THE LICENSING OF STRUCTURAL CASE IN STANDARD ARABIC[*]

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1.   Introduction

In this paper I propose a new theory to account for the structural Case facts in Standard Arabic (SA). I argue that structural Case in SA is licensed by a feature called Verbal Case (VC). To motivate my proposal, I first argue that the two major theories of the feature(s) responsible for licensing structural Case cannot account for the Case checking facts in SA. I then show that structural Case is not licensed when VC is not licensed, despite the presence of tense, agreement, and mood. Finally, I revitalize an old observation about verbs in SA, basically the fact that they receive some form of case from particles (Sibawayhi 8th century). I formalize this observation and claim that, like DPs, verbs in SA receive abstract formal licensing, thus have a [VC] feature. By showing that Case/licensing is active in the verbal as well as the nominal system, this account argues against proposals eliminating abstract Case from UG, like Marantz (1991) and McFadden (2004), among others.

2.   The Licensing of Case in the Absence of Agreement and Tense

There are two main proposals in the literature on the feature that licenses structural Case. The first is advanced in Schütze (1997) and Chomsky (2001), among others, and argues that Case is licensed to the DP, crosslinguistically, as a reflex of valuing the φ-features on the Case checking head; I will refer to this as the [φ]-approach. This approach has recently been extended to SA in Soltan (2007). The second is advanced in Pesetsky & Torrego (2001, 2004), and argues that Case is licensed on the DP as a result of valuing a [uT] feature on D[0] by T[0]; I will refer to this as the [T]-approach. The following two subsections will present some arguments against these two approaches.

2.1.   Case in the Absence of Agreement

The [φ]-approach is based on the assumption that verbs agree with their subjects and objects in terms of φ-features, [Number], [Gender], and [Person], which indicates that the Case-checking functional heads must have a full set of φ-features. In other words, the [φ]-approach assumes that the [φ] specification on T[0] and $v*^0$ must always be complete in order for the functional head to value

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Case on the relevant DP. As Chomsky (2001:7) argues, a φ-incomplete probe is a φ-defective one, which cannot value [Case] on the goal.

However, a number of facts from the SA agreement system show that φ-agreement is defective in the language, which suggests that this approach cannot be extended to it. First, verbs in SA do not fully agree with their subjects, always lacking [Number], as (1a) shows. Second, as (1b) shows, verbs in SA are not allowed to fully agree with their subjects. In other words, if the [φ]-approach were extendable to SA, (1b), without the asterisk, would have been the strongest argument for it. However, the fact that (1b) is ungrammatical speaks against extending the [φ]-approach to SA. Furthermore, the conclusion that (1b) undermines the [φ]-approach as far as SA is concerned is supported by the fact that verbs in the language can in principle realize full agreement with the agentive DP, as (1c) shows.

(1) a. kataba-t-Ø   l-banaat-u   r-risaala-t-a
         Pst.write.3-**s**f-Ind   the-girls-Nom   the-letter-f-Acc
         'the girls wrote the letter.'

     b. * katab-na-Ø   l-banaat-u   r-risaala-t-a
         Pst.write.3-**p**f-Ind   the-girls-Nom   the-letter-f-Acc

     c. ʔal-banaat-u   katab-na-Ø   *pro*   r-risaala-t-a
         the-girls-Nom   Pst.write.3-**p**f-Ind   ec   the-letter-f-Acc
         'the girls wrote the letter.'

Now the difference between the post-verbal DP 'l-banaat-u', meaning 'the girls', in (1b) and the same DP in (1c), where it is preverbal, is that it is a subject in (1b) but a topic in (1c), fitting the syntactic and semantic properties associated with topics and left-dislocated elements.[1] This insight comes from the Basran grammarians of Arabic (Sibawayhi 8th century, and associates), revitalized and formalized in Minimalist terms in Soltan (2007). As successfully argued in Soltan (2007), while the post-verbal DP subject in (1a) realizes structural Nom Case licensed by T^0, the pre-verbal DP topic in (1c) realizes default Nom case, obtained at PF (for morphophonological reasons, and as a result of not being in the scope of a Case assigner).

Third, as (1a) shows, verbs in SA usually agree with the subject in terms of [Person] and [Gender], but not in [Number], which counts as defective agreement in Chomsky's (2001) terms. In addition, the SA facts show that φ-agreement can be even more defective. To illustrate, as the Qur'aanic verse in (2) shows, verbs can agree with the subject only in terms of [Person], but not [Gender] or [Number].

