

## **Clause Structure in Contact Contexts: Sason Arabic**

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Clause Structure in Contact Contexts: the Case of Sason Arabic

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In this paper, we discuss the syntax of negation in Sason Arabic which patterns with both its Arabic neighbors, particularly the so-called Mesopotamian varieties (such as the Iraqi variety/varieties of Mosul) and the neighboring languages that are typologically different, particularly Kurdish and Turkish. We provide a description of copula constructions in Sason and discuss their word order patterns and interaction with sentential negation. Depending on the nature of the predicate, Sason displays both head-initial word order, which reflects its Arabic and Semitic lineage, and head-final word order, which shows the influence of its head final neighbors and competitors for linguistic space.

**Keywords:** Sason Arabic, language contact, clause structure, copula

### **1. Introduction**

Language contact is a fact of life for many languages. The difference has more to do with the degree of contact and the impact on the languages involved in the contact situation.<sup>1</sup> The latter critically depends on the relative status and roles of the languages, the size of their speech communities, the domains of interaction between the languages, literacy and education, among many others<sup>2</sup>. The most visible effects of contact that are relatively easier to identify are borrowed words and expressions and to some extent grammatical markers that one can trace back to another language, especially if the borrowing is recent. These effects of language contact are very interesting and informative. They can tell us a great deal about the intensity of contact between the different speech communities and inform us about the history and mobility of the languages involved and their speakers. Contact linguistics can be essential to the study of history, settlement patterns, population movement, and the dynamics of that movement. The facts may not be always decisive but they sometimes can provide a crucial piece of the puzzle.

Equally important and, from a theoretical linguistic point of view even more dramatic and of great implications, are structural and syntactic effects of contact, particularly between languages that have radically different grammatical systems that govern word order and clause structure. Under contact pressures some languages adopt a different word order and clause structure. For example, Semitic languages typically display VSO and SVO orders and the consensus is that this situation has been stable for

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centuries and millennia. However, we do find head-final (OV) Semitic languages. They pattern with other Semitic languages with regard to their inflectional and derivational morphology and share a large number of roots and cognates with them, but their word order may pattern with other non-Semitic languages. For example, Akkadian (Huehnergard, 2011) and Amharic (Leslau, 1995; Hudson, 1997) can be safely characterized as Semitic languages, but they display an OV order which happens to be the order of the languages that they have or had been in contact with at some stage in their history, most likely Sumerian for Akkadian and Cushitic for Amharic. These cases seem to be instances of acquisition in bilingual contexts which in turn lead to changes in the grammatical systems. How the change at the grammatical system level actually happens depends on one's favored theory of grammar and how language variation is accounted for. Within the Principles and Parameters framework, variation has to do with choice of parameters that govern how different members of a phrase marker interact with each other and satisfy their own requirements (movement and the size of the elements involved, dependency at a distance, insertion, etc.). Regardless of what the parameters are and how they work (both far from determined in any rigorous way), the main idea is that Akkadian and Amharic adopted a Sumerian and Cushitic parametric choice respectively. In traditional terminology, Akkadian and Amharic adopted the Sumerian and Cushitic rules of word order respectively.

However, and as is well known, some languages do show their split allegiance, not only in their lexicon and morphology, but also in their syntax. For example, Amharic displays mostly head-final syntax, but one

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can find head-initial syntax in some of its nominal compounds (Leslau, 1995). English is no longer a verb-second language (like most of its Germanic relatives), but it still has small pockets that hint to that past in its interrogative, conditional, and negative contexts. One could reasonably claim that these are small pockets of the grammar that do not reflect global properties of the system that can be acquired through general rules or parameters; rather, they are linguistic fossils that have resisted change and will eventually have to yield to change. The linguistic “fossils” would then not play a major role in bootstrapping language acquisition and setting parameters (for overall clause structure and word order). The debate is potentially critical for the notion of parameters and also constructions and the relations between them and their acquisition and generalization across patterns. The syntactic effects of contact can play an important role in this debate which hopefully will be enhanced by more studies of the syntax of languages in contact, many of which are unfortunately under stress if not outright threat of extinction.

In this paper, we discuss the syntax of negation in Sason Arabic, henceforth SA, which patterns with both its Arabic neighbors, particularly the so-called Mesopotamian varieties (such as the Iraqi variety/varieties of Mosul) and the neighboring languages that are typologically different, particularly Kurdish and Turkish. The syntax of SA is relevant to the theoretical issues mentioned above because it displays head-initial order, which reflects its Arabic and Semitic lineage, and head-final order, which shows the influence of its head final neighbors and competitors for linguistic space. The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we

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provide a brief overview of SA, including its phonemic inventory, inflectional morphology, and syntax. In section 3, we introduce the copular constructions and paradigms in SA. In section 4, we discuss the different word order patterns that obtain in copular constructions, including negative sentences, and advance a tentative analysis for the different word orders based on the contact situation that SA has been in for centuries.

