

# NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN ARABIC: TOWARDS A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

Ahmed Moutaouakil

*University of Rabat*

## 0. Introduction

Aside from the taxonomic descriptions we find in ancient Arab grammarians books, no theoretically based analysis, as far as I know, has been proposed to deal with the phenomenon of negation in Arabic.

It is well known that negation is a very complex linguistic phenomenon for it involves morpho-syntactic, semantic as well as pragmatic aspects. In this paper, I will assume that functional Grammar (henceforth FG) is a framework which can provide us with a multi-level analysis that gives an adequate characterization of the various aspects of negative constructions in natural languages.

In section 1 and 2 I will give an overview of the properties of the negative constructions of Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA). In section 3 I will discuss the definition according to which negation is a speech act. Section 4 will be devoted to the way in which the properties of negative constructions in MSA may be adequately described within the FG framework.

## 1. Negative particles

Negation is expressed in MSA, by two kinds of particles: "simple particles" and "complex particles". Simple particles are those which consist of a single negative morpheme; complex particles are those "discontinuous" negative morphemes consisting of the negative particle proper and the restriction marker *'illā*.

In MSA, there are many particles with function as negative morphemes. The use of these particles is governed by a complementary distribution which will be examined in the following two subsections.

### 1.1 Simple particles

The main parameters co-determining the occurrence of negative particles in MSA are the following:

- (i) the syntactic category to which the predicate of the sentence belongs
- (ii) the mood, aspect and tense features of the predicate
- (iii) the scope of negation
- (iv) the position which may be occupied by the negative particle within the sentence
- (v) the form of the predicate.

With these five parameters in mind we can account for the distribution of negative particles in MSA in the following way:

1.1.1 *lam*

The negative particle *lam* occurs in a sentence with a verbal predicate as shown by the contrast between (1a) and (1b-c):

- (1) a. *lam ya'ti zaydun*  
not come Zayd-nom  
Zayd didn't come
- b. \**lam zaydun 'ustādun*  
not Zayd-nom teacher-nom  
Zayd isn't a teacher
- c. \**lam zaydun mariḍun*  
not Zayd-nom ill-nom  
Zayd isn't ill

The verbal predicate of *lam*-constructions must have 'perfective' and 'past' as its aspectual and tensal features. The contrast between (1a) and (2a-b) illustrates the point:

- (2) a. \**lam ya'ti zaydun ḡadan*  
not come Zayd-nom tomorrow  
Zayd will not come tomorrow
- b. \**lam yaktub zaydun r-risāлата l-'āna*  
not write Zayd-nom the-letter-acc now  
Zayd doesn't write the letter now

The particle *lam* combines with a verbal predicate taking the *yaf'al* form — called in traditional grammar *muḍānī* as the above examples show. When it combines with a verb taking the *fa'al* form (traditionally called *māḍī*), the result is odd:<sup>1</sup>

- (3) \**lam 'atā zaydun*  
not come Zayd-nom  
Zayd didn't come

As regards its scope, this particle may serve to negate (a) the predicate as in (4a) or (b) the entire sentence as shown by (4b):

- (4) a. *lam yakrah zaydun hindan bal 'ašiqahā*  
not detests Zayd-nom Hind-acc but loved-he-her  
Zayd didn't detest Hind, he loved her
- b. *lam yasquṭi l-mataru*  
not fall the-rain  
It wasn't raining

Data suggest that *lam* is not used to negate one of the constituents of the sentence. This is evidenced by the fact that sentence like (5) are highly marked if not ungrammatical:

<sup>1</sup> In a variety of colloquial Egyptian Arabic, however, we can find negative constructions where the particle *lam* is associated with a *fa'al* verbal predicate as in the following sentence (extracted from an old song):

- (i) *bi-t-tibri lam bi'tukum, bi-t-tibni bi'ūni*  
with gold not sold-I-you with hay sold-you-me

I do not know whether the constructions exemplified in (i) come from an ancient non-standard Arabic dialect. Be that as it may, this kind of negative constructions do not occur even in standard colloquial Egyptian Arabic.

- (5) ?*lam ya'saq zaydun hindan bal zaynaba*  
 not loves Zayd-nom Hind-acc but Zaynab-acc  
 Zayd didn't love Hind; he loved Zaynab

That *lam* cannot have a single constituent in its scope is corroborated by the fact that the insertion of a constituent between it and the verbal predicate is prohibited as the ungrammaticality of (6) shows.<sup>2</sup>

- (6) ?*lam hindan ya'saq zaydun*  
 not Hind-acc love Zayd-nom

### 1.1.2 *lan*

In general, *lan* has the same distributional features as *lam*. It combines only with a verbal predicate. Witness the ungrammaticality of (7b-c):

- (7) a. *lan ya'tiya zaydun*  
 not come-fut Zayd-nom  
 Zayd won't come  
 b. \**lan zaydun 'ustāḍun*  
 not Zayd-nom teacher-nom  
 Zayd isn't a teacher  
 c. \**lan zaydun marfīḍun*  
 not Zayd-nom ill-nom  
 Zayd isn't ill

It is never associated with a *fa'al* verbal predicate as the ungrammaticality of (8) shows:

- (8) \**lan 'atā zaydun*  
 not came Zayd-nom  
 Zayd didn't come

Like *lam*, this particle serves to negate either the verbal predicate it attaches to or the whole sentence. These two possible scopes can be illustrated by sentences (9a-b):

- (9) a. *lan yatazawwaḡa zaydun hindan bal sayufāriḡhā*  
 not marries Zayd-nom Hind-acc but will leave-he-her  
 b. *lan yasqūṭa l-mataru bal sayasfū l-ḡawwu*  
 not falls the-rain-nom but fair the-weather-nom  
 It won't rain; the weather will improve

The constructions understood on the basis that *lan* has in its scope a single constituent other than the predicate are highly marked:

<sup>2</sup> The negative constructions where *lam* preceded by a constituent are grammatical but highly marked; compare (5), for example, and (ii):

(ii) ?? *hindan lam ya'saq zaydun*  
 Hind-acc not loved Zayd-nom  
 It's Hind that Zayd didn't love

(iii) Like *lam*, *lan* may be preceded by a constituent but the result is a highly marked construction:

(iv) *hindan lan yatazawwaḡa zaydun*  
 Hind-acc not will marry Zayd-nom  
 It's not Hind that Zayd will marry

- (10) ??*lan yatazawwaġa zaydun hindan bal zaynaba*  
 not marries Zayd-nom Hind-acc but Zaynab-acc  
 Zayd will not marry Hind, he will marry Zaynab

As a consequence of this property, *lan* cannot be separated from the predicate by another constituent. The ungrammaticality of (11), for example, illustrates the point:

- (11) \**lan hindan yatazawwaġa zaydun*  
 not Hind-acc will marry Zayd-nom  
 Zayd will not marry Hind

However, *lan* differs distributionally from *lam* with respect to mood, aspect and tense features. *lam*, as mentioned above, combines with a verb form in the indicative mood, the perfective aspect and the past tense whereas *lan* attaches to a verb conjugated at the subjunctive mood, the imperfective aspect and the future tense as shown by the contrast between (12a) and (12b) :

- (12) a. *lan yadhūla zaydun ġadan*  
 not will-go-in Zayd-nom tomorrow  
 Zayd won't go in tomorrow  
 b. \**lan yadhūl zaydun l-bāriġata*  
 not go-in Zayd-nom yesterday  
 Zayd didn't go in yesterday

### 1.1.3 *laysa*

It was argued in (Moutaouakil 1986) that *laysa* is a categorically 'hybrid' word: it behaves at once like a copular (or an auxiliary) verb and a negative morpheme. This negative verb-particle co-occurs with a (verbal or non-verbal) predicate with which are associated the aspectual and tensal features : "Imperfective" and "Present".

As a copular verb, it commutates with 'zero-copula' in present tense non-verbal sentences. Compare :

- (13) a. *zaydun tālibun*  
 Zayd-nom student-nom  
 Zayd is a student  
 b. *hindun ġamīlatan*  
 Hind-nom beautiful-nom  
 Hind is beautiful
- (14) a. *laysa zaydun tāliban*  
 is-not Zayd-nom student-acc  
 Zayd isn't a student  
 b. *laysat hindun ġamīlatan*  
 is-not Hind-nom beautiful-acc  
 Hind isn't beautiful

### 1.1.4 *mā*

The particle *mā* is used as a negative morpheme in sentences with a verbal, a nominal or an adjectival predicate as witnessed in sentences (15 a-c) :

- (15) a. *mā 'aḥabba zaydun hindan*  
 not loved Zayd-nom Hind-acc  
 Zayd didn't love Hind

- b. *mā* *ḥālidun* *qaṣṣāṣun*  
 not *Hālid*-nom novelist-nom  
*Hālid* isn't a novelist
- c. *mā* *hindun* *ḡaniyyatun*  
 not *Hind*-nom rich-nom  
*Hind* isn't rich

This particle cannot, however, combine with a verbal predicate taking the form *yaf 'al* except when it constitutes a discontinuous negative morpheme with the restrictive particle *'illā*. The contrast (16a) - (16b) illustrates the point:

- (16) a. ??? *mā yuḥibbu zaydun hindan*  
 not loves Zayd-nom Hind-acc  
 Zayd doesn't love Hind
- b. *mā yuḥibbu zaydun 'illā hindan*  
 not loves Zayd-nom except Hind-acc  
 Zayd doesn't love but Hind

*mā* has the property of serving to negate (a) the predicate of the sentence, (b) the sentence in its entirety or (c) one of the constituents of the sentence as shown by the following examples:

