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Existential predication and predicative possession in Arabic dialects

A typological approach

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Abstract: In the existential domain, Classical Arabic expresses the ground > figure perspectivization in locational predication by a mere change in constituent order, but Modern Arabic varieties have variously grammaticalized existential particles that tend to acquire verb-like properties. In the possessive domain, Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic have a typical oblique-possessor (or locational possessive) construction in which the possessor phrase is flagged by a preposition. In the vernacular varieties, this preposition has become a possessive predicator with some verbal properties, whose coding frame is similar (although not fully identical) to that of a transitive verb. More radical changes in the existential and possessive domains are attested in pidginized/creolized Arabic varieties.

Keywords: Arabic dialects; existential particles; existential predication; have-drift; predicative possession

1 Introduction

Classical Arabic had a locational predication construction ‘(Copula +) Figure - phrase + Ground phrase’ with the possibility of expressing the ground > figure perspectivization by a mere change in constituent order, but Modern Arabic varieties have variously grammaticalized existential particles. In the possessive domain, Modern Standard Arabic has the same oblique-possessor (or locational possessive) construction as Classical Arabic, literally ‘at/to Possessor is Possessee’, but in vernacular varieties, the preposition flagging the possessor NP has acquired verb-like properties in its possessive use, and the departure from the original situation is particularly radical in pidginized/creolized Arabic varieties.

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In this article, I discuss the typological status of the constructions expressing existential predication (or more precisely inverse-locational predication – see Section 2.2) and predicative possession in Arabic dialects, and the grammaticalization paths that gave rise to them, without, however, trying to give a precise and exhaustive picture of their geographical distribution.

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 offers a sketch of a general typology of predication possession and inverse-locational predication. Section 3 discusses the typology of inverse-locational predication in Arabic dialects, and Section 4 discusses the typology of predicative possession in Arabic dialects. Section 5 summarizes the conclusions.

2 The general typology of predicative possession and inverse-locational predication

2.1 Predicative possession

In accordance with common practice, PREDICATIVE POSSESSION is used here as an abbreviation for ‘direct/plain predicative possession’, i.e. predicative constructions encoding a variety of possessor-possessee relationships with the unmarked perspectivization ‘possessor > possessee’, illustrated by English *John has a book/two sons/short hair* (as opposed to inverse predicative possession expressing the alternative perspective ‘possessee > possessor’, illustrated by English *The book is John’s*). As a rule, languages have a limited number of predicative constructions (often just one) available to express a relatively wide range of possessive relationships.

Heine (1997) and Stassen (2009) constitute the most detailed and comprehensive accounts of the typology of predicative possession published so far. Although they differ in important respects, they basically agree on the types of predicative possession that can be identified in the world’s languages. Apart from definitional and terminological issues, the main difference between the typology of predicative possession sketched in this section and those proposed by Heine and Stassen is the rejection of the so-called Topic Possessive type as a possible basic type of predicative possession. For a detailed discussion of this point, readers are referred to Chappell and Creissels (2019).

With very few exceptions that can generally be explained as transitional stages in an ongoing process of have-drift, the possessive clauses of the world’s languages can be identified as belonging to one of following three types:

- in the HAVE-POSSESSIVE (or TRANSPOSSITIVE) type, the possessor and the possessee are coded like the agent and the patient in transitive predication;
- in the S-POSSESSOR type, the possessor is coded like S in intransitive verbal predication or the figure in locational predication, and the possessee shows some non-core coding;
- in the S-POSSESSEE type, the possessee is coded like S in intransitive verbal predication or the figure in locational predication, and the possessor shows some non-core coding.

(1b), to be compared to the prototypical transitive clause (1a), illustrates the have-possessive type in Mandinka, with the coding frame of *sòtó* ‘have’ fully aligned with that of the prototypical transitive verb *tábi* ‘cook’.

- (1) Mandinka (Mande) [pers.doc.]
- a. *Fàatú yè kín-òò tábí kèê-lú yè.*
 Fatou CPL.TR meal-D cook man.D-PL for
 ‘Fatou cooked the meal for the men.’
- b. *Fàatú yè báadiŋ-ò-lú sòtó ññ sàatêe tó.*
 Fatou CPL.TR relative-D-PL have DEM village.D LOC
 ‘Fatou has relatives in this village.’

The S-possessor type can be further divided into two subtypes:

- in the INCORPORATED-POSSESSEE type, the possessor is the S argument of a proprietive predicate (verb or adjective) derived from the noun designating the possessee, as in (2);
- in the COMITATIVE-POSSESSEE type, the possessee shows the same coding as comitative adjuncts, as in (3).

- (2) Kalaallisut (Eskimo) [Van Geenhoven 1998: 25]
Angut taana illu-qar-puq.
 man that house-PROPR-IND.3SG
 ‘That man has a house.’ (lit. ‘That man is house-having’)
- (3) Hausa (Chadic, Afroasiatic) [Newman 2000: 222]
Yārò yanà dà fensĩr.
 boy 3SG.M.ICPL with pencil
 ‘The boy has a pencil.’ (lit. ‘The boy is with pencil’)

The S-possessee type can be further divided into two subtypes:

- in the OBLIQUE-POSSESSOR type, illustrated in (4), the possessor shows some kind of oblique marking: adessive, comitative, benefactive, etc.;

- in the GENITIVE-POSSESSOR type, illustrated in (5), the possessor and the possessee show the same coding characteristics (genitive marking of the possessor and/or possessive or construct marking of the possessee) as in adnominal possession.

(4) Fongbe (Kwa, Niger-Congo) [Rassinoux 2000: 32]
Akwé gegé q(o) así tòn.
 money much be in.the.sphere.of 3SG
 ‘He has much money.’ (lit. ‘Much money is in his personal sphere’)

(5) Turkish (Turkic) [pers.doc.]

a. *Murat-in otomobil-i*
 Murat-GEN car-CSTR
 ‘Murat’s car’ (adnominal possession)

b. *Murat-in otomobil-i var.*
 Murat-GEN car-CSTR ILP
 ‘Murat has a car.’
 (possessive clause, lit. ‘Of_Murat there is his_car’)

Of these five types, the have-possessive type and the oblique-possessor type have a particularly wide distribution in the languages of the world.

2.2 Inverse-locational predication

In Creissels (2019), I propose the following definition of ‘plain locational predication’ and ‘inverse locational predication’ as comparative concepts in the sense of Haspelmath (2010).

