Syntax of the Palestinian Arabic negation-associated exclusive construction

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This paper presents an analysis of a Palestinian Arabic negation-associated exclusive construction featuring the contrastive focus marker *illa* 'but', with theoretical implications for the syntax of negation, negative polarity item licensing, and the categorical status of the root in sentential syntax. It analyzes *illa*-phrases as constituents licensed by a c-commanding sentential negation (Neg), and *illa* as a grammatical device encoding contrastiveness. A crucial source for the exclusive semantics of the construction comes from a silent *bass* 'only' immediately following *illa* that constitutes a syntactic 'shield' against Neg scope. Rather than taking an *in-situ* focus-interpretation approach (cf. Rooth 1985, 1992), we argue for two covert movements at the syntax-semantics interface: quantifier raising of *illa*-phrases to the designated specifier of polarity Phrase followed by Polarity-to-Focus-raising of Neg. This creates the right syntactic configuration for the truth conditional import of both operators and captures the 'classical' thought that focus-sensitive exclusive operators like *only* quantify over propositional alternatives.

Keywords: negation, exclusive operator, focus, covert movement, nominal root

1. Introduction

Linguists in the formal semantics and generative grammar traditions have been accustomed to bringing cross-linguistic data to support their linguistic analysis of some construction under the assumption that the manifestation of cross-linguistic variation is 'minimal' on the surface and variation is (almost) non-existent at logical form (LF). To capture the proper semantics of the *sufficiency modality* construction (SMC), exemplified in (1), von Fintel & Iatridou (2007: 445–446), for example, argue that in both *only*-languages and NEG + EXCEPTIVE languages should have the same LF. Therefore, they propose to decompose the English

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exclusive focus-sensitive operator *only* into a NEG component and an EXCEPTIVE component, assigning NEG and the exclusive *other than* differential scope, on a par with the French analytic counterpart *ne…que* and the Greek counterpart *dhen…para* 'NEG…EXCEPT', as exemplified in (2) and (3), respectively.

(1) To get good cheese, you only have to go to the North End!

(2) Si tu veux du bon fromage,
If you want of-the good cheese
tu n'as qu' à aller au North End
you NE-have- QUE-to go to-the N.E
'If you want good cheese, you only have to go to the North End.'

(3) An thelis kalo tiri,
If want.2SG good cheese
dhen echis para na pas sto North End
NEG have.2SG EXCEPT NA go.2SG to.the North End
'If you want good cheese, you only have to go the North End.'

Although von Fintel & Iatridou (2007: 453) model the decomposition-analysis of English *only* according to French and Greek, they ignore the semantic or syntactic contribution of *mono* in addition to the exceptive marker *para* 'EXCEPT' in (4). If *only* consists of NEG and EXCEPT components at LF, one wonders what role *mono* has in (4). Obviously, it cannot be analyzed as a lexical item with zero semantics or no syntactic role whatsoever.

(4) a. Dhen idha para **mono** ton Yanis
NEG I.saw EXCEPT only the Yanis
'I didn't see anyone except Yanis.'

Moreover, we encounter *bass* 'only' in the SMC counterpart of (1) *overtly*, as illustrated in (5), thus deviating from the almost 'perfect' correspondence between the English-type languages and the French-type languages expressing the SMC meaning.

(5) a. *iða* (*inti*) *b-add-ak* *jibni* *mliiḥa*,
if (you) non-PST-like-2MSG cheese good
maa *ʔil-ak* ***illa*** (***bass***) *t-ruḥ* *ʕa-l* *North End*
NEG to-2MSG ILLA (only) 2MSG-go-SUBJ to-the NE
'If you want good cheese, you only$_F$ have to go to the North End$_F$.'

Without delving into the disambiguation of the semantic contribution of the additional exclusive *bass* 'only' in (5a) at this stage, we maintain that von Fintel & Iatridou's (2007) modeling of English *only* in the SMC according to the analytic

NE…QUE exceptive construction is inadequate, since the nature of interaction between the two operators NEG and EXCEPT, the lexical idiosyncratic properties of each, the prosody of the *neg…Que* exceptive construction, and the possible presence of silent *only* in the construction are decisive factors in disclosing the true nature of so-called NEG+ EXCEPT languages, as the facts of Palestinian Arabic will demonstrate.