- (17) a. *mā 'aḥabba zaydun hindan bal karihahā*  
 not loved Zayd-nom Hind-acc but detested-he her  
 Zayd didn't love Hind, he detested her
- b. *mā nazala l-mataru*  
 not fell the-rain-nom  
 It hasn't rained
- c. *mā hindan 'aḥabba zaydun bal zaynaba*  
 not Hind-acc loved Zayd-nom but Zaynab-acc  
 Zayd didn't love Hind; he loved Zaynab

Unlike the other negative particles examined above, *mā* does not attach to the predicate; rather, it occupies the first position in the initial area of the sentence. This can be evidenced by the following two facts:

(i) Unlike the other negatives, *mā* tolerates the insertion of the negated constituent between it and the predicate as shown by sentence (17c); further, the constituent being in its scope must follow it<sup>3</sup> as the contrast (18a) - (18b) shows:

- (18) a. *mā hindan ra'aytu*  
 not Hind-acc saw-I  
 It wasn't Hind that I saw
- b. ??? *mā ra'aytu hindan*

<sup>3</sup> With respect to this behaviour, *mā* resembles other sentential operators. I pointed out elsewhere (Moutaouakil 1984) that the interrogative particle *'a* has the property of attracting the constituent falling under its scope (ie. the questioned constituents) as is shown by the contrast (Va)-(Vb):

- (v) a. *'a zaydan qābalta 'am 'amran?*  
 Int-Part Zayd-acc met-you or 'Amr-acc  
 Was it Zayd that you met or 'Amr?
- b. ??? *'a qābalta zaydan 'am 'amran?*  
 Int-Part met-you Zayd-acc or 'Amr-acc  
 Was it Zayd that you met or 'Amr?

(ii) No internal constituent can be positioned before *mā*;<sup>4</sup> witness the ungrammaticality of constructions like (19):

- (19) *hindan mā ra'aytu*  
 Hind-acc not saw-I  
 It wasn't Hind that I saw

### 1.1.5 *lā*

*lā* is the negative particle which has the widest distributional field. It appears, therefore, in the most frequent negative constructions. I will try to account for the distribution of this particle by distinguishing four classes of environments: (a) *lā* + Verb, (b) *lā* + Nominal, (c) *lā* + Proposition and (d) *lā* as a coordinating particle. In this following subsection I will examine the properties of this negative particle in each of the four distributional classes.

#### 1.1.5.1 *lā* + Verb

In *lā* + Verb environment the particle *lā* is associated with a *yaf'al*-Verb. The verb with which this particle is associated must be (conjugated) in the indicative mood and must express the imperfective aspect and the present tense. These requirements are fulfilled in sentence (20):

- (20) *lā yanziṭu l-maṭaru l-yawma*  
 not falls the-rain-nom today  
 It isn't raining today

The verb may as well express 'zero-tense'<sup>5</sup> as in (21):

- (21) *lā yaktubu zayḍun aš-šī'ra bal yaktubu l-qiṣaṣa*  
 not write Zayd-nom the poetry but writes-he the novels-acc  
 Zayd doesn't write poetry; he writes novels

<sup>4</sup> This constitutes one of the main properties of all sentential operators, which do not tolerate the positioning of some constituent before them, except when the pre-posed constituent is 'external' to the nuclear clause proper. Compare:

- (vi) a. \* *zaydan mā 'a'aytu kitāban*  
 Zayd-acc not gave-I book-acc  
 It is not Zayd that I gave a book  
 b. *zayḍun, mā 'a'aytuhu kitāban*  
 Zayd-nom not gave-I-him book-acc  
 Zayd, I didn't give him a book  
 (vii) a. \* *zaydan 'a 'a'tayta kitāban ?*  
 Zayd-acc Int-Part gave-you book-acc  
 Was it Zayd that you gave a book?  
 b. *zayḍun, 'a 'a'taytahu kitāban?*  
 Zayd-nom Int-Part gave-you-him book-acc  
 Zayd, did you give him a book?

Sentences (vi b) and (vii b), unlike sentences (vi a) and (vii a), are grammatical because the constituents preceding *mā* and *'a* are themes, i.e. constituents which do not belong to the clause proper.

<sup>5</sup> By 'zero-tense', I mean what is traditionally called 'habitual present'. This tensal category indicates, in fact, no tense at all since the state of affairs designated by the predicate with which it is associated is conceived of as being true in the past, the present as well in the future.

The conclusion which may be drawn from the preceding remarks is that *lā* cannot combine with a Verb taking the scheme *fa'al* as shown by the ungrammaticality of (22):

- (22) \**lā nāma ḥālidun*  
 not slept Ḥālid-nom  
 Ḥālid didn't sleep

This constraint is neutralized, however, when the illocutionary force associated with the sentence is a *prayer*.<sup>6</sup> In this case, sentences within which *lā* is used with a *fa'al* verb are grammatical. For example, sentence (23) becomes perfectly grammatical when it is understood on the basis that it expresses not a statement but a 'prayer':

- (23) *lā nāma ḥālidun*  
 not sleeps Ḥālid-nom  
 I wish that Ḥālid didn't sleep

*lā* may be used also with an imperative sentence as in (24):

- (24) *lā taḍrib 'ahāka!*  
 not hit-you brother-acc-you  
 Don't hit your brother

In fact, only *lā* can be used to negate an imperative sentence. The contrast between (24) and (25a-b) illustrates this point:

- (25) a. \**lam taḍrib 'ahāka!*  
 not hit-you brother-acc-you  
 b. \**lan taḍrib 'ahāka*  
 not hit-you brother-acc-you  
 c. \**mā taḍrib 'ahāka*  
 not hit brother-acc-you

Like *lam* and *lan*, the negative *lā* can have in its scope (a) the predicate, (b) one of the constituents of the sentence or (c) the whole sentence. Sentences (26a-c) illustrate these three types of negation scope:

- (26) a. *lā taḍrib 'ahāka bal qabbilhu*  
 not hit brother-acc-you but kiss-you-him  
 Don't hit your brother but kiss him  
 b. *lā taḍrib 'ahāka bal 'aduwakka*  
 not hit brother-acc-you but enemy-acc-you  
 Don't hit your brother, hit your enemy  
 c. *lā yanzilu l-maṭaru*  
 not falls the-rain-nom  
 It's not raining

Like *lam* and *lan*, it attaches to the predicate so it cannot be separated from it by another constituent as shown by the ungrammaticality of (27):

- (27) \**lā 'amran yuqābilu ḥālidun*  
 not 'Amr-acc meets Ḥālid-nom  
 It isn't 'A. that Ḥ. meets

<sup>6</sup> It is possible to describe this property in terms of mood. One can speak in this case of jussive mood.

1.1.5.2 *lā* + Noun

Consider the following two sentences:

- (28) a. *lā raḡula fī d-dāri*  
 not man-acc in the-house-gen  
 There is no man in the house  
 b. *lā raḡulun fī d-dāri*  
 not a-man-nom in the-house-gen  
 There isn't a man in the house

In this pair of sentences, the particle *lā* combines not with the predicate of the sentence but with a noun, i.e. *raḡula* in (28a) and *raḡulun* in (28b). This is evidenced by the fact that no other constituent can be inserted between them. Witness the ungrammaticality of (29a-b):

- (29) a. \**lā fī d-dāri raḡula*  
 not in the-house-gen man-acc  
 b. \**lā fī d-dāri raḡulun*  
 not in the-house-gen a-man-nom

Furthermore, it can have in its scope only the noun which it attaches to as it clear from the contrast between (30) and (31):

- (30) *lā raḡula fī d-dāri bal mra'atun*  
 not man-acc in the-house-gen but woman-nom  
 There is not a man in the house, but a woman  
 (31) \**lā raḡula fī d-dāri bal fī š-šār'i*  
 not man-acc in the-house-gen but in the-street  
 There is not a man in the house, but in the street

In fact, this particle can negate (a) the whole constituent with it combines as shown by (30) or (b) only the number feature associated with this constituent as in (32):

- (32) *lā raḡulun fī d-dāri bal raḡulāni/riḡālun*  
 not man-nom in the-house-gen but man-dual-nom/man-plur-nom  
 There is not one man in the house but two men/many men

It is never used to negate the whole sentence within which it occurs, witness the ungrammaticality of (33):

- (33) \**lā raḡula fī d-dāri bal zaydun fī š-šār'i*  
 not man-acc in the-house-gen but Zayd-nom in the-street

From the observation above, we can deduce that the most distinguishing property of the particle *lā* is that it is the negative morpheme which serves in MSA to negate in all contexts the nominal constituents to which it attaches.

At first glance it seems to behave like the English negative *no* occurring in constructions like (34), for example:

- (34) No man is in the room.

However, contrary to expectation, *lā* can attach only to the nominal constituent functioning as subject. Sentences where it appears with a constituent having another functional status are ungrammatical. Compare:

- (35) a. *lā kitāba fī l-maktabati*  
 no book-acc in the-library-gen  
 There is no book in the library

- b. *lā šay'a yahummu*  
 no thing does-matter-nom  
 Nothing is important
- (36) a. \**ra'aytu lā rağula*  
 saw-I no man-acc  
 b. \**a'aytu lā rağula mālan*  
 gave-I no man-acc money-acc  
 I gave no man money

Before closing this examination of *lā + N* negative pattern, we should notice that only an indefinite noun can co-occur with the particle *lā*. The contrast (37a)-(37b) illustrates the point:

- (37) a. *lā tilmīdā fī l-qismi*  
 not pupil-acc in the-class-room-gen  
 There is no pupil in the class-room  
 b. \**lā t-ilmīdā fī l-qismi*  
 not the-pupil-nom in the-class-room-gen  
 The pupil isn't in the class-room

*lā* can, however, combine with a definite noun when it is iterated in coordinative constructions like (38):

- (38) *lā t-ilmīdū fī l-qismi wa-lā l-'ustādū*<sup>7</sup>  
 not the-pupil-nom in the-class-room-gen and not the-teacher-nom  
 In the class-room, there is neither the pupil nor the teacher

I will return to this kind of negated coordinative constructions in the following subsection.