### **2. Sason Arabic**

SA is one of the many Arabic varieties spoken in Anatolia, modern day Turkey. Jastrow (1978, 2005a, 2006) classifies SA as a member of the Kozluk-Sason-Muş group, as a sub-branch of Mesopotamian Arabic varieties.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 is a map taken from Jastrow (2006); it marks the area where SA is spoken.

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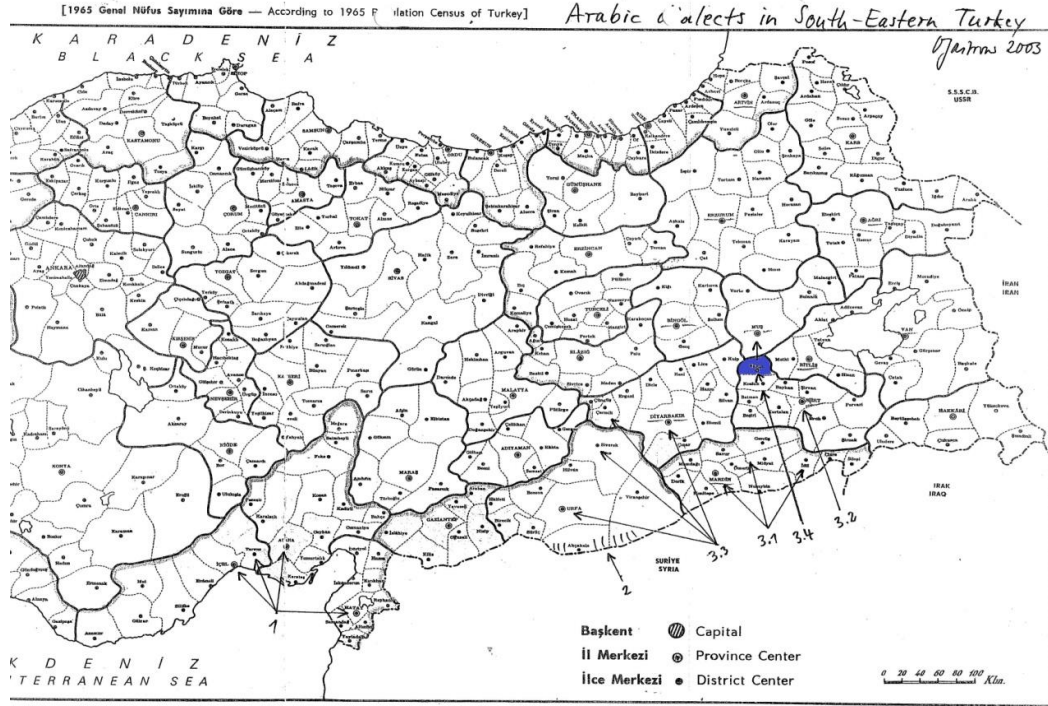


Figure 1: Sason Arabic and other Anatolian Arabic dialects

Anatolian *qəltu*-dialects are conventionally divided into four groups (Jastrow, 2006)<sup>4</sup>:

- (1) a. Mardin group
- b. Siirt group
- c. Diyarbakır group
- d. Kozluk-Sason-Muş group

SA, in Jastrow's (2011) terms, is one of the Arabic *Sprachinseln* 'language islands'. These are isolated pockets of spoken Arabic in non-Arab countries, Turkey in this case.<sup>5</sup> Since it is an Arabic dialect spoken in a non-Arabic country, it is also one of the so-called *peripheral* Arabic

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dialects. The exact number of SA speakers has not been reliably determined, but our rough estimate is that the number is around 2,000 speakers based on the population of villages where this dialect is spoken (including the minor intra-dialectal varieties). The Kozluk-Sason-Muş group comprises dialects that were spoken mostly by Christians, but today these dialects are predominantly spoken by Muslim villagers.<sup>6</sup>

The absence of official literacy in Arabic, and hence the absence of diglossia,<sup>7</sup> and the strong influence from the surrounding languages, such as Turkish (the official language of Turkey), Kurdish and Zazaki (Indo-Iranian), and Armenian (spoken by SA speakers of Armenian origin) are the two primary factors that have shaped SA linguistically and sociologically. It is significant to note that SA speakers are usually multilingual, speaking some of the aforementioned languages.

