses under certain conditions. A f-phrase cannot be preceded by a wh-phrase, but the order where the f-phrase is followed by a wh-phrase is grammatical.

(36)  a. AHMET šine qara?
A what read.3m
‘What did AHMET read?’

b. *šine AHMET qara?
what A read.3m

(37)  a. MAITEBE ičax ti-mme?
school when 2m-go
‘When will you go TO SCHOOL?’

b. *ičax MAITEBE timme?
when school 2m-go

The point of the data is that FOC and Wh are distinct heads and this is reflected in main clauses of Sason Arabic as well. Therefore, coupled with the adjacency requirement of Shlonsky (2000) which states that lower TopP is not instantiated, the configuration in Sason is as follows:17

(i)  ANDE šine qara?
who what read.3m
‘WHO read what?’

(ii) *ande šINE qara?
who what read.3m
‘Who read WHAT?’

The observations so far can be stated as follows:

(iii) *wh.....F F........wh
*wh.....WH WH.....wh

17 If there is more than one wh-phrase in a clause in Sason Arabic, the leftmost one has to bear stress.
(37)  TopP >> ta >> TopP >> Rel. Op >> le >> (TopP₁) >> Foc >> Wh >> (TopP₂) >> FinP/TP

4. Left Periphery of Sason in a Comparative Context

In this section I will compare the configuration in (37) with the analysis proposed for other Arabic dialects. Let us first look at Shlonsky’s (2000) proposal of the complementizer layer in Standard Arabic.

4.1. CP layer in Standard Arabic

In his discussion of the Standard Arabic complementizer ʾanna, Shlonsky (2000: 332) says that ʾanna is associated with indicative mood and finite tense. It cannot be followed by a verb, is typically followed by a DP and this DP manifests accusative case.

Moreover, he shows that the unmarked constituent word order in Standard Arabic, VSO, is impossible in embedded finite clauses, as the contrast in (38) shows.

(38)  a.  kataba ʾal-walad-u ʾal-risaalat-a.  
    wrote  the-boy-nom the-letter-acc
    ‘The boy wrote the letter.’

    (I) claimed that wrote the-boy-nom the-letter-acc
    ‘I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.’

     c.  zaʾamtu ʾanna ʾal-walad-a kataba ʾal-risaalat-a  
    (I) claimed that the-boy-acc wrote the-letter-acc
    ‘I claimed that the boy wrote the letter.’

Shlonsky notes that the morpheme he labels as the accusative case in (38)c, which is associated with the embedded subject resembles the ECM, but argues that it is different from the ECM.18

The fact that a pair-list reading is required shows that multiple constituents are being interrogated, and that it is not an echo-question.

The same pattern of stress also extends to inherently focused NPs, such as only-phrases (E. Kiss 1998), which carry an inherent [+foc] feature.

(iv)  [BINTTEYN WATU] [sade kitab-ma] qaro  
    two girls only only book-a read.3pl
    ‘Only two girls read just two books’

(v)  *[bintteyn watu] [SADE KITABMA] qaro  
    *f......F

I will not try to account for the cooccurrence of multiple wh-phrases in the left periphery in this paper. I should however note that the same observations are made for Turkish in Göksel and Özsoy (2000), which is a wh-in situ language.

18 See Shlonsky (2000:332-333) for several arguments.
He posits that the post-`anna DP to be endowed with a morphological feature, [+F], a nominal feature, which happens to have the same phonetic realization as accusative Case. Crucially, [+F] is not the same formal feature as [ACC].

One supporting piece of evidence for the different nature of the morpheme comes from (39) where it attaches to the CLLDed object. Crucially, the first of the two topics manifests the accusative case, namely [+F], while the second shows up with the nominative case, the case manifested by topics (cf. fn 16).

(39) za`amtu ?anna `al-risaalat-a `al-walad-u kataba-ha
(I claimed that-letter-[+F] the-boy-nom wrote-3f.sg
‘I claimed that the letter, the boy wrote it.’

Shlonsky (2000:333) also shows that `anna is not uniquely associated with topics, as in (38)c, but there are some non-topic constituents that satisfy the requirement of `anna - by checking [+F] - and trigger and agreement suffix on `anna, e.g. in a non-referential null subject (of an impersonal passive).