### 1.1.5.3 *lā* as a coordinator

In a functional study of coordinative constructions in Arabic (Moutaouakil 1986), I have shown that the negative *lā* used as a coordinator, has the following properties:

(i) It serves to coordinate two constituents, which can be nominals, verbs or adjectives as in (39a), (39b) and (39c) respectively:

- (39) a. *šaribtu šāyan lā labanan*  
 drunk-I tea-acc not milk-acc  
 I have drunk tea not milk  
 b. *rasaba lā nağaha zaydun*  
 failed not succeeded Zayd-nom  
 Zayd didn't succeed; he failed

<sup>7</sup> In constructions like (35), the second coordinate element can be adjacent to the first one as in the following sentence:

(viii) *lā t-ilmīdū wa-lā l-'ustādū fī l-qismi*  
 not the-pupil-nom and not the-teacher-nom in the-class-room-gen

In the classroom, there is neither the pupil nor the teacher

The two kinds of coordinated negative constructions, however, are not synonymous. It seems to me that the second coordinated element gets a focal value when it is separated from the first coordinated element.

- c. *hindun fariḥatun lā ḥazīnatun*  
 Hind-nom happy-nom not sad-nom  
 Hind is happy not sad

(ii) Unlike the coordinator *wa* ('and'), *lā* cannot coordinate more than two constituents. Compare:

- (40) a. *iṣṭaraytu kitāban wa-mağallatan wa-qalamān*  
 bought-I book-acc and journal-acc and pencil-acc  
 I bought a book, a journal and a pencil  
 b. *iṣṭaraytu kitāban lā mağallatan*  
 bought-I book-acc not journal-acc  
 I bought a book not a journal  
 c. *\*iṣṭaraytu kitāban lā mağallatan lā qalamān*  
 bought-I book-acc not journal-acc not pencil-acc

(iii) *wa*, unlike *lā*, can coordinate two sentences as the contrast between (41a) and (41b) shows:

- (41) a. *dahāla zaydun wa-ḥarağat hindun*  
 went-in Zayd-nom and went-out Hind-nom  
 Zayd went in and Hind went out  
 b. *\*dahāla zaydun lā ḥarağat hindun*  
 went-in Zayd-nom not went-out Hind-nom

(iv) *lā* occurs in non negative contexts as is the case in sentence (40b) for example. However, it appears in sentences negated by means of one of the other negative particles<sup>8</sup> following the coordinator *wa* as in (42):

- (42) *mā šaribtu šāyan wa-lā labānan*  
 not drank-I tea-acc and not milk-acc  
 I haven't drank tea nor milk

### 1.2 Complex negative particles

As mentioned above, Complex negative particles consist of discontinuous morphemes like *mā...illā*, *lā...illā*, *lam...illā* (all translatable by 'not...but'). These compound negative morphemes are used in the following way: The first element appears in the initial positional area of the sentence; the second element attaches to one of its constituents as witnessed in the following sentences:

- (43) a. *mā ḡā'a illā zaydun*  
 not came except Zayd-nom  
 Only Zayd has come

<sup>8</sup>The ancient Arab grammarians assume that the coordination is expressed, in constructions like (39), only by the coordinator *wa*. It seems to me that it would be more reasonable to regard the whole compound particle *wa-lā* as expressing the coordination in this kind of construction. This view is evidenced by the fact that *lā* cannot co-occur with a coordinator other than *wa* as the ungrammaticality of the following sentences show:

- (ix) a - \* *mā šaribtu šāyan fa-lā labānan*  
 not drank-I tea-acc and not milk-acc  
 b - \* *mā šaribtu šāyan tumma lā labānan*  
 not drank-I tea-acc and not milk-acc

- b. *lam yanğah 'illā hālidun* \*  
 not succeeded except Hālid-nom  
 Only Hālid has succeeded
- c. *lā yaktubu 'amrin 'illā š-šīra*  
 not writes 'Amr-nom except poetry-acc  
 'Amr writes only poetry
- d. *lan 'ahruğa 'illā ft l-masā'i*  
 not go-out-I except in the-evening-gen  
 I will go out only in the evening

Notice that any simple negative can combine with 'illā to constitute a complex discontinuous negative morpheme. In sentences (43a-d), the negatives *mā*, *lam*, *lā* and *lan* are associated with this particle. We can get also discontinuous negative morphemes whose first element is the particle *laysa* or the particle 'in as in (44a) and (44b):

- (44) a. *laysa zaydun 'illā ā'iran*  
 not Zayd-nom except poet-acc  
 Zayd isn't but a poet
- b. 'in *hindun 'illā šadīqatun*  
 not Hind-nom except friend-nom  
 Hind isn't but a friend

It should be noted, however, that the particle 'in unlike the other particles, always appears in combination with 'illā. The sentences where it appears alone seem highly marked<sup>9</sup> if not ungrammatical at all:

- (45) ??? 'in 'a'lamu hal ġā'a 'amrin  
 not know-I Int-part came 'Amr-nom  
 I don't know if 'Amr has come

As regards the semantics of the constructions containing the complex negative particles at hand, it was established by the ancient Arab grammarians that these constructions are used to express what was called *al-ḥaṣr* ('restriction'). According to these grammarians, the constructions in question are used to express two notions at once: the notion of negation and the notion of restriction. More explicitly speaking, in this kind of constructions a certain property is negated with respect to some set of entities and restricted to one of these entities. In sentence (43a), for instance, the property designated by the predicate *ġā'a* is assumed to be irrelevant for a certain potential set of entities and restricted to one of these entities that referred to by the constituent *zaydun*.

Before closing this section I would point out that in Arabic some constituents behave like negative morphemes in the sentence which are always associated with negative particles. This class of constituents includes: 'ahad, ('somebody'), šay' ('something'), qaṭu and 'abadan (both translatable by 'never'). The occurrence of these constituents is illustrated by the following sentences:

<sup>9</sup> Constructions like (42) were frequent in Classical Arabic, as witnessed in traditional grammar handbooks. In MSA, however, it seems that their use becomes quite limited.

- (46) a. *mā qābaltu 'ahadan*  
not met-I some-body-acc  
I met nobody
- b. *mā fa'altu šay'an*  
not wrote-I something  
I did nothing
- c. *mā katabtu l-qišaša qattu*  
not wrote-I the-novels never  
I never wrote novels
- d. *lan 'udahhina 'abadan*  
not smoke-I never  
I will never smoke

It is possible to regard these constituents as forming with the negative particle with which they are associated a single negative discontinuous morpheme.<sup>10</sup> This claim may be grounded by the following facts:

(i) The constituents at hand never occur in a non-negative context, witness the ungrammaticality of (47a-b):

- (47) a. \**qābaltu 'ahadan*  
met-I somebody  
I met somebody
- b. \**katabtu l-qišaša qattu*  
wrote-I the-novels-acc never
- c. ? *'udahhinu 'abadan*  
smoke-I never

The word *šay'*, however, may appear in a non-negative construction. (48), for example, is a perfectly grammatical sentence:

- (48) *katabtu šay'an*  
wrote-I something-acc

For explaining this phenomenon one can hypothesize that the 'grammaticalization' process involved in constructions like (46a) and (46c-d) has not yet arrived at its achievement in construction like (46b). In other words, unlike *'ahad*, *qattu* and *'abadan*, *šay'* is not yet completely 'grammaticalized' as an element of a complex (discontinuous) negative morpheme.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> There are grounds to believe that these words tend to constitute with the negative particle what is sometimes referred to as 'embracing negation' a phenomenon witnessed in French (*ne...pas*, *ne...jamais*, *ne...personne* etc...) among other languages.

<sup>11</sup> This grammaticalization process has taken place in modern colloquial Arabic languages, where the word *šay'* has developed into a mere suffix which attaches to the predicate of the negated constructions. Here are some examples of the relics of this word in modern colloquial Egyptian and modern colloquial Moroccan:

- (x) a. *ma ḥatariš 'ala bllak yūm*  
not come to mind-I on mind-you day  
You have never remembered me
- b. *ma ktəbš r-risla*  
not wrote-I the-letter  
I didn't write the letter

(ii) When they occur in a negative sentence these words 'monopolize' the scope of negation so as no other constituent may be understood as the negated constituent. The ungrammaticality of the following sentences lies in the fact that constituents other than *'ahad* and *qattu* fall under the scope of negation:

- (49) a. \**mā l-bārihata qābaltu 'ahadan bal al-yawma*  
 not yesterday met-I someone-acc but today-acc  
 It isn't yesterday that I didn't meet someone but today
- b. \**mā qābaltu 'ahadan al-bārihata bal al-yawma*  
 not met-I someone yesterday-acc but today-acc
- (50) a. \**mā zaydan qābaltu qattu bal 'amran*  
 not Zayd-acc met-I never but 'Amr-acc  
 It's not Zayd that I never met but 'Amr
- b. \**mā qābaltu zaydan qattu bal 'amran*  
 not met-I Zayd-acc never but 'Amr-acc

## 2. Negative constructions: the problem of the scope of negation

In Arabic (as probably in all natural languages), negative constructions differ with respect to the scope of negation. If one adopts the differences lying in the scope of negation as a classificatory criterion, one can distinguish between four main types of negation: 'sentence negation', 'constituent negation', 'illocutionary force negation' and 'modality negation'. In this section I will examine the main properties of the constructions involving each of these four types of negation.

