

PREPOSITION STRANDING IN LIBYAN ARABIC SLUICING

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Abstract

In the PF-deletion theory, sluicing is derived by movement of a wh-phrase out of a sentential constituent (TP) plus deletion of that TP at PF. This account rests on crosslinguistic evidence such as morphological case-matching and preposition-stranding (p-stranding) and their morpho-syntax with the wh-remnant. Merchant (2001) generalises that p-stranding under sluicing is permitted only in languages that allow p-stranding under regular wh-movement. Recent research, however, has uncovered cases of non-p-stranding languages that allow p-stranding under sluicing (c.f., Szczegelnik (2006) for Polish, Stjepanović (2006) for Serbo-Croatian, Almeida and Yoshida (2007) for Brazilian Portuguese, Fortin (2007) for Indonesian and Nevins et al. (2009) for Brazilian Portuguese and Spanish). Libyan Arabic (LA), a non-p-stranding language, is apparently another counterexample to this generalisation. P-stranding is not permissible under regular wh-movement; however, it is in sluicing (1).

- (1) Ali tekəlləm mʕa waħed lakin miš ʕarəf (mʕa) man.
Ali talked.3ms with someone but NEG know.1s with who
'Ali talked with a man, but I don't know who/with whom.'

Starting from the observation that LA sluicing seems to display optionality in stranding and/or pied-piping a preposition, the paper addresses the apparent violation of the *Preposition Stranding Generalisation* (Merchant 2001) and questions its robustness. The paper argues that LA sluicing under p-stranding derives only from a cleft source, thus is pseudosluicing despite its appearance as sluicing. The p-stranding effect follows from the fact that wh-pivots of clefts cannot be headed by a preposition. It is proposed that LA has two sources of IP ellipsis: sluicing and pseudosluicing. Hence, despite initial appearances, the claim is that LA does not constitute a counterexample to Merchant's generalisation. Based on these sluicing-related facts, the paper provides novel evidence for Shlonsky's (2002) analysis of Arabic Class II wh-interrogatives as copular clauses.

References

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