

On Possessive and Directional/Locative Constructions in Jordanian Arabic: A Phase-based Approach to Binding

In Jordanian Arabic, there is an asymmetrical binding behavior in possessive constructions between reflexive and reciprocal anaphors. That is, reflexive possessives induce ungrammaticality, but reciprocal possessives do not, as exemplified in (1a–b). We also see this exact behavior in directional/locative constructions, as in (2).

- (1) a. z-zulum₁ bihibu [DP sajaaraat-hum₁ / sajaaraat baʕðhum
 DEF-men-NOM like.3PL.M cars.ACC-their / cars.ACC some.3PL.M.GEN
 l-baʕuð₁ / *sajaaraat haalhum₁].
 DEF-some.GEN / cars.ACC themselves.3PL.M.GEN
 ‘The men like their cars/each other’s cars/*themselves’ cars.’
- b. z-zulum₁ bihibu [DP s-sajaaraat tabʕat-hum₁ / tabʕat
 DEF-men-NOM like.3PL.M DEF-cars.ACC belonging-them.GEN / belonging
 baʕðhum l-baʕuð₁ / *tabʕat haalhum₁].
 some.3PL.M.GEN DEF-some.GEN / belonging themselves.3PL.M.GEN
 ‘The men like their cars/each other’s cars/*themselves’ cars.’
- (2) z-zulum₁ haʕtu ʃ-ʃantaat [PP dʒanb-hum₁ / dʒanb
 DEF-men.NOM put.3PL.M DEF-bags.ACC beside-them.3PL.M.GEN / beside
 baʕðhum l-baʕuð₁ /*dʒanb haalhum₁].
 some-3PL.M.GEN DEF-some.GEN / beside themselves.3PL.M.GEN
 ‘The men put the handbags beside them/each other/themselves.’

Note that the reciprocals and pronouns are licensed in (1)–(2) but the reflexives are not. Principles A and B of the standard binding theory seem to fall short of explaining the behaviors of anaphors and pronouns in the above examples. In order to account for the acceptability of reciprocal and pronominal possessives and the unacceptability of reflexive possessives in both nominal and locative possessives, I appeal to three arguments. First, I argue, following Hiraiwa (2005), Reintges and Lipták (2006), and Despić (2011, 2015), among many others, that DPs involving possession constitute a phase. Second, I argue that the reciprocal is licensed in such possessive constructions due to the LF movement of the distributor, as proposed by Heim, Lasnik and May (1991), which renders it accessible for binding by the matrix subject in the higher vP phase. Third, I argue, along the lines of Lee-Schoenfeld (2008) and Quicoli (2008), that Principle A applies cyclically at the end of each phase. That is, binding occurs after the LF movement within the phase and before the complement of the phase head undergoes Spell-Out. Accordingly, I show that reflexive possessives are ungrammatical because they are left unbound in their DP phase, while reciprocal possessives are grammatical since they can be anteceded by a subject NP from the higher vP (their phasal binding domain) due to their LF movement. Pronominal possessives, on the other hand, are proposed to be free in their DP phase and hence grammatical. This conclusion also draws on Chomsky’s (2001, 2008) Phase-Impenetrability Condition. It will also be shown that Arabic locative prepositions, like *dʒanb* ‘beside/next to’ in (2), form possessive constructions when followed by an NP and therefore should be treated like nominal possessives (see Kayne 2005, Ryding 2005, Stanton 2016), which explains the parallel behavior of the anaphors and pronouns

in both the DPs and the PP in (1)–(2). By uniformly reducing the binding domains to phases (Lee-Schoenfeld 2004, 2008; Canac-Marquis 2005; Quicoli 2008; Despić 2011, 2015), we capture all the binding behaviors of anaphors and pronouns in both nominal and directional/locative possessives, while still preserving the essence of the binding theory.

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