(2) "ʔiThaa jaaʔa-kum   l-muʔminaat-u   muhaajiraat-in"   p.550
         if   Pst.come.**3**-you   the-believer.**pf**-Nom   migrating.**pf**-Gen
         'if the female believers came to you migrating ….'

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[1]   One irrelevant difference between these two DPs is the form of the definite article. Basically, the definite article 'ʔal-' becomes 'l-' when the DP is preceded by anything.

This thus indicates that agreement is always defective in SA when there is a subject that requires structural Nom Case. Fourth, in addition to the defective subject agreement in the language, SA verbs also do not realize object agreement, neither fully, as (3a) shows, nor partially, as (3b) shows.

(3) a. * katab-**na**-Ø   r-rajul-u   r-rasaaʔil-a
         Pst.write.3-**pf**-Ind   the-man-Nom   the-letter.**pf**-Acc

     b. * katab-**uu**-Ø   r-rajul-u   r-rasaaʔil-a
         Pst.write.3-**pm**-Ind   the-man-Nom   the-letter.**pf**-Acc

Taking verbal morphology to reflect the featural structure of functional categories, it becomes clear that T^0 and $v*^0$ are not φ-complete, but rather φ-defective. Therefore, assuming with Chomsky (2001) that a φ-defective probe cannot license Case to the goal, and given the fact that both Nom and Acc Cases are licensed in the absence of complete φ-specification, as the examined data suggest, it becomes clear that φ-features do not license structural Case in SA.

2.2. Case in the Absence of Tense

The [T]-approach is based on the assumption that for structural Case to be licensed, verbs must always realize tense semantically (and morphologically), which means that the Case-checking heads must always have an interpretable [*i*T] feature which can value an uninterpretable [*u*T] feature on the DP, which amounts to the valuation of [Case]. Pesetsky & Torrego (2004:2) argue that "all instances of structural Case are actually instances of *u*T on D". Thus the presence of tense is crucial for the licensing of Case. However, SA provides evidence that structural Case can be licensed in the absence of tense. First, SA imperatives are tenseless (as are those of many other languages), yet both Nom and Acc Cases are licensed.[2] The claim that SA imperatives are tenseless is based on the fact that the SA imperative verbs lack tense morphology, as table 1 shows; they only realize person (as well as number and gender) morphology and the imperative morpheme [Impr] (plus the VC specification).[3]

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[2]   That imperative verbs and clauses are tenseless has been argued in Huntley (1980), Henry (1995), Han (1998), Rupp (1999), Jakab (2002), and Bennis (2007), among many others.

[3]   The claim that SA imperative verbs are derived from the jussive form (Wright 1967) further shows that they are tenseless. This is because the jussive form is tenseless since it occurs in past negative sentences where [T] is realized on the negative particle, as (i) shows, and also in conditional sentences that have no time frame, like (ii).

(i)   lam   ya-njaH-**Ø**   l-walad-u
       Neg.Pst   Impf-pass.3sm-**Juss**   the-boy-Nom
       'the boy did not pass.'
(ii)   mataa   tu-THaakir-**Ø**   ta-njaH-**Ø**
       when   2-study.sm-**Juss**   2-pass.sm-**Juss**
        'when(ever) you study, you pass.'

Table 1

Jussive	Positive Imperative	Negative Imperative	3rd Positive imperative
ta-ktub-Ø 2-write-Juss	ʔu-ktub-Ø Impr.2-write-Juss	laa ta-ktub-Ø Neg.Impr 2-write-Juss	li-ta-ktub-Ø Impr-2-write-Juss

This claim is also based on the fact that the SA imperative verbs lack tense semantics since they do not exhibit the past vs. non-past distinction, thus lacking the feature [Precedence], which "is at the heart of what can be called the narrow tense system" (Cowper 2005:15). Thus lacking the [±Past] distinction indicates lacking [T]. This approach to imperatives is supported by the fact that the only temporal interpretation that imperatives convey is 'future orientation', which makes reference to mood rather then tense (Cowper 2005, and Cowper & Hall 2007). This way, imperative clauses in SA instantiate a MoodP, rather than a TP. Despite the lack of tense, both Nom and Acc Cases are licensed in the SA 2nd person canonical imperative construction, shown in (4a), as well as in the special 3rd person imperative pattern, shown in (4b).

