



DEF-heaven-PL.FEM                      DEF-high-SG.FEM  
 ‘The high heavens’.

Pre-nominal adjectives can appear in special constructs which are called genitive constructs. These constructs normally have a possession denotation. These constructs are either nominal or adjectival. A nominal genitive construct consists of two nouns, as exemplified in (3a). As for adjectival genitive constructs<sup>1</sup>, they start with adjectives, as shown in (3b):

(3) a. Nominal genitive construct:

kta:b-u                      al-ṭa:lib-i  
 book.SG-NOM              DEF-student.SG-GEN  
 ‘The student’s book’.

b. Adjectival genitive construct:

ṭawi:l-u                      al-qa:ma-t-i  
 tall.SG-NOM              DEF-length-FEM-GEN.  
 Literal: he has a high body  
 ‘He is tall.’

In the adjectival construct in (3b), the adjective *ṭawi:l-u* describes *al-qa:ma-t-i*. Such an adjectival genitive construct describes a construct-external noun. In (4), for example, the adjectival genitive construct *ṭawi:l-u al-qa:ma-t-i* describes the construct-external noun, *radzul-u-n*:

(4) *radzul-u-n*              ṭawi:l-u              al-qa:ma-t-i  
 Man.SG-NOM-INDEF      tall.SG-NOM              DEF-length-FEM-GEN.  
 Literal: a man has a high body  
 ‘A tall man’.

Adjectival genitive constructs do not only have a possession meaning, but also a partitive denotation: the height is one of the properties of the man’s body. The adjectival construct in (4) has the following properties: the adjective *ṭawi:l-u* describes *al-qa:ma-t-i*, the adjective *ṭawi:l-u* and the construct-external NP *radzul-u-n* have full agreement in phi-, case and definiteness features. The embedded N is always marked by genitive case.

Pre-nominal adjectives also appear in another construct which has almost the same possession and partitive meaning. The most apparent distinctive features of this construct are its resumptive/possession pronoun cliticized to its internal NP and the absence of the genitive case to the right of the construct-internal noun, as exemplified in (5):

(5) Adjectival construct with a possession clitic:

a. ʔimraʔa-t-u-n              ḍʒami:l-u-n              waḍḥ-u-ha  
 woman-FEM-NOM-INDEF      Beautiful-Nom-INDEF      face-NOM-POSS.FEM

Literal: a woman whose face is beautiful  
 ‘A woman with a beautiful face’.

b. *radzul-u-n*                      ṭawi:l-at-u-n  
 Man.SG-NOM-INDEF              tall-FEM.SG-NOM-INDEF

<sup>1</sup>Adjectival constructs, similar to nominal constructs, have somehow a nominal denotation (Fassi 1999).

qa:ma-t-u-hu  
length-FEM-NOM-POSS.MAS  
Literal: a man who has a high body  
‘A tall man’.

Another distinctive feature of this construct is agreement: case and definiteness features of the adjective *ḍāmi:l-u-n* agree with the construct-external NP *ʔimraʔa-t-u-n* in (5a), and the phi-features of the adjective (i.e. number and gender) agree with the construct-internal NP *wadḥh*. Therefore, the adjectival genitive construct in (3b) and the adjectival construct with a possession clitic, which have some similarities in terms of the semantic interpretation, differ in the way agreement between the adjective and the surrounding nouns is established.

## 2. Purpose of the study

The adjectival genitive constructs and adjectival constructs with a possession clitic have been reported and studied in several studies (especially adjectival genitive constructs). They have been presented as full propositional DPs (Kremers, 2003; Fassi, 1999); however, no previous study has distinguished between these constructs. This study is mainly to demonstrate that these constructs are syntactically different. In the following section, the similarities and differences between these adjectival constructs are discussed in more details.