### *Brief Overview of the Phonology and Morphology of SA*

Although a Semitic language, SA exhibits certain patterns whose presence can be best attributed to its contact with non-Semitic languages. Among these patterns are the weakening of the extent and the role of the templatic root and pattern morphology that characterizes Semitic languages, the use of periphrastic causative constructions in addition to or instead of gemination or the “ablaut” causative, and the development of some head-final word order patterns. Like other spoken Arabic dialects, SA lacks case morphology but has rich agreement morphology.<sup>8</sup>

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**Table 1.** Consonant Inventory of SA

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
<b>plosive</b>	p b			t d		c g	k q		
<b>fricative</b>		f v	ð	s z	ʃ ʒ		x ɣ		h
<b>affricate</b>					tʃ dʒ				
<b>nasal</b>	m			n					
<b>approximant</b>	w					j			
<b>liquid</b>				l			ɭ		
<b>trill</b>				r					

(1) bilabial, (2) labiodental, (3) interdental, (4) alveolar, (5) post-alveolar, (6) palatal, (7) velar, (8) uvular, (9) glottal

A number of new phonemes have been introduced into SA via loanwords from Turkish, Armenian, Kurdish and Zazaki, as in other Arabic *qəltu*-dialects; these include the voiceless bilabial stop /p/, the voiceless affricate /č/, /v/, and /ʃ/ (Prochazka, 2013). For example, SA *čāx* ‘time, moment’ corresponds to Kurdish *čāx*. Moreover, the interdental fricatives have been shifted to sibilants in SA, while they have been retained in some other Anatolian dialects, such as the Mardin group dialects (Jastrow, 2005a). In Tillo dialect of Siirt, on the other hand, they have been turned into labiodentals fricatives (Lahdo, 2009).

**Table 2.** Some cross-dialectal comparison

Mardin dialect	SA	Tillo dialect
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<i>ḏahab</i> ‘gold’	<i>zahab</i>	<i>vahab</i>
<i>bayḏ</i> ‘egg’	<i>be:za</i>	

SA displays properties that are found in other Arabic varieties. For instance, as in other Semitic languages and Arabic dialects (Aoun et al. 2010), verbs in SA exhibit two morphological patterns: perfective and imperfective, as Tables 3 and 4 illustrate. In the perfective, subject agreement is realized as a suffix on the verb.<sup>9</sup> In the imperfective, by contrast, the realization of agreement differs dramatically. It is realized by both prefixes and suffixes.

**Table 3.** Perfective Paradigm of the root *fqz* ‘run’

Person	Number	Gender	Affix	Verb+Affix
1	Singular	M/F	-tu	faqastu ‘I ran’
2	SG	M	-t	faqast
2	SG	F	-te	faqaste
3	SG	M	Ø	faqaz
3	SG	F	-e	faqaze
1	Plural	M/F	-na	faqazna
2	PL	M/F	-to	faqasto
3	PL	M/F	-o	faqazo

**Table 4.** Imperfective Paradigm of the root *fqz* ‘run’

Person	Number	Gender	Affix	Affix+Verb
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1	Singular	M/F	a-	afqez ‘I run’
2	SG	M	tɪ---Ø	tɪfqez
2	SG	F	tɪ---e	tɪfqize
3	SG	M	i-	ifqez
3	SG	F	tɪ---Ø	tɪfqez
1	Plural	M/F	nɪ-	nɪfqez
2	PL	M/F	tɪ---o	tɪfqizo
3	PL	M/F	i---o	ifqizo

In addition to the position of person agreement (as suffix in the perfective and as prefix in the imperfective),<sup>10</sup> the two forms differ with respect to their internal vocalic melody of the verb stem.

The personal pronouns in SA are illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Personal Pronouns in SA

Person	Gender	Pronoun
1.SG	M/F	ina
2.SG	M	int
	F	inte
3.SG	M	iyu
	F	iya
1.PL	M/F	nana
2.PL	M/F	into
3.PL	M/F	iyen

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### *Brief Overview of Key Syntactic Properties of SA*

SA is a VS(O)/SV(O) language, as (2a-d) illustrate. Permutations to these basic orders are allowed under certain pragmatic conditions.

- (2) a.     *kemal qar-a*                      *kitab-ad*                      SVO  
         K     read.past-3.M.SG     book-PL  
         ‘Kemal read books.’
- b.     *qar-a*                      *kemal kitab-ad*                      VSO  
         read.past-3.M.SG     K     book-PL  
         ‘Kemal read books.’
- c.     *misafir-ad*     *go*                                      SV  
         guest-PL     came.3.PL  
         ‘The guests came.’
- d.     *go*                      *misafir-ad*                      VS  
         came.3.PL     guest-PL  
         ‘The guests came.’

VS(O) order is used frequently in relative clauses (3a) and embedded clauses (3b).

- (3) a.     *int*     *kitab le*     *i-habb*     *cihan*     *ti-qri*  
         2.M.SG book that     3.M.SG-love Cihan     2.M.SG-read  
         ‘You read the book that Cihan likes.’

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- b.      *ma-sima-tu*                      *le*      *go*                      *zyar*  
NEG-heard-1.SG      that      came.3.PL      children  
‘I didn’t hear that the children came.’

The word order patterns we see in (3) (SV and VS) are the typical ones we see in the so-called non-peripheral dialects of Arabic, such as Moroccan, Egyptian, and the various dialects spoken in the Levant and Gulf. Like those dialects, in SA the object can precede the verb, but in this situation a resumptive clitic or agreement on the verb is obligatory.