(4) a. ʔu-ktub-Ø   (ʔanta)   waajib-**a**-ka
         Impr.2-write.sm-Juss   you.sm.**Nom**   homework-**Acc**-your
         '(you) write your homework!'

     b. li-ya-ktub-Ø   ʔax-**uu**-ka   waajib-**a**-hu
         Impr-Impf-write.sm-Juss   brother-**Nom**-your   homework-**Acc**-his
         'make/have your brother write his homework!'

Second, another argument against the [T]-approach is based on one of the arguments that Pesetsky & Torrego (2001) used to argue for their theory. To illustrate, the authors state that one argument for their proposal comes from the fact that the Nom Case suffixes in SA are identical to the mood suffixes of the verb form that carries tense; their data are reproduced in table 2.

Table 2

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1.	T-Taalib-**u** the-student-Nom	T-Taalib-**aan** the-student-d.Nom	l-muʕallim-**uun** the-teacher-p.Nom
2.	ya-ktub-**u** 3m-write-Ind	ya-ktub-**aan** 3m-write-d.Ind	yu-ʕallim-**uun** 3m-teach-p.Ind

Despite the appeal of their reasoning, I believe that if this morphological similarity has a theoretical utility, it should indicate connection between Nom Case and mood, rather than tense. Third, the fact that some Acc Case suffixes in SA are identical to the 'mood' suffixes of a verb form that does not realize tense, the subjunctive, as shown in table 3, argues against Pesetsky & Torrego's (2004) proposal that Acc Case is also a [uT] on D^0. As table 3 shows, tense is realized on the negative particle. These facts indicate that tense cannot be the feature that licenses Case in SA.

Table 3

		Subjunctive		Acc-marked DPs
1.	1s	lan	ʔu-darris-**a**	ʔal-mudarris-**a**
		Neg.**Fut**	1-teach-**Sub**	the-teacher-Acc
2.	2sm	lan	tu-darris-**a**	ʔal-mudarris-**a**
		Neg.**Fut**	2-teach-**Sub**	the-teacher-Acc
3.	3sm	lan	yu-darris-**a**	ʔal-mudarris-**a**
		Neg.**Fut**	Impf-teach-**Sub**	the-teacher-Acc
4.	3sf	lan	tu-darris-**a**	ʔal-mudarrisat-**a**
		Neg.**Fut**	f-teach-**Sub**	the-teacher.f-Acc

Given the facts discussed in this section, structural Case can be licensed in the absence of agreement and tense, which means that agreement and tense cannot be responsible for the licensing of Case in SA. The next section will provide some more evidence for this conclusion, and will establish the assumed link between structural Case and VC.

3. Verbless Sentences and Case in SA

This section presents the morphosyntax of the so-called verbless sentences in SA, shown in (5a-b), with four goals. First, it shows that a verbless sentence is composed of a topic and a predicate. Second, it shows that verbless sentences, though lacking a verb, are finite clauses. Third, it argues that verbless sentences do not witness the licensing of structural Case. Fourth, it proposes that structural Case is not licensed in verbless sentences due to the absence of the verb, thus establishing the connection between verbal and nominal licensing.

(5) a.   ʔal-walad-u   sabbaaH-un
          the-boy-Nom   swimmer-Nom
          'the boy is a swimmer.'

     b.   ʔal-walad-u   mariiD-un
          the-boy-Nom   sick-Nom
          'the boy is sick.'

To establish the link between VC and Case, I would like to argue that a verbless sentence is composed of a topic and a predicate, contra Fassi Fehri (1993) and Benmamoun (2000, 2008) who argue that the DP in (5a-b) 'the boy' is a subject. This claim is based on three arguments. First, (5a-b) convey a categorical interpretation where the DP 'the boy' is interpreted as the topic of the discourse, with the predicate commenting on it.[4] Second, the fact that (like the preverbal DP in SVO sentences which, being a topic, cannot be indefinite nonspecific, Soltan 2007) the DP in (5a-b) cannot be indefinite nonspecific, as shown by the comparison between (6a) and (6b), indicates that it is a topic.

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[4]   On the distinction between categorical and thetic readings, see Basilico (1998).

(6) a. ʔal-walad-u   mariiD-un
       the-boy-Nom   sick-Nom
       'the boy is sick.'

    b. walad-un   mariiD-un
       boy-Nom   sick-Nom
       'a sick boy.'
       '*a boy is sick.'