### 2.1 Sentence negation

The negative constructions involving what we call 'sentence negation' are those constructions where the entire sentence is negated. The following sentences illustrate the point:

- (51) a. *mā sāfarat hindun*  
 not travelled Hind-nom  
 Hind hasn't travelled
- b. *lam ya'ud zaydun*  
 not come-back Zayd-nom  
 Zayd hasn't come back
- c. *lan yafhama 'amrun darsa r-riyyādiyyāti*  
 not will-understand 'Amr-nom lesson-acc mathematics-gen  
 'Amr will not understand the lesson of mathematics

In (51a-c), the whole 'propositional content' falls under the scope of negation, i.e. the scope of the negative particles *mā*, *lam* and *lan*. As I have pointed out in the previous section, all the simple negative particles may serve to negate the entire propositional content of the sentences within which they appear. Examples illustrating this property are given there.

### 2.2 Constituent negation

By 'constituent negation' I mean the negation which takes in its scope one of the constituents of a sentence. The constituents which may fall under the scope of negation in the constructions involving what one may call 'partial negation' are (a) the

predicate itself or (b) one of the NPs (or PPs) associated with it. Here are some examples illustrating these two possibilities:

- (52) a. *lan yarsuba zaydun bal sayanğahu*  
 not fails Zayd-nom but will-succeed-he  
 Zayd will not fail; he will succeed
- b. *lam yahđur ʿamrun bal tağayyaba*  
 not come ʿAmr-nom but was-absent-he  
 ʿAmr hadn't come, he was absent
- (53) a. *mā hindan ʿahabba qaysun bal laylā*  
 not Hind-acc loved Qays-nom but Layla-acc  
 It wasn't Hind that Qays loved but Layla
- b. *mā masāʿan ħarağtu bal šabāhan*  
 not evening-acc went-out-I but morning-acc  
 It wasn't in the evening that I went out in the morning

The negation of constituents is constrained, however, by the following two facts:

- (i) not all constituents can be negated,  
 (ii) among negatable constituents some constituents are more accessible to negation than others.

As regards fact (i), it is commonly admitted that the constituent carrying presupposed 'old' information are hardly negatable. To put it another way, the constituent bearing the pragmatic function Topic does not fall under the scope of negation. Consider the following conversational exchange:

- (54) S : a. *māđā šaribat hindun ?*  
 what drunk Hind-nom  
 What did Hind drink ?
- A : b. *šaribat hindun qahwatan*  
 drunk Hind-nom coffee-acc  
 Hind drank coffee
- S : c. *mā qahwatan šaribat hindun bal šāyan*  
 not coffee-acc drunk Hind-nom but tea-acc  
 Hind didn't drink tea, she drank coffee
- d. *\*mā šaribat hindun qahwatan bal zaynabu*  
 not drunk Hind-nom coffee-acc but Zaynab-nom  
 It isn't Hind that drank coffee bur Zaynab

In this dialogue, it is obvious that the constituent designating the entity which functions as Topic is *hindun*. The contrast between (54c) and (54d) shows that this constituent cannot fall under the scope of negation, hence the ungrammaticality of (54). This same contrast shows also that the constituent which is the best candidate for being negated is that carrying 'new information', i.e. the constituent *qahwatan*. As all sentential operators, negation can have in its scope only the nuclear clause or one of its constituents. This implies that the constituents which do not belong to the clause proper (as the so-called 'left dislocated' and 'right dislocated' constituents) are never touched by negation, as shown by the following two contrasts:

- (55) a. *al-kitābu, mā ʿallafuhu bal saħħaħtuhu*  
 The-book-nom not wrote-I-it but corrected-I-it  
 I haven't written this book; I have only corrected it

- (56) b. *\*al-kitābu, mā 'allaftuhu bal l-qaṣīdata*  
 The-book-nom not wrote-I-it but the-poem-acc  
 The book, I haven't written it, but the poem
- a. *mā 'ahḃabtuha, hindun, bal karihtuhā*  
 not loved-I-her Hind-nom but detested-I-her  
 I didn't love her, Hind, I detested her
- b. *\*mā 'ahḃabtuḥā, hindun, bal zaynabu*  
 not loved-I-her Hind-nom but Zaynab-nom  
 I didn't love her, Hind; I love Zaynab

Notice that 'external constituents' cannot fall under the scope of negation even when they follow the negative particle, witness the ungrammaticality of sentence (57b):

- (57) a. *mā l-kitābu 'allaftuhu bal saḥḥaḥtuḥu*  
 not the-book-nom wrote-I-it but corrected-I-it
- b. *\*mā l-kitābu 'allaftuhu bal al-qaṣīdatu*  
 not the-book-nom wrote-I-it but the-poem-nom

Let us turn now to what is stated in (ii). In most works dealing with the phenomenon of negation in natural languages it is pointed out that some kinds of constituents are more likely negatable than others.

Belonging to this class of constituents are indefinite NPs, focused NPs, quantifiers and some adverbs. In order to contribute to provide an analysis which permits to account for this phenomenon in an unified and more principled way, I will make the following assumptions:

(a) In some languages, negated constituents are morpho-syntactically marked. In MSA as shown above, the constituent functioning as Subject in some peculiar constructions is marked when negated, by the negative prefix *lā*.

(b) When no constituent is morpho-syntactically marked as being the negated constituent in the sentence, the constituent which falls under the scope of negation is one of the preferred negatable words mentioned above, namely indefinite NPs, focused NPs (or PPs), quantifiers and adverbs.

(c) The examined data suggest that indefinite NPs, quantifiers and some adverbs carry 'new' (or 'contrastive') information more likely than they carry (presupposed) 'old' information. This explains the lower acceptability of sentences like (58b), (59b) and (60b) where constituents other than the indefinite NP, the quantifier and the manner adverb are in focus:

- (58) a. *'a'tā zaydun 'amran kitāban*  
 gave Zayd-nom 'Amr-nom book-acc  
 Zayd gave 'Amr a book
- b. *??? 'a'tā zaydun 'amran kitāban*  
 gave Zayd-nom 'Amr-acc book-acc  
 Zayd gave a book to 'Amr
- (59) a. *'a'tā zaydun 'amran kulla l-kutubi*  
 gave Zayd-nom 'Amr-acc all the-book-gen  
 Zayd gave to 'Amr all the books
- b. *??? 'a'tā zaydun 'amran kulla l-kutubi*  
 gave Zayd-nom 'Amr-acc all-acc the-books-acc
- (60) a. *haraḡa zaydun al-yawma mubtasiman*  
 went-out Zayd-nom today-acc smiling-acc

- b. ??? *haraġa zaydun al-yawma muhtasiman*  
 went-out Zayd-nom today-acc smiling-acc

(d) As already mentioned above, there is an indubitable connection between negation and the informational status of the constituents so that the constituent which designates the focal<sup>12</sup> information is picked out to be in the scope of negation. This is confirmed by contrasts like (61a) - (61b) and (62a) - (62b):

- (61) a. *mā 'a'tā zaydun 'amran kitāban bal maġallatan*  
 not gave Zayd-nom 'Amr-acc book-acc but a magazine-acc  
 It isn't a book that Zayd gave to 'Amr, but a magazine
- b. ??? *mā 'a'tā zaydun 'amran kitāban bal hālidan*  
 not gave Zayd-nom 'Amr-acc book-acc but Hālid-acc  
 It isn't to 'Amr that Zayd gave a book, but to Hālid
- (62) a. *mā 'a'tā zaydun 'amran kulla l-kutubi bal ba'dahā*  
 not gave Zayd-nom 'Amr-acc all the-books-gen but some of them  
 Zayd didn't give 'Amr all the books; he gave him some of them
- b. ??? *mā 'a'tā zaydun 'amran kulla l-kutubi bal hālidan*  
 not gave Zayd-nom 'Amr-acc all the-books-gen but Hālid-acc  
 Zayd didn't give all the books to 'Amr, he gave them to Hālid

It becomes clear from the comparison between the sentences of pairs (61a-b) that the constituents monopolizing the scope of negation (i.e. indefinite NPs, quantifiers and some adverbs) are precisely those constituents which also monopolize the focus of the sentence. We can conclude from this that the constituent which always falls under the scope of negation is the constituent bearing the pragmatic function Focus.

If this conclusion is correct, we can formulate the following general principle:

- (63) In a negative sentence, the negated constituent is the focused constituent<sup>13</sup>

(e) There are constituents which are more easily focused than others. The most well known are indefinite NPs, quantifiers and some adverbs. Taking for granted that this observation is correct, we can express the 'Focus Accessibility Hierarchy' as follows:

- (64) *Focus Accessibility Hierarchy:*
- |                |   |                      |
|----------------|---|----------------------|
| Indefinite NPs | } | > other constituents |
| Quantifiers    |   |                      |
| Some adverbs   |   |                      |

<sup>12</sup> In negative sentences the constituent in focus (which is the negated constituent) obligatorily carries contrastive information, i.e. the information the speaker assumes to be irrelevant with respect to the settings where the verbal exchange takes place. On the basis of this observation I will assume hereafter that the pragmatic function assigned to the focused constituent in negative constructions is the function 'focus of contrast'.