Consider the contrast between (4a) and (4b):

- (4) a.      *Naze*                      *masag-e*                      *atsūra*  
Naze                      caught-3.F.SG                      bird  
‘Naze caught a bird/birds.’
- b.      *Naze*      *atsūra*      *masagi-du*  
Naze      bird      caught.3.F.SG-it  
‘The bird, Naze caught it.’

In (4b), the verb carries a resumptive clitic (or object agreement) because the object has been preposed. This is exactly the pattern we find in dialects such as Moroccan as illustrated in (5):

- (5) a.      *l-wəld*                      *qbəʔ*                      *t-ter*  
the-boy                      caught                      the-bird  
‘The boy caught the bird.’

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- b.      *t- ʔer*              *l-wəld*              *qəbʔt-u*  
         the-bird              the-boy              caught-it  
         ‘The boy caught the bird.’

Based on the above brief description, it seems reasonable to conclude that SA has maintained the core syntactic word order properties that we find across non-peripheral Arabic varieties that have been studied in sufficient detail. We turn next to negation where this conclusion is challenged in important ways and where the syntactic effects of contact are quite striking.

### *Negation in SA*

A cursory look at SA negative sentences with verbal predicates reveals that it patterns with other Arabic dialects. The main negative is realized as *maa* or a variant of *maa* (such as *mo/mi*) depending on tense and occurs before the verb or as a proclitic on the verb:

- (6) *maa    adaʃ-tu              tuʃi. (ma:daʃtu)*  
     NEG   saw-1.M              anything  
     ‘I didn’t see anything.’

In imperative sentences, the negative *laa* is used as in other Mesopotamian, Gulf, and many Levantine varieties of Arabic; e.g., (7).

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- (7) *laa tamel.*  
 NEG work.2.M.SG  
 ‘Don’t work.’

The full paradigm of negation in sentences with verbal predicates is given in Table 6, and its distribution according to tense is given in Table 7.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 6.** SA Negative Markers

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Negative Particle</b>
<b>Present/Future (non-past)</b>	mo-/mī-/mi-
<b>Past</b>	maa
<b>Imperative</b>	laa

**Table 7.** Distribution of Negation in SA

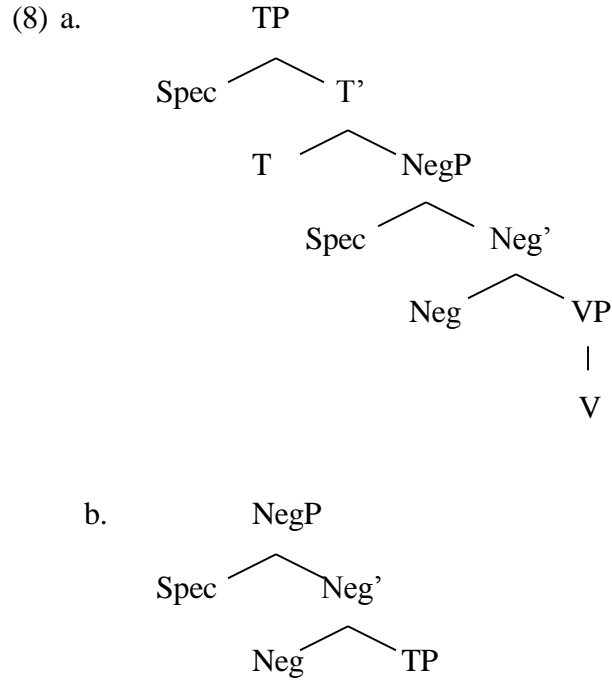
	<b>Present/Future</b>	<b>Past</b>
<b>ina (1.SG)</b>	moççi “I don’t/won’t come”	ma-citu “I didn’t come”
<b>int (2.M.SG)</b>	mıtçı	ma-cit
<b>inte (2.F.SG)</b>	mıtçe	ma-cite
<b>iyu (3.M.SG)</b>	mi:çi	ma-ca

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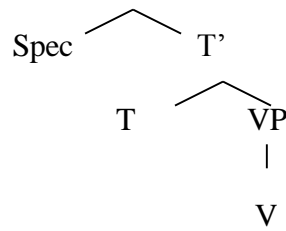
<b>iya (3.F.SG)</b>	mıtiçi	ma-catte
<b>nana (1.PL)</b>	miniçi	ma-cinna
<b>into (2.PL)</b>	mıtiço	ma-cito
<b>iyen (3.PL)</b>	mi:ço	ma-co

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The syntax of negation in Arabic varieties, including Standard Arabic, is a lively topic of debate that has yielded a wealth of descriptive data on different varieties, as well as competing analyses. One major issue concerns the position of negation in clause structure and whether it is lower than tense (Benmamoun, 1992, 2000) or higher (Fassi Fehri, 1993; Shlonsky, 1997; Soltan, 2007; Benmamoun et al., 2014; among others). The two competing configurations are given in (8a) and (8b):



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Benmamoun et al. (2014) provide an overview of the debate about the position of sentential negation in the Arabic syntactic configuration and add new evidence to support the configuration in (8b) where negation is higher than tense. One main argument, original to Soltan (2007), involves the distribution of the future marker relative to negation in Egyptian Arabic. As Soltan (2007) convincingly argues, in Egyptian Arabic the future marker follows the negative marker as the following sentence from Benmamoun et al. (2014) clearly shows:

- (9) *miš ha-yiskut-u ʕala kida ʔabadan*  
 NEG FUT-silent-3.PL on this ever  
 ‘They will never remain silent about it.’