## 3. Literature review

Few studies have been done on the syntax of adjectival constructs in Arabic (Kremers, 2003; Fassi, 1999; Al Sharifi & Sadler, 2009). On the contrary, much effort has been paid to analyze the nominal genitive construct and its syntactic representation in Arabic (Al-Qahtani, 2016; Al-Mansour, 2012; Benmamoun, 2006; Siloni, 2003; Kaplan, 1993; Mohammed, 1988 among others). The general proposal in the studies that have been done on the adjectival constructs is in two folds. The first one is that the adjectival genitive construct, as in (3b), has to be constructed in the syntax of Arabic but not in the morphology (Al Sharifi and Sadler, 2009). The second is that both types of constructs are full DPs.

Al sharifi and Sadler (2009) present the following tests as evidence to their assumption that an adjectival genitive construct is constructed in syntax. They report that one of the elements of an adjectival genitive construct can be coordinated and modified and therefore it should be considered as a product of syntax in Arabic. In (6a), for example, the adjective *ṭawī:l-at-u* which belongs to the adjectival genitive construct is coordinated by the adjective, *nahī:l-at-u*.

- (6) a. bint-u-n                      nahī:l-at-u                      w    ṭawī:l-at-u  
            Girl-NOM-INDEF.SG    slim-FEM-NOM.SG    and    tall-FEM-    NOM.SG  
al-qa:ma-t-i  
DEF-length-FEM-GEN.  
‘A girl is skinny and tall.’
- b. *radḥul-u-n*                      abjaḍ-u w                      ḍāmi:l-u  
            Man.SG-NOM-INDEF              white-NOM              and              beautiful-NOM  
al-wadḥh-i  
DEF-face-GEN.  
‘A man who has a white and beautiful face’.

In (7), the construct-internal NP *al-rusu:m-i* is post-modified by *al-ḍāmi:l-at-i*.



#### 4. Discussion

In this section, I propose that both types of constructs are different in terms of syntactic representation. Only the adjectival genitive construct is a spell-out domain which is sent to interfaces by a non-defective/strong adjectival D head. Evidence to this proposal comes from the following assumptions: a spell-out domain does not allow the intervention of any element between its components after it is shipped to PF. Furthermore, agreement has to be established before shipping a domain to PF, and therefore it is not possible to have optional agreement between two construct-internal elements or a construct-internal and construct-external element. Only the construct that does not allow intervening elements and optional agreement is a spell-out domain.

Another tool that is used to determine whether a construct is a spell-out domain or not comes from syntax-phonology interface. I will refer to *t*-liaison (i.e. the realization of the feminine suffix *-t* at the right edge of a word). I propose that this feminine suffix has to be realized when it occupies a non-final position in a construct whose components form a single spell-out domain.

##### 4.1. Immediate adjacency requirement (syntactic requirement)

If the genitive construct and the construct with a possession clitic are shipped to PF as spell-out domains, the elements of each construct should be immediately adjacent to each other. This immediate adjacency requirement is a result of shipping a construct to PF as a single spell-out domain. In other words, the components of this domain cannot be accessed again after sending to interfaces. Therefore, any intervening element should not be inserted between the elements of each construct. Adverbs, for example, are not expected to appear in a construct-internal position if this construct is a spell-out domain. Otherwise, it should allow adverb intervention.

In (9a&b), I assume that the genitive constructs are domains that have been already shipped to PF and cannot be accessed any more throughout the syntactic derivation due to the fact that they do not allow the intervention of the adverb *dziddan*. Therefore, these sentences are ungrammatical.

(9) Genitive constructs:

- \*a. raʔ aj-t-u                      imraʔ-at-a-n  
 See.PST-1SG-NOM                woman-FEM-ACC-INDEF.SG  
 dʒami:l-at-a                      dʒiddan                      al-wadʒh-i  
 beautiful.FEM-ACC-INDEF.SG    much                      DEF-face-GEN  
 'I saw a woman whose face is very beautiful.'
- \*b. dʒa:ʔa                      raʔʒul-u-n                      ʔalwi:l-u  
 come.PST.1SG    woman-NOM-INDEF.SG    beautiful.NOM.SG  
 bi-fiddah                      al-qa:m-at-i  
 in-strength    DEF-height-FEM-GEN  
 'A man who is very tall came.'