PLAIN-LOCATIONAL PREDICATION (Koch’s 2012 THEMATIC LOCATION), illustrated by English *The cat is in the tree*, is characterized by its ability to encode prototypical figure-ground relationships with the unmarked perspectivization ‘figure > ground’. A prototypical figure-ground relationship is an EPISODIC spatial relationship between two CONCRETE entities differing in their degree of MOBILITY: the ground typically occupies a fixed position in space, whereas the figure is mobile, which regardless of information structure gives it a higher degree of saliency, hence the unmarked nature of the ‘figure > ground’ perspectivization.

INVERSE-LOCATIONAL PREDICATION (Koch’s 2012 RHEMATIC LOCATION) is identified as such by its ability to encode the same prototypical figure-ground relationships, but with the marked perspectivization ‘ground > figure’, as English *There is a cat (in the tree)*.

In order to qualify as a representative instance of the comparative concept ‘ILP construction’, a predicative construction must fulfill the following conditions:

- a) it must be available to encode spatial relationships involving prototypical figures and grounds;
- b) it must be typically used in communicative settings where the relevant information is the presence of an entity at some place and its identification;
- c) it must not be analyzable as deriving from a general-locational predication construction via the application of some morphosyntactic device generally applicable to predicative constructions, such as variation in constituent order, topic/focus marking, or definiteness marking.

According to these criteria, many languages (probably more than half of the world’s languages) lack a true ILP construction. In some of them, as illustrated in (6), variation in constituent order provides a rough equivalent of the plain- versus inverse-locational predication contrast found in other languages.

- (6) Basque (isolate) [pers.doc.]
- a. *Parke-a ibai-ondo-an dago.*
 park-SG river-side-SG.LOC be.PRS.3SG
 ‘The park is next to the river.’
 - b. *Ibai-ondo-an parke eder bat dago.*
 river-side-SG.LOC park lovely one be.PRS.3SG
 ‘There is a lovely park next to the river.’

However, this possibility is far from being general. As illustrated in (7), some languages have locational clauses ambiguous between a plain-locational and inverse-locational reading (for more details on this particular point, the reader is referred to Creissels 2019).

- (7) Mangarayi (Australian) [Merlan 1982]
- Mawuj ja-Ø-ŋi biyaŋgin ŋa-bongan.*
 food 3-3SG-be inside LOC-box
 ‘There’s food in the box.’ or ‘The food is in the box.’

In the remainder of the present article, predicative constructions used to encode figure-ground relationships with the unmarked perspectivization figure > ground, but also found in contexts in which other languages tend to select a distinct ILP construction, will be designated as general locational predication (GLP) constructions.

Among the types of ILP constructions identified in Creissels (2019), three have a relatively wide distribution in the world’s languages: the there.be-ILP type, the

have-ILP type, and the type involving the use of a dedicated inverse-locational predicator.

There.be-ILP constructions differ from plain-locational predication by the obligatory presence of a locative expletive, i.e. a word or clitic which has no referential value in the ILP construction, but also occurs in other constructions in which it refers to a specific place, such as English *there*, or Italian *ci* in (8).

- (8) Italian (Romance, Indo-European) [pers.knowl.]
- a. *La chiave è sul tavolo.*
 the key is on.the table
 ‘The key is on the table.’
- b. *C’è una chiave sul tavolo.*
 there_{EXPL}-is a key on.the table
 ‘There is a key on the table.’

Have-ILP constructions involve a predicator distinct from that used in plain-locational clauses but also used in a have-possessive construction, with the figure NP coded like the possessee NP in the possessive construction, as in (9).¹

- (9) Bulgarian (Slavic, Indo-European) [pers.doc.]
- a. *Kotka-ta e pod masa-ta.*
 cat-D be.PRS.3SG under table-D
 ‘The cat is under the table.’
- b. *Ima kotka pod masa-ta.*
 have.PRS.3SG cat under table-D
 ‘There is a cat under the table.’
- c. *Sestra mi ima kotka.*
 sister 1SG have.PRS.3SG cat
 ‘My sister has a cat.’

Specialized inverse-locational predicators are words or clitics that constitute the distinctive element of ILP constructions and cannot be analyzed synchronically as locative expletives or as a ‘have’ verb used impersonally. The historical origin of specialized inverse-locational predicators may be very diverse. For example, Spanish *haber* was originally a ‘have’ verb used impersonally in an inverse-locational construction, but synchronically, it can only be analyzed as a specialized inverse-locational predicator, due to its replacement by *tener* in the role of transitive verb of possession.

¹ French *il y a* illustrates the cross-linguistically rare variant of the have-ILP type in which an obligatory expletive locative marks the use of ‘have’ as an inverse-locational predicator.

(10) Spanish (Romance, Indo-European) [pers.knowl.]

- a. *El perro está en el patio.*
 the dog LCOP.PRS.3SG in the courtyard
 ‘The dog is in the courtyard.’
- b. *Hay un perro en el patio.*
 ILP.PRS.3SG a dog in the courtyard
 ‘There is a dog in the courtyard.’
- c. *Mi abuela tiene un perro.*
 my grandmother have.PRS.3SG a dog
 ‘My grandmother has a dog.’

3 ILP constructions in Arabic

3.1 Classical Arabic

Classical Arabic can be classified among the languages that do not have a grammaticalized ILP construction according to the criteria formulated in Section 2.2, but in which variation in constituent order is used to express the contrast between the figure > ground perspectivization (figure phrase followed by ground phrase, as in 11a) and the ground > figure perspectivization (ground phrase followed by figure phrase, as in 11b).

(11) Classical Arabic [Qur’an 31:5, 7:47]

- a. *ʔulāʔika ʕalā hudan min rabbihim.*
 those on right.way from their.lord
 ‘Those are on right guidance from their Lord.’
- b. *wa baynahumā ḥiğābun.*
 and between.them partition
 ‘And between them will be a partition.’

3.2 There.be-ILP constructions in Modern Arabic varieties

The development of existential particles distinguishing inverse-locational from plain-locational predication is systematic in Arabic dialects, and is also found in Modern Standard Arabic. Some of the existential particles are expletive locatives in a construction belonging to the there.be-ILP type of inverse-locational predication, whereas others are specialized inverse-locational predicators whose etymology is more or less blurred.

3.2.1 There.be-ILP constructions with the expletive locative *hunāka*

In Modern Standard Arabic, the function of expletive in a there.be-ILP construction is mainly fulfilled by the place adverb *hunāka* ‘there’ (sometimes also *hunālika* ‘there’ or *tamma* ‘there’). However, in Modern Standard Arabic, this construction, deemed ‘incorrect’ by purists who consider it a calque from European languages, is in competition with the mere inversion of the order ‘figure phrase – ground phrase’ – example (12b–c).