<sup>13</sup> In fact, principle (60) is also true for the constructions containing a constituent to which the negative particle *lā* is attached, since this constituent is necessarily focused. Compare:

- (xi) a. *lā tilmidun fi l-qismi bal tilmidūni*  
 not pupil-nom in the-class-room-gen but pupil-dual-nom  
 There is not a student in the class-room; there are two
- b. \* *lā tilmidun fi l-qismi bal fi s-sħati*  
 not pupil-nom in the-class-room-gen but in the play ground-gen

These preferred focused constituents have over the other constituents the privilege to monopolize the scope of negation. This property can be expressed by means of the 'Negation Accessibility Hierarchy' which I propose to formulate in the following way:

(65) *Negation Accessibility Hierarchy*:

Preferred focused constituents > focused constituents > other constituents

I have mentioned in the previous section that the particle *lā* may negate (a) the entire constituent to which it attaches or only (b) the operator numerating this constituent.

Examples (66a-b) illustrate these two scopal properties:

- (66) a. *lā tāliba fī l-qismi*  
 not student-acc in the-classroom-gen  
 There is no student in the classroom
- b. *lā tālibun fī l-qismi bal tālibāni*  
 not student-nom in the-classroom-gen but student-dual-nom  
 There is not one student in the classroom, there are two students

Constructions like (66) are not exceptional since we find negative constructions where only a constituent operator falls under the scope of the negative morpheme. The negated constituent operator may be a numerator, a demonstrative or a quantifier as in (67a), (67b) and (67c) respectively:

- (67) a. *mā kitābayni qara'tu bal 'arba'ata kutubin*  
 not book-dual-acc read-I but four-acc books  
 I haven't read two books, I have read four books
- b. *mā hādīhi l-fatāta 'a'šīqtu bal tilka*  
 not this the-girl-acc love-I but that-one-acc  
 I don't love this girl but that one
- c. *mā ġami'ā l-ašdiqā'i qābaltu bal ba'dahum*  
 not all-acc the-friends-gen met-I but some-acc-them  
 I haven't met all the friends but only some of them

This kind of constructions raises a more general problem which can be formulated in the following questions:

- (i) Can negation 'penetrate' into a constituent and pick out one of its elements?  
 (ii) Which elements can fall under the scope of negation: constituents operators, the head, or modifiers?  
 (iii) Can one of the elements (operator, head or modifier) of a constituent be focused, i.e. bear the pragmatic function Focus?

Having, for the moment, no precise answers to these questions, I prefer not to go into a more detailed discussion of the problem of 'negation within constituent'. I will keep in mind, however, in the remainder of this study, the observation that the constituent operator may be negated element in a negative construction.

### 2.3 Illocutionary force negation

In 'Speech acts theory' (and in the pragmatically based linguistic models), a sentence is conceived of as a combination of a 'Propositional content' and an 'illocutionary force' which can consist of a 'statement', a 'question' a 'promise' etc...

Among the main arguments which were presented in order to justify the distinction 'Propositional content' Vs 'illocutionary force' is the fact that in a negative sentence,

negation may have in its scope the proposition carried by the sentence as in (68a) or the illocutionary force associated with it as in (68b):

- (68) a. 'a'iduka 'annanī lan 'azūrika  
 promise-I-you that-I not visit-I-you  
 I promise that I won't visit you
- b. lā 'a'iduka 'annanī sa'azūrika  
 not promise-I-you that-I will-visit-I-you  
 I don't promise that I will visit you

In (68a) only the propositional content 'azūrika is negated; in (68b) what falls under the scope of negation is the illocutionary force as expressed by the performative clause 'a'iduka.

It should be noticed here that we have an 'illocutionary force negation' only if (a) the negated higher verb belongs to the class of so-called 'performative verbs' which includes verbs like qāl (to say), wa'ad (to promise), 'aw'ad (to threaten) and others, (b) this verb fulfils the performativity requirements.<sup>14</sup> When the second condition is not satisfied, the negated higher verb loses the property of expressing the illocutionary force although it belongs to the lexical class of performative verbs. In sentences (69a-c), for instance, the verb of the higher clause does not express any illocutionary force since it does not fulfil the performativity requirements:<sup>15</sup>

- (69) a. lam 'a'idka bi-'annanī sa'azūrika  
 not promised-you with-that-I will-visit-I-you  
 I didn't promise to visit you
- b. lā 'a'iduka katīran bi-'annani sa'azūrika  
 not promise-I-you often-acc with-that-I will-visit-I-you  
 I don't often promise to visit you
- c. lā ya'iduka 'amrun bi-'annahu sayazūrika  
 not promises-you 'Amr-nom with-that-he will-visit-he-you  
 'Amr does not promise to visit you

The negative constructions exemplified by (69a-c) do not involve an illocutionary force negation. What is involved in this kind of constructions is merely a negation taking as its scope the higher clause.

#### 2.4 Modality negation

By *modality*, I mean the "attitude the speaker may have with respect to the propositional content carried by the linguistic expression that uses in some verbal exchange". This 'propositional attitude' can be a certainty, a belief, a doubt, a will etc. In general, the modality associated with a proposition is expressed by means of a clause in which the clause indicating the propositional content is embedded, as shown by the following sentences:

<sup>14</sup> In general, for being performative, a verb must (a) be conjugated in the Present Tense, and (b) have as its subject the first singular person pronoun.

<sup>15</sup> In (69a-b) the tense requirement is not satisfied; in (69c), it is the subject requirement that is not fulfilled.

- (70) a. 'anā mutayaqqinun min 'anna hindan marīḏatun  
 I sure-nom from that Hind-acc ill-nom  
 I'm sure that Hind is ill
- b. 'azunnu 'anna hindan marīḏatun  
 believe-I that Hind-acc ill-nom  
 I believe that Hind is ill
- c. 'urīdu 'an ta'ūda hindun  
 want-I that come-back Hind-nom  
 I want Hind to come back

In this kind of complex sentences, negation may have in its scope either the higher clause as in (71a) or the lower one as in (71b):

- (71) a. lā 'azunnu 'anna hindan marīḏatun  
 not believe-I that Hind-acc ill-nom  
 I don't believe that Hind is ill
- b. 'azunnu 'anna hindan laysat marīḏatan  
 believe-I that Hind-acc is-not ill-acc  
 I believe that Hind isn't ill

In the latter case, the part of the sentence which is negated is its propositional content; in the former case, what is negated is the modality associated with this propositional content.

### 3. Is negation a speech act?

According to some grammarians<sup>16</sup> and some linguists,<sup>17</sup> negation is a speech act in the sense that it consists of a denial of some information assumed by the speaker to be irrelevant. The speaker performing the following two sentences, for example, assumes that the information carried by the whole sentence and by the constituent *mīṭāfan* is irrelevant and, thus, denies it:

- (72) a. mā gādara 'amnun al-bayta  
 not left 'Amr-nom the-house-acc  
 'Amr didn't leave the house
- b. mā mīṭāfan iṣṭaraytu  
 not coat-acc bought-I  
 It wasn't a coat that I bought

A closer look at negative constructions across natural languages shows, however, that negation cannot be reasonably conceived of as a real speech act. The main argument which can be presented in favour of the claim that negation is not a speech act is the fact that it may combine with other speech acts like Assertion, Question, Command and so on. This is witnessed in sentences like (73a-c), for example:

<sup>16</sup> In Ancient Arab linguistic thought, negated imperative constructions are seen as tools for performing the act of *nahy* (approximately translatable by 'prohibition').

<sup>17</sup> In his pragmatic study of negative constructions, Givón (1978) tends to regard negation as a speech act.

- (73) a. *lam yuqābil hālidun hindan*  
 not met Hālid-nom Hind-acc  
 Hālid didn't meet Hind
- b. 'a mā 'a'taytuka l-kitāba ?  
 Int-Part not gave-I-you the-book-acc  
 Didn't I give you the book
- c. *lā tadḥul* !  
 not go-in-you  
 Don't go in

Furthermore, negation may have in its scope a speech act as in sentences (68b) repeated here for convenience:

- (68) b. *lā 'a'iduka 'annanf sa'azūruka*  
 not promise-I-you that-I will visit-I-you  
 I don't promise that I will visit you

If negation is not a speech act, i.e. if it is not comparable to alleged speech acts like 'Statement', 'Question', 'Command', 'Promise' etc, what is its exact (pragmatic) functional status? For contributing to answer this question, I will make the following assumption: Among the speech acts the speaker can perform by means of linguistic expressions examined here is that of denying an information assumed by him/her to be irrelevant with respect to a given setting. He/she can also provide the addressee with the information he/she assumes to be relevant in the given setting. The following dialogue illustrates the point:

- (74) A: a. *ištarat hindun ḥidā'an*  
 bought Hind-nom shoes-acc  
 Hind bought shoes
- B: b. *mā ḥidā'an ištarat hindun*  
 not shoes-acc bought Hind-nom  
 It was not shoes that Hind bought
- c. *mā ḥidā'an ištarat hindun bal mi'tafan*  
 not shoes-acc bought Hind-nom but coat-acc  
 It wasn't shoes that Hind bought, but a coat
- d. *mi'tafan ištarat hindun lā ḥidā'an*  
 coat-acc bought Hind-nom not shoes-acc  
 It was a coat that Hind bought, not shoes

Sentences (74b-d) all are corrective answers to sentence (74a) in the sense that the speaker B assumes the information carried by the constituent *ḥidā'an* to be irrelevant with respect to the setting within which this dialogue takes place. In (74b), the irrelevant information is merely denied; in sentences (74c-d), not only is this information denied but it is also replaced by alternative information, i.e. the information the speaker assumes to be relevant with respect to the given setting.

