Vocatives of Entreaty in Arabic: Evidence for PP Selection

Saleem Abdelhady
The American University of the Middle East, Kuwait

Marwa Alkinj
Al Al-Bayt University, Jordan

Abstract—Across languages, it is argued that vocative phrases are composed of a vocative head that selects a noun phrase (NP) or a determiner phrase (DP) as its complement. Based on data from Standard Arabic, in addition to selecting NPs and DPs, the study reveals patterns where a vocative head may select a prepositional phrase (PP). This class of vocative constructions appears in situations where speakers are calling for help and is referred to as *nɪdaʔ ʔalʔɪstɪɣaθa* 'Vocative of Entreaty.' This study focuses on the syntax of *nɪdaʔ ʔalʔɪstɪɣaθa* 'Vocative of Entreaty' and expands the boundaries that limit the selection options of vocative heads to NPs and DPs. For this purpose, the study utilizes the Minimalist program (Chomsky, 1995) for data analysis and follows Hill (2013) in analyzing vocatives as speech act projections. This study is significant because it challenges all previous accounts on vocatives (Haddad 2020; Abdelhady 2020; Al-Bataineh 2019) and reveals new patterns where a vocative particle becomes obligatory in vocative phrases, provided that its complement is a PP. This type of data has implications for proposals related to case assignment patterns of nominals that are c-commanded by VOC.

Index Terms—Vocative Phrases, Speech Acts Layer, Speakers, Arabic, Minimalism

I. INTRODUCTION

The syntax of vocative phrases is a hot area of research (Hill, 2013; Hill, 2007; Hill, 2017; Akkus & Hill, 2018; Hill, 2022; López, 2020). Based on cross-linguistic data, Hill (2013) defines vocative phrases as phrases that are "by default, organized around a noun (or a pronoun), either a name or a common noun, which may or may not be modified by adjectives, other nouns, […], prepositional phrases or relative clauses" (42). Across languages, this definition proves correct (e.g., Hill, 2017; Soltan, 2016; Akkus & Hill, 2018; Al-Bataineh, 2019; Haddad, 2020; Abuladze & Ludden, 2013; Girvin, 2013). However, in Standard Arabic, a class of vocatives seems to deviate from this definition, as illustrated in the following examples (1).

(1)
a. *ya   la-muhamad   lɪ-saɣiid.*
   VOC.PART[1] to-Muhamad.GEN   to-Sa'id.GEN
   'Hey Muhamad Sa'id (seeks your help.)'
b. *ya   lɪ-llaah   lɪ-l-muslɪmiin.*
   VOC.PART   to-God.GEN   to-DEF-Muslims.GEN
   'Hey God Muslims (seek your help.)'
c. *ya   lɪ-xaalɪd.*
   VOC.PART   to-Khalid.GEN
   'Hey Khaled (I seek your help.)!'
d. *ya   lɪ-muhamad   lɪ-salim   mɪn xaalid.*
   VOC.PART   to-Muhamad.GEN   to-Salim.GEN from Khalid.GEN
   'Hey Muhamad Salim (seeks your help) from Xhalid.'

(Al-Samirai, 2000, pp. 335-336)

The examples in (1) challenge previous accounts on vocatives because the vocative phrases are not organized around a noun or a pronoun. The examples show a vocative phrase that is organized around a prepositional phrase (PP). Those examples depart from previous accounts on vocatives (e.g., Hill, 2007; Akku & Hill, 2018; Abdelhady, 2020; Soltan, 2016). Compare the following examples in (2).

(2)
a. [Mary], when did they leave?   DP
b. [My dear Mary], what came on you?   AP-N

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[1] VOC: vocative, PART: particle, N: noun, CP: complementizer phrase, ADVP: adverbial phrase, A: adjective, GEN: genitive, M: Masculine, F: Feminine, DEF: definite, S: singular, PL: plural; DU: dual, VP: verb phrase, DP: determiner phrase, NP: noun phrase

c.	[Doctor Smith], may I talk to you?	DP-N
d.	[The students from France], where is your translator?	N-PP
e.	[The students who just arrived], you must stay in this room.	N-CP
f.	[You there], what do you think you're doing?	DP-AdvP
g.	[Smarty], can you keep quite now?	A/DP

(English)

(Hill, 2013, p. 43)

Hill (2013) shows possibilities where a vocative phrase appears, is created around a DP (2a), an adjectival phrase modifying a noun (2b), a DP modifying a noun (2c), a noun selecting a propositional phrase (PP) (2d), a noun selecting a complementizer phrase (2e), a DP with an adverbial phrase f), and an adjective or DP (2g). However, the possibilities in (2) are not inclusive (cf., (1)) and do not capture this case: P+NP/DP.