(12) Standard Arabic [Aziz 1995]

- a. *ar-raġulu fi-l-maktabi.*
D-man.NOM in-D-office.GEN
‘The man is in the office.’
- b. *hunāka raġulu-n fi-l-maktabi.*
there_{EXPL} man.NOM-IDF in-D-office.GEN
‘There is a man in the office.’
- c. *fi-l-maktabi raġulu-n.*
in-D-office.GEN man.NOM-IDF
same meaning as (b)

3.2.2 There.be-ILP constructions with the expletive locative *tamma*

tamma and its cognates in Modern Arabic varieties (Moroccan Arabic *temma*, Hassaniya *vamm*, etc.) are basically deictic place adverbs (‘there’), and in most varieties (for example, in Moroccan), this is their only possible use. Their use as expletive locatives in inverse-locational predication has a relatively restricted distribution among Arabic varieties.

Aziz (1995) mentions the non-referential use of *tamma* in Standard Arabic. Its cognates in Maltese (*hemm*) and Tunisian Arabic (*tamma* or *famma* – Halila 1992; Marçais and Guîga 1925; Ritt-Benmimoun 2014) are also used productively as existential particles. Example (13) contrasts the use of *famma* as a deictic place adverb and as an existential particle in Tunisian.

(13) Tunisian Arabic [Halila 1992: 261, 9]

- a. *ħuṭṭ l-iktāb fama.*
put.IMP.2SG D-book there
‘Put the book there.’ (*famma* as a deictic place adverb)
- b. *famma ktāb fūq iṭ-ṭāwla.*
there_{EXPL} book on D-table
‘There is a book on the table.’ (*famma* as an existential particle)

In Maltese (14), *hawn* ‘here’ (cognate with Standard Arabic *huna*) is also used as an existential particle, as evidenced by the use of the discontinuous negation in (14b).²

(14) Maltese [Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander 1997: 96, 89]

- a. *Kien hemm hafna tfajliet imma wahda tkellmet.*
 be.PST.3SG.M there_{EXPL} many girl.PL but one.F speak.PST.3SG.F
 ‘There were many girls, but only one spoke.’
- b. *M’ hawn-x hafna traffiku fi-t-triq.*
 NEG here_{EXPL-NEG} many traffic in-D-road
 ‘There isn’t a lot of traffic on the road.’

The non-referential use of *tamma* and its cognates in an ILP construction is also attested in Western Libya (Procházka 1993: 123) and in Andalusi Arabic (Corriente et al. 2015: 292).

3.2.3 There.be-ILP constructions with the expletive locatives *fī-hi* or *bī-hi*

Most Eastern Arabic varieties (and also Libyan Arabic) have ILP constructions involving an existential particle cognate with Standard Arabic *fī-hi* ‘in it’: “In present-day dialects, *fī-hi*, lit. ‘in it’ > *fīh* > *fī* ‘there is/are’, has evolved into a non-referential pronoun that heads *there*-constructions (i.e., *fih ṣadl* ‘there is justice’)” (Esseesi 2010: 182).

A form *fīyu* < *fī-hu* (neg. *mā-fī*) is attested in Anatolian Arabic (Grigore 2006–2007), and a form *fīa* < *fī-hā* (neg. *mafkyā* < *mā fī-hā*) is found in Cypriot Arabic (Borg 1985: 139).³

Forms cognate with Standard Arabic *bī-hi* (‘at/in it’)⁴ are found as expletive locatives in *there.be*-ILP constructions in Ḥawrān (Northern Jordan and Southern Syria) and Yemen (Nāim 2009: 177; Procházka 1993: 109; Rubin 2005: 62).

- (15) Yemeni Arabic [Nāim 2009: 177]
kān bi-h mare w marat xū-ha
 be.PST.3SG.F at-it_{EXPL} woman and woman.CSTR brother-3SG.F
 ‘There once was a woman and her sister-in-law.’

² As discussed in Section 3.4.1 below, in vernacular Arabic varieties, a distinctive property of existential particles is that they behave like verbs with respect to negation marking.

³ The form *mafkyā* results from a fortition rule according to which *y* following an obstruent surface as *ky*.

⁴ *bī-hi* also has the meaning ‘with it’, but it is reasonable to think that its use as an existential particle derives from its locative meaning.

Insofar as the etymology is still transparent (i.e., insofar as the consonant *h* is not elided), the construction can be analyzed as a there.be-ILP construction in which ‘in/at it’ acts as an expletive locative, as in example (15). However, phonetic reduction tends to blur the etymology of the expletive locatives originating from *fī-hi* or *bī-hi*, resulting in constructions in which they can only be analyzed as expletive locatives in a historical perspective, their synchronic status being rather that of lexicalized inverse-locational predicators – see Section 3.3.1.

3.2.4 Copula agreement in ILP-constructions with expletive locatives

Some sources (in particular Hoyt 2000: 103) provide examples of ILP-constructions with expletive locatives whose TAM value requires the presence of the copula, and in which the copula agrees with the figure phrase in the same way as in plain locational predication. However, one may have doubts about the authenticity of such constructions, which may have been accepted in elicitation by consultants who in fact do not use them spontaneously (Bruno Herin, p.c.). Be that as it may, the lack of agreement of the copula in the ILP-constructions with expletive locatives, illustrated by examples (14a) and (15) above, is at least the prevailing tendency in the vernacular varieties, if not the general rule. In other words, in the ILP-constructions with expletive locatives, the third person singular masculine form of the copula acts as an invariable TAM marker.

3.3 Specialized inverse-locational predicators in Modern Arabic varieties

In this section, we examine the case of grammaticalized ILP constructions whose characteristic element cannot be analyzed as an expletive locative.

3.3.1 Inverse-locational predicators cognate with *fī-hi* or *bī-hi*

In constructions with the expletive locatives *fī-hi* or *bī-hi*, phonetic reduction tends to blur the etymology of the expletive locative. In the varieties in which the reduced form of the expletive locative is the only one possible, it can be analyzed as having been lexicalized as a specialized inverse-locational predicator either homonymous with the preposition, or differing from it in vowel length only. Examples (16) and (17) illustrate the lexicalization of *fī* in Libyan Arabic, and the lexicalization of *bī* as an inverse-locational predicator in Syrian Arabic.

- (16) Libyan Arabic [Christophe Pereira, p.c.]
fī libya, fī hālbā səyyārāt.
 in Libya ILP many car.PL
 ‘In Libya, there are many cars.’