     Basically, the fact that (6b) is a DP, that is, ungrammatical as a clause, indicates that the topic, unlike the subject, cannot be indefinite nonspecific.[5] Third, the fact that the DP in (5b) has to be resumed by a pronoun within a coordinate structure island, as (7) shows, suggests that it is base-generated in the left-periphery, since it could not have moved out of such a structure.

(7) ʔal-walad-u   **huwa**   wa   ʔax-uu-hu   marDaa
     the-boy-Nom **he**   and   brother-Nom-his   sick.Nom
     'the boy, he and his brother are sick.'

     Therefore, the DP in (5a-b) fits the syntactic and semantic properties associated with topics/left-dislocated elements.

     The claim that verbless sentences encode tense is based on three arguments. First, as Fassi Fehri (1993) argues, if comparing (8a) to (8b) shows that a verbal sentence (one with a verb) contains tense, then, by analogy, comparing (9a) to (9b) must indicate that a verbless sentence also encodes tense.

(8) a. ʔar-rajul-u   ya-ʔkul-u   l-ʔaan-a
       the-man-Nom   Impf.**Prs**-eat.sm -Ind   the-now-Acc
       'the man is eating now.'

    b. * ʔar-rajul-u   ya-ʔkul-u   ʔams
       the-man-Nom   Impf.**Prs**-eat.sm-Ind   yesterday

(9) a. ʔar-rajul-u   mariiD-un   l-ʔaan-a
       the-man-Nom   sick-Nom   the-now-Acc
       'the man is sick now.'

    b. * ʔar-rajul-u   mariiD-un   ʔams
       the-man-Nom   sick-Nom   yesterday

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[5]   Subjects, which always follow the verb in SA, can be indefinite nonspecific, as (i) shows, whereas topics cannot, as (ii) shows.

(i) kataba-Ø   walad-un   l-waajib-a
    Pst.write.3sm-Ind   boy-Nom   the-homework-Acc
    'a boy wrote the homework'

(ii) * walad-un   kataba-Ø   l-waajib-a
     boy-Nom   Pst.write.3sm-Ind   the-homework-Acc

Second, since, as argued in Eisele (1988), temporal adverbs must be anchored by tense, then verbless sentences contain tense since they can co-occur with temporal adverbs, as (9a) shows. Third, as argued in Benmamoun (2000), verbless sentences have a tense category since they co-occur with 'ʔinna', which selects tensed clauses, but not tenseless ones. As (10) shows, 'ʔinna' occurs in the tensed main clause, but not in the tenseless embedded one. Tenseless clauses are selected by 'ʔan'.[6]

(10) ʔinna   r-rajul-a   Haawala   [*ʔinna/ʔan ya-naam-a]
      Comp   the-man-Acc   Pst.try.3sm   Comp   Impf-sleep.3sm-Sub
      'the man tried to sleep.'

Though lacking a verbal projection, Fassi Fehri (1993) argues that verbless sentences encode sentential agreement, which appears on the negative particle 'laysa', as shown by (11a). However, Fassi Fehri's argument is weakened by the observation that 'laysa' is a composite form, consisting of the negative particle 'laa' and the archaic auxiliary 'ʔays' (Wright 1967), thus (11a) is not technically verbless. However, Fassi Fehri's argument can be strengthened by the fact that verbless sentences are ungrammatical with the non-ϕ-inflecting negative particles, as (11b-c) show, thus suggesting that these clauses encode ϕ-features that have to be hosted by the negative particle (in the absence of the verb).

(11) a.   ʔal-ʔawlaad-u   lays-**uu**   sabbaaH-iin
            the-boys-Nom   Neg-**3pm**   swimmer-p.Acc
            'the boys are not swimmers.'

      b. * ʔal-ʔawlaad-u   laa   sabbaaH-iin/-uun
            the-boys-Nom   Neg   swimmer-p.Acc/-p.Nom

      c. * ʔal-ʔawlaad-u   maa   sabbaaH-iin/-uun
            the-boys-Nom   Neg   swimmer-p.Acc/-p.Nom

In addition to tense and agreement, verbless sentences can be argued to encode indicative mood since they express facts, beliefs, and assertions, where "'indicative' mood […] covers areas of actuality where the speaker merely asserts a proposition as fact" (Winford 2000:67). Thus verbless sentences encode [T], [ϕ], and [Mood]. The observation that verbless sentences encode [Mood] but do not license structural Case (as will be argued soon) suggests that [Mood] does not license Nom Case in SA, thus contra Aygen (2002) who argues that mood and modality license Nom Case in Turkish as well as in Tuvan, Kazakh, English, Catalan, European Portuguese, Japanese, and Italian.