Even though Al-Bataineh (2019) notes that this type of vocative exists in the Arabic language, he excludes it from his study, claiming that "[Vocative of Hailing] is the only vocative construction utilized to attract the attention of a person in the discourse setting" (p. 2). This claim, however, is not accurate. The study overlooks a pattern that does not fit with the machinery proposed in that study (i.e., a vocative can be assigned a nominative or an accusative case only). This study aims to explore how PP patterns are generated in the language faculty by highlighting the syntactic properties of *nɪdaʔ ʔalʔɪstɪɣaθa* 'call for help' in Arabic. The study, additionally, aims to explain how a genitive case is assigned, and it seeks to provide an understanding of the function of prepositions and if they block pragmatic roles (addressees) to extend to DPs selected by a prepositional head. To further advance this proposal, we aim to revisit the components of vocative phrases and the structure of vocatives in the Arabic language.

This study is organized as follows. The second section provides a background on vocative phrases and their components. The third section reviews studies on vocatives with a focus on vocative phrases in the Arabic language. The fourth section presents an analysis of the syntax of *nɪdaʔ ʔalʔɪstɪɣaθa* 'call for help' and shows if this type of vocative differs from nominal vocative phrases (Jaradat et al., 2022). The final section concludes the study.

II. BACKGROUND

To understand the syntactic nature of vocatives, we define vocative phrases, their components, and their functions. Afterward, we present how current syntactic theories analyze vocative in generative grammar. For this purpose, we review the basic machinery of the Minimalist Program (MP) and its extension at the syntactic-pragmatic interface.

Researchers deals with vocatives from various perspectives: morphological markings, syntactic restrictions, pragmatic functions, semantic features, and others. In this part of the research, we provide a comprehensive overview of vocatives by exploring aspects that will guide us through this research.

Among the earliest attempts to define vocatives, focus on how vocatives take place in language use. According to Zwicky (1974), vocatives refer to a phenomenon "set off from the sentence it occurs in by special intonation […] and it doesn't serve as an argument of a verb in this sentence" (p. 787). This definition illustrates how vocatives appear in sentences. Nevertheless, the definition does not capture the intricacies of vocatives. In addition, Levinson (1983) looks at vocatives as "noun phrases that refer to the addressee but are not syntactically or semantically incorporated as the arguments of a predicate; they are rather set apart prosodically from the body of the sentence that may accompany them" (p. 71). Both views focus on how speakers utilize vocative phrases in their language use, and that vocative phrases occur with phonological markings; nevertheless, the definitions minimize the syntactic part of vocatives because vocatives do not appear as arguments of predicates.

From a semantic point of view, Schaden (2010) views vocatives as "noun-phrases that identify or describe the addressee" (p. 176). For him, if a noun describes the addressee, it is a vocative construction. While Moutaouakil (2014) states that a vocative is a pragmatic function similar to other functions like Topics and Focus, and it cannot be "considered as a semantic function because it is not part of states of affairs of predication" (p. 140), Schaden (2010) identifies three semantic functions for vocatives: predication, activation, and identification (p. 183). The basic idea of those semantic distinctions is related to the addressee. For him, predication and identification refer to scenarios in which the addressee is anticipated. On the other hand, identification vocatives refer to cases where the addressee should be recognized. Since the focus of the current study is on the syntactic part of vocatives, we ask the reader to see Schaden (2010) for further details.

For the purpose of this study, we adopt Moutaouakil's (2014) functional definition of vocatives as "a constituent referring to [an] entity addressed in a given discourse setting" (p. 140). See the following examples.

(3)

a. *(O)lele (majko),*   *pak*   *trjabva*   *datraˇgvam.*
   oh mother-VOC   again   must   SUBJ leave-1SG
   'Oh, my, I have to leave again'.

b. *Vaˇh, na*   *kogo*   *ni*   *ostavi?*
   Oh   to   whom us.left-2SG
   'Oh, whom did you leave us with?'

(Bulgarian)

(Hill, 2007, p. 2081)

In generative approaches to vocatives (e.g., Hill, 2007; Hill, 2017; Akkus & Hill, 2018), researchers deal with how vocatives are computed in the language faculty. In those studies, a vocative is a constituent that revolves around an addressee (a noun/a pronoun). Based on data from Romanian, Bulgarian, and Umbundu, Hill (2007) proposes that vocative phrases are generated by the same syntactic computations that generate core syntactic structures (verbs).

(4)

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              VocP
             /   \
         Spec     Voc'
        (BRE)    /    \
              Voc      DP/NP
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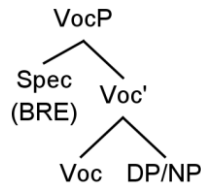
(Hill, 2007, p. 5)

The tree in (4) indicates that in a vocative phrase, a vocative head (VOC) selects a DP or a NP. Feature checking applies. Al-Bataineh (2019) captures this process by stating that "in the case of NP, feature checking involves a movement of N to VOC, and in the case of DP, feature checking requires a movement of DP to SPEC, VOCP or distance Agree" (p. 7). To sum up, the syntactic structure of vocative phrases centers around a nominal element.