Palestinian Arabic (PA) employs both the synthetic and analytic form to convey exclusivity or *only*-sentence reading, as shown respectively in (6). The exclusive *bass* 'only' in (6a) is a Persian loanword,[1] whereas the PA particle *illa* is a simplified form of the MSA exceptive/exclusive marker *ʔillaa*, which is derived from the adjacency of the conditional complementizer *ʔin* 'if' and the unmarked negative morpheme *laa* 'not'; backward assimilation is responsible for the reduplication of the consonant /l/ in the amalgam *ʔinlaa*.[2] The sentential Neg *maa* 'not' in (6b) is a *focused* free atom and hence contrasts with the weak negative clitic *ma-* that requires *strengthening* by the clitic *-š* in negative past tense sentences to express sentential Neg.[3]

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1. I thank reviewer #2 for pointing out to me that *bass* 'only' is a Persian loanword (cf. Prokosch 1983: 51–52).

2. The 'if-&-not' ingredients of *illa* are implicitly revealed in the following dialogue:

(i) a. *miin kasar š-šubbaak*
who break-PST-3MSG the-window
'Who broke the window?'

b. *miš ana*
NEG I
'Not me.'

c. ***illa*** *miin lakaan*
if-not who then
'If ~~you did~~ **not** ~~break the window~~, who then ~~broke it~~?'

3. One conclusive argument for the claim that the clitic *-š* cannot express sentential Neg alone comes from the ungrammaticality of (ib), in contrast to the grammaticality of (ia), where *ma-* or *maa* is sufficient to express sentential Neg.

(i) a. *laazim zeenab* ***maa*** *ti-iji/* ***ma****-ti-jii-š* *ʕal- ḥafli*
must Zenab NEG 3FSG-come-SUBJ/ NEG-3FSG-come-SUBJ-NEG to-the party
'Zenab must not come to the party.'

b. * *laazim zeenab ti-ji-i š* *ʕal- ḥafli*
must Zenab 3FSG-come-SUBJ-NEG to-the party
'Zenab must not come to the party.'

(6) a. *zeenab **bass** baas-at rašiid*
Zenab only kiss-PST-3FSG Rashid
'Zenab only kissed Rashid.'
b. *zeenab **maa** baas-at/ **ma**-bas-at-**iš** **illa** rašiid*
Zenab NEG kiss-PST-3FSG/ NEG-kiss-PST-3FSG-NEG ILLA Rashid
'Zenab didn't kiss but Rashid.'

The main objective of this paper is to present a novel analysis of the NAEC featuring the contrastive marker *illa* within the scope of sentential Neg *maa* 'not' (or its variants), as exemplified in (6b), the 'apparent' counterpart of the French *ne…que* exceptive construction.[4] Since the literature has been focusing more on the semantics of *only*-sentences and exceptive constructions in different languages (cf. Horn 1969; von Fintel & Iatridou 2007; Smeets & Wagner 2018; Erlewine & Kotek 2018, among many others), we propose to shift the focus to the syntactic perspective, on the ground that semantics follows syntax. More specifically, we argue that syntactic structure plays an *essential* role in the disambiguation process of the 'polysemous' nature of *illa*, and that the salient characteristics of NAEC can in principle be derived from the covert *illa*-phrase movement to the SpecPolP-position *followed* by Pol_{Neg}-to-Foc raising at the syntax-semantics interface.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the salient characteristics of NAEC. Section 3 introduces the main proposal and Section 4 provides some evidence for its defense. Finally, Section 5 sums up the analysis and draws some theoretical implications concerning the syntax of sentential negation, NPI licensing, and the categorial status of the root in the syntactic structure of (transitive) sentences.

2. Salient characteristics of the NAEC

In this section, we present the salient characteristics of NAEC that show a stark contrast with the French-language type in order to motivate a new syntactic perspective that can account for them more adequately. Special attention is devoted to *illa*-phrase licensing due to its significance.

4. Soltan (2016) discusses the syntactic analysis of exceptive constructions in Egyptian Arabic without considering the type corresponding to (6b).