- (17) Syrian Arabic, Der iz-Zor variety [Bruno Herin, p.c.]
ʕind-i b-il-bīr, bī kaniz.
 at-1SG in-D-well ILP treasure
 ‘At my place, in the well, there is a treasure.’

Cognate forms such as *bu* < *bi-hu* (variant of *bi-hi*) are also attested (Younes and Herin 2013: 51–52).

3.3.2 The inverse-locational predicator *kāyen*

The inverse-locational predicator *kāyen* is found in the Arabic varieties spoken in Algeria and Morocco. It is commonly assumed that it results from the grammaticalization of a participle of the verb *kāna* ‘be’. According to Tapiéro (1978: 50), in Algerian Arabic, it is usually invariable, and this is confirmed by Grand’Henry’s (1972) texts. For Moroccan Arabic, Harrell (1966) provides examples in which *kāyen* agrees in gender and number with the figure phrase.

- (18) Algerian Arabic [Tapiéro 1978: 50]
fī-waṣṭ dik-le-mdīna, kāyen zenqa kbīra.
 in-middle DEM-D-TOWN ILP street big.F
 ‘In the middle of this town, there is a main street.’
- (19) Moroccan Arabic [Harrell 1966: 61]
kaynīn šī nas temma?
 ILP.PL some people there
 ‘Are there any people there?’

3.3.3 The inverse-locational predicator *ḥālāg*

ḥālāg, etymologically the participle of the verb *ḥlāg* ‘exist, occur’, is found in Hassaniya Arabic (Zavadovskij 1981: 39). It agrees in gender and number with the figure phrase.

- (20) Hassaniya Arabic [https://cheikhdidid.skyrock.com/496261091-Cours-de-Dialecte-maure-HASSANIYA.html]

- a. *ḥāləg ɾāžəl fi bayt-i.*
 ILP.M man in room-1SG
 ‘There is a man in my room.’
- b. *ḥālga mɾa min senegal hawn.*
 ILP.F woman from Senegal here
 ‘There is a woman from Senegal here.’

3.3.4 The inverse-locational predicator *šay*

The use of *šay* (or its variant *ši*) as an inverse-locational predicator is found in Southern Arabia, and has been discussed as a feature shared by South Arabian and Yemeni dialects (Howley 2011). Example (21) illustrates an occurrence of *šay* as an inverse-locational predicator in Emirati Arabic.

- (21) Emirati Arabic [Wilmsen 2017: 282]
šay internet wa free wifi.
 ILP internet and free wifi
 ‘There is Internet and free Wi-Fi.’

However, most of the examples quoted in the literature are controversial, since they are compatible with an interpretation of *šay* as a quantifier (‘any’, ‘some’). For example, Wilmsen (2015) also quotes an example from Moroccan Arabic taken from Caubet (1993: 280) in which he glosses *ši* as ‘there.are’: *ši nās ka-y-bġ-ēw əl-lbən*, translated as ‘There are people who like buttermilk’. In fact, in this example, *ši* is not an inverse-locational predicator, but a quantifier ‘some’, and the exact translation of this example is ‘Some people like buttermilk’. Dominique Caubet (p.c.) confirms that this example has been misinterpreted by Wilmsen, and that, more generally, *ši* is not attested in Moroccan Arabic as an inverse-locational predicator.

The question of the relationship between *šay* ‘thing’ and the inverse-locational predicator *šay* is complex, since it is difficult to imagine a plausible grammaticalization path converting a noun meaning ‘thing’ into an inverse-locational predicator. See Wilmsen (2017) for a discussion.

3.3.5 The inverse-locational predicator *aku*

The inverse-locational predicator *aku* is found in Iraqi Arabic (Erwin 2004), and a cognate form is also found in the Anatolian dialect of Āzəx (Jastrow 2018: 92).

- (22) Iraqi Arabic [Alkalesi 2006: 64]
aku maṭār b-baġdād.
 ILP airport in-Baghdad
 ‘There is an airport in Baghdad.’

Müller-Kessler (2003) has proposed that the origin of this inverse-locational predicator is the borrowing of an Aramaic particle attested as 'yk' 'there is' in Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic. However, the hypothesis of a back-formation from the negative form *māku*, itself a reduced form of *mā yakūn* 'it is not' (Jastrow 2018; Rubin 2005: 63), seems more plausible.

3.3.6 The inverse-locational predicator *hast*

The inverse-locational predicator *hast* and its variants, borrowed from Persian (where *hast* is the third person singular of the present of the verb 'be') is found in Bahraini Arabic and some other varieties of Kuwait, Southern Iraq, and Eastern Arabia (Holes 2015: 36, 43).

3.4 Expletive locatives and inverse-locational predicators as pseudo-verbs

A major characteristic of Arabic vernaculars, in contrast to Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, is the development of a category of words commonly designated as PSEUDO-VERBS in the literature on Arabic dialects. Pseudo-verbs are "a category of words of non-verbal origin that, to some extent, behave as verbs, for instance, because they can have a direct object or because they are negated as verbs" (Versteegh 2014: 102). Typically, the words in question show verbal characteristics within the frame of particular constructions, whereas in other constructions, they maintain their original categorial status (Brustad 2000: 153).

Although not all descriptions provide the relevant data, it is widely assumed that the expletive locatives and inverse-locational predicators found in Arabic vernaculars belong to the category of pseudo-verbs.

3.4.1 Evidence from negation

In general, the vernacular varieties of Arabic have distinct negation strategies for verbal and verbless clauses, and pseudo-verbs select the same type of negation marking as verbs.

Maltese illustrates the case of Arabic varieties that have a discontinuous negation (Maltese *m ... x*) in verbal clauses, but not in clauses formed by mere juxtaposition of a non-verbal predicate and its subject. The fact that the expletive locative in inverse-locational predication triggers the use of the discontinuous negation provides evidence of its status as a pseudo-verb.

- (23) Maltese [Vanhove 1993: 400]
- a. *Il-ktieb hemm.*
 D-book there
 ‘The book is there.’ (*hemm* as a deictic place adverb in predicate function)
- b. *M-hemm-x kotba hawn.*
 NEG-there_{EXPL-NEG} books here
 ‘There are no books here.’ (*hemm* as an existential particle)

Other Arabic varieties have a distinction between two negative particles whose distribution is essentially determined by the presence of a verbal form in the clause, and in this case too, expletive locatives and inverse-locational predicators trigger the use of the negative particle selected by verbs. In example (24), sentence (a) illustrates the use of the negation marker *mī* in a plain-locational clause in which the negation marker immediately precedes the preposition *bi*, contrasting with the use of *mā* (also used with verbs) when the negation marker immediately precede the inverse-locational predicator *bī*.