Hill (2007) adds that vocative "computations apply at the edge of discourse" (p. 2078). In her proposal, vocative phrases are functional domains. That is, they have a functional head. Those heads select a DP and assign pragmatic roles. In other words, vocative phrases are generated in a way like verbs. However, they differ in that they are generated at the edge of discourse. Accordingly, Hill (2007) adopts Speas' and Tennys' (2003) configuration of speech acts (SAs) above the CP (5) to account for pragmatic roles (p-role) of vocatives.

(5) [SA*P Speaker SA* [SAP Utterance SA Hearer]]

The configuration in (5) shows that a speech act head has three argumental positions that enable checking p-roles, like theta roles of in the vP shell hypothesis (Larson, 1985). Those p-roles are SPEAKER, HEARER and SENTIENT. In Hill's (2007) proposal, a vocative phrase checks the hearer p-role. In this study, we adopt this proposal; however, we need to explain how the p-role, HEARER, is checked for DPs headed by a preposition.

III. STUDIES ON ARABIC VOCATIVES

Many studies have analyzed vocatives in the Arabic language (e.g., Moutaouakil, 2014; Haddad, 2020; Al-Bataineh, 2019; Abdelhady, 2020; Soltan, 2016; Jaradat et al., 2022; Shormani & Qarabesh, 2018). In this section, we review three major studies on Arabic vocatives (i.e., Al-Bataineh, 2019; Haddad, 2020; Moutaouakil, 2014) to build a foundation for analyzing Vocatives of Entreaty and reconciling our data with the most current proposals.

Moutaouakil (2014, p. 139) sets a foundation for analyzing vocatives in the Arabic language in terms of Functional Grammar. The study highlights that a vocative is a pragmatic function that is affected by the discourse setting (as pointed out by Hill, 2007). In addition, based on traditional Arabic grammarians (e.g., Sibawayh, 1970), he defines the boundaries for three types of vocatives (addressee): Ɂal-munada (addressed) (6), Ɂal-mustaɣaaθ bɪh (the one who is called for help) (7), and Ɂal-maduub (the one who is bemoaned) (8).

(6)
a. *Zayd-u   nawɪln-i   al-mɪlħ-a.*
    Zayd-NOM   give-1-ACC   DEF-salt-ACC
     'Zayd, give me the salt.'
b. *ya   talɪɣ-a   al-ʃdʒarah-ti, Ɂɪnzɪl.*
    VOC-PART   climbing-ACC   DEF-tree-GEN   come.down
     'You who are climbing the tree, come down.'
c. *ħana   waqt-un-nawm-i,   Ɂayyuha l-tɪfl-u.*
    arrivedtime-NOM   DEF-sleep-GEN O   DEF-child-NOM
    'Now is the time to sleep, children.'

(Vocative of Hailing)

(7)
a. *ya   lɪ-Zayd-ɪn   lɪ-Halid-ɪn.*
    VOC.PART   to-Zayd-GEN   to-Halid-GEN
     'O, if only Zayd were by Halid's side.'[2]
b. *ya   la-Amr-ɪn   lɪ-ma   Ɂsaban-a.*
    VOCPART   to-Amr-GEN   to-whathappened.PERF-1PL
     'O, if only Amer were here, with all that has happened to us.'

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[2] The translation is based on the source.

<div align="right">(Vocative of Entreaty)</div>

(8) *wa*   *Zaydah*
   VOC.PART   Zayd-ah
   'O Zayd, as exclaimed by a widow at the graveside.'

<div align="right">(Vocative of Bemoaned)</div>
<div align="right">(Moutaouakil, 2014, p. 139)</div>

As it is clear from the above examples, the three types of vocatives have similarities and differences. The first set of examples shows a vocative particle. The vocative particle is optional in (6a). There is also a noun that receives an accusative (6b) or a nominative case (6c). In (7), the pattern is different in that the vocative particle is mandatory, and the vocative receives a genitive case because it is selected by a preposition. The final example in (8) shows a vocative particle that has a different function in expressing the feeling of the speaker. Moutaouakil's (2014) study defines constraints on using vocatives, highlights boundaries for using eight different vocative particles (*ʔa, ʔay, ya, ʔaya, haya, ʔay, ʔa* and *wa*), demonstrates that vocatives of hailing have two case markings (nominative and accusative) and sets the conditions of their assignment, and shows the structural positions available for vocatives. While Moutaouakil's (2014) study covered most descriptive aspects of the vocatives of hailing, the study has limitations. First, the study does not reveal how vocatives are generated in light of current theories. Second, the study does not analyze the Vocatives of Entreaty.