2.1 Ban on the distribution of *illa* in post-tensed verb position

Unlike French *que, illa* cannot have exclusivity meaning of *only* in the post-tensed verb position without the overt presence of a sentential Neg, as illustrated in (7). It seems that Modern French *que* in (7b) corresponds to the archaic English *but* in (7d), as the latter can occur without an overt Neg licenser. French *que* in (7c) alone seems too minimal to bear the burden of exclusivity-meaning expression; therefore, various structures have been proposed to capture the source of both negation and the exceptive *other than* components (cf. O'Neill 2011; Homer 2015; Authier 2020).

(7) a. * *baas-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** *rašiid*
kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab ILLA Rashid
'Zenab kissed but Rashid.'

b. ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** *rašiid*
NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab ILLA Rashid

c. Il (**ne**) lit **que** *Le Monde* (von Fintel & Iatridou 2007: 458)
he (NE) reads QUE *Le Monde*
'He reads only *Le Monde*.', 'He does not read anything except *Le Monde*.'

d. Zenab kissed **but** Rashid

2.2 Sentential negation licensing *illa*-phrases

The contrastive marker *illa* 'but' in the NAEC must be licensed by a c-commanding sentential Neg such as *maa* that marks scope over (tensed) sentences. Constituent negation, however, cannot license *illa*-phrases, as shown in (8b).

(8) a. ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** *rašiid*
NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab ILLA Rashid
'Zenab only kissed Rashid.'

b. * ***miš*** *min zamaan zeenab baas-at* ***illa*** *rašiid*
NEG from time Zenab kiss-PST-3FSG ILLA Rashid
'Not long ago, Zenab kissed but Rashid.'

Matrix sentential Neg, however, cannot license the occurrence of an *illa*-phrase in the embedded context, as shown in (9). Thus, *illa*-phrase licensing by sentential Neg must satisfy locality condition.

(9) a. * ***maa*** *fakkar-it* *ʔinnu zeenab baas-at* ***illa*** *rašiid*
NEG think-PST-1SG that Zenab kiss-PST-3FSG ILLA Rashid
'*I didn't think that Zenab kissed except Rashid.'

2.3 *Illa*-phrases fronting across sentential negation

Unlike French *que*-phrases, PA *illa*-phrases can front to sentence-initial position across Neg, as in (10), yielding *reversal* in meaning: (10) means that only Rashid did Zenab not kiss. Such reversal indicates that *illa*-phrases are scope-taking expressions whose interpretation is read off syntactic structure and form a syntactic constituent, given that movement is a reliable test for constituency. It seems that sentence-initial phrases manage to 'escape' the need for licensing by a c-commanding negation in overt syntax; however, we will argue that the licensing of *illa*-phrases and NPIs is operative at the syntax-semantics interface.

(10) a. ***illa*** *rašiid* ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab*
ILLA Rashid NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab
'Only Rashid did Zenab not kiss.'

2.4 Left adjunction of *illa* to modified cognate objects

The contrastive marker *illa* may left-adjoin to modified cognate objects in the scope of negated transitive verb sentences, as illustrated in (11). The cognate object *boos* 'KISS' must be lexicalized overtly once modified by the *focused* adjectival expression *fransaawi*, triggered by the presence of *illa*. The mere fronting of *illa boos fransaawi* across *maa* 'not' yields *reversal* in meaning: (11b) means that Zenab kissed Rashid with every kissing type except the French one.

(11) a. *zeenab* ***maa*** *baas-at* *rašiid* ***illa*** *boos fransaawi*$_{F}$
Zenab NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Rashid ILLA KISS French
'Zenab only French$_{F}$-kissed Rashid.'

b. ***illa*** *boos fransaawi*$_{F}$ *zeenab* ***maa*** *baas-at* *rašiid*
ILLA KISS French Zenab NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Rashid
'Zenab didn't only French-kiss Rashid.'

2.5 *illa*-phrases being syntactic island-sensitive[5]

The NAEC does not permit *illa*-phrases to be embedded within a syntactic island even when it appears within the c-commanding domain of Neg, as shown in (12).

(12) a. ***maa*** *ʔar-at* ***illa*** *l-ktaab* *illi* [rašiid]$_{F}$ *aʔar-aa-h*
NEG read-PST-3FSG ILLA the-book that Rashid read-3MSG-it
'She only read the book that Rahsid$_{F}$ read.'