On the basis of these observations, one can hypothesize that negation is a syntactic tool expressing the denial of an information assumed, in some setting, to be irrelevant. In other words, negation is not in itself a speech act; it is rather the formal expression of a speech act which consists of denying some irrelevant information. Accordingly, what can be conceived of as a speech act in negative constructions is the denial performed through these constructions, not the negation.

In the light of this hypothesis, the denial can be viewed as part of a more general speech act (i.e. a 'macro speech act') which one can call 'Refutation'. This speech act would consist of two sub-acts (or 'micro-acts'):

(a) The act of denying the irrelevant information (which can be carried by the whole clause or only by one of its constituents) and (b) the act of giving alternatives, i.e. the act of replacing the irrelevant information by the information assumed to be relevant. In this analysis, negation can be conceived of only as a morpho-syntactic means for expressing the former sub-act, i.e. the act of denial.

#### 4. Towards a functional grammar of negation

In this section I will try to sketch out a grammar of negation in Arabic within the FG framework. Before doing so, I will briefly recall the general organization of the grammar in this theory and the early proposals made within it for describing the properties of negative constructions in natural languages.

##### 4.1 Functional Grammar: An outline

In FG framework, linguistic expressions (i.e. sentences) are derived through building three main structures. These are: (a) 'predicative structure', (b) 'functional structure' and (c) 'constituent structure'.

Predicative structure is a formal representation of the logico-semantic properties of the sentence. There are specified: (a) the abstract form of the predicate and its syntactic category, (b) the 'terms' (arguments and satellites) associated with the predicate, (c) the semantic functions (Agent, Goal, Recipient...) that terms bear with respect to the state of affairs designated by the predicate and (d) the operators associated with the predicate.

- (75) *šaribat hindun labanan*  
 drunk Hind-nom milk-acc  
 Hind drunk milk

- (76) [Ind [Perf [Pass *šarib* V (d1f<sup>x</sup> : *hind* (x<sup>1</sup>)) Ag (d1mx<sup>2</sup> : *laban* (x<sup>2</sup>)) Go]]]

In structure (75), *šarib*, is represented as being a two-place verbal predicate taking the terms *hind* and *laban* as its Agent and Goal arguments respectively. In the same structure, are coded the modal ((Ind(icative)), aspectual ((Perf(ective)) and temporal ((Pas(t)) operators and the operators associated with the two arguments, namely: 'definiteness' (represented as 'd'), number (represented as '1' for singular) and gender (represented as 'm' for masculine and 'f' for feminine).

The predicative structure is converted into a functional structure through the application of two sets of rules: (a) the functions assignment rules and (b) the predication operator specification rules. The terms of the predicative structure are assigned two kinds of functions: syntactic functions (Subject and Object) and pragmatic functions (Topic and Focus). Notice that we distinguish, between two types of Focus: 'Focus of new' and 'Focus of contrast' (cf. Moutaouakil 1984). The former function is assigned to the term (or the predication) carrying information unknown to the speaker or the hearer; the latter function is assigned to the term (or the predication) carrying the information constituting the contrastive difference in the pragmatic knowledge of the speaker and the hearer. The predication operator serves to indicate the illocutionary force associated with the predication. In Moutaouakil



In pattern (81), two kinds of positions and 'external' positions. External positions are the positions occupied by the constituents which do not belong to the predication proper, i.e., the constituents theme, tail and vocative. These constituents are basically located in P2, P3 and P4 respectively according to the general schema (82):

(82) Vocative, theme (i), [iii xi iii], Tail

As for the so-called 'internal positions', they are filled according to the following procedure: 'P1-constituents' (i.e. subordinators, relative pronouns and illocutionary force devices) go to the absolute initial position P1; questioned words (i.e. interrogative pronouns) and the constituents bearing Topic function or Focus of contrast function occupy the second initial position P0. Rules (83) and (84) have been formulated to account for the placement of these two kinds of constituents.

(83) P1 constituents —> P1

(84) ? Pro  
Top  
Foc contr | —> P0

Here are some examples illustrating the order of constituents resulting from the application of rule (83) and rule (84) respectively:

(85) a. *hal raġa'a hālidun ?*  
Int-particle came-back Hālid-nom  
Did Hālid come back ?

b. *'inna hindan luġawiyyatun mumtāzatun*  
Foc-particle Hind-acc linguist-nom excellent-nom  
Hind is surely an excellent linguist

(86) a. *man qābalta ?*  
Who met-you  
Who did you meet ?

b. *fī l-maqhā (Top) šaribtu šāyan*  
in the-cafe-gen drank-I tea-acc  
In the cafe, I drank tea

c. *šāyan (Foc contr) šaribtu*  
tea-acc drunk-I  
It was tea that I drank

The three positions V, S and O are filled by the verbal predicate and the constituents bearing Subject and Object functions, according to rules (87 a-c):

(87) a. Verb —> V  
b. Subj —> S  
c. Obj —> O

PT is a 'special' position<sup>19</sup> which may be occupied, under certain conditions, by the constituent bearing the Topic function or by the constituent which must be preposed according to the so-called 'Lipoc' principle.<sup>20</sup> Sentences (88 a-b) illustrate the point:

<sup>19</sup> Arguments in favour of postulating this position are given in Moutaouakil (forthcoming, a).

<sup>20</sup> According to the principle of 'language independent preferred order of constituents', the constituents are ordered with respect to their categorial complexity, so that the more complex constituents tend to be placed after the less complex ones.

- (88) a. *šaribati l-labana* (Top) *hindun*  
 drank the-milk-acc Hind-nom  
 Hind drunk milk
- b. *'ahzana hindan 'ann 'amran ġādara r-ribāta*<sup>21</sup>  
 saddened Hind-acc that 'Amr-acc left Rabat-acc  
 Hind was saddened by the fact that 'Amr left Rabat

As for X, it is conceived of as the positional area (containing more than one position) within which are located all the constituents which have not any syntactic nor any pragmatic functions enabling them to be placed in a special position. The general rule responsible for the placement of this kind of constituents is formulated as follows:

- (89) X-constituents —> X

In sentence (90), for example, the constituents *al-yawma* and *fī l-maqhā* both occupy the X positional area according to rule (89):

- (90) *qābalat zaynabu hindan al-yawma fī l-maqhā*  
 met Zaynab-nom Hind-acc today-acc in the cafe-gen  
 Zaynab met Hind today in the cafe

Let us turn now to the unordered structure (80). Through the application of placement rules (87 a-c) the verb *šaribat* and the constituents *hind* and *laban* bearing the syntactic functions Subject and Object are placed in the positions V,S and O respectively resulting in structure (91):

- (91) [*šaribat* [*hind*] [*laban*]]

This structure becomes a fully specified constituent structure through the application of the 'accent and intonation assignment rules' (which will not be explicitly discussed here).

#### 4.2 Negation in Functional Grammar

What should one notice then? First of all is the fact that negative constructions have not received, until now, great interest within the FG framework. Aside from some general assumptions about the formal representation of negative operators made in Dik's writings (1978, 1989), one does not find, as far as I can judge, any concrete study of the phenomenon of negation in the functional literature.

In the remainder of this study, I will give an outline of an approach of Arabic negative constructions compatible with the organization of the grammar in FG.

##### 4.2.1 Negative operators

The best way to formalize negation within the FG framework is to represent it by means of operators at the predicative structure level. As far as Arabic negative constructions are concerned, three negative operators can be distinguished: 'predicate negative operator', 'predication negative operator' and term negative operator'.

<sup>21</sup> In sentence (88b), the object constituent *hindan* precedes the subject constituent *'anna 'amran ġādara r-ribāta* because the latter constituent is categorically more complex than the former. The functionally motivated ordering of these two constituents would lead to the following highly marked construction:

- (xii) ??? *'ahzana 'anna 'amran ġādara r-ribāta hindan*  
 saddened that 'Amr-acc left Rabat-acc Hind-acc

## 4.2.1.1 Predicate negative operator

In the predicative structure underlying some negative sentences, a negative operator (noted Neg) is added to the combination of predicate operators representing the mood, aspect and tense features of the predicate. According to this analysis, the predicate structure underlying sentence (92), for example, can be represented as (93):

- (92) *lam tašrab hindun labanan*  
 not drinks Hind-nom milk-acc  
 Hind didn't drink milk
- (93) [Neg [Ind [Perf [Past *šarib* V (d1fx<sup>1</sup> : *hind* (x<sup>1</sup>)) Ag (d1mx<sup>2</sup> : *laban* (x<sup>2</sup>)) Go]]]]

## 4.2.1.2 Predication negative operator

In the predicative structures of some other negative sentences, namely those containing the negative particle *mā*, negation is coded by means of a predication negative operator (also noted Neg). This representation differs from that adopted above in that the operator Neg does not belong to the combination of the predicate operators. It is rather a part of the combination of the potential predication operators as it becomes clear from predicative structure (95) which can be regarded as representing the underlying structure of sentence (94):

- (94) *mā šaribat hindun labanan*  
 not drank Hind-nom milk-acc  
 Hind didn't drink milk
- (95) [Neg ([Ind [Perf [Past *šarib* V]]]) (d1fx<sup>1</sup> : *hind* (x<sup>1</sup>)) Ag (d1mx<sup>2</sup> : *laban* (x<sup>2</sup>)) Go]

## 4.2.1.3 Term negative operator

In section 1 I have pointed out that the negative particle *lā* attaches to the constituent functioning as Subject in negative constructions like (96):

- (96) *lā tāliba ġā'ibun*  
 not student-acc absent-nom  
 No student is absent

It goes without saying that in this kind of constructions the negative particle must be represented in the underlying predicative structure as an operator belonging to the combination of operators associated with the negated term. According to this conception, the predicative structure of sentence (96) would be something like (97):

- (97) [Ind [Imperf [Pres *ġā'ib* A (Neg ilm<sup>x</sup><sup>1</sup> : *tālib*(x<sup>1</sup>)) Po]]]

To sum up: the particles used in MSA to express negation are represented at the (underlying) predicative structure level by means of three kinds of operators: predicate operator, predication operator and term operator. This analysis seems to me more adequate than any other analysis backed by the assumption that negative particles can be represented in the underlying structure by one (and only one) abstract negative marker attached to the S-node, the Aux-node or the determiner

node of some constituent.<sup>22</sup> Such an analysis would necessarily imply the use of transformational rules which permit to incorporate the negative morpheme into the negated constituent. The analysis we have adopted does not need any transformational rule for it basically specifies the location of the negative morpheme, i.e. it determines in the underlying structure itself the constituent to which this morpheme will be attached. This same property prevents it from generating structures which are never actually realized.