Al-Bataineh (2019) analyzes case assignment patterns of Vocatives of Hailing from a Minimalist perspective, following (Hill, 2007; Hill, 2013; Hill, 2017). In this study, Al-Bataineh (2019) argues that the vocative particle in vocatives of hailing is a transitive probe with a valued accusative case feature, unvalued second person, and distance feature. Furthermore, he looks at the structure of the addressee. He claims that the D head in a DP has an unvalued case feature, but it has a second person and a binary distance feature. Based on those sets of features, he analyzes different patterns on case assignments. Thus, he states that the appearance of a case (nominative/accusative) on nominals is not random and is governed by syntax.

The proposal accounts for case variation in vocative constructions. Those patterns include case variation in indefinite vocative phrases (9), proper names (10), accusative-like cases in construct state vocatives (11), and nominative case patterns on demonstrative phrases (12).

(9)
a. *ya*   *rajul-a-n,*   *ʔaɣlıq l-baab-a.*
    VOC.PART   man-ACC-n   closeDEF-door-ACC
    'Man, close the door.'
b. *ya*   *rajul-u,*   *jlis.*
    VOC.PART   man-NOM   sit.down
    'Man, sit down.'

<div align="right">(Al-Bataineh, 2019, p. 16)</div>

(10)
a. *ya*   *zayd-a-n*
    VOC.PART   Zayd-ACC-n
    'Oh Zayd (among other Zayd's).'
b. *ya*   *zayd-u*
    VOC.PART   Zayd-NOM
   'Oh Zayd!'

<div align="right">(Fehri, 2012, p. 195)</div>

(11) *ya*   *sadiiq-a*   *ʕamr-ı-n,   saacid sadiiq-a-ka.*
    VOC.PART   friend-ACC   Amr-GEN-n help friend-ACC-2s (GEN)
    'Friend of Amr, help your friend.'

(12)
a. *haa ð-ı-hı*   *al-fataat-u*
    this-F-S   DEF-girl-NOM
    'this girl'
b. *haaʔ-olaaʔi r-rijaal-u*
    these (M-P) DEF-men-NOM
    'these men'
c. *haa ð-aani*   *al-kitab-aani*
    these (M-DUAL-NOM)   DEF-books (M-D-NOM)
    'these two books'

<div align="right">(Al-Bataineh, 2019, p. 18)</div>

Al-Bataineh (2019) argues that those patterns can be accounted for by unifying Hill's (2017) proposal on vocatives with Larson's (2014) theory on DPs in which he views determiners as verbs. See the tree diagram in (13).

(13)
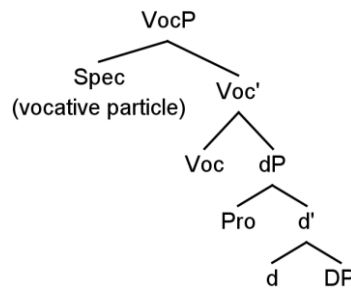
(Al-Bataineh, 2019, p. 18)

For indefinite vocatives (9) and proper names (10), Al-Bataineh (2019) argues that the syntax proper marks them as accusative only if they are merged with an overt D -n. Otherwise, a nominative case appears by default. Furthermore, he argues that for vocatives heading Construct States, head-to-head movement takes place. That is, N moves to D. This process results in assigning the accusative case to N. Finally, for demonstrative phrases, he argues that head movement (D-to-d movement) is blocked because of an intervening head (such as DEM), resulting in a marking of the nominal with a nominative case.

While this account of case checking sounds plausible, the obvious drawback to this analysis is that it cannot capture the structure of Vocatives of Entreat (Hill, 2013; Al-Bataineh, 2019). First, the vocative phrase in Vocatives of Entreaty selects a PP (contra Hill's, 2013 and others). Second, Vocatives of Entreaty have genitive case markings (contra Al-Bataineh's, 2019 DP proposal that a vocative should check either nominative or an accusative case). How can we account for patterns in which a vocative appears in a genitive case marking?

Haddad (2020) argues that vocatives should not have fixed positions in the left periphery, as Hill (2013) points out in her study. Based on data obtained from Twitter, he claims that vocatives are "parenthetical adjuncts whose relationship with their host clause is minimally constrained" (p. 1). He builds his argument on the idea that vocative phrases can stand alone (14). Haddad (2020) shows that in (14), the addressee may be called in different ways, where the elements in brackets are optional. Thus, vocative phrases such as the one above "do not have to be part of a larger utterance and thus no connection with the host clause is required at all" (p. 18).

(14) <ya:>   ziya:d <ya: ziya:d>
     <VOC.PART> Ziyad <VOC.PART   Ziyad>
  a. Excitement: 'Ziad, it is so good to see you!'
  b. Disbelief: 'Ziad, I can't believe you did that!'
  c. Desperation: 'Ziad, what shall I do with you?!'

(Haddad, 2020, p. 18)

In addition, Haddad (2020) claims that scope information is another piece of evidence that supports his argument. He notices that "vocatives cross-linguistically fall out the scope of negation."