5. We would like to thank reviewer # 1 for pointing out to us the relevance of syntactic island-sensitivity to *illa*-phrase covert-movement.

b. * ***maa*** *ʔar-at* *l-ktaab* *illi* ***illa*** *rašiid* $_{F}$ *aʔar-aa-h*
NEG read-PST-3FSG the-book that ILLA Rashid read-3MSG-it
'She only read the book that Rahsid$_{F}$ read.'

The ungrammaticality of (12b) confirms the locality condition on *illa*-phrase licensing by Neg and provides evidence for the assumption that *illa*-phrase covert-movement is sensitive to syntactic islands such as relative clauses. Moreover, (12a) satisfies the locality condition on *illa*-phrase licensing and *illa* together with Neg can associate with the focused constituent [rašiid]$_{F}$ inside the relative clause because the seeming island-sensitivity problem can be explained away if covert movement can trigger *pied-piping* (cf. Erlewine & Kotek 2018). Having introduced the salient characteristics of NAEC, we turn now into the main proposal.

3. Main proposal

To account for the derivation of a NAEC such as (8a), we propose structure (13a) and the subsequent covert focus-movement of *illa rašiid* to its designated SpecPolP position followed by Pol $_{maa}$ -to-Foc raising, as schematically shown in (13b).

(13) a. [$_{PolP}$ ***maa*** *ba~~w~~as*[6] *-at* [$_{TnP}$ ~~*bawas-at*~~ [$_{vP}$ *zeenab* ~~*bawas*~~ [$_{RP}$ √ ~~BWS~~ [$_{DP}$ [$_{EXC}$ ***illa ø$_{only}$***] [$_{DP}$ *rašiid*]]]]]
b. [$_{FocP}$ ***maa*** $_{Foc}$ [$_{PolP}$ [$_{DP}$ [$_{EXC}$ ***illa ø$_{only}$***] [$_{DP}$ *rašiid*]]$_{1}$ ~~*maa*~~ [*baas-at*] [$_{TnsP}$…[$_{DP}$ [x_{1}]]]]]]

The contrastive marker *illa* together with the silent *bass* '*ø$_{only}$*' is taken to be an alternative-inducing adjunct left-adjoined to the focused DP *rašiid* with [+focus] feature specification, resulting in a complex DP *illa ø$_{only}$ rašiid*. At the syntax-semantics interface, since the complex DP is of quantificational nature, due to (at least) the presence of silent *bass* 'only', it undergoes a covert focus-movement to the designated SpecPolP-position. Both *illa ø$_{only}$* and *maa* are taken to be two operators that operate over different constituents: the focus-sensitive operator operates over the (semantic) DP-argument associate, *rašiid*, whereas *maa* operates over

6. *Baas* in the surface structure is in fact a product of the simplification strategy employed in PA: When the second phoneme in the tri-consonantal root *bws* is /w/, the sequence *awa* is altered to *aa*. However, when the second phoneme is /w/ in the root is reduplicated in the second banyan it has to show up, thus giving rise to the word form *ba~~w~~was* ('kissed intensively'). The diphthong /aw/ in PA nominal roots is altered to /oo/: *baws* => *boos* ('KISS').

the (semantic) propositional argument [*basaat zeenab* [x_1]]. The postulation of a FocP-projection the head of which selects the PolP-complement is motivated by the fact that the sentential Neg *maa* is in fact *focused* and is therefore required to covertly raise to the Foc-head to account for *illa ø$_{only}$ rašiid*-raising to SpecPolP or SpecFocP-position, as in (8a) and (10), respectively.[7] The covert focus-movement of both Neg *maa* and *illa*-phrase is viewed as QR instantiation, driven by the necessity to obtain the right syntactic configuration for the interpretation of both Neg and *illa ø$_{only}$* operating over the prejacent *baasat zeenab rašiid* 'Zenab kissed Rashid'.

The formal licensing condition regulating the occurrence of complex DP in (8a) is satisfied, because it appears within the Neg c-commanding domain, the latter being first base-generated in Pol-head position and then covertly raised to the higher Foc-head position to satisfy the c-command relation between *Neg* and *illa*. However, the complex DP-movement in (10) in narrow syntax must have landed in the SpecPolP-position on its way to the final destination, SpecFocP, at least to guarantee the elimination of an unvalued [+Neg] feature of *illa* and meet the condition on *illa*-phrase licensing by Pol_{Neg}: after raising, Pol_{Neg} can c-command the SpecPolP, the intermediate landing site of *illa ø$_{only}$ rašiid*, from a syntactically higher head-position.

