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Certificate of Participation

The Department of English Literature and Linguistics at the College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University testifies that

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Sincerely,

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A Syntactic Analysis of Vocative Exclamatives in Gulf Arabic

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Vocative exclamatives are a type of exclamative sentence that include the vocative particle *yā* "O". Arabists generally assumed that the structure of vocative exclamatives is similar to that of vocatives. According to the traditional grammar of Arabic, the underlying structure of vocatives in Modern Standard Arabic covertly contains the verb *ʔunādī* "i-call". This verb has been deleted after the insertion of the vocative particle. What remains is the object, which becomes the vocative noun. Vocative exclamatives have not seen much scholarly attention especially the variety found in the Gulf dialects. It is found that vocative exclamatives can be divided into three types based on their syntactic structure:

1. *yā* + DP + Possessive Pronoun
2. *yā* + DP + DP₂ + Possessive Pronoun
3. *yā* + DP + Possessive Pronoun + PP

These vocative exclamatives are found to be verbless. How, then, to account for temporality and arguments selection? I propose that the underlying structure of the verbless vocative exclamatives includes a head, the nature of which differs depending on the type of vocative exclamative and temporality. I also propose that vocative exclamatives are derived via ellipsis.

- (1) *yā* ḥad^s-i-k!
 O luck-you
 "How lucky you are!"

The vocative exclamative in (1) is derived from the following sentence:

- (2) ʔataʕajab min ḥad^s-i-k.
 pres-exclaim about luck-fem-your
 I exclaim about your luck.

When forming (1), the vocative exclamative (VocE) undergoes an ellipsis operation at its initial part where the verb *ʔataʕajab* "exclaim" and the preposition *min* "about" are deleted following movement of the DP to the Spec of Focus. The vocative exclamative particle *yā* "O" replaces the deleted elements and licenses the ellipsis. In this case, the underlying P selects a DP as its argument and the possessive pronoun is attached to the DP in a construct state. This vocative exclamatives can be interpreted in the present tense because the underlying V carries the present tense feature.

- (3) [_{VocEP} [_{VocE} *yā* /O] [_{Focus} [_{DP_i} [_D ḥad^s/luck [_{Pro} -k/your] [_{TP} ... [_{VP}... [_{PP} [P ... [ti]]]]]]]]]]]]

There is an alternative for this proposal in the derivation of (1) to account for the past tense and argument selection. The underlying structure of (2) before the ellipsis would include a copula instead of a preposition:

- (4) *yā* ḥad^s-i-k kun-t-i bi-al-musābaqah!
 O luck-fem-your were-you-fem at-the-game
 How lucky you were at the game!

The ellipsis in (4) occurs at the final position where the copula and its complement are deleted. This copula carries the past tense feature and selects *ḥad^s* "luck" as its second argument.

My argument, then, is the absence of an overt VP in vocative exclamatives leads to two possibilities to identify the element that selects arguments and carries [+TENSE] feature. The first possibility is that an underlying P selects the vocative exclamative noun and the matrix V *ʔataʕajab* "exclaim" bears the present tense feature. The VocE noun moves from its position as a P complement to the Spec of Focus before the ellipsis operation takes place. The alternative of this proposal is that an underlying copula selects the vocative exclamative noun as its second argument and bears the past tense feature. Here, the derivation of a vocative exclamative triggers two movements: the movement of the Pro "you" from the SC to T, and the movement of the SC "your luck" to the Spec of Focus. Then, the copula with its complement is crossed out and the VocE particle licenses the ellipsis.

