I. Possessive nPs in Semitic, an overview


Main issues:
- The structure of nPs and DPs, possessives, and genitive formations.
- Construct State nominal.
  
  Ritter (1991):
  The head of the construct is generated under N and moves to spec D, leading head-initial word order:
  e.g. beit ha-mora / * ha-beit ha-mora 'the house of the teacher'.
  dar Imo'sallim / *ddar Imo'sallim

- The locus of gender and number (Ritter 1993, 1995, see also Lowenstamm 2008)
  o Ritter (1995: 417-418): “in Hebrew the gender specification is on the head of NP; the number specification is on the head of NumP; and definiteness is on the head of DP.”

- Analytic (Free State) vs synthetic (Construct State) nPs (Ouhalla 2009, 2011).
- Ouhalla (2011: 128): “[i]nalienable noun phrases derive from a structure (…), where the inalienable possessum is the head noun and the possessor is its internal argument.”

e.g. (p. 114) xal al-bnt / *al-xal dyal al-bnt
uncle the-girl the-uncle of the-girl

(2) Moroccan Arabic possessives:
- nPs of the form bu + possessee.
- Compared with possessives of the form mul + possessee.
- They show interesting properties with regard to gender, number and definiteness.
- Also some phonological and prosodic proprieties of the complex bu + noun will be examined.

Aims:
- Determine the morphosyntactic structure of these nPs.
- Show the properties of bu and mul in both types of formations:
  - bu probably lost its original phonetic form /ʔabu/ and meaning ‘father’
  - bu + N exhibit compounding proprieties while mul + N are genuine possessives.

II. Moroccan Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>Feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>'stubborn, big headed'</td>
<td>bu ras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'big-eared'</td>
<td>buwdnin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'short-legged'</td>
<td>burqila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Potbelly'</td>
<td>bukrija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>'homeowner'</td>
<td>mul ddar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'grocer'</td>
<td>mul lhanut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'fishmonger'</td>
<td>mul lhat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- bu + possessee noun: [-number], [-definite], [+/- gender]  
- mul + possessee noun: [+number], [+gender], [+definite]  
- The same word order: possessor + possessee. They differ from other common possessive NPs (see 5), which display the opposite word order possibly with a genitive preposition between them.  
- bu and mul cannot occur in isolation.  
- mul + N = genuine possessives  
- bu + N behave as compounds in which bu has lost its original form /ʔabu/ and meaning ‘father’.  
- Forms with bu are semantically opaque. Their meaning is not compositional: It does not obtain from the meaning of N1 + the meaning of N2.
Some other forms in Moroccan Arabic are invariable and morphologically unmarked for gender and number:

(4)

‘carnival figure dressed in goatskin’ buʒlud (also called bulabtˤajn)
‘snail’ buʒaylal (also called babbuʃ)
‘varicella’ buhámrun
‘measles’ buʃffirˤ
‘mussels’ buʒrag
‘dish made of sheep’s head’ buzrug
Surnames: buʒərbala, buɾʃilat, buxobza, etc.
Place names: buzniqa, buɔdɔʳ, etc.
Typical or particular dress: mmul lmonto ‘dressed in a coat’ / bumonto ‘always dressed in a coat’ mmul tarboʃ ‘wearing a hat’ / butarboʃ ‘always wearing a hat’.

(5)

a. ddar djal rrążal the house of the man ‘The man’s house’
b. ras rrążal / *rras djal rrążal head the main ‘The man’s head’

III. Eastern Arabic

ʔabu ‘father’ + Noun

Egyptian Arabic:

‘whiskered’ ʔabu ṣanab
‘bald-headed’ ʔabu batˤha
‘hunchbacked’ ʔabu qubba
‘one-eyed’ ʔabu ʕura

Egyptian Arabic also has forms of the type in (3b), but uses sˤaheb ‘friend, owner’ rather than mul: e.g. sˤaheb elbi:t ‘homeowner’.

The same patterns are found in Palestinian Arabic.

IV. Berber

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>‘big headed’</td>
<td>buuɡajju</td>
<td>mmuɡajju</td>
<td>id biɡˤiʃja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘potbelly’</td>
<td>buuɦliɡ</td>
<td>mmuɦliɡ</td>
<td>id biʔiɦlan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘grocer’</td>
<td>buθanuṭ</td>
<td>mmuθanuṭ</td>
<td>id buθunaṭ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>‘hedgehog’</td>
<td>bu +Noun</td>
<td>proper name</td>
<td>Mḥnd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘boar’</td>
<td>butaγant</td>
<td>‘forest’</td>
<td>tagant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All forms are inflected for gender (bu / mmu) and number (id / istt).
The possessee noun is sensitive to gender and number.
Surnames, places names and some other common nouns use bu-:

(7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surnames</th>
<th>buufus ‘hand’</th>
<th>buzzit ‘oil’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common nouns</td>
<td>buufus ‘hand’</td>
<td>buzzit ‘oil’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Structures

- Standard analyses assign the possessive nPs as in (5) a structure in which the possessee is the head noun and the possessor its specifier.
  - Head-raising derives the possessee-initial position order (see Ouhalla 2011: 112).
  - The head noun, which may itself be unspecified for definiteness, inherits it from the possessor (see for instance Benmamoun 2000 and Fassi Fehri 1999).

- Possessive nPs at issue (3) are assigned a structure in which bu and mul are heads, and the possessee noun the complement (see 8).
  - The lack of definiteness and number in the forms with bu follows from the fact that bu is projected lower in the structure than mul.
  - Forms like buras ‘stubborn’ are generated inside DP with no functional head for number and gender.
  - Forms like mul ddar ‘homeowner’ contain a possessive phrase projected outside DP and headed by mul.
  - PossP is regarded as the locus of number and gender specifications of the entire construction, since number and gender of the head determines number and gender of the whole form.

(8) Compounds vs genuine possessives

(a) DP
   \[ \begin{array}{c}
   \text{D'} \\
   \text{D} \\
   \text{NP} \\
   \text{bu} \\
   \text{NP} \\
   \text{N'} \\
   \end{array} \]

(b) PossP
   \[ \begin{array}{c}
   \text{PossP} \\
   \text{Poss'} \\
   \text{Poss} \\
   \text{mul} \\
   \text{D'} \\
   \text{D} \\
   \text{NP} \\
   \text{np} \\
   \text{d} \\
   \end{array} \]
VI. Phonological domains
   - One phonological word
     - *bu / *mu show phonological word properties with the possessee noun: each form behaves as one phonological word though containing two words.
     - *bu cannot ever be separated from the possessee noun by any other element, while *mul can.
       - Initial CV hypothesis (Lowenstamm 1999)
         - Each word of major category (N, V, A) has an empty initial CV at its left.
         - This empty CV is the site of cliticization.
         - In certain languages the empty CV hosts determiners: e.g. French *le, *la, *les; Hebrew definite article *ha.

       ![French example]

       ![Hebrew example]

   - In Moroccan Arabic, the definite article and *bu compete for the same position, namely the initial CV.

   ![RRAS example]

   ![BURAS example]

References