4. Proposal defense

In this section, we present evidence in favor of the main proposal in (13). The order of argumentation is as follows. First, we show that the adjunct-analysis of *illa* best accounts for its distribution in the NAEC. Second, we demonstrate that

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7. In fact, when the focused DP is an indefinite with *specificity* construal, as in (ia), it has to raise alone *beyond* the SpecPolP-postion, i.e. to SpecFocP, at the syntax-semantics interface to get the right scopal relations, as shown schematically in (ib). This again supports the thesis that contrastive focus constituents undergo a covert moment. As a matter of fact, universally quantified expressions must covertly QR when they are focus-marked by the complex exclusive *illa ø$_{only}$* and have wide scope with respect to Neg, as in (ic).

(i) a. ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** *zalami*$_F$
NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab ILLA man-indefinite
'A man Zenab only kissed.'

b. [$_{FocP}$ **zalami** $_{\text{ه}}$ *maa* $_{Neg}$ [$_{PolP}$ [***illa ø$_{only}$*** [$_{DP}$ X_i]]$_J$ *baasat*...zeenab...[X_J]]]

c. *min z-zlaam w l-nasaween* ***maa*** *baas-at* *illa* ***kull***$_F$ *z-zlaam*
of the-men and the-women NEG kiss-PST-3FSG ILLA every the-men
'Of the men and the women, she only kissed all the men.'

illa-phrases are focused quantifiers and hence need to QR at the syntax-semantics interface. We then close the section with brief reflection on the categorial status of the root that constitutes the fundamental building block of minimalist-based accounts of sentential syntax.

4.1 Evidence for the adjunct-analysis of *illa*

The contrastive marker *illa* can attach to the left edge of different syntactic categories, be it DP-arguments or PP or CP-adjuncts in the sentence, as exemplified in (14ab), yielding different exclusive semantics depending on the contrastive focus of the constituent *associated* with it. We take (14) as evidence for the adjunct status of *illa*, since it shows syntactic category-insensitivity and the fact that it is left adjoined to the silent adjunct *bass* 'only', yielding adjunction recursion.

(14) a. ***maa*** *baas-at* (***illa)*** *zeenab* (***illa***) *rašiid* (***illa)*** *ʔabil* *šwayy*
NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab ILLA Rashid ILLA before little

b. ***maa*** *raḥ* *ti-njaḥ* *zeenab* ***illa*** *iða* *b-tu-drus* *mliiḥ*
NEG FUT 3FSG-succeed Zenab ILLA if PRES-3FSG-study well
'Zenab will not succeed unless she studies well.'

4.2 *Illa*-phrases undergoing QR at the syntax-semantics interface

Since the NAEC contains two operators, we predict to have scope ambiguity resulting from the interaction between Neg and *illa*-phrases in certain contexts, yielding an 'inverse scope' reading. This prediction is borne out, if we consider (15).

(15) a. ***maa*** *ʔar-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** *ha-li-ktaab*
NEG read-PST-3FSG Zenab ILLA this-the-book
'Zenab only read this book'/, 'Only this book did Zenab not read.'

If *illa* in (15a) receives prosodic focus intonation, the inverse scope reading is enforced: the quantifier object *illa hali ktaab* should outscope the Neg operator *maa*, triggering analogous reading of (10), repeated in (16), where the object has undergone fronting in narrow syntax, thus yielding wide scope of *illa rašiid* with respect to Neg *maa*. If quantifier scope is subject to c-command requirement, the quantifier object in (15) must then undergo QR at the syntax-semantics interface.

(16) a. ***illa*** *rašiid* ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab*
ILLA Rashid NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab
'Only Rashid did Zenab not kiss.'

The inverse scope reading is also evoked when the focus-sensitive operator *bass* 'only' is positioned within the Neg c-commanding domain and receives prosodic focus intonation, as shown in (17). However, when the associated focus constituent *hali ktaab* 'this book' receives the prosodic focus intonation instead, it yields the interpretation that Zenab didn't only read this book but also some other book(s).