Despite the fact that verbless sentences encode all the three features of finiteness, they still do not witness the licensing of structural Case. This claim is supported by the observation that both the topic and the predicate in (5a-b),

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[6]   It is noteworthy that Benmamoun's argument is based on the distribution of the Moroccan Arabic equivalent of 'ʔinna', which in 'bəlli'.

repeated in (12a-b), receive default Nom case at PF. My conception of default case is that of Schütze (2001) and Soltan (2007) according to which a nominal receives default case only if it is not in the scope of a Case assigner.

(12)   a.   Ɂal-walad-u   sabbaaH-un
                the-boy-Nom   swimmer-Nom
                'the boy is a swimmer.'

         b.   Ɂal-walad-u   mariiD-un
                the-boy-Nom   sick-Nom
                'the boy is sick.'

The claim that the topic in (12a-b) receives default Nom case (and so is not in the scope of a Case assigner) is supported by the fact that it realizes Acc Case in the presence of 'Ɂinna', a lexical Acc Case assigner, as (13a) shows, and also when in the embedded subject position of an ECM predicate, as (13b) shows.

(13)   a.   Ɂinna   l-walad-**a**   mariiD-un
                Comp the-boy-**Acc**   sick-Nom
                'certainly the boy is sick.'

         b.   Zanna-Ø   l-mudarris-u   l-walad-**a**   mariiD-un
                Pst.believe.3sm-Ind the-teacher-Nom   the-boy-**Acc**   sick-Nom
                'the teacher believed the boy to be sick.'

This thus indicates that the DP 'the boy' is *not* in the scope of a Case assigner in (12a-b), thus in a left peripheral/A-bar position, otherwise it would not have assumed the Case assigned by 'Ɂinna' or the ECM verb (in 13a-b). I here assume the Case Freezing Condition (CFC) of Uriagereka (2008) according to which a nominal may not assume more than one Case value. By the same token, the predicate in (12a-b) receives default Nom since in the presence of the copula 'kaana-Ø', it realizes lexical Acc Case, as (14a-b) show.

(14)   a.   kaana-Ø   r-rajul-u   mariiD-**an**
                Pst.be.3sm-Ind   the-man-Nom   sick-**Acc**
                'the man was sick.'

         b.   sa-ya-kuun-u   r-rajul-u   mariiD-**an**
                Fut-Impf-be.3sm-Ind   the-man-Nom   sick-**Acc**
                'the man will be sick.'

Thus given the finding that structural Case is not licensed in the presence of [T], [φ], and [Mood], and in the absence of the verb, it seems reasonable to assume that there is some verbal property (other than the three features that are well-known to indicate finiteness) that is responsible for the licensing of structural Case. The next section explores this intuition and reveals the assumed verbal property.

4. Case in the SA Verbal System

One crucial observation about the verbal system in SA that comes from the traditional grammar of Arabic (Sibawayhi 8th century, and associates) is that verbs in the language receive some form of case. In the generative framework, Fassi Fehri (1993) interpreted this insight such that verbs in SA receive Temporal Case (TC), and Soltan (2007) treated TC as an uninterpretable feature, [uTC], on T^0 (with no abstract licensing-related functions). This fact about SA verbs is illustrated in (15).

(15) a.   yu-riid-u   l-walad-u *(**ʔan**) yu-shaahid-**a**   t-tilfaaz-a
              Impf-want-Ind the-boy-Nom Comp Impf-watch-**Sub** the-t.v.-Acc
              'the boy wants to watch TV.'

      b.   sa-ʔa-ʕmal-u   *(**Hattaa**)   ʔa-njaH-**a**
              Fut-1-study-Ind   until   1-succeed-**Sub**
              'I will work until I make it.'

      c.   * (**ʔin**)   tu-THaakir-**Ø**   ta-njaH-**Ø**
              if   2-study.sm-**Juss**   2-pass.sm-**Juss**
              'if you study, you pass.'

      d.   * (**lam**)   ya-ktub-**Ø**   l-mudarris-u   d-dars-a
              Neg.Pst Impf-write.sm-**Juss** the-teacher-Nom the-lesson-Acc
              'the teacher did not write the lesson.'

      e.   ʔal-walad-u   yu-Hibb-**u**   l-kutub-a
              the-boy-Nom   Impf-like.3sm-**Ind**   the-books-Acc
              'the boy likes books.'

      f.   kataba-**Ø**   l-walad-u   r-risaala-t-a
              Pst.write.3sm-**Ind**   the-boy-Nom   the-letter-f-Acc
              'the boy wrote the letter.'