SA provides additional evidence for this analysis. Consider the sentences in (10a) and (10b) (Akkus, 2013, 2014).

- (10) a. *mi-k ya-yel laham.*  
 NEG-PAST 3.M.SG-eat meat  
 ‘He wasn’t eating meat./He didn’t use to eat meat.’  
 b. *mi ki-ya-yel laham.*



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NEG PAST-3.M.SG-eat meat

‘He wasn’t eating meat./He didn’t use to eat meat.’

In (10a) the past tense marker is an enclitic on the negative marker. Evidence that the tense marker merges with NEG and against the argument that NEG has raised to tense may be found in (10b) where the past tense marker is a proclitic on the verb while the NEG precedes the verbal morphological complex. Thus, the syntax of negation with verbal predicates in SA seems to pattern with the syntax of negation in other varieties of Arabic. As we will discuss below, negation in the head-final languages in contact with SA is lower than tense, so the facts we see in (10) are not due to contact with those languages. Though SA has evolved a past tense marker that is not found in other dialects of Arabic, its syntax of negation in verbal predicates seems to have remained intact. However, the latter conclusion cannot be made about negation in copular constructions, as we discuss next.

### 3. Copular Constructions in SA

We saw above that the syntax of verbal predicates in SA, particularly in the context of sentential negation, is similar to the syntax of their counterparts in other Arabic dialects. However, in copula constructions we get clear differences between them. In other Arabic dialects (so-called non-peripheral dialects, such as Egyptian and Moroccan Arabic), there is

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no copula in non-generic present tense sentences (Benmamoun, 2000; Aoun et al., 2010). However, in SA a copula is possible as illustrated in the sentences in (11a, b):

- (11) a.    *sabi*    *raxu*    \*(*ye*)  
              boy    sick    COP.3.SG  
              ‘The boy is sick.’
- b.    *raxu*    *kintu*  
              sick    1.SG.PRES  
              ‘I am sick.’

As shown in (11) the copula markers *ye* and *kintu* are obligatory in this context. Moreover, the copula is found in both matrix and embedded contexts as in (12):

- (12) *mo-saddex*            *le*    *Naze*    *baş-e/cuan-e*            *ye*  
              NEG-1.SG.believe that    Naze    good-F/hungry-F    COP  
              ‘I don’t believe that Naze is good/hungry.’

The full paradigms of the copula found in the present and past tenses are given in tables 8 and 9 respectively.

**Table 8.** Present Tense Copula

Person	Number	Gender	Auxiliary
1	Singular	M/F	<i>kintu</i> ‘I am’

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2	SG	M	kınt
2	SG	F	kınte
3	SG	M	ye
3	SG	F	ye
1	Plural	M/F	kınna
2	PL	M/F	kınto
3	PL	M/F	nen

**Table 9.** Past Tense Copula

Person	Number	Gender	Auxiliary
1	Singular	M/F	kıntu ‘I was’
2	SG	M	kınt
2	SG	F	kınte
3	SG	M	kan
3	SG	F	kane
1	Plural	M/F	kınna
2	PL	M/F	kınto
3	PL	M/F	kano

Other than the third person, the two paradigms are identical (in the first and second person). The most plausible analysis, to us at least, regarding the evolution of the present tense copula is that because of the absence of a present tense copula in Arabic and due to contact with

languages that have a copula in the present tense, SA evolved one by repurposing the past tense paradigm, particularly the first and second person forms, of the copula for the present tense.<sup>12</sup> For the third person, SA opted for the third person pronoun which is used for the same purpose in Arabic varieties under highly restricted conditions.

### 4. Word Order and Copular Constructions

Unlike the copula in other Arabic varieties where it precedes the non-verbal predicate in past tense sentences, the copula in SA follows the predicates in both present and past tense sentences as shown in (11a) and (11b). However, as (13) illustrates, the copula may not precede a non-verbal predicate unless the subject is focused.

- (13) \**sabi*      *ye*      *raxu* (Ok if the subject is focused).  
     boy      COP.3.SG      sick

Putting aside the important topic about the evolution and distribution of the copula in SA, let us focus on the most intriguing feature of copular constructions that is relevant to the present paper, namely, its interaction with negation. Consider the sentences in (14).

- (14) a.    *ali*    *bad*      *nihane*      *muu*  
         Ali    not.yet      here      NEG.3.M.SG

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‘Ali is not here yet.’

- b. *bint beyt mey*  
girl house NEG.3.F.SG  
‘The girl is not in the house.’