(17) a. ***maa*** *ʔar-at* *zeenab* ***bass*** *ha-li-* *ktaab*
NEG read-PST-3FSG Zenab only this-the- book
'Only this book did Zenab not read'

The question now arises: What explains the semantic equivalence between (15) and (17) under their inverse scope reading? We maintain that the silent exclusive $ø_{only}$ in the internal structure of *illa*-phrases coupled with assumption that *illa* is a mere grammatical encoding of contrastive focus marking lexically specified for [+polarity reversal] feature of the prior structure can in principle account for such an equivalence. The explanatory power of our proposal is grounded on (a) the desideratum to uniformly capture the exclusivity semantics lexically expressed as a conventional meaning by both overt and covert version of *bass* 'only' in the lexicon and (b) empirical coverage. Our proposal predicts that the silent exclusive *bass* may get overtly realized in some contexts. This prediction is borne out, as the datum in (18) illustrates.

(18) a. ***maa*** *ʔar-at* *zeenab illa* ***bass*** *ha-li-ktaab*
NEG read-PST-3FSG Zenab ILLA only this-the-book
'Zenab only read this book.'

The presence of *bass* 'only' in (18) attracts the prosodic focus intonation and hence enforces the exclusivity meaning of *maa…illa bass 'not…but only'* at the syntax-semantics interface, as the English gloss shows. A constituent specified for contrastive focus in a syntactic structure seems to *correlate* with syntactic *displacement*, and driven by economy consideration, its covert movement to a *designated position* is preferred in order to guarantee the right interpretation of the linguistic object containing it. Moreover, the presence of a (unvalued) negative feature specified for *illa* as a lexical property, motivated by the negative component *la* 'not' of *illa*, requires *matching* or agreement with a constituent bearing a valued negative specification in a higher syntactic position to satisfy licensing. The optimal 'antecedent' in this case is the sentential Neg operator heading the PolP. If our analysis is on the right track, we have an immediate account for the distribution restriction imposed on the contrastive marker *illa*, i.e., its appearance within the Neg c-commanding domain.

4.3 Neg-to-Foc raising at the /syntax-semantics interface

Before we adduce direct evidence for Neg-to-Foc raising, we would like first to present support for Neg-raising in narrow syntax. PA, unlike English or Dutch, cannot express sentential Neg by a negative quantifier in a postverbal position, as shown in (19a); however, *wala-raising* to the Tns left edge-position 'rescues' its well-formedness by having *wala* in a *scope*-taking position, as shown in (19b).

(19) a. * *baas-at* *zeenab* ***wala*** *ḥada*
NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab NEG one
'Zenab kissed no one.'

b. ***wala*** *baas-at* *zeenab ḥada*
NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab
'Zenab kissed no one.'

c. ***maa*** baas-*at* *zeenab* ***wala*** *ḥada*
NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab NEG one
'Zenab didn't kissed anyone.'

d. * ***maa wala*** *baas-sat* *zeenab ḥada*
NEG NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab one

e. ***wala*** *ḥada* ***maa*** baas-*at* *zeenab*
NEG one NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab
'No one did Zenab not kiss.'

Wala-split from its indefinite nominal 'host' *ḥada* 'one' is necessarily interpretation-driven: sentential negation interpretation cannot be attained unless the Neg scope position is *lexicalized*. We take the left edge-position of the (finite) verb to be such a position. One plausible candidate for the landing site is the Pol-head position. However, in *emphatic* negatives with a single semantic negation reading, as in (19c), *wala* must remain in *situ* when the scope position is already lexically filled by another negative form, thus validating the assumption that movement should be *motivated*. The effect of *wala* presence in the scope of Neg *maa* is to expand the domain of quantification with informational impact just like English *any*, (cf. Kadmon & Landman 1993), and to *strengthen* or *intensify* its negative force. However, fronting the object to sentence-initial position in (19e) retains its universal quantificational force, yielding the double-negation interpretation, i.e. no one did Zenab not kiss. That Neg-licensed elements such as *illa*-phrases in postverbal position 'win' their free (universal) quantificational force once they escape their controller/licenser, just as *wala*-NP does, and scope over it substantiates the thesis that syntactic structure does contribute to the *disambiguation* of linguistic expressions in natural language.