#### 4.2.2 Negative operators and the scope of negation

As shown in section 2, some constituents may fall under the scope of the negative particle even if this particle is not directly attached to them. This implies, in terms of the analysis sketched out in the previous subsection, that some negative operators (namely predicate operator and predication operator) may have in their scope the constituent (the predicate or the whole predication) to which they attach or some other constituent. Recall that the particle *mā*, although it functions as a predication operator, may take in its scope the whole predication to which it attaches or one of its constituents as it becomes clear from the comparison of sentences (98 a-c):

- (98) a. *mā gādarat hindun al-madīnata*  
 not left Hind-nom the-city-acc  
 Hind hasn't left the city
- b. *mā gāḍibat hindun*  
 not got angry Hind-nom  
 Hind didn't get angry
- c. *mā daḡāḡan 'akalat hindun*  
 not chicken ate Hind-nom  
 It wasn't chicken that Hind ate

To deal with the problems of the scope of negation within the FG framework, I will make the following general proposals:

(i) In the case of constructions like (96) repeated here convenience:

- (96) *lā ṭāliba ḡā'ibun*  
 not student-acc absent-nom  
 No student is absent

The constituent to which the negative particle is attached is the constituent falling under the scope of negation, whatever its pragmatic function is.<sup>23</sup>

(ii) In the case of the constructions containing a negative particle attached to the whole predication (i.e. the particle *mā*) or to the predicate (i.e. the particles *lam*, *lan*, *lā*...), it is the constituent (i.e. the predication, the predicate or one of the terms) to which the pragmatic function Focus is assigned that is taken in the scope of negation, as predicted by principle (65).

According to the negation-Focus connection, the functional structures of sentences (98a), (98b) and (98c) can be represented as (99), (100) and (101) respectively:

<sup>22</sup> An overview of the main analysis proposed, since 1960, within the various generative transformational theories, is given in Lasnik (1976).

<sup>23</sup> As is noticed above, the pragmatic function that the negated constituent bears in constructions like (96) is in fact the focus of contrast.

- (99) [Ass [Neg {[Ind [Perf [Past *ğādar* V]]]}] (d1fx<sup>1</sup> : *hind* (x<sup>1</sup>)) Ag Subj Top  
(d1fx<sup>2</sup> : *madīnat* (x<sup>2</sup>)) Go Obj Foc new]
- (100) [Ass [Neg {[Ind [Perf [Past *ğadīb* V]]]}] Foc contr (d1fx<sup>1</sup> : *hind* (x<sup>1</sup>)) Po  
Subj Top]]
- (101) [Ass [Neg { [Ind [Perf [Past '*akal* V]]]}] (d1fx<sup>1</sup> : *hind* (x<sup>1</sup>)) Ag Subj Top  
(d1mx<sup>2</sup> : *dağāğ* (x<sup>2</sup>)) Go Obj Foc contr]]

In all functional structures (99-101), the negative operator is represented as a predication operator. Its scope, however, is not the same in these three structures. In (99), it takes in its scope the entire predication whereas in (100) and (101) only one element of the predication falls under its influence, i.e. the predicate and the second argument respectively. The difference in scope between the three functional structures under examination lies in which element the pragmatic function Focus is assigned to.

(iii) A functional structure containing a negative operator and an element (a predicate, a predication or a term) bearing the Focus function must be interpreted on the basis that the negated element (i.e. the element taken in the scope of the negative operator) is that element to which the Focus function is assigned.

(iv) It is commonly admitted that the notion of the scope of negation is connected with the linear order of constituents so that the negative morpheme can take in its scope only one of the constituents which precede the negative morpheme are outside its scope.

This observation seems to pose a problem for FG in the sense that in this grammar the structure in which the scope relationships are represented is unordered. This means that this kind of relationships should be represented only at the "constituent structure" level, i.e. after the constituents have been ordered. In this case, we must provide FG with an ad hoc interpretive semantic component which would operate on the output of the placement rules.

This problem vanishes, however, when we keep in mind the following observations: First, the scope of negation is connected, as shown above, with the pragmatic function Focus. Second, the connection between negation and Focus holds whatever the order of the constituent is: The focused constituent falls under the scope of the negative particle when it follows this particle as well as when it precedes it. Third, the constituents which are always outside the scope of negation are functionally marked: These are (a) the 'external' constituents theme and tail which never fall under the influence of the negative particle (this particle as stated above, can take in its scope only the predication proper or one of its elements) and (b) the internal elements bearing the pragmatic function of Topic.<sup>24</sup>

From these observations, it follows that the negative scope relationships can be captured at the level of an unordered but functionally specified structure similar to

<sup>24</sup> As already mentioned, topic constituents never fall under the influence of the negative particle even when they follow it.

the functional structure proposed within the FG framework, only on the basis of the negative morpheme-focused constituent connection.<sup>25</sup>

(v) As for the complex sentences within which the negated constituent is the higher clause expressing the illocutionary force or the modality, they can be represented, at the functional level, as complex predications with a negative operator taking in its scope the first (higher) predication. The functional structures underlying sentences (68b) and (71a) repeated here for convenience are structures (102) and (103) respectively:

(68) b. *lā 'a'iduka 'annanf sa'azīruka*  
not promise-I-you that-I will-visit-I-you

I don't promise you that I will visit you

(71) a. *lā 'azunnu 'anna hindan marīdatun*  
not believe-I that Hind-acc il-nom

I don't believe that Hind is ill

(102) [[Neg [Ind [Imperf [Pres *wa'ad* V (d1mx<sup>1</sup> : 1p(x<sup>1</sup>)) Po Subj Top]]]]] Foc  
contr (Subx<sup>2</sup> : [Ind [Imperf [Fut *zār* V (d1mx<sup>1</sup> : 1p(x<sub>j</sub>)) Ag Subj (d1mx<sup>2</sup>  
: 2p(x<sub>k</sub>)) Go Obj]]] (x<sup>2</sup>) Go Obj]

(103) [Ass {Neg [Ind [Imperf [Pres *zann* V (d1mx<sup>1</sup> : 1p(x<sup>1</sup>)) Po Subj Top]]]}  
Foc (Subx<sup>2</sup> : [Ind [Imperf [Pres *marīdat* A (d1fx<sup>1</sup> : hind(x<sub>j</sub>)) Po  
Subj]]] (x<sup>2</sup>) Go Obj]

<sup>25</sup> Contrary to expectation, this analysis is not faced by the famous problem of the scope differences involved in constructions containing both a negative particle and a quantifier. In MSA the quantifier falls under the scope of negation when it is focused, as is usually the case, whatever its position with respect to the negative particle is. The following sentences illustrate the point:

(xiii) a. *lam 'uqḏbil kulla t-talḏmīḏi*  
not met-I all-acc the-pupils-gen

It was not all the pupils that I met

b. *kulla t-talḏmīḏi lam 'uqḏbil*  
all-acc the-pupils-gen not met-I

It was not all the pupils that I met

In negative constructions where it is not focused (i.e. where it bears the pragmatic function Topic), the quantified constituent escapes from the influence of the negative particle as in (xiv a-b):

(xiv) a. *kulla t-talḏmīḏi lam 'uqḏbilhum*  
all-acc the-pupils-gen not met-I-them

All the pupils, I didn't meet

b. *kulla t-talḏmīḏi lam 'uqḏbil*  
all-acc the-pupils-gen not met-I

All the pupils, I didn't meet

When the quantifier is a part of an external constituent (i.e. a Theme or a Tail), needless to say that it is outside the scope of negation since it does not belong to the predication proper. This becomes clear from the following sentences;

(xv) a. *kulla t-talḏmīḏi, lam 'uqḏbilhum*  
all-nom the-pupils-gen not met-I-them

As for all the pupils, I didn't meet them

b. *lam 'uqḏbil at-talḏmīḏa, kullahum*  
not met-I the-pupils-gen all-acc-them

I didn't meet all of the pupils

From these observations, one can deduce that negation-quantifier relationships do not constitute a counterexample to the analysis striving to account for the scope of negation independently of the order of constituents.

