

## Grammaticalization of Alienable Possession in Makkan Arabic

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Many of the world's languages grammaticalize a distinction between alienable and inalienable possession. Inalienable possession is defined as an unchanging, permanent semantic relationship between two nominals, the possessee and the possessor while alienable possession is a changing, context-dependent relationship between the possessee and the possessor (Heine 1997 and Alexiadu 2003). Such a dichotomy of acquired vs. inherited possession (as identified by Alexiadou 2003) does not exist in Standard Arabic in which possession is expressed by simple juxtaposition of the possessee and the possessor nominals, a structure known as the Semitic construct state (Benmamoun & Choueiri 2013). However, in Makkan Arabic (MA) an alternative possessive construction has emerged (besides the construct state) in which possession is expressed by using the morpheme *ħag* between the possessee and the possessor. This morpheme might be followed by a possessor NP as in (1a) or take an enclitic possessive pronoun as in (1b-c) and it agrees with the possessed NP in gender as in (1c).

- (1) a. (al)-kita:b *ħag* Sami      b. (al)-kita:b *ħagg-i*      c. al-warag-a *ħagg-at-i*  
DEF-book POSS Sami.      DEF-book POSS-1SG      DEF-paper-F POSS-F-1SG  
'Sami's book'      'my book'      'my paper'

Cross-linguistically, kinship and body parts terms are prototypical members of the class of inalienably possessed nouns in languages that display distinct grammatical markings for in/alienable possession (Nichols 1992, Heine 1997, and Alexiadu 2003). These two noun classes are incompatible with the emergent periphrastic possessive construction in MA, as indicated by the ungrammaticality of (2a) and (2b). Thus, I assume that the emergent possessive construction in MA is specific to alienable possession and that it is the outcome of the grammaticalization of the inalienable/alienable split in this variety of Arabic.

- (2) a. \*ʕam *ħagg-i*      b. \*Ra:s *ħagg-i*  
uncle POSS-1SG      head POSS-1SG  
(Intended) 'my uncle'      (Intended) 'my head'

In this paper I argue that the possessive marker *ħag* is a functional morpheme that has been grammaticalized from the noun *ħag* 'right'. As a noun, *ħag* 'right' can (a) be pluralized: *ħugu:g* 'rights' and (b) take the definite article: *al-ħag* 'the right'. However, the grammaticalized functional possessive morpheme, *ħag* lost these properties, so it is incompatible with the definite article (3a) and cannot be pluralized (3b). Nonetheless, grammaticalization does involve gains (Hopper & Traugot, 2003), *ħag* as a possessive morpheme inflects for gender as in (1c), a property which does not apply to the lexical source, the noun *ħag*.

- (3) a. \*(al)-kita:b al-ħag Sami      b. \*al-kutub *ħugu:g* Sami  
DEF-book DEF-POSS Sami      DEF -books POSS.PL Sami  
(Intended) 'Sami's book'      (Intended) 'Sami's books'

In the recent study, I show that the possessive morpheme *ħag* conforms to Hopper's (1991) five principles of Grammaticalization, namely, (1) layering, (2) divergence, (3) specialization, (4) persistence, and (5) decategorialization, and that the choice of the noun *ħag* to be grammaticalized as a possessive marker is not arbitrary but complies with the principle of specialization on the basis of textual frequency and semantic generalizations (Hopper 2003).

This cline of grammaticalization in MA is consistent with the insights of grammaticalization as a cyclical process (Hopper and Traugott 2003), and it, interestingly, is in line with a similar cline of grammaticalization in Maltese and Egyptian Arabic (see Stolz 2011 and Sultan 2007).

## References

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