The data (15a-b) show that the particles 'ʔan' and 'Hattaa' assign the subjunctive verbal case; (15c-d) show that the particles 'ʔin' and 'lam' assign the jussive verbal case. The data (17e-f) show that the indicative verbal case is not assigned by particles. In fact, there are several positions on how the indicative verbal case obtains; see Owens (1988:62-63) for an overview. Fassi Fehri (1993:164) states that he "follow[s] traditional grammarians in taking the first TCase [Temporal Case] [meaning indicative] to be assigned by default (thus paralleling Nominative in the nominal system), whereas other cases are assigned/checked under government". Unlike these proposals, the present analysis claims that there is a difference between morphological verbal case (m-vc) and abstract Verbal Case (VC) in terms of how they obtain as well as their syntactic utility. Basically, while m-vc obtains as a result of assignment by particles (subjunctive and jussive) or default specification (indicative), abstract VC licensing (for all the three verbal forms) obtains structurally. Thus the

crucial contribution that this analysis makes is proposing verbal licensing in SA, on a par with DP licensing. In other words, if morphological nominal case (m-case) indicates the existence of abstract DP licensing/Case, which is Vergnaud's (1977) insight that led to the introduction of the theory of abstract Case in Chomsky (1980, 1981), then by analogy, I propose that m-vc indicates the existence of abstract verbal licensing, Verbal Case (VC). In Al-Balushi (In prep.), I present an account of the claimed abstract VC feature on verbs, one which shows that verbs in SA are in fact similar to DPs in terms of abstract structural licensing. Also, since the fact that (SA) verbs realize [T], [ϕ]], and [Mood] morphology led to the assumption that they encode [T], [ϕ], and [Mood] features, then the fact that they realize VC morphologically should indicate that they have a [VC] feature. Thus, besides m-vc, verbs in SA receive VC. I assume that this VC feature is realized as an unvalued formal feature [uVC] on T^0 and $v*^0$. The next section will show how this feature is valued, and how it values [Case] on the relevant DPs.

It should also be noted that the terms 'indicative', 'subjunctive', and 'jussive', as used in this paper, do not make reference to modality. This terminology was a European contribution to the inquiry, but I agree with Fassi Fehri (1993) and Benmamoun (2000) that what Wright (1967) called 'indicative', 'subjunctive', and 'jussive' do not map to the three relevant moods. Therefore, I will call these verbal forms 'VC forms' and the suffixes that Wright (1967) calls 'mood suffixes' 'VC suffixes'. Unlike Fassi Fehri (1993) and Soltan (2007), I will call this feature 'Verbal Case' (VC) instead of 'temporal Case', since it obtains in the presence of verbs, rather than tense, since verbless sentences, which have tense, do not have VC. The next section capitalizes on the insight that the verbal property that co-exists with structural Case is [VC] (rather than [T], [Mood], or [ϕ]).

5. Verbal Case Licenses Structural Case

5.1. The Proposal

Given the observation that DP licensing/structural Case is contingent on the licensing of verbs, as well as the fact that verbs in SA receive a VC specification that is morphologically realized, the licensing of VC has two manifestations, one abstract and the other morphological. To illustrate, narrow syntax first witnesses the abstract manifestation of VC licensing (seen in the form of licensing structural Case), which I will call 'VC checking'. It then witnesses the morphological specification of VC (seen in the form of the m-vc specification realized by the verb), which I will call 'VC assignment'.

Moreover, given the observation that the VC licensing particles are either merged in or eventually moved to C^0 (Al-Balushi, in prep.), as well as the observation that structural Case is not licensed unless VC is licensed, I claim that the source of the abstract manifestation of VC licensing ('VC checking') is the Comp domain. Also, given the observation that, unlike subjunctive and jussive VC verb forms, indicative VC verb forms do not require overt VC assigning particles, I will argue that the source of 'VC checking' is

not the particle, thus pointing out to the existence of an 'abstract' licenser. Therefore, assuming Rizzi's (1997) Split-Comp-Hypothesis where he suggests that Fin^0 is the locus of finiteness in the Comp domain, I claim that the Fin^0 head is the source of 'VC checking'. In addition, given the observation that the presence of the VC assigning particles results in the verb realizing a form other than the so-called 'citation form' (which is morphologically the indicative VC form), I will assume that the source of the morphological manifestation of VC licensing ('VC assignment') is the particle.