In both structures (102) and (103), negation is represented by means of a negative operator attached to the predicate of the higher predication. This representation is backed by the idea that only the higher predication (i.e. the predication designating the illocutionary force or the modality) falls under the scope of negation. This is not, however, the case of all occurrences of negated complex sentences with a higher verb expressing modality. Sentence (71b) for example, can be understood on the basis that it is synonymous with sentence (104) where the negated constituent is the lower clause, not the higher one:

- (104) 'azunnu 'anna hindan laysat marīdatun  
believe-I that Hind-acc is-not ill-nom  
I believe that Hind isn't ill

This phenomenon can be accounted for in terms of the general principle stated in (65). The negative particle kinds the higher predication if this predication is focused; otherwise it leaps over and takes in its scope the lower predication. Thus, sentence (71a), when interpreted as synonymous with (104) has as underlying structure, structure (105) not structure (103):

- (105) [Ass {Neg [Ind [Imperf [Pres *zann* V (d1mx<sup>1</sup> : 1p(x<sup>1</sup>)) Po Subj Top}  
(Subx<sup>2</sup> : [Ind [Imperf [Pres *marīdat* A (d1fx<sup>1</sup> : *hind* (x<sup>1</sup>)) Po Subj]]]  
(x<sup>2</sup>)) Go Obj Foc]

Again, notice that the Negation-Focus connection, as understood within the FG framework, prevents us from using additional and perhaps ad hoc rules for describing the scope properties of negative constructions.

#### 4.2.3 Formal realization of negative operators

In this subsection, I will be concerned with the expression rules responsible for the mapping of functional structures containing negative operators into constituent structures with negative particles. In other words, I will formulate the rules determining the way in which (abstract) negative operators are converted into actual negative particles.

##### 4.2.3.1 Term operators

Recall that term operators are converted into determiners (definite (or indefinite) articles, numerators, demonstratives, quantifiers etc...) through the application of a subset of what I proposed to call 'phrase constituency rules'. By means of this subset of rules, the negative operator (Neg) attached to the negated term in the functional structure underlying constructions like (97) is replaced by the negative particle *lā*. The rule responsible for this conversion can be formulated in the following way:

- (106) [ $\varphi$  (Neg i x<sup>1</sup>: ... (x<sup>1</sup>)) Subj] →  
[ $\varphi$  (*lā* x<sup>1</sup> : ... (x<sup>1</sup>)) Subj]

##### 4.2.3.2 Predicate operator

As mentioned above, the predicate gets its actual morpho-syntactic form by means of the 'predicate constituency rules'. These rules operate according to the information coded in the functional structure, i.e. namely the indicators of mood, aspect and tense features. Among this subset of rules, I will postulate rules which determine the formal expression of the predicate negative operator, i.e. the negative

particles onto which the (abstract) predicate negative operator is mapped. On the basis of the observations made in section 1, these rules can be formulated as follows:

- (107) [Ass [Ind [Perf [Past  $\phi$ V [yaf'al] ..]]]  $\rightarrow$   
 (108) [Ass {Neg [Ind [Perf [Past  $\phi$ V [yaf'al]]]]} .. ]  $\rightarrow$   
 [Ass {lam [Ind [Perf [Past  $\phi$ V [yaf'al]]]]} .. ]  
 (109) [Ass {Neg [Ind [Imperf [Pres  $\phi$ V [yaf'al]]]]} .. ]  $\rightarrow$   
 [Ass {lā [Ind [Imperf [Pres $\phi$ V [yaf'al]]]]} .. ]  
 (110) [Ass {Neg [Ind [Imperf [Fut  $\phi$ V ... ]]]} .. ]  $\rightarrow$   
 [Ass {lan [Ind [Imperf [Fut  $\phi$ V ... ]]]} .. ]  
 (111) [Juss {Neg [[Imperf [Pres  $\phi$ V [fa'al]]]]} .. ]  $\rightarrow$   
 [Juss {lā [[Imperf [Pres  $\phi$ V [fa'al]]]]} .. ]

#### 4.2.3.3 Predication operator

Recall that I have assumed above that the negative constructions introduced by the particle *mā* must have as underlying representation a structure containing a predication negative operator. Recall also that this particle is more likely used in negative constructions with a *fa'al* verbal predicate, i.e. a predicate having as its operators the combination Indicative-Perfective-Past, or a non-verbal predicate.

In these two claims are tenable, the rule responsible for the insertion of the particle *mā* can be formulated in the following way:

- (112) [Neg {[Ind [Perf [Past $\phi$ v [fa'al]]]]} .. ]  $\rightarrow$   
 [mā {[Ind [Perf [Past  $\phi$ -v [fa'al]]]]} ... ]  
 $\phi$ -v

#### 4.2.3.4 *laysa* insertion

I have shown above, that *laysa* is a 'hybrid' category in the sense that it functions as a copular verb and a negative morpheme at once. Being a copular verb expressing the aspectual and tensal features that non-verbal predicates cannot indicate by themselves *laysa* is inserted at the constituent structure level by means of a predicate constituency rule which I called elsewhere (Moutaouakil 1988) 'copula insertion rule'. Keeping in mind the properties of *laysa* discussed in section 1, we can formulate the rule responsible for the insertion of this particle as follows:

- (113) [Neg {[Ind [Imperf [Pres  $\phi$ ]]} .. ]  $\rightarrow$   
 [laysa v  $\phi$ ...]

#### 4.2.4 The order of constituents in negative constructions

The order of constituents is determined by a subset of rules, the 'placement rules', according to the positional pattern(s) assumed to be relevant in the language under examination. I will concentrate here on those placement rules which determine the ordering of (a) negative particles and (b) the negated constituents.

##### 4.2.4.1 Negative particles placement

The negative particle *lā* attached to one of the terms of the predication is placed in the initial position of that term as a determiner according to the general phrase constituency rule (114):

- (114) [Det, Head, Mod] = [Det Head Mod]  
 where: Det = Determiner; Mod = Modifier.

(114) is the rule responsible for the placement of *lā* in constructions like (96) repeated here for convenience:

- (96) *lā ṭāliba ḡā'ibun*  
 not student-acc absent-nom  
 No student is absent

The particles that can be attached to the predicate, i.e. *lā*, *lam* and *lan*, function, as shown above, as predicate operators and thus form one constituent with that predicate. This complex constituent is placed in the position of the verbal predicate according to rule (89a) repeated here for convenience:

- (89a) Verb —> V

The negative copular verb *laysa* occupies, as all copular verbs, the position COP according to positional pattern (115):

- (115) P4,P2,P1 P0 COP S $\phi$ (0) X,P3

The rule responsible for the placement of copular verbs can be formulated as follows:

- (116) Copular verb —> COP

As for the particle *mā*, it occupies, as a predication operator, the absolute initial position in the predication proper, i.e. the position P1. The rule which is assumed to account for the placement of this particle is rule (84) repeated here for convenience:

- (84) P1 - constituents —> P1

#### 4.2.4.2 Negated constituents placement

As far as Arabic negative constructions are concerned, we can state that, in general, negation plays no role in the ordering of constituents. In other words, the constituents are ordered in both negative and non-negative constructions according to the same parameters.

Bearing usually the pragmatic function 'focus of contrast' the negated constituent is more likely located in the second initial position within the predication proper, i.e. the position P0. thus the constituents *zaydan*, *hindan*, *al-labana* and *kitāban* occupy the initial position in sentences (117a-d) because they bear the Focus of contrast function:

- (117) a. *zaydan lam 'uqābil*  
 Zayd-acc not met-I  
 It is Zayd that I didn't meet  
 b. *hindan lan 'uqābila*  
 Hind-acc not will-meet-I  
 It is Hind that I will not meet  
 c. *al-labana lā 'ašrabu*  
 the-milk-acc not drink-I  
 It is milk that I don't drink  
 d. *mā kitāban katabtu*  
 not book-acc wrote-I  
 It isn't a book that I wrote

The responsible for the placement of these constituents is the general rule which determines the position of focused constituents. This rule has been formulated above as (84):

$$(84) \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} ?Pro \\ Foc \\ Top \end{array} \right] \longrightarrow P0$$

where: ?Pro = Interrogative pronoun

### Summary and Conclusions:

In MSA negation may be expressed by more than one (simple or complex) negative particle. The use of these particles is determined by interacting parameters, namely (a) the illocutionary force associated with the sentence, (b) the mood, aspect and tense feature of the predicate, (c) the categorial status and the form of predicate, (d) the scope of negation and (e) the position which may be occupied by the negative morpheme. Negation can take in its scope the (a) whole sentence, (b) one of its constituents, or (c) the (higher) clause expressing the illocutionary force or the modality associated with the propositional content of the sentence.

Aside from peculiar negative constructions where the negative particle (*lā*) attaches to the negated constituents, negation takes in its scope the constituent carrying the contrastive information i.e. the constituent in Focus. There are grounds to believe that negation is not in itself a speech act. Rather it is a morpho-syntactic device that natural languages use to express the speech act of denial which in turn consists of a 'sub-act' of a macro-speech act one call 'refutation'.

These properties of negative constructions in MSA can be fruitfully approached in terms of FG. Within this framework, negative particles are represented in the underlying structure as (a) predicate operators, (b) predication operators or (c) term operators.

The scope relationships are captured in this structure through the negative operator-Focus of contrast connection. The formal realization of negative operators (i.e. their conversion into negative particles) is accounted for by means of three subsets of 'expression rules': 'phrase constituency rules', 'predicate constituency rules' and 'mā insertion rules'. This approach has over analyses proposed within other frameworks the following advantages:

- (i) It describes in a principled way the interaction of the pragmatics, the semantics and the syntax of negative constructions;
- (ii) It represents in an explicit manner the connection between negation and the communicative act it is used to express;
- (iii) It provides a representation of the scope properties of negative constructions which prevents the use of undesirable (transformational) rules or interpretive devices based on sequential relationships between constituents;
- (iv) With such a representation, it is possible to account for the scope relationships in negative constructions in a greater number of natural languages.

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