(15) fi: ya: ʃaba:b vi:ru:s sˤi:ni: ʔism-u   koro:na.[3]
     there voc guys   virus Chinese called-3sg Corona
     'There is, guys, a Chinese virus called the corona.'

(Haddad, 2020, p. 19)

The argument focuses on vocative phrases that cannot be negated. Thus, any attempt to negate the vocative phrase in (15) results in an ungrammatical construction. He solidifies his argument by other tests, including the lack of agreement between vocative phrases and the host clause and the infinite use number of vocatives (for further information, see Haddad, 2020). For a counterargument against Haddad's (2020) proposal, see Abdelhady (2020) and Abdel-Hady and Branigan (2020).

IV. VOCATIVES OF ENTREATY

Vocatives of Entreaty appear with a vocative particle and a PP. The surface structure sounds challenging because the nominal is marked with a genitive case. The previous proposal rejects the semantic account and adopts a generative account claiming that if the DP shell hypothesis is merged with the vocative phrase structure, it can account for case alternation of vocative phrases. Still, as we have seen, this proposal has a limitation when exposed to the data in (16).

(16)
  a. ya   lɪ-muhamad   lɪ-saʕiid.
      VOC.PART   to-Muhamad.GEN   to-Sa'id.GEN
      'Hey Muhamad Sa'id (seeks your help.)'
  b. ya   lɪ-llaah   lɪ-l-muslɪmiin.
      VOC.PART   to-God.GEN   to-DEF-Muslims.GEN
      'Hey God Muslims (seek your help.)'

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[3] The example is simplified, focusing only on the vocative phrase.

c. *ya*   *lı-xaalıd.*
    VOC.PART   to-Khalid.GEN
    'Hey Khaled (I seek your help.)!
d. *ya*   *lı-muhamad   lı-salim   mın   xaalid.*
    VOC.PART   to-Muhamad.GEN to-Salim.GEN   from Khalid.GEN
    'Hey Muhamad Salim (seeks your help) from Xhalid.'

                                         (Al-Samirai, 2000, pp. 335-336, repeated)

In this section, we point out the differences that call for revisiting previous accounts on vocatives. We explore in depth the status of case markings, vocative particles, and prepositions.

V. COMPONENTS OF VOCATIVES OF ENTREATY

Vocatives of Entreaty require specific elements; those components are like regular vocatives even though they behave differently. Other components are exclusive to vocatives of Entreaty. In this part, we present the components of the Vocatives of Entreaty and their features.

While *ya* is a multifunctional particle in the Arabic language (Abdelhady, 2021), there are two reasons why *ya* is considered a vocative particle in this type of construction. In the absence of *la*, the vocative retains its nominative case. In other words, the vocative appears with a default case marking.

(17)
    ya   *ʕaly-u*   *lı-l-fuqaraʔ.*
    VOC.PART   Ali-NOM   to-def-poor
    'Hey, Ali the poor (seeks your help).

Notice that in (17), *ʕaly-u* is marked with a nominative case. This default case appears when Vocatives of Entreaty appear without *la* (this pattern is not common; however, it points out that Vocatives of Entreaty are marked by default with a nominative case, just like regular vocatives). However, because of *la,* case markings differ.

Second, unlike the Vocative of Hailing, in Vocatives of Entreaty, the particle is mandatory. Omitting the vocative particle results in ungrammatical constructions.

(18)
a. *ya*   *ʕaly-u*   *lı-l-fuqaraʔ*
    VOC.PART   Ali-nom   to-DEF-poor
    'Hey, Ali the poor (seeks your help).
b. *   ʕaly-u lı-l-fuqaraʔ*
        Ali-NOM   to-DEF-poor
        'Hey, Ali the poor (seeks your help).

(19)
a. *ya*   *lı-l-ṭabiib*   *lı-l-mariiḍ*
    VOC.PART   to-DEF-doctor   to-DEF-patient
    'Hey doctor the patient (seeks your help.)'
    b. *   *lı-l-ṭabiib*   *lı-l-mariiḍ*
            to-DEF-doctor   to-DEF-patient
            'Hey doctor the patient (seeks your help.)'

The examples in (18) and (19) show that the particle *ya* is obligatory. Because this type of vocative is built around a fixed structure; that is, it is unlike regular vocatives where the vocative phrase is an adjunct. The vocative phrase is not optional. Therefore, the particle itself is not optional either. Omitting the particle will not facilitate understanding the construction as a vocative phrase. This is evident in examples (18b) and (19b). Those patterns are contra Hill's (2013) claim that vocative particles are optional particles in vocative constructions.

To account for the Vocatives of Entreaty in Arabic, we need to understand the status of the *li*. Consider the following examples.