- (24) Syrian Arabic, Der iz-Zor variety [Bruno Herin, p.c.]
- a. *iṣ-ṣarxa mī bi l-Ṣaqal.*
 D-cry NEG in D-spirit
 ‘The cry is not in the spirit.’ (i.e., ‘The cry is very loud.’)
- b. *awwali mā bī fanādiq.*
 formerly NEG ILP D-hotel.PL
 ‘Formerly there weren’t hotels’

According to Holes (1984), in the Arabic varieties of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia, the inverse-locational predicators *fī* (used in the whole region) and *hast* (used mainly in Bahrain) combine with the negation marker *mā*, like verbs, whereas the negation marker in plain-locational clauses is *mū*, also used in equative clauses in which a noun phrase in predicate function is merely juxtaposed to its subject.

The same distribution is described by Cowell (1964: 383–387) for the negative markers *mā* and *mū* in the variety of Syrian Arabic spoken in Damascus.

The same situation is found in the Jordanian variety described by Herin and Al-Wer (forthcoming), with plain-locational clauses negated in the same way as equative clauses, i.e. by means of the negation marker *miš* (or variants thereof), or more marginally by means of a negative copula, contrasting with inverse-locational clauses involving the same negation markers as verbal clauses: *mā ...*, *mā ... š*, *a ... š*, or *... š*.

3.4.2 Evidence from combinability with personal indexes

As observed by Comrie (1991: 16–17) and Brustad (2000: 155–156), combinability with personal indexes in the form used to index the objects of transitive verbs is one of the possible manifestations of the verb-drift that characterizes pseudo-verbs.⁵

In the inverse-locational predication constructions of Arabic dialects, the figure phrase consistently follows the expletive locative or inverse-locational predicator, in the same way as object phrases follow verbs in SVO clauses. Consequently, it is natural that the verb-drift that characterizes expletive locatives and inverse-locational predicators manifests itself by a tendency to align the behavior of the figure phrase with that of the object NP in verbal clauses. This is precisely what can be observed in several Arabic varieties where the figure in inverse-locational predication can be represented by suffixed personal indexes identical to those used to represent the object of verbs, as in (25).⁶ Note that, in this example, the first person singular index follows the negative marker -š, whereas in verb forms, object indexes precede the negative suffix.

- (25) Algerian Arabic [Souag 2016: 509]
ma kaš-ni.
 NEG ILP.NEG-1SG
 ‘I’m not here/there, I’m not around.’

In the Sudanese variety described by Manfredi (2010), where *fi* as an inverse-locational predicator combines with suffixed indexes representing the figure phrase identical to the object suffixes of verbs, the accent maintains the distinction between for example *fi-hîn/in-3PL.F/* and *fi-hîn/ILP-3PL.F/*.

- (26) Kordofanian Baggara Arabic [Manfredi 2010: 72, 273]
- a. *fī-ha āmne?*
 ILP-3SG.F Amina
 ‘Is there Amina?’
- b. *aš-šubyan fū-hum.*
 D-adolescent.PL ILP-3PL.M
 ‘There are enough guys.’

⁵ Note, however, that first person singular forms only are crucial in this respect, since in the other persons, the personal suffixes representing the object of transitive verbs are identical to the personal suffixes that attach to nouns and prepositions.

⁶ I would like to thank Lameen Souag for drawing my attention to the pervasiveness of this phenomenon and helping me to give it proper weight.

The suffixation of indexes identical to the object suffixes of verbs is also signaled by Jullien de Pommerol (1999: 201) in the negative inverse-locational clauses of Chadian Arabic – example (27).

- (27) Chadian Arabic [Jullien de Pommerol 1999: 201]
Inta jit wa anā mā fī-ni
 2SG come.CPL.2SG and 1SG NEG ILP-1SG
 ‘You came to my place and I was away.’

3.5 The reanalysis of ILP constructions as GLP constructions (and of inverse-locational predicators as general locational copulas) in Arabic pidgins/creoles

According to Miller (2002), the reanalysis of the inverse-locational predicator *fī* as a general locational copula is one of the features shared by Sudanic pidgins/creoles, and this is confirmed by Manfredi’s (2017) description of Juba Arabic.

- (28) Sudanese pidgins/creoles [Miller 2002: 32]
úwo fī fī bét.
 3SG LCOP in house
 ‘(S)he is at home.’

In Gulf Pidgin Arabic, *fī* is used not only as a general locational copula, but also as an equative copula and a ‘have’ verb (see Section 4.3.2).

4 Predicative possession in Arabic

4.1 The general trend

Leaving aside developments found exclusively in pidginized varieties of Arabic (see Section 4.3), two types of predicative possession are well-attested in Arabic: the oblique-possessor type (or locational possessive type in Stassen’s 2009 terminology), and a type which is impossible to characterize satisfactorily in a purely synchronic typology of predicative possession, and is best characterized as the result of an unfinished process of have-drift affecting the oblique-possessor construction as attested in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. The other types of predicative possession are either completely unattested in the documentation I have been able to consult, or relatively marginal (see however Section 4.4).

Classical Arabic is a perfect example of a language in which the coding of the possessor and the possessee in predicative possession is fully aligned with that of the ground and the figure in the variant of locational predication expressing the ground > figure perspectivization:

| | |
|--|---|
| (COP) PREP NP _{ground} NP _{figure} | (loc. pred. with <i>ground</i> > <i>figure</i> perspectivization) |
| (COP) PREP NP _{possessor} NP _{possessee} | (predicative possession) |

In Modern Standard Arabic, the preposition used to flag the possessor NP in this construction may be *ʕinda* ‘beside’, *li* ‘to, for’, or *maʕ* ‘with’. In the past, the presence of an overt copula (the verb *kāna* ‘be’) expressing agreement with the possessee unambiguously shows that the possessee phrase must be analyzed as the subject in the same way as the figure NP in locational predication (example (29b)).⁷

- (29) Modern Standard Arabic [Ambros 1969: 89; Comrie 1989: 223–224]
- a. *ʕinda l-muʕallimi sayyāratun.*
 beside D-teacher.GEN car.NOM.IDF
 ‘The teacher has a car.’
- b. *kānat li zaydin ḥubzātun.*
 was.F to Zayd(M).GEN loaf(F).NOM.IDF
 ‘Zayd had a loaf.’