In addition, since the observation that DPs receive structural Case led to the assumption that [Case] is an unvalued feature on D^0 (Pesetsky & Torrego 2001, 2004, among others), I will assume that the observation that verbs receive VC must indicate that [VC] is an unvalued feature on T^0 and $v*^0$. This way, 'VC checking' proceeds as follows. I will assume that Fin^0 has a valued [VC] feature which, via Agree (Chomsky 2001), values the unvalued [VC] features on T^0 and $v*^0$. This results in T^0 and $v*^0$ valuing, via Agree, the [Case] features on the subject and object, respectively. Thus VC checking results in structural Case checking. Moreover, 'VC assignment' proceeds as follows. Upon introduction in the derivation, the particle enters an Agree relation with the verb, which results in assigning the verb a VC specification that will be relevant for the morphological component. I assume that particles have indices that specify the VC values that they assign. For example the subjunctive VC assigning particle 'ʔan' looks like 'ʔan$_{Sub(junctive)}$'; likewise, the jussive VC assigning particle 'lam' looks like 'lam$_{Juss(ive)}$'. Thus VC assignment makes no contribution to the licensing of structural Case.
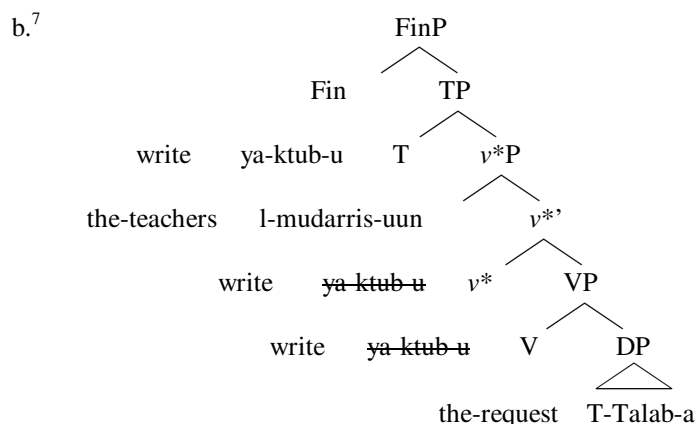
Furthermore, given the observation that [T], [ϕ], and [Mood], the three features taken to signal finiteness do not license structural Case in SA, I will propose that these features make reference to what I call Infl Finiteness (I-finiteness), and that there is another type of finiteness, which constitutes the licenser of structural Case, and which I call Comp Finiteness (C-finiteness), which refers to [VC], since Fin^0 resides in the Comp domain.

Moreover, given the fact that SA has verbal sentences, where both Nom and Acc Cases are licensed, and verbless sentences, where neither Nom nor Acc is licensed, we seem to need a condition on the featural structure of Fin^0 that would regulate when structural Case needs to be licensed; that is, we need a condition that regulates when Fin^0 must and must not have a [VC] feature. Assuming the conception of categorial selection in Chomsky (1995:54), Adger (2003), and Hallman (2004), I will propose that Fin^0 has a [VC] feature iff it selects an XP that has (at least) one I-finiteness feature ([T], [Mood], [ϕ]) and a categorial [V] feature. The following section implements this syntactic system on a sentence from SA.

5.2. A Sample Derivation

This section shows how the proposed syntactic system accounts for Case checking in a VSO sentence; (16a) receives the clause structure in (16b).

(16) a. ya-ktub-u   l-mudarris-uun   T-Talab-a
          Impf-write.sm-Ind   the-teacher-p.Nom   the-request-Acc
          'the teachers are writing the request.'

b.[7]

```
                                    FinP
                                   /    \
                              Fin        TP
                             /    \     /    \
                       write   ya-ktub-u  T    v*P
                                              /    \
                   the-teachers  l-mudarris-uun     v*'
                                                   /    \
                              write   ya-ktub-u  v*      VP
                                                        /    \
                                    write   ya-ktub-u  V      DP
                                                             /    \
                                              the-request  T-Talab-a
```

