Grammaticalized Resumption Helps a Little with Islands and D-Linking Helps a Lot: Evidence from Modern Standard Arabic Acceptability

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Introduction

• Resumption is sometimes claimed to be island-rescuing (Ross, 1967, et seq.)
• In grammaticalized resumption languages, resumption is claimed to be island-insensitive (McCookley & di Matteo, 2006) and/or required in island contexts (Shiki, 2012).
• Acceptability tests of this claim have been confined to non-grammaticalized resumption languages like English (Polinsky, et al., 2015, et al.)
• Factorial design of island effects provides a quantitative definition of islandhood well-suited for testing resumption (Sprouse, et al., 2012)
• Modern standard Arabic (NSA) has grammaticalized resumption like Irish/Hebrew

Items

(1) Whether Islands

a. ماذا ي 바랍니다 الشرطي بذلك؟ ما هو يكون؟
   b. masha'ah [jussa'lal-jarr] [ ma'a iba kaama maalum saara ta j]
   c. What, wonder the policeman [whether had Mahmoud stole it?
   d. What, does the policeman wonder [whether Mahmoud stole it?]

(2) Within Islands

a. ماذا يقلق لى الحاج محمد في البيت؟
   b. masha'ah, taqalaa [l.xal al-nasir ta fis-maktab]
   c. what, you worry [if the lawyer forgot it in the office]
   d. "What, do you worry [if the lawyer forgot it at the office?"

(3) Complex NP (NCN) Islands

a. ماذا يقلق لى الحاج محمد في البيت؟
   b. masha'ah, taqalaa [l.xal al-nasir ta fis-maktab]
   c. what, you worry [if the lawyer forgot it in the office]
   d. "What, do you worry [if the lawyer forgot it at the office?"

Results: Bare wh-Phrase Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island Effects:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Resumption:</td>
<td>No Resumption:</td>
<td>No Resumption:</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.11; p = 0.44$</td>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.26; p = 0.09$</td>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = 0.06; p = 0.67$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resumption:</td>
<td>Resumption:</td>
<td>Resumption:</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = 0.05; p = 0.02$</td>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.05; p = 0.82$</td>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = 0.37; p = 0.01$</td>
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Results: D-Linked wh-Phrase Questions

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<td>No Resumption:</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.37; p = 0.08$</td>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.78; p = 0.0007$</td>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.48; p = 0.04$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resumption:</td>
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<td>Resumption:</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.05; p = 0.002$</td>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.77; p = 0.0008$</td>
<td>$\hat{\beta} = -0.33; p = 0.12$</td>
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Discussion

• CNCPs may not be islands in Arabic:
  • Very difficult to find NPs that take CP complements in this way, might simply be lexical/grammatical
  • Resumption somewhat marked with bare wh-fillers
  • D-Linking improves resumption in adjuncts/whether-islands
  • ...in some cases non-d-linked resumptives are worse than islands alone
  • In some cases, resumption improves long extraction alone
  • For Wh-whether-islands, resumption helps remove the marginally present super-additive component only
  • Resumption never results in $z > 0$ for any island
  • Results (islands & resumption) clearly subtle and may depend on population

Conclusions

• Last resort might be the best characterization of resumption...
• but resumption is not ameliorative of island violations
• Future Directions:
  • Relative clause extractions in addition to wh-questions
  • Arguments vs. adjuncts?
  • Spoken varieties of Arabic
  • Other putative wh-movement constructions (comparatives, etc.)

Acknowledgments & Selected References

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