A more evident case for the Pol-to-Foc raising comes from the adjacency of the focus-sensitive operator *walla* 'really' and the *focused* Neg, as exemplified in (20). Although Neg realization in past tensed sentences is a *discontinuous* form in the unmarked case, focused Neg must be realized by the independent form *maa* 'NOT', as the grammaticality contrast in (20ab) demonstrates. It seems natural to us to interpret the morphosyntactic realization of the head Neg in (20a) as a reflex of Pol_{Neg}-to-Foc raising in narrow syntax. Having established the independent Neg-raising in narrow syntax, we turn now to the evidence for Pol_{Neg}-to-Foc-raising at the syntax-semantics interface.

(20) a. *zeenab walla* ***maa*** *ʔar-at* *li-ktaab*
Zenab really NEG read-PST-3FSG the-book
'Zenab really did not read the book.'
b. * *zeenab walla* ***ma*** *-ʔar-at-š* *li-ktaab*
Zenab really NEG-read-PST-3FSG-NEG the-book
'Zenab really did not read the book.'

PA displays some linguistic data that can be analyzed as evidence for covert Neg-to-Foc raising. The first instantiation comes from the interaction between universal quantifiers and negation, as exemplified in the following:

(21) a. *kull z-zlaam* ***maa*** *ʔar-u* *ha-li- ktaab*
all the-men NEG read-PST-3MPL this-the book
'All the men didn't read this book.'
b. *l-kull* ***maa*** *ʔar-a* *ha-li- ktaab*
the-every NEG read-PST-3MSG this-the book
'Everyone didn't read this book.'

The sentential Neg *maa* in (21) must have a *wide* scope reading with respect to the universal quantifier *kull z-zlaam* 'all the men' or *l-kull* 'everyone' when Neg receives the prosodic focus intonation, yielding the interpretation that not all men/every one read this book. Under the assumption that quantifier scope is subject to c-command relation, the Neg operator *maa* must raise across the quantifier syntactic position in pre-negated verb position to have the latter in its c-commanding domain. The quantifier in (21) cannot originate in the Spec*v*P and at the syntax-semantics interface undergoes reconstruction, since PA is a VSO language and the preverbal constituent is *usually* dedicated to a topic position.[8] Moreover, PA being a *pro*-drop language, it is reasonable to posit a *pro* subject in Spec*v*P-position identified (or bound) by the topic (quantifier). Thus, to obtain

8. For an argument that preverbal DPs in SVO word order occupy a *topic*-position, see Khalaily (1995).

the inverse scope reading in (21), the Neg *maa* base-generated in Pol-head position has to raise to the F-head position at the syntax-semantics interface, thus yielding the right syntactic configuration and consequently mirroring the relevant interpretation.

The second piece of evidence in favor of covert Neg-raising comes from NPI licensing. PA permits some NPI adjuncts to *precede* the negative polarity licenser in narrow syntax, as illustrated in (22). The aspectual adjunct in (22a) and the frequency adjunct in (22b) are NPIs that do not appear in the c-commanding domain of their Neg licenser in narrow syntax.

(22) a. *zeenab* ***baʃid****-ha* *(***miš***) *šaar-yi* *s-sayyara*
Zenab yet-NPI-3FSG NEG buy-PRTCPL-3FSG the-car
'Zenab hasn't bought the car yet.'

b. *zeenab* ***b-l-marra*** *(***maa***) *šar-at* *iši*
Zenab P-the-once-NPI NEG buy-PST-3FSG thing
'Zenab did not bought a thing at all.'

c. *zeenab daayman* ***maa*** *b-tiij-i* *b-il-* *waʔit*
Zenab always NEG PRES-come-3FSG in-the time
'Zenab always does not come on time.'

