

Obligatory resumption in Iraqi Arabic – a narrow syntax phenomenon

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Previous analyses of resumption (Doron 1982; Sharvit 1999; Guilliot 2006; Malkawi 2009; Sterian 2011) consider it an interface phenomenon, regardless of whether resumption is obligatory or only an option. In other words, these authors attempt a unified interface analysis of both obligatory and optional contexts. In this paper I present data from Iraqi Arabic pronominal resumption (i.e. “weak resumption” in Malkawi’s (2009) and Guilliot & Malkawi’s (2011) terminology) referred to in the following as “resumption”, and I argue that obligatory resumption in Iraqi Arabic is a purely syntactic phenomenon. The obligatoriness of resumption follows strictly from requirements in the syntax and only optional resumption is an interface phenomenon.

In Iraqi Arabic, resumption can be impossible, obligatory or it can alternate with a gap. Obligatory resumption in Iraqi Arabic is a case of true resumption in the sense of Sells (1984) and occurs in relativization and dislocation. Resumption is optional in D-linked content questions and impossible with bare interrogatives (except for long distance direct object extraction). Consider the obligatory resumption context in (1): the pronominal element *-h* ‘him’ occupies the thematic A-position of the moved constituent *illyi* ‘whom’, which is in an A’-position; in the context of relativization, the gap strategy is ill-formed in Iraqi Arabic. I argue that obligatory resumption arises in Iraqi Arabic because of (i) the nature of the D involved: *illyi* “which” has a categorial selectional feature that requires it to take a complement headed by the resumptive pronoun, and (ii) the resumptive pronoun is a clitic in the sense of Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) and therefore cannot surface in its base position, but must raise to a derived one.

I adopt Déchaine & Wiltschko’s (2002) typology of pronouns and I analyse resumptive pronouns in Iraqi Arabic as being of category ϕ . In (1) the relative pronoun *illyi* “which”, the resumptive pronoun *h* “him” and the noun *kateb* “writer” form a complex-DP (2) that starts out in the derivation as complement of the verb *feft* “I saw”. Then ϕ raises to a derived position because of its deficient nature (Cardinaletti and Starke 1999). The remnant-DP raises to SpecCP and N moves up, assuming a raising analysis of relative clauses (3).

With respect to the obligatoriness of resumption in relative clauses, Iraqi Arabic patterns – besides other varieties of Arabic - with Romanian, an Eastern Romance language that also displays true resumption in the sense of Sells (1984). However, with respect to D-linked questions, Romanian and Iraqi Arabic are different: resumption is obligatory in Romanian, but only optional in Iraqi Arabic. This follows from my account because in Romanian, significantly, relative clauses and D-linked content questions also have in common – besides obligatory resumption - the relative pronoun/ D-linked interrogative *care* “which” (4); I argue that *care* “which”, similarly as Iraqi Arabic *illy* “which”, has a categorial selectional feature that requires it to take a complement headed by the resumptive pronoun. In Iraqi Arabic the relative pronoun *illy* is morpho-syntactically different from the D-linked interrogative *ya* (5): the relative pronoun patterns with Romanian as it requires obligatory resumption, but the D-linked interrogative participates only in optional resumption and is ambiguous between a [D-N] and a [D- ϕ -N] structure.

KEY WORDS: resumption, relativization, clitic, complex-DP, D-linking

Examples:

IRAQI ARABIC

(1) OBLIGATORY RESUMPTION

il=ka:teb illyi feft=**ah**/*___ eb-be:t Suha tʃa:n Khalil Jubran
the=writer which saw.1S=**him**/*___ at=house Suha was Khalil Jubran
'The writer whom I saw [**him**] in Suha's house was Khalil Jubran.'

IRAQI ARABIC

(2) COMPLEX-DP STRUCTURE IN RELATIVIZATION

[DP [D illyi] [_φP [_φ h] [N ka:teb]]]
which him writer

(3) DERIVATION IN RELATIVIZATION

[D il [CP [DP [NP ka:teb][D illyi] [_φH][N ka:teb]]]...[I feft]...[_φ h]...[DP [D illyi] [_φP [_φ h] [N ka:teb]]]

ROMANIAN

(4) OBLIGATORY RESUMPTION

a. relativization

Panciu era un oraşel pe care *___/il cunoştea din copilărie.
Panciu was a town.M pe which *___/him knew from childhood
'Panciu was a town which he knew [it] since childhood.'

b. D-linked question

Pe care profesor *___/I-ai invitat să țină o prelegere ?
pe which professor.M *___/him=Aux.2S invited Conj hold.3S a talk
'Which professor did you invite [him] to give a talk ?'

IRAQI ARABIC

(5) D-LINKED QUESTION

Iman ya: ridʒdʒa:l fa:ft=**eh**/*___ bi-l-Hafla
Iman which man saw.3FS=3MS/*___ at-the-party
'Which man did Iman see [**him**]/___ at the party ?'

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