In (14a) and (14b), the copula+NEG complex follows the predicate *nihane* ‘here’ and *beyt* ‘house’ respectively. Table 10 from Akkus (2014) provides the full paradigm of the copula+NEG complex, along with its positive counterpart.<sup>13</sup>

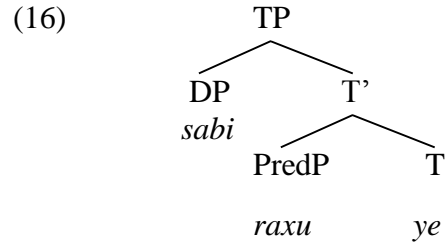
**Table 10.** NEG + Copula in SA

Pronoun	Positive (Pred+Cop)	Negative (Pred+Neg+Cop)
3.M.SG	<i>ye</i>	<i>muu/mou</i>
3.F.SG	<i>ye</i>	<i>mii/mey</i>
3.PL	<i>nen</i>	<i>mennen</i>

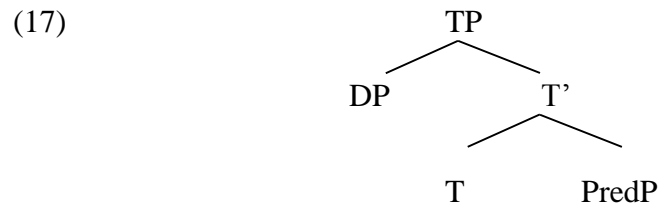
Relative to the non-verbal predicate, negation and the copula display a head-final order rather than the head-initial order typical of other non-peripheral Arabic varieties. Let us start with copular constructions without negation. For a sentence like (15), we will simply assume the structure is head final with the copula generated in T as in (16).<sup>14</sup>

- (15) *sabi raxu \*(ye).*  
boy sick COP.3.M.SG  
‘The boy is sick.’

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In non-peripheral varieties of Arabic, such as Egyptian and Moroccan, copular constructions have a head initial structure as in (20).



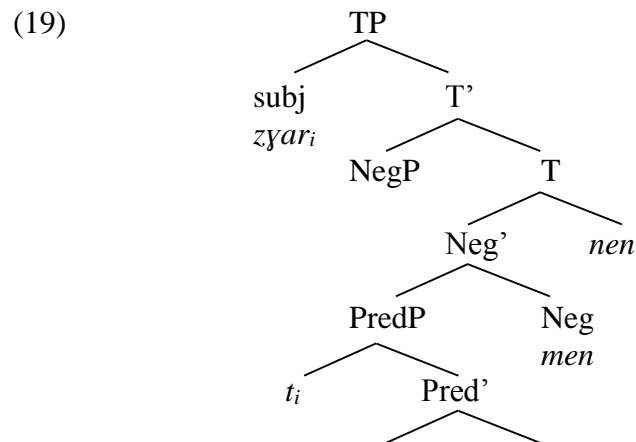
Thus, the main contrast between SA and Moroccan Arabic or Standard Arabic, for example, is the order of T relative to the predicate in copular constructions. SA developed an overt copula in the present tense under contact with languages that have such a copula. It also adopted the head final structure from those languages for all copular constructions. If our analysis is correct, this is one case where we have one pocket of the syntax of SA that deviates from the parameters or word order rules present in its sentences with verbal predicates and in other Arabic varieties. Though SA still displays head initial syntax in non-copular constructions, it is most likely that the pressure to syntactically project a present tense copula opened the door for it to change its word order and adopt the head final order even for past tense copular constructions. However, it seems to us

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that this is not the only change in the syntax of SA that copula constructions triggered. The configurational properties of negation also changed. Recall that in non-peripheral Arabic varieties, negation is located higher than tense. SA sentences with verbal predicates (13) also point in the same direction. However, in copular constructions we find negation merging with the copula with the latter as an enclitic. For example, in the sentence in (21), the negative+copula complex is made up of the negative *men* which carries plural agreement and the copula *nen*.

- (18) *zyar raxuin men-nen*  
 children sick-PL NEG-COP.3.PL.PRES  
 ‘The children are not sick.’

If the copula is in T and head final, as we believe the facts indicate, negation in (21), which is linearly sequenced between the predicate and the copula, seems to be in a position lower than tense but higher than the predicate. We, thus, propose the structure in (22) for the sentence in (21)<sup>15</sup>:



Pred

*raxuın*

The phrase marker and constituent hierarchy in (22) are radically different from those we find in Arabic dialects such as Egyptian and Moroccan.<sup>16, 17</sup> Not only is there an overt copula that is head final, but negation itself is in a different position relative to tense; it is lower than tense. If our analysis is correct then negation as a member of the SA syntactic configuration is ordered differently in sentences with verbal predicates and sentences without verbal predicates (copular constructions). In the former, it is higher than tense and it is head initial relative to the predicate. In the latter, it is lower than tense and it is head final relative to the predicate. We believe that contact with neighboring languages that have for centuries been competing with SA for linguistic space are the trigger of this significant change.