(20)
a. *ya*   *lı-xaalıd.*
    VOC.PART   to-Khalid.GEN
    'Hey Khaled (I seek your help.)!
b. *   ya*   *xaalıd.*
    VOC.PART   Khalid.NOM
    'Hey Khaled (I seek your help.)!⁴
(21)
    a. * ya*   *on-xaalıd.*
        VOC.PART   on-Khalid.GEN
        'Hey Khaled (I seek your help.)!

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⁴ The example is wrong only in vocatives of entreaty, but it is valid as a vocative of hailing.

b. * *ya*   *ʕind-xaalɪd.*
VOC.PART   near-Khalid.GEN
'Hey Khaled (I seek your help.)!

(22)
a. *ʔal-kɪtab*   *lɪ*   *xalɪd*
DEF-book   for   xalid
'The book is for Khalid.'
b. *kɪtaab xalɪd*
book   xalid
'Khalid's book'

We argue that the preposition is not optional (20). In addition, *lɪ* cannot be replaced with other prepositions (21).

Vocatives of entreaty utilize a special call for someone to help another who is in distress. That is, the speaker calls *l-mustaɣaaθ bɪh* 'the addressee' with a request to offer help for *l-mustaɣaaθ lah* 'someone who is in need for help. See the following example in (23).

(23) *ya*   *lɪ-l-ṭabiib*   *lɪ-l-mariiḍ*
VOC.PART   to-DEF-doctor   to-DEF-patient
'Hey doctor, the patient (seeks your help.)'

The example above shows two definite DPs, *ṭabiib* 'doctor' (*l-mustaɣaaθ bɪh*) and *mariiḍ* 'patient' (*l-mustaɣaaθ lah).* The speaker calls the doctor to help the patient. The first feature to mention here is that those DPs have fixed positions. That is, we cannot shift the addressee with the distressed. Doing so results in a different interpretation in which the roles are shifted.

(24) * *ya*   *lɪ-l-mariiḍ*   *lɪ-l-ṭabiib*
VOC.PART   to-DEF-patient   to-DEF-doctor
'Hey doctor, the patient (seeks your help.)'

The fixed positions entail that we have new semantic roles in the speech act layer: HEARER and PATIENT. If this conclusion is on the right track, then the p-roles (Hill, 2007; Hill, 2013) should be extended to include more roles: SPEAKER, HEARER, PATIENT AND SENTIENT.

While the addressee is mandatory, the distressed can be omitted. That is, this type of vocative utilizes a minimum structure. This structure should include at least the vocative particle and addressee, but the distressed can be omitted, or it can be invisible. The following example is illustrative.

(25)
a. *ya*   *lɪ-l-kɪram-ɪ*   *lɪ-l-muħtaʒiin*
VOC.PART   to-DEF-generous-GEN   to-DEF-needy
'Hey the generous, the needy (seek your help).'
b. *ya*   *lɪ-l-kɪram-ɪ*
VOC.PART   to-DEF-generous-GEN
'Hey the generous, (we (seek your help)).'
c. *̈* *ya*   *lɪ-l-muħtaʒiin*
VOC.PART   to-DEF-needy
'Hey the generous, the needy (seek your help).'
d. **ya*   *lɪ-l-kɪram-ɪ*   *ya*   *lɪ-l-muħtaʒiin*
VOC.PART   to-DEF-generous-GEN   VOC.PART to-DEF-needy
'Hey the generous, the needy (seek your help).'

Notice that in (25), vocatives of Entreaty are composed of the addressee (hearer) and the distressed (patient). While it is plausible to omit the distressed (25b), it is implausible to do so for the hearer (25c). Note that the vocative particle cannot precede the distressed (25d).

Like vocatives of hailing (c.f., Shormani & Qarabesh, 2018; Al-Bataineh, 2019; Haddad, 2020), the addressee can be coordinated. It should be noted here that the vocative particle is optional in the second conjunct. The following examples illustrate this aspect.

(26)
a. *ya*   *lɪ-l-ʃabab-ɪ*   *wa*   *ya*   *lɪ-l-ʃabaat-ɪ*
VOC.PART   to-DEF-boys   and VOC.PART to-DEF-girls-GEN
lɪ-l-waṭan-ɪ
to-DEF-homeland
'Hey boys and girls, the homeland (needs your help.)'

(Faouaid, 2020)

b. *ya*   *lɪ-l-ʃabab-ɪ*   *wa*   *lɪ-l-ʃabaat-ɪ*
VOC.PART   to-DEF-boys   and to-DEF-girls-GEN
lɪ-l-waṭan-ɪ
to-DEF-homeland

'Hey boys and girls, the homeland (needs your help.)'

(Adapted from Faouaid, 2020)

Moreover, the addressee can appear as a modified/complex DP. That is, a series of an adjective can modify the noun, but those adjectives should be definite.