As analyzed in Section 3, in the locational domain, the general trend in Arabic is the grammaticalization of inverse-locational constructions that can be schematized as follows:

(COP) LOC_{EXPL} NP_{figure} PREP NP_{ground}

Consequently, the maintenance of the alignment relationship between predicative possession and the variant of locational predication expressing the *ground* > *figure* perspectivization would have required the parallel development of possessive constructions involving the same expletive locatives, i.e., possessive constructions schematizable as follows:

(COP) LOC_{EXPL} NP_{possessee} PREP NP_{possessor}

⁷ Note, however, that not all scholars of Arabic agree on the obligatoriness of copula agreement in the predicative possession construction of Modern Standard Arabic (see in particular Choueiri 2019).

However, none of the descriptions of Arabic dialects I have been able to consult mentions a construction ‘(COP) *fī* X *ʕinda/li/maʕ* Y’ as the standard way of expressing ‘Y has X’. On the contrary, the changes that have affected possessive predication in the vernacular varieties of Arabic have yielded constructions in which the possessor NP is invariably unflagged and in initial position, and the preposition originally used to flag the possessor NP has been converted into a possessive pseudo-verb characterized by obligatory agreement with the possessor NP:⁸

(NP_{possessor}) (COP) HAVE-I_{possessor} NP_{possessee}

In such constructions, the coding of the possessor and the possessee is aligned with that of A and P in transitive predication as regards the linear order of constituents and the lack of flagging. However, as will be discussed in Section 4.2, argument indexation in the possessive construction is not aligned with argument indexation in transitive predication. But in spite of that, the possessive constructions of this type are more similar to a transitive verbal construction than to locational predication. In other words, the evolution of predicative possession in Arabic can be viewed as a case of ‘have-drift’.

4.2 The have-drift in vernacular Arabic varieties

In the oblique-possessor construction illustrated in (29b) above, it is possible to mark topicalization of the possessor by moving the possessor phrase to the left periphery of the clause and resuming it by means of an index suffixed to the preposition, as in (30).

- (30) Modern Standard Arabic [Comrie 1989: 223–224]
Zaydun *kānat* *la-hu* *ḥubzaton*.
 Zayd(M).NOM was.F to-him loaf(F).NOM.IDF
 ‘Zayd had a loaf.’

A common evolution in vernacular varieties is that the construction that was originally the basic form of predicative possession (illustrated in (29)) has ceased to be used, and the construction illustrated in (30), initially a topicalizing construction, has become the unmarked way of expressing predicative possession, without any implication for information structure.

⁸ HAVE = possessive predicator, I = index.

For example, in Maltese, as discussed by Comrie (1989), the possessive construction illustrated in (31b) cannot be analyzed as the topicalizing variant of an oblique-possessor construction, since the possessor phrase obligatorily precedes *għand*. In Maltese, as illustrated in (31a), *għand* still exists as a spatial preposition ('at') followed by a noun phrase to which the role of ground is assigned, but possessive *għand* cannot be analyzed as a preposition. Its categorial status is that of a pseudo-verb acting as the nucleus of a predicative construction schematizable as follows:⁹

(NP_{possessor}) *għand*-I_{possessor} NP_{possessee}

(31) Maltese [Comrie 1989: 221–222]

- a. *Il-ktieb għand Pawlu.*
 D-book at Pawlu
 'The book is at Pawlu's.'
- b. *Pawlu għand-u ktieb.*
 Pawlu have-3SG.M book
 'Pawlu has a book.'
- c. **Għand Pawlu ktieb.*
 at Pawlu book
 intended: 'Pawlu has a book.'
- d. *Pawlu m' għand-u-x ktieb.*
 Pawlu NEG have-3SG.M-NEG book
 'Pawlu does not have a book.'

In this construction, both core terms are unflagged, like A and P in transitive predication. Moreover, *għand* as a possessive predicator shares with verbs the obligatory indexation of the argument represented by the NP that precedes it, and consequently, this NP can be analyzed as its subject. The recategorization of possessive *għand* is confirmed by the fact that, with respect to negation, possessive clauses behave differently from locational and equative clauses: like verbs, possessive *għand* 'have' combines with the discontinuous negation *m(a) ... x* (33d).

However, the construction of the possessive predicator *għand* is not fully aligned with the basic transitive construction, since the obligatory possessor indexes attached to *għand* 'have' differ from those expressing the agreement of

⁹ For a detailed description of predicative possession in Maltese, see Vanhove (1993: 409–427) and Stolz et al. (2008: 195–208).

verbs with their subject. The obvious explanation is that they originate from the paradigm of possessive suffixes, also used to index complements of prepositions.

The difference between this construction and the original oblique-possessor construction is accentuated by the fact that, in the past and in the future, the agreement of the copular verb with the possessee phrase illustrated in (29b) above has disappeared. *Għand* ‘have’ has suppletive past and future forms (*kell* and (*sa*)*jkoll* respectively) originating from the combination of the verb ‘be’ with the preposition *li* – example (32). Like the present form *għand*, the past and future forms of the possessive predicator are obligatorily suffixed by a possessor index, whereas the agreement with the possessee NP that operated in the original oblique-possessor construction has been lost. This is visible in (32b), since *ħobża* is feminine, and **Pawlu sa tkollu ħobża* with feminine agreement is not possible.

(32) Maltese [Comrie 1989: 221–222]

- a. *Pawlu kell-u ktieb.*
 Pawlu have.PST-3SG.M book
 ‘Pawlu had a book.’
- b. *Pawlu sa jkoll-u ħobża.*
 Pawlu FUT 3SG.M:have.FUT-3SG.M loaf
 ‘Pawlu will have a loaf.’

The same analysis applies to the possessive clauses of other vernacular varieties of Arabic. For example, (33) illustrates the use of discontinuous negation with the pseudo-verb ‘have’ in Tripoli Arabic.

(33) Tripoli Arabic [Christophe Pereira, p.c.]

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| <i>aħməd</i> | <i>mā</i> | <i>ʕand-ā</i> | <i>š</i> | <i>lə-ktāb</i> |
| Ahmed | NEG | have-3SG.M | NEG | D-book |

‘Ahmed does not have the book.’

Caubet (1993: 51–52) shows that the characteristics of the possessive clauses of Moroccan Arabic are essentially similar to those described above for Maltese. She explicitly mentions that the only possible order is (Possessor –) *ʕand* – Possessee, with an obligatory possessor index suffixed to *ʕand*, and that the discontinuous negation *ma ... š* found in possessive clauses is identical to that found in verbal clauses, and distinct from the negation marker *ma ši* found in verbless clauses (including plain-locational clauses with the ground phrase flagged by the preposition *ʕand*, as in 34d).