SA is in contact with Aramaic/Turoyo, Turkish, Kurdish, and Zazaki. Kurdish, Turkish, and Turoyo have an overt copula that follows the predicate as shown in examples in (20) from Grigore (2007).<sup>18</sup>

- (20) a. *Bave minşivan-e* (Kurdish)  
b. *Babam çoban-dır* (Turkish)  
c. *Babi rəfyo-yo* (Turoyo)  
‘My father is a herder’



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In negative sentences, NEG (and the copula if there is one) follows the predicate, as the sentences in (21) show.

- (21) a. *Hasta değıl-ler* (Turkish)  
sick NEG-COP.3.PL  
'They are not sick'
- b. *Kemal xwandekar nin-a* (Kurdish)  
Kemal student NEG-3.SG
- c. *Cinya niwaş ni-yo* (Zazaki)  
child sick NEG-3.SG

The head-final order in (21) is similar to the order we saw above in SA. The similarities are so striking and so different from what we find in other Arabic varieties that contact seems to be the most plausible reason for this syntactic feature in SA. The difficult question, however, is which contact language is the main trigger for this change in the syntax of SA. Our educated guess based on the sociolinguistic situation in the area is that Kurdish is the language with the most influence on SA, though Turkish has been steadily gaining ground. Turoyo may also have played a role in the development of the copula in Sason, but the head-final order is most likely due to contact with Kurdish. It is also entirely plausible that SA developed a copula due to contact with Turoyo and subsequently adopted the head-final order with regard to negation due to contact with Kurdish, Turkish, or Zazaki. We hasten to add that these are only tentative

explanations and hopefully more in-depth studies of the contact situation in the area would help shed light on how SA has come to adopt syntactic properties that deviate clearly from its Arabic and Semitic heritage.

### 5. Conclusion

SA, an endangered Arabic variety still spoken in South Eastern Turkey, displays both head-initial and head-final syntax. In sentences with verbal predicates, it mostly patterns with relatively well studied Arabic dialects, such as Egyptian Arabic and Moroccan Arabic. Negation seems to be located in a position higher than tense and it precedes the verbal predicate. However, in sentences with copula constructions with non-verbal predicates, SA displays head-final syntax. The copula follows the predicate and so does negation which is located below tense. The head final syntax of negative copular constructions is most likely due to contact with the head-final languages that SA has been in contact with. The result is a situation where the language seems to straddle two word order camps which in turn raises questions about how the situation has come about and its implication for how syntactic variation is to be accounted for syntactically and psycholinguistically. We have here a case of variation within a language which is by no means atypical but nevertheless challenges simple notions of how variation needs to be accounted for. We plan to take these issues up in more detail in future research.

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Most studies of change in Arabic varieties in contact situations have not devoted as much attention to syntax (Ratcliffe, 2005). We hope to have shown that analyses of syntactic constructions in contact contexts can provide important insight into the nature of the contact and its history. The topic has not received as much attention in Arabic dialectology but it has the potential to advance that field and theoretical syntax as well.

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<sup>1</sup> This is certainly the case with Arabic varieties including Classical Arabic, which, as Versteegh (2010, 2014) points out, have always been in contact with other languages and have influenced them and have been influenced by them.

<sup>2</sup> See Thomason (2001) for descriptions and analyses of the different contact situations, their social dimensions and implications, and linguistic outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> By *Sason Arabic*, we refer to the dialect spoken in the villages of Purşeng, Batman and Kuzzi, Bitlis. This dialect is different from the one documented by Isaksson (2005) in the village of Xalile, for example, in terms of its verbal modifications (ibid:187), which forms the basis of our examination, among other things. The existence of such variation in such a small area is striking, but not unexpected. Jastrow (2006, 2007) points out that the Kozluk-Sason-Muş group is the least studied. It should also be noted that the degree of mutual intelligibility varies among speakers of Anatolian Arabic dialects, usually as a result of geography, leading to complete unintelligibility in many cases.

<sup>4</sup> This classification relies on Blanc's (1964) seminal book *Communal Dialects in Baghdad*. This work is an investigation of Arabic spoken in three religious communities, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian, who spoke different dialects despite living in the same town. Based on the word *qultu* 'I said' in Classical Arabic, Blanc referred to the Jewish and Christian dialects as *qəltu* dialects and the Muslim dialect as *gilit* dialect.

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<sup>5</sup> See Jastrow (2005b) for a brief description of the properties of Uzbekistan Arabic, another peripheral dialect that he argues has evolved into a distinct language, like Maltese.

<sup>6</sup> The reader is referred to Jastrow (2005a, 2006), Talay (2001, 2002), Lahdo (2009) for more social and historical background on the Kozluk-Sason-Muş dialects, along with other Anatolian Arabic dialects.

<sup>7</sup> Diglossia refers to a linguistic situation where two linguistic varieties, called High and Low, are used. The two varieties are, to some extent, in complementary distribution, although there is often significant overlap and code-switching.