(40) za`amtu `anna-hu niima fi `al-sariir-i. (Shlonsky’s (13b))
(I claimed that-3m.sg slept in the-bed-gen
‘I claimed that it was slept in the bed.’

Along with non-referential null subjects, referential null subjects and wh-traces also satisfy `anna. All three elements are phonetically unexpressed and all three trigger an agreement suffix on `anna. Following Roberts and Shlonsky (1996) and Shlonsky (1997), he argues that this agreement suffix -hu is not a `clitic’ in the sense of a Romance-like reduced pronoun, but the head of an agreement projection, dominating `anna. Indeed, such enclitic particles are found on all major heads in Semitic, verbs, nouns, prepositions and complementizers, as illustrated in (41).

(41) a. qaabal-tu -hu meet.pfv-1sg [3m.sg]
‘I met him.’

b. bayt-u -hu house-nom [3m.sg]
‘his house’

c. qabla -hu before [3m.sg]
‘before him’

d. `anna -hu that [3m.sg]
‘that him’

19 Without going into details of the relevant derivation, in cases where `anna is satisfied by a topic, i.e. by an element in Spec,TopP, as in (38)c and (39), Shlonsky (2000: 335) suggests that `anna is raised and incorporated to Top’ and [+F] is checked in TopP.
The idea is that the suffixes in (41) head agreement projections to which the substantive head, ˀanna in this case, raises and (left)-joins. The Comp layer of the examples in (41) should therefore be taken to contain an AgrP above XP into which X˚ raises.

Finally, through a comparison with the other complementizer ˀinna, which is assertive or affirming, while ˀanna is neutral, Shlonsky concludes that these complementizers must be endowed with a force specification, i.e. contain Force˚ features. Therefore, syntactically this has the consequence of requiring them to raise to Force˚.

Based on the points presented here (and some other arguments), Shlonsky (p. 341) arrives at the following configuration for Standard Arabic.

\[ \text{ForceP} > \text{TopicP} > \text{AgrXP} > \text{XP} > \text{TopicP*} > \text{FocusP} \ldots \]

What is crucial for the present discussion is the restriction that the complementizer ˀanna imposes on the embedded clause, i.e. the impossibility of VSO, and the presence of AgrXP in the left periphery. In the following section, I will compare these with Sason Arabic facts.

### 4.2. CP layer in Sason Arabic

Similar to Standard Arabic, enclitic particles in (41) are found on some major heads, e.g. verbs (43)a, nouns (43)b, prepositions (43)c in Sason, and for some speakers on complementizers, (43)d.

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{(43) a. } & \textit{adaš-tu-a} \\
& \text{\textit{saw-1sg-3f.sg}} \\
& \text{\textit{‘I saw her.’}} \\
\text{b. } & \textit{bēd-a} \\
& \text{\textit{house-3f.sg}} \\
& \text{\textit{‘her house’}} \\
\text{c. } & \textit{and-a} \\
& \text{\textit{with-3f.sg}} \\
& \text{\textit{‘with her’}} \\
\text{d. } & \textit{%le-na} \\
& \text{\textit{that-3f.sg}} \\
& \text{\textit{‘that her’}}
\end{align*} \]

I take this as well to mean that for some speakers Sason Arabic lacks the AgrP and XP that Shlonsky proposes for Standard Arabic, whereas it is available for others.

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20 The specifier of this agreement projection is presumably an A-position and contains an agreeing nominal expression, e.g., pro.

21 Shlonsky uses the symbol \begin{math} \mathbf{KP} \end{math} for this phrase, I will use bold XP to refer to it.

22 For Shlonsky, the TopP above AgrP is not recursive, unlike the one below which can be recursive.
5. Conclusion

This paper investigated the CP-domain in Sason Arabic. I have discussed the distribution of the two complementizers ta and le in the language. I also addressed the question of their interaction with other components of the left periphery, e.g. focus phrases, the order of le with respect to relative operator and interrogative pronoun, and proposed the following configuration (without incorporating the AgrP and XP):

(44)  TopP >> ta >> TopP >> Rel. Op >> le >> (TopP₁) >> Foc >> Wh >> (TopP₂) >> FinP/TP

References


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