The merge operations proceed as follows. The verb, which has a valued categorial [V] feature, is merged in V^0 with the object in its complement position; the object has an unvalued [Case] feature. Then, $v*^0$ which has an unvalued [VC] feature is merged with the VP. Now, the external argument, which has an unvalued [Case] feature, is merged in Spec, $v*$P. Next, T^0, which has an unvalued categorial [V] feature as well as an unvalued [VC] feature and a valued (present tense) [T] feature, is merged with the $v*$P, forming the TP;[8] this unvalued [V] feature enables T^0 to select the $v*$P. Finally, Fin^0 is merged with the TP, forming FinP. Since this Fin^0 selects an XP (TP) with a categorial [V] feature and a [T] feature, then it must be the version of Fin^0 that has an unvalued categorial [V] feature as well as a valued [VC] feature and an unvalued [T] feature.[9] For purposes of c-selection, the valued categorial [V] feature on the verb is projected (or transmitted) to the $v*$P projection.

The feature valuation operations proceed as follows. Upon merge of T^0, Match between the unvalued categorial [V] feature on T^0 and the valued categorial [V] feature on the $v*$P takes place, which results in the two elements entering an Agree relation, which, in turn, results in the latter valuing the former. Also upon Merge of T^0, $v*^0$ enters an Agree relation with T^0 to get its unvalued [VC] feature valued, but no valuation takes place (since both heads have negative specification of the feature). However, a permanent link is created between the two features, and they become two instances of one feature, a situation dubbed 'Agree as feature sharing' (Frampton & Gutmann 2000, and Pesetsky & Torrego 2007). Now if one instance is valued via Agree with another head, the other instance is automatically valued. Moreover, the now

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[7]   The strikethrough signals the phonetically deleted copies.

[8]   It is worth emphasizing that this approach to labeling of merged elements is just one of various hypotheses on the issue of labeling, and since none of the proposals in this paper is contingent on a specific approach to labeling of merged elements, I will not get into the debate; see Chomsky (2000, 2005), Boeckx (2002), Adger (2003:73), Collins (2002), Cecchetto (2006), and Donati (2006) for a discussion of the relevant issues.

[9]   I here assume that Fin^0/C^0 encodes a [T] feature, in agreement with many proposals in the literature (Stowell 1982, Raposo 1987, and Enç 1987, among others).

valued categorial [V] feature on T^0 is projected to the TP projection, which enables it to be selected by the version of Fin^0 that has an unvalued categorial [V] feature as well as a valued [VC] feature and an unvalued [T] feature. Upon merge of Fin^0, it enters an Agree relation with T^0, which results in valuing [V] and [T] on Fin^0 and [VC] on T^0, and automatically on $v*^0$. At this point, the subject and object enter Agree relations with T^0 and $v*^0$, respectively, and get their [Case] features valued as Nom and Acc, respectively. Thus, VC checking by Fin^0 on T^0 and $v*^0$ results in Case checking on the subject and object, respectively. Finally, the verb, which, not being in the scope of a VC assigning particle, is not assigned a VC specification, which means that it will realize the default indicative m-vc specification at the morphological component. Thus VC assignment does not take place.[10]

In Al-Balushi (In prep.), I show that this analysis of Case checking can account for the structural Case facts in a variety of clauses in SA, comprising SVO sentences, copular sentences, verbless sentences (with 'ʔinna'), control constructions, raising constructions, ECM constructions, imperatives, passives, unaccusatives and unergatives, as well as participial sentences.

6.   Concluding Remarks

The proposal laid out in this paper argues for the presence of abstract Case in UG. It also argues against the proposal that Case is licensed by an I-finiteness feature, since there is no single I-finiteness feature responsible for licensing Case, nor is Case licensed in the absence of [VC]. It thus draws a distinction between finiteness in the Infl domain and finiteness in the Comp domain. This proposal thus restores the Government and Binding (GB) and early Minimalism idea that Case-checking categories/heads have a dedicated [Case] feature, which is [VC] in the proposed system. It also restores the early GB idea that C^0 has a Case assigning property (Stowell 1981, Massam 1985, among others). The difference between these proposals and the one presented in this paper is that while they assume that C^0 licenses Case to the DP in Spec, TP, the present account argues that C^0 licenses Case to the Infl domain functional heads, which then license Case to the subject and object. Though it works for SA, this proposal is yet to be tested on data from other languages. Since this task is beyond the space limits of this paper, I will leave it for another occasion.

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[10]   It is noteworthy that introducing a particle, which would result in 'VC assignment' will necessitate discussing more complicated feature valuation operations.

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