<sup>8</sup> See Akkuş (2013) for an argument that with regard to the marking of (in)definiteness, SA exhibits the pattern found in Iranian and Turkic languages, as in (i), in that the definite NP is unmarked, while the indefinite NP is marked by the enclitic *ma* ‘a, some’. This item most likely harks back to Classical Arabic *maa*, e.g. *baytun* ‘a house’, *baytun maa* ‘some house’. Note that in Arabic varieties, the opposite pattern is observed, such that the indefinite NP is unmarked, while the definite NP is marked by the article *al-*, *əl-*, *il-*, as illustrated in (ii).

- |      |    |                 |    |                   |                   |
|------|----|-----------------|----|-------------------|-------------------|
| (i)  | a. | <i>bağle</i>    | b. | <i>bağle-ma</i>   | (Sason Arabic)    |
|      |    | ‘mule’          |    | ‘a mule’          |                   |
| (ii) | a. | <i>ʔasʕiide</i> | b. | <i>l-ʔasʕiide</i> | (Lebanese Arabic) |
|      |    | ‘a poem’        |    | ‘the poem’        |                   |

<sup>9</sup> Brustad (2000) substitutes *perfective* and *imperfective* for the traditional terms *perfect* and *imperfect*, arguing that the latter refer to an aspect, arguably, expressed by the participle.



<sup>10</sup> The only exception to the generalization that person is expressed as a prefix is the second person feminine where gender is expressed as a suffix.

<sup>11</sup> Note that in existential and possessive constructions, the existential particle *ifi* ‘there’ is used in both. This is different from what we find in many (non-peripheral) Arabic dialects (Choueiri, 2014). SA displays the following negative particles in present and past existential construction (*cf.* Table 6).

(i)	Neg	Existential	
	<i>maa-</i>	<i>fi</i>	‘There is not’
	<i>mi-</i>	<i>kə-fi</i>	‘There was not’

As seen in (i), in the present tense the form *ma* is used while in the past tense *mi* is preferred. This is the reverse of the pattern illustrated in Table 6. Another interesting property is that in possessives, the existential particle is combined with the dative clitic.

(ii)	<i>ifi-nni</i>	<i>kəlp-ma</i>	‘I have a dog’
	there-me	dog-a	
	<i>ifi-lley</i>		‘you (m.) have’
	<i>ifi-kki</i>		‘you (f.) have’
	<i>ifi-llu</i>		‘he has’
	<i>ifi-lla</i>		‘she has’
	<i>ifi-nna</i>		‘we have’
	<i>ifi-kken</i>		‘you (pl) have’
	<i>ifi-llen</i>		‘they have’

<sup>12</sup> Note that the negative morpheme in the present tense copula of the first and second person forms is *ma-*, which is the negative particle used with past tense verbs and copulas. We take this as evidence for our claim that the past tense has been repurposed for the present tense. Speakers use temporal adverbs to distinguish between the present and past use of the copula. For the third person forms, see Table 10.

<sup>13</sup> Note that agreement is only present in the negative paradigm.

<sup>14</sup> It is not critical for the present purposes whether the copula is generated in T or lower.

<sup>15</sup> We are agnostic as to whether the morphological complex containing negation and the copula is due to syntactic head movement of negation to tense or cliticization, under adjacency, in the morpho-phonological component. Cliticization seems to be more plausible mainly because we cannot think of a principled syntactic reason for negation to move to T.

<sup>16</sup> Note that we are assuming the subject to be located in Spec, PredP or lower and to subsequently raise to Spec, TP. The scope properties of the subject seem to favor this approach:

- |     |                           |             |               |                |                             |
|-----|---------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| (i) | <i>kul</i>                | <i>zyer</i> | <i>nihane</i> | <i>muu</i>     | (Akkus, 2014)               |
|     | every                     | child       | here          | NEG.COP.3.M.SG |                             |
|     | 'Every child isn't here.' |             |               |                | neg >> every; *every >> neg |

<sup>17</sup> An anonymous reviewer points out that our structure makes it look like the predicate and the negation form a constituent. However, as we mention in footnote 14, we assume that negation and the copula form a morphological unit, which is what the reviewer suggests. See also Kelepir (2001) for a similar configuration for nominal sentences in

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Turkish. Moreover, in the languages that Sason is in contact with no constituent intervenes between the predicate, negation, and the copula:

- (i) a.    *\*hasta*    *çocuk-lar*    *değil-ler*    (Turkish)  
         sick           child-PL    NEG-COP.3.PL  
         ‘They are not sick’
- b.    *\*xwandekar* *Kemal* *nin-a*    (Kurdish)  
         student    K    NEG-3.SG
- c.    *\*niwaş* *cinya*    *ni-yo*    (Zazaki)  
         sick    child    NEG-3.SG

<sup>18</sup> Turoyo is a Semitic (Neo-Aramaic) language that displays head-initial word order but does have an enclitic copula.