It is tempting to analyze the syntactic position of each adjunct in (22) in SpecFocP and the Neg marker as its Foc-head, the former resulting from either adjunct-movement from post*v*P position or direct base-generation and the latter resulting from Pol-to-Foc raising in overt syntax. One supporting piece of evidence for such an analysis comes from the fact that these adjuncts are quantificational in nature and their presence in the SpecFocP-position is triggered or motivated by being *focused* quantifier expressions. As far as the Pol-to-Foc raising concerned, the sentence in (22c) proves to be relevant, especially when Neg takes wide scope interpretation with respect to the universal quantifier *daayman* 'always' at the syntax-semantics interface. The quantifier *daayman* outcopes negation in the unmarked context; however, when *maa* 'not' receives the prosodic focus intonation, we have scope *reversal*, yielding the interpretation that Zenab does not always come on time.

4.4 *Illa* left-adjoined to nominal cognate objects

Before closing this section, we would like to briefly consider the puzzling data related to nominal cognate objects that may share an adjunction structure with the contrastive marker *illa* 'but', especially when they are restricted by an adjectival modifier (in postverbal position) and (b) their ability to front as quantificational expressions across Neg licenser, yielding reversal in meaning, as illustrated in (23).

(23) a. *baas-at zeenab rashiid boos*$_F$
kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab Rashid KISS
'Zenab kissed$_F$ Rashid.'

b. *boos* $_F$ *baas-at zeenab rašiid*
KISS kiss-PST-3FSG Zenab Rashid
'Zenab kissed$_F$ Rashid.'

c. *zeenab* ***maa*** *baas-at rašiid* ***illa*** *boos fransaawi* $_F$
Zenab NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Rashid ILLA KISS French
'Zenab only French$_F$-kissed Rashid.'

d. ***illa*** *boos fransaawi* $_F$ *zeenab* ***maa*** *baas-at rašiid*
ILLA KISS French Zenab NEG kiss-PST-3FSG Rashid
'Zenab only French$_F$-kissed Rashid.'

First, (23ab) does not leave any doubt that the cognate object in the post-complement position may optionally front to sentence-initial position when it is specified for [+Foc] feature and hence receives prosodic focus contour. The reason behind their very existence has to do with PA syntax: (a) tensed transitive verbs may be 'reduplicated' by the nominal cognate object when they are *focused* due to the natural constraint which requires contrastive focus be *overtly* lexicalized at PF. Chomsky's copy theory of movement can in principle account for their existence. The copy of the nominal root *BWS* doesn't get externalized or undergo Spell-Out before the generation of the whole sentence since its contrastive focus status turns it into a *viable* option for overt movement, as in (23d), and covert movement at syntax-semantics interface, as in (23c).

Sentence initial-fronting of focused cognate objects such as *boos*$_F$ therefore lends a clear support for the FocP-postulation in (13) and the nominal root-incorporation analysis of tensed verbs in narrow syntax, given their *copy* lexicalization when they have a contrastive focus specification and their possible overt *displacement*, just like PA empty pronouns do when they are focused (cf. Khalaily 1994, 1997).

5. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, this paper has introduced some novel observations concerning the NAEC featuring the contrastive focus marker *illa* and managed to shed some light on its salient intricate characteristics. Moreover, the prominent thesis defended here is that *illa*-phrases undergo covert movement into the *designated* SpecPolP-position, which is projected higher than TnsP and below FocP, *followed* by Pol$_{Neg}$-to-Foc raising at the syntax-semantics interface. Since the *illa*-phrase occu-

pies the SpecPolP-position, it appears within the c-commanding domain of Pol_{Neg}, thus enabling Neg and *illa* coupled with the silent exclusive $ø_{only}$ to quantify over propositional alternatives (cf. Wagner 2006, 2012; Smeets and Wagner 2018, among others). Furthermore, we have argued (a) that the categorical status of the root seems to favor the *nominal* rather than the verbal or underspecified one as the core primitive that drives the derivation of natural-language (tensed) expressions, (b) that the postulation of PolP is *universally* inevitable (cf. Holmberg 2013), and (c) that NPI licensing is a syntax-semantics-interface phenomenon after all. If our NAEC-analysis is on the right track, a PA modeling of the French *ne…que* exclusive construction and its counterparts in other languages is worth taking seriously. The claim that the source for exclusive semantics of NAEC mainly comes from the silent exclusive $ø_{only}$ (disguised by the present 'shield' of *illa*) falsifies von Fintel & Iatridou's distinction between *only*-languages and NEG+EXCEPTIVE languages, on the one hand, and expands the logical space of syntactic theorization, on the one hand.

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