On the contrary, intervening adverbs are allowed in the constructs with a possession clitic in (10). This constructs should not be spell-out domains on their own. Otherwise, they should have rejected the intervening element *dziddan* in (10a) and *bi-fiddah* in (10b) by virtue of the fact that the elements of each construct have been already spelled out to PF and must behave like a single lexical word.

(10) Construct with a possession clitic:

- a. raʔ ajt-u                      imraʔ a-t-a-n                      dʒami:l-a-n  
 saw.PST-1SG-NOM    woman-FEM-ACC-INDEF    beautiful-ACC-INDEF.SG  
 dziddan                      wadʒh-u-ha

much face-NOM-POSS  
'I saw a woman whose face is very beautiful.'

b.  $\widehat{d}\widehat{z}a:ʔa$   $\widehat{r}a\widehat{d}\widehat{z}ul-u-n$   $\widehat{t}alwi:l-at-un$   
 come.PST.1SG man-NOM-INDEF.SG tall-FEM-NOM-INDEF.SG  
 bi- $\widehat{f}iddah$   $qa:m-at-u-hu$   
 in-strength height-FEM-NOM-POSS  
 Literal translation: A man whose body is very high came.  
 'A man who is very tall came.'

#### 4.2. Number agreement in both types of constructs

In this subsection, I show that the genitive construct should constitute a spell-out domain and as a consequence its number is specified before shipping it to PF by a strong phase head. In (11a&b), each genitive construct agrees with the construct-external NP. In these examples, agreement in number between the construct-external NPs, *muṣallim-u:n* in (11a) and *riḍḍa:l-u-n* in (11b), and the construct-internal pre-nominal adjectives *kiba:ru* and *dzamil-u:* is obligatory: they are all plural.

(11) a.  $al-mu\widehat{ṣ}allim-u:n$   $kiba:r-u$   $al-sinn-i$   
 DEF-teacher- NOM.PL3M old.PL.M.NOM DEF-age-GEN  
 'The old teachers'.

b.  $\widehat{d}\widehat{z}a:ʔa$   $\widehat{r}i\widehat{d}\widehat{z}a:l-u-n$   $\widehat{d}zamil-u:$   
 come.PST.1SG man-NOM-INDEF.PL beautiful.NOM.PL  
 al-wadḡh-i  
 DEF-height-FEM-GEN  
 'Men who are very tall came.'

On the contrary, the examples in (12) are ungrammatical due to the fact that the number feature of the construct-internal adjectives does not match the number feature of the construct-external NPs: the construct-external NPs *al-muṣallim-u:n* and *riḍḍa:l-u-n* are plural and the construct-internal adjectives *kabi:r-u* and *dzamil-u* are singular

(12) \*a.  $al-mu\widehat{ṣ}allim-u:n$   $kabi:r-u$   $al-sinn-i$   
 DEF-teacher- NOM.PL3M old.SG.M-NOM DEF-age-GEN  
 'The old teachers'.

\*b.  $\widehat{d}\widehat{z}a:ʔa$   $\widehat{r}i\widehat{d}\widehat{z}a:l-u-n$   $\widehat{d}zamil-u$   
 come.PST.1SG man-NOM-INDEF.PL beautiful.NOM.SG  
 al-wadḡh-i  
 DEF-height-FEM-GEN  
 'Men who are very tall came.'