(34) Moroccan Arabic [Caubet 1993: 51–52]

- a. *ħməd* *ħand-u* *əl-ktāb.*
 Ahmed have-3SG.M DEF-book
 ‘Ahmed has the book.’
- b. *əl-ktāb* *ħand-u.*
 DEF-book at-3SG.M
 ‘The book is at his place.’
- c. *ħməd* *ma* *ħand-u* *š* *əl-ktāb.*
 Ahmed NEG have.PST-3SG.M NEG DEF-book
 ‘Ahmed doesn’t have the book.’
- d. *əl-ktāb* *ma šī* *ħand-u*
 DEF-book NEG at-3SG.M
 ‘The book is not at his place.’

According to Harrell (1965), a difference with Maltese is that, in the possessive construction of Moroccan Arabic, the past auxiliary maintains agreement with the possessee phrase, as in (35), which is at odds with the reanalysis of the possessor as the subject. However, according to Dominique Caubet (p.c.), a construction in which the auxiliary does not express agreement (and is invariably in the 3SG.M form) is more usual, and agreement of the auxiliary suggests a locational rather than possessive reading.

(35) Moroccan Arabic [Harrell 1965: 237]

- kanu* *ħand-i* *ši* *flūs.*
 be.PST.3PL have-1SG some money(PL)
 ‘I had some money.’

A similar situation is described with varying degrees of detail by Cohen (1975: 94–95) for Tunisian Arabic, by Taine-Cheikh (2007) for Hassāniyya Arabic, by Naïm (2003) for Levantine Arabic, etc. Example (36) illustrates the obligatory order (Possessor –) *ħind* – Possessee (with an obligatory possessor index suffixed to *ħind*) and the lack of agreement of the past auxiliary in the possessive construction of Levantine Arabic.

(36) Levantine Arabic [Naïm 2003: 363, 365]

- a. *waʔt ma* *kint* *sġire* *kēn* *ħind-e* *kutub.*
 when be.PST.1SG small.F be.PST.3SG.M have-1SG book.PL
 ‘When I was a small girl, I had books.’
- b. *ħamm-e* *ħind-u* *kalb.*
 uncle-1SG have-3SG.M dog
 ‘My uncle has a dog.’

In this Arabic variety too, negation provides further evidence of recategorization, since ‘have’ is negated by *mā*, as a verb would be, whereas the negation marker preceding prepositional phrases in uncontroversial non-verbal clauses is *miš*.

(37) Levantine Arabic [Naïm 2003: 378]

- a. *l-walad miš bi l-bēt.*
 D-child NEG at D-house
 ‘The child is not at home.’
- b. *mā ũind-ī wlēd.*
 NEG have-1SG child.PL
 ‘I don’t have children.’

Similarly, in Gulf Arabic, possessive *ũind* is preceded by the verbal negation marker *ma*, whereas prepositions can only be preceded by the negative marker *mu* (Næss 2008), which gives evidence that possessive *ũind* has been recategorized as a pseudo-verb.

Example (38) illustrates the use of the verbal negation *mā* with *ʔil-* as a pseudo-verb ‘have’, contrasting with the non-verbal negation *mū* with an *ʔil-*prepositional phrase in predicate function, in Syrian Arabic.

(38) Syrian Arabic [Brustad 2000: 153]

- a. *mā ʔilak šəǧəl ũandi.*
 NEG have.2SG business at.1SG
 ‘You do not have a job with me.’
- b. *il-kās mū ʔilak.*
 D-glass NEG to.2SG
 ‘The glass is not yours.’

In Darfur Arabic, according to Roset (2018), the reflexes of *ũinda* have ceased to be used as spatial prepositions, and only occur as possessive predicators, obligatorily combined with suffixes indexing the possessor, as in (39).

(39) Darfur Arabic [Roset 2018: 95]

- hakāma and=u asākīr.*
 government have=3SG¹⁰ soldier.PL
 ‘The government has soldiers.’

¹⁰ In the original example, *and* is glossed ‘with’, which is quite misleading, since the author states explicitly that, in this Arabic variety, *and* has lost the possibility of being used as a preposition.

Similarly, in Chadian Arabic, *ind* has completely lost its prepositional function, and survives only in the possessive construction ‘(NP_{possessor}) *ind*-I_{possessor} NP_{pos-seee}’ (Jullien de Pommerol 1999: 193).

The similarity between the construction of pseudo-verbs ‘have’ and the transitive construction is particularly strong in the Arabic varieties that have either differential object marking, or distinct accusative forms of personal pronouns, and in which possessee phrases showing overt accusative marking can be found, as in (40) and (41).

- (40) Maltese [Vanhove 1993: 424]
/méta *ǰmm-i* *kéll-ha* *ǰíl-i/*
 when mother-1SG have.PST-3SG.F ACC-1SG
 ‘when my mother had me’

- (41) Syrian Arabic [Cowell 1964: 413, 545]
ǰand-i *yā(-ha)*.
 have-1SG ACC-3SG.F
 ‘I have it.’

In the Arabic varieties that have either differential object marking or distinct accusative forms of personal pronouns, relativization may also provide evidence of alignment of the possessee phrase with the object of transitive verbs, as in (42).

- (42) Jordanian Arabic [Herin and Al-Wer forthcoming]
il-lōha *lli* *ǰind-i* *yyā-ha*
 D-picture REL have-1SG ACC-3SG.F
 ‘the picture that I have’

Unfortunately, the available documentation does not allow to establish with certainty whether the recategorization of prepositions as possessive predicators with a coding frame partially aligned with the transitive construction is general in Arabic dialects or not. All descriptions give details about the ‘prepositions’ found in predicative possession (i.e. reflexes of *ǰinda*, *li*, or *maf*) and the semantic nuances they carry, but many of them do not discuss their morphosyntactic status, and provide only ambiguous examples of positive clauses with pronominal possessors, or of clauses whose interpretation as possessive or locational clauses is unclear.

With this caveat, it is safe to say that, in Arabic dialects, the general rule is that the predicative possession construction does not belong to the oblique-possessor type found in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, but to a type characterized by PARTIAL ALIGNMENT WITH THE BASIC TRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTION.

4.3 Have-possessive constructions in pidginized/creolized varieties of Arabic

4.3.1 The have-possessive construction in Sudanic pidgins/creoles

In Juba Arabic, the loss of agreement morphology has resulted in full alignment of the coding frame of *éndu* ‘have’ with the basic transitive construction (Manfredi 2017: 120).