(27) *ya*   *lı-qadat-ı*   *Ɂal-ʒuyuuʃ-ı Ɂal-Ɂabṭaal   lı-ʃuʕuubı-hım*
     VOC.PART   to-leaders-GEN   DEF-armies-GEN   DEF-brave to-people-3PL.GEN
     'Hey leaders of the heroic armies your people (seek your help).'

(Faouaid, 2020)

As we observe, in the above example, the nominal *qadat* 'leaders' is modified by *Ɂal-ʒuyuuʃ-ı Ɂal-Ɂabṭaal* 'the brave armies.'

To sum up, vocatives of Entreaty have three basic elements: the vocative particle, the preposition *la/lı* and the addressee, and the distressed. Based on our data, we argue that the vocative head may select two arguments. While the addressee is obligatory, the distressed can be invisible. Some of those elements are mandatory, and some of them are optional. The positions of the vocative DPs are fixed.

VI. GENERATING VOCATIVES OF ENTREATY

According to studies on vocatives (e.g., Hill, 2007; Hill, 2022; Hill, 2013; Speas & Tenny, 2003; Al-Bataineh, 2019; Abdelhady, 2020), a vocative phrase consists of a vocative head; this head behaves like a verb in that it selects DP/NP. We look at the vocative head in light of such a parameter, but we argue that VOC, in Vocatives of Entreaty, has two valences. The first valency is for the *l-mustaɣaaθ bıh* 'the addressee', and the second one is for *l-mustaɣaaθ lah* 'the distressed'. If this proposal is on the right track, we can reconciliate Hill's (2013) proposal that "vocatives are organized around a noun" with the vocatives of Entreaty, which utilize PPs. We argue that the genitive case appears when *la* is present. But, when *la* is not used, the default nominative case appears, as suggested by earlier proposals (Al-Bataineh, 2019).

(28) *ya*   *lı-l-ṭabiib*   *lı-l-mariiḍ*
     VOC.PART   to-DEF-doctor   to-DEF-patient
   'Hey doctor, the patient (seeks your help.)'

In short, our proposal resembles VPs with multiple arguments (29).

(29)
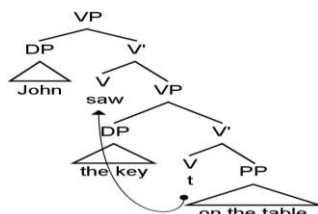
To clarify the mechanism, consider the following example above. We argue that the DP has an unvalued case feature [ucase]. X is a transitive probe. It has a valued [genitive] feature. X probes for the closest DP to check its feature. This results in assigning the genitive case to the DPs.

(30)
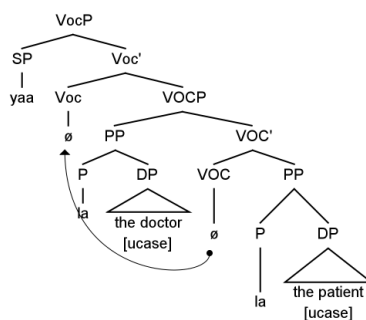
The first piece of evidence comes from the observation that the vocative particle cannot appear in the specifier position of VOC that selects 'the patient'. We attribute this to that the specifier position is not vacant; it is occupied by the XP 'the doctor'. Secondly, notice that we argued earlier that *l-mustaɣaaθ bıh* 'the addressee' can appear with the nominative case on the condition that *la* is not present. This case is not applicable for the *l-mustaɣaaθ lah* 'the distressed'.

That is, *la* is mandatory for *l-mustaɣaaθ lah* 'the distressed'. This proves that *la* originates in a low position.

Furthermore, we argue that the vocative particle is mandatory because of feature checking. P is a transitive probe; it searches for the closest active goal. The unvalued case feature of the DP is valued as genitive, and it becomes invisible for voc. This goes side by side with the Earliness Principle, which states that "operations must apply as early as possible in a derivation" (Radford, 2009, p. 238).

Our proposal suggests that VOC assigns theta-roles. This hypothesis is not far from reaching. According to Hill (2013) and Hill (2007), a vocative phrase may occupy the specifier position of the *hearer's* head in a speech act projection; Following Larson (2014), we argue that "[the] third set argument, typically introduced by an oblique, preposition-like element such as *than*, as or *except*, it seems appropriate to recognize oblique thematic-roles for predicate arguments" (p. 11). This conclusion is confirmed by Al-Bataineh (2019) for Vocatives of Hailing. While Al-Bataineh's (2019) observation is on the right track, it does not show how the third set of arguments may appear under Vocatives of Hailing because Vocatives of Hailing, like most vocative phrases, cross-linguistically is limited to two arguments. However, our data show that three roles are assigned in Vocatives of Entreaty, including a role that specifies the call (the specifier position of VOC), a role for *l-mustaɣaaθ bɪh* 'the addressee' (θADDRESSEE) and a role for the *l-mustaɣaaθ lah* 'the distressed' (θDISTRESSED/EXPERIENCER). Our proposal, then, redefines a vocative phrase as a phrase that is organized around an addressee; the addressee can be a phrase that includes a nominal element (e.g., a PP) that is able to hold the semantic role of an addressee (that is a functional head selecting the nominal element cannot assign thematic roles).