It is impossible to lack agreement in number in genitive constructs, as shown in the ungrammatical examples in (12), because the genitive constructs, I assume, in these examples are spell-out domains. In these domains, agreement has been already established before shipping them to PF by a strong adjectival D head. Specifically, the number of the genitive construct-internal adjective has already agreed with its genitive construct-external NP and has been specified as







realized in genitive construct-internal position, as shown in (20). On the contrary, the pre-nominal adjective in (21), for example, does not constitute one spell-out domain with the construct-internal NP, and therefore the feminine *-t* is not realized at the right of the pre-nominal adjective: the feminine *-t* does not occupy a spell-out domain internal-position. It is rather at the left edge of a spell-out domain. This spell-out domain contains the construct-internal NP, which has been said to be an island on its own (Guilliot & Malkawi, 2011; Kremers, 2003; Aoun et al., 2010), as shown in (21).

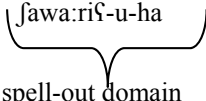
(20) Adjectival genitive construct (the feminine suffix *-t* occupies a spell-out domain-internal position):

wa:siʕ-aʔ                      al-ʕawa:riʕ-i

A spell-out domain

wa:siʕ-aʔ                      al-ʕawa:riʕ-i  
 wide-FEM.SG    DEF-road.PL-GEN  
 ‘It has wide streets.’

(21) Adjectival construct with a possession clitic (the feminine suffix *-t* does not occupy a spell-out domain internal position. It is rather to the left of a spell-out domain that contains the adjectival construct-internal NP *ʕawa:riʕ-u-ha*):

wa:siʕ-aʕ/0                      ʕawa:riʕ-u-ha  


wa:siʕ-aʕ/0                      ʕawa:riʕ-u-ha  
 wide-FEM.SG    road. PL-FEM-NOM-POSS  
 ‘It has wide streets.’

## 5. Conclusion

This paper touches upon the difference between two types of adjectival constructs that have been previously considered as full propositional DPs (Kremers, 2003; Fassi, 1999). In this paper, the researcher has shown that the major difference between these two types could be in term of the syntactic representation of each construct. The adjectival genitive construct must have a non-defective adjectival D head that is able to spell out the construct to PF. On the other hand, the embedded NP in the construct with a possession clitic is an island and spelled-out alone. I have shown that the adjectival genitive construct should be considered a spell-out domain. Evidence to this proposal comes from the prohibition of word insertion, obligatory number agreement, realization of the feminine suffix in spell-out domain-internal position. As for the construct with a possession clitic, the same tools have been presented as counter-evidence to the proposal that this construct constitutes a single spell-out domain: it allows word insertion and optional number agreement and the feminine suffix is suppressed in internal position.

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## تراكيب الإضافة الوصفية في اللغة العربية

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### ملخص

هذه الدراسة تُركِّزُ على نمطين من التراكيب الوصفية في اللغة العربية. التَّركيبُ الأوَّلُ يَتميِّزُ بِحَرَكَةِ الجَرِّ عَلَى الاسْمِ المَوْصُوفِ وَالتَّركيبُ الآخرُ يَشتمَلُ عَلَى ضَمِيرِ مَلَكِيَّةِ مَوْصُولٍ بِالاسْمِ المَوْصُوفِ. مُؤخَّرًا دُرِسَتْ هَذِهِ التَّراكيبُ، وَلَكِنَّ الإختلافاتَ بَيْنَهُمَا لَمْ تُناقَشْ بِوَضُوحٍ. فِي هَذِهِ الدَّرَاسَةِ، إعتَبِرَ التَّركيبُ الأوَّلُ فَقطُ أَنَّهُ حَقْلٌ مُستَقِلٌ إِذْ أَنَّهُ بَرَفُضٍ إِدخالُ أَيِّ كَلِمَاتٍ جَدِيدَةٍ بَيْنَ مَكُونَاتِهِ وَ لَا يَسْمَحُ بِغِيَابِ التَّوَأْفُقِ النَحْوِيِّ فِي العَدَدِ بَيْنَ هَذِهِ المَكُونَاتِ.

الكلمات الدالة: تراكيب الإضافة الوصفية ، اللغة العربية

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