4.3.2 The have-possessive construction in Gulf Pidgin Arabic

In Sudanic pidgins/creoles, a transitive ‘have’ verb (*éndu*) contrasts with a general locational copula *fi*, which is a very common configuration typologically. The situation in Gulf Pidgin Arabic is different (and typologically much less common), since the extension of the uses of the existential particle *fī* has resulted in a situation in which the same verb (whose ultimate origin is the expletive locative *fī-hi* ‘in it’ in a there.be-ILP construction) is used transitively as a ‘have’ verb, and intransitively as a ‘be verb’ (i.e., as an equative-locational copula) – Avram (2012) and Bakir (2014).

(43) Gulf Pidgin Arabic [Bakir 2014: 418]

- a. *fī* *moni* *mā-fī* *muškila*.
be/have money NEG-be/have problem
‘If there is money, there is no problem.’
- b. *alhin* *walla* *ana* *fī* *talāta* *arba* *baččā*
now by.God 1SG be/have three four child
‘I swear I have three, four children.’
- c. *ana* *fī* *maskīn* *sah* *walla* *lā?*
1SG be/have poor right or no
‘I am a poor fellow, right?’
- d. *ana* *bēt* *fī* *wara* *dukkān*.
1SG home be/have behind shop
‘My home is behind the shop.’

This is a very rare configuration cross-linguistically. The use of the same verbs as transitive verbs of possession and inverse-locational predicators is widespread in the languages of the world, but Southeast Asia seems to be the only area where the use of the same verbs as transitive verbs of possession and general locational copulas is common (Creissels 2019), and apart from Gulf Pidgin Arabic I am aware of only one language using the same verb not only as a ‘have’ verb and a general

locational copula, but also as an equative copula: Bai, a Southeast Asian language whose classification as a Sinitic language or a highly sinicized Tibeto-Burman language is unclear (Chappell and Lü 2022).

Carbou (1913), quoted by Procházka (1993: 125), provides examples suggesting the possibility of a similar situation for Wadday (Tchad) (for example *ana sekkin fi* ‘I have a knife’), but more data would be necessary before taking a decision about the status of such examples in the typology of predicative possession.

4.4 The comitative-possessee type of predicative possession in Arabic

Pace Naïm (2003: 372), the possessive construction with *maʕa* found in Levantine Arabic (as in *maʕe ʔalim* ‘I have a pen’) is not an instance of Heine’s ‘companion schema’ or Stassen’s ‘with-possessive’ type of predicative possession, since possessive *maʕa*-clauses can be glossed as ‘with Possessor is Possessee’ whereas Heine’s ‘companion schema’ and Stassen’s ‘with-possessive’ (in my own terminology: comitative-possessee construction) refer to possessive clauses glossable as ‘Possessor is with Possessee’. In fact, possessive *maʕa*-clauses belong to the same oblique-possessor type as the possessive *ʕinda-* or *li-*clauses of Classical Arabic.

However, a true comitative-possessee construction ‘Possessor (is) with Possessee’, with the possessor resumed by an index suffixed to the possessee, is attested in Sudan (Kordofan, Šukriyya), Libya, and Mauritania (Procházka 1993: 109).

- (44) Kordofanian Baggara Arabic [Manfredi 2010: 169]
mūsa da be bitt=a.
 Moses PROX.SG.M with¹¹ daughter=3SG
 ‘Moses has a daughter.’

- (45) Libyan Arabic, Benghazi variety [Saad 2019: 4]
ḥū-ya ayyūb ḥatta huwwa b-murattab-a
 brother-1SG Ayoub even 3SG.M with-salary-3SG.M
wu b-sayyart-a wu b-šəggt-a,
 and with-car-3SG.M and with-flat-3SG.M
 ‘My brother Ayoub too has a salary, a car, and a flat.’

¹¹ In the original example, *be* is glossed ‘by’, but this preposition also has instrumental and comitative uses, and as the author rightly observes in the section where he describes the uses of *be* (p. 183), its use to flag the possessee in a possessive construction certainly derives from its comitative meaning. Consequently, in this example, the gloss ‘with’ is more adequate.

- (46) Hassaniya Arabic [Taine-Cheikh 2008: 429]
ānā b-owlād-i.
 1SG with-child.PL-1SG
 ‘I have children.’

4.5 The genitive-possessor type of predicative possession in Arabic

The only mention I have found of this type is for the Daragözü dialect (Anatolian): *bayt-i fi* ‘I have a house’, an obvious calque of Turkish *ev-im var* (Jastrow 1973: 52, quoted by Procházka 1993: 125).

5 Conclusions

In this article, I have discussed the typological characterization of inverse-locational (‘existential’) predication and predicative possession in Arabic dialects.

In the locational domain, the general trend is the development of inverse-locational pseudo-verbs. Some of them are locative expressions ‘there’ or ‘in it’ acting as expletives in ILP constructions, or transparently derive from such expletive locatives, but other sources of inverse-locational pseudo-verbs are attested.

In the possessive domain, the general trend is the replacement of the oblique-possessor construction as attested in Classical Arabic (and maintained in Modern Standard Arabic) by a construction partially aligned with transitive predication, in which the possessor NP is unflagged, and the preposition that flagged the possessor NP in the original oblique-possessor construction has been converted into a pseudo-verb to which suffixes indexing the possessor are obligatorily attached. The development of possessive constructions belonging to the comitative-possessee type is also attested in some varieties.

Unsurprisingly, the departures from the types of constructions attested in Classical Arabic are particularly important in pidginized/creolized varieties of Arabic.

Abbreviations

| | |
|------|-----------------------|
| ACC | accusative |
| COP | copula |
| CPL | completive |
| CSTR | construct form marker |

| | |
|-------|---|
| D | definite |
| DEM | demonstrative |
| EXPL | expletive |
| F | feminine |
| FUT | future |
| GEN | genitive |
| GLP | general locational predication |
| ICPL | incompletive |
| IDF | indefinite |
| ILP | inverse-locational predication or inverse-locational predicator |
| IMP | imperative |
| IND | indicative |
| LCOP | locational copula |
| LOC | locative |
| M | masculine |
| NEG | negation marker |
| NOM | nominative |
| NP | noun phrase |
| PL | plural |
| PLP | plain-locational predication |
| PREP | preposition |
| PROPR | propriative |
| PRS | present |
| PROX | proximate |
| PST | past |
| PTCP | participle |
| REL | relativizer |
| SG | singular |
| TR | transitive |

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