VII. Is There a Reconciliation?

To reconcile our proposal with earlier proposals on vocatives, we can view *la* as a vocative head. This does not alter the fact that *la* will assign a genitive case to its complement. Abdelhady (2020, p. 171) shows that, in Jordanian Arabic, speakers may use *walak* to call their addressee. See the examples below.

(31)

a. *wa-l-ak,*   *taʕaal   la-huun!*
   VOC.PART-PREP-2M.SG   come.2M.SG to-here
   'Hey! come here.' (to a male addressee)

(Abdelhady, 2020, p. 171)
(Jordanian Arabic)

b. *wa-l-ɪk,*   *taʕal-ii   la-huun!*
   VOC.PART-PREP-2F.SG   come.2F.SG to-here
   'Hey, come here.' (to a female addressee)

(Abdelhady, 2020, p. 171)
(Jordanian Arabic)

He highlights (contrary to Soltan, 2016) that "the *walak* indicates that the speaker is calling an addressee to pay his attention toward performing a command. *walak* shows a complex relationship with the addressee." That is, the vocative phrase shows agreement with the addressee (cf. (31a) and (31b). Abdelhady (2020) views *la* as a vocative head, *wa-* as a vocative particle and *-ak/-ik* as a DP. In light of this proposal, the example in (28) will be generated as follows.

(32)
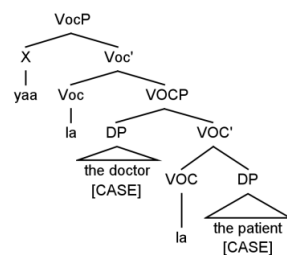
Adopting this pattern results in viewing Vocatives of Entreaty in light of current theories, where a vocative head selects a DP. However, this claim is not supported in the literature. In the Arabic language, prepositions can select DPs just like a verb, and the head (that has a verbal interpretation), selecting a PP as its complement, can be invisible. See the examples below.

(33)

a. *bɪ-ʔabii*   *ʔanta wa ʔummii*
   on-my.father (I protect)   you   and my.mother
   ya   *rassuul*   *ʔallah*
   voc.part   prophet   God
   'O prophet of Allah, I protect you by scarifying my father and mother'

    b.   *bɪ-llah*   *la-ʔaʒtahɪddanna*   *bɪ-ʕamali.*
        By-God (I swear) to-work.hard   in-my.job
        'I swear by God to work hard in my job.'

As we notice, the DPs *bɪ-ʔabii* 'by my father' and *bɪ-llah* 'by God' are selected by an invisible verbal head that has the interpretation of *protect* for the former and *swear* for the later.

We argue that this invisible verbal element in VOC is what leads to the selection of the PP as a complement in Vocatives of Entreaty; that is, we argue that an invisible verbal element *ʔunadii* 'call' is what triggers this selection. Therefore, we argue that VOC can select a prepositional phrase. Our proposal enhances Al-Bataineh's (2019) proposal by showing that vocatives are not limited to nominative and accusative case patterns; vocatives can have genitive markings. The proposal shows that there isn't any restriction for vocative heads to select a PP.

VIII. CONCLUSION

To sum up, in this study, we investigated the syntax of Vocatives of Entreaty in Arabic from a Minimalist perspective. Unlike regular vocative phrases, Vocatives of Entreaty are organized around a PP and the vocative is marked with a genitive case. The study also shows that Vocatives of Entreaty may select two arguments (visible/invisible).

Vocatives of Entreaty are challenging to previous accounts. This type of vocative is marked with a genitive case, a scenario skipped from Al-Bataineh's (2019) proposal that accounts only for nominative and accusative case patterns of vocatives. This type of vocatives cannot appear at any part of the sentence. This confirms Hill's (2007) proposal but questions the parenthetical nature of vocatives (Haddad, 2020). The study argues that to account for Vocatives of Entreaty in Arabic, we should look at vocative phrases as Shells that have thematic roles. This is needed in our data because Vocatives of Entreaty require three arguments within its phrase structure: a role that specifies the call (the specifier position of VOC), a role for *l-mustaɣaaθ bɪh* 'the addressee' (θADDRESSEE) and a role for the *l-mustaɣaaθ lah* 'the distressed' (θDISTRESSED/EXPERIENCER).

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Saleem Abdelhady was born in Jordan. He received his PhD in linguistics from Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada.

He is currently an assistant professor at the Department of English Language and Communication, the American University of the Middle East, Kuwait.

Marwa Alkinj was born in Jordan. She received her MA in linguistics from Yarmouk University, Jordan.

She is currently a teaching staff member at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities/the Department of Humanities, Aal AlBayt University, Jordan.