

Semantics of Resumptive Pronouns in Cairene Arabic  
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**The Issue:** In forming head-external relative clauses, there are two (relevant) principle ways of dealing with the position relativized over: to leave a gap/trace (1a), as in English, or to leave a resumptive pronoun, as in Arabic (1b). There can also be optionality between a gap and a resumptive pronoun, as in colloquial Hebrew (1c).

- (1) a. The man that I saw --- (English)  
 b. el-ragel elli šaftu **-hu** (Cairene Arabic)  
     the-man that I.saw him  
 c. ha-gever še ohevet --- / **oto** (Hebrew)  
     the-man that I.saw --- / him

In Hebrew and Cairene Arabic, the highest subject position in the relative clause (e.g. *the dog that --- barked*) must have a gap. In Cairene Arabic, all other positions must have a resumptive pronoun, while in Hebrew, the relativized object of the verb may leave either a resumptive pronoun or a gap.

**Research Objective:** Are resumptive pronouns and gaps semantically interchangeable? How are resumptive pronouns interpreted? I use the contrast between Cairene Arabic and Hebrew illustrated in (1) to answer these questions. In doing so, I demonstrate a novel semantic field elicitation technique for *de dicto*/*de re* readings.

**Theoretical Background:** Past work on colloquial Hebrew (Doron 2011) has argued that when a relative clause can have either a gap or a resumptive pronoun in the object of the verb position, a) the resumptive pronoun option forces a *de re* reading of the head DP *ha-iša*, but b) the gap option allows for both a *de dicto* and a *de re* reading of the head DP. In (2), this means that (2a) requires that the woman Dani is looking for exists, but (2b) does not.

- (2) a. dani yimca et ha-iša<sub>1</sub> še-hu mexapes **ota**<sub>1</sub> (*de re*)  
     dani will.find ACC the-woman that-he searches her  
 b. dani yimca et ha-iša<sub>1</sub> še-hu mexapes ---<sub>1</sub> (*de re, de dicto*)  
     dani will.find ACC the-woman that-he searches

Doron assimilates the existence difference to the *de re* / *de dicto* ambiguity, which she treats as a scope phenomenon. There are other reported scope-related differences between resumptive pronouns and gaps. In relative clauses like (2), Sichel (2014) additionally reports differences in anaphor binding, embedded idiom interpretation, and amount readings. In Hebrew questions, which also involve resumptive pronouns, Sharvit (1999) reports differences in the availability of pair/list readings depending on the presence of a gap or optional resumptive pronoun. This indicates that resumptive pronouns, when optional, do have a different interpretation than gaps or mandatory resumptive pronouns in Hebrew, and that they block certain readings, in line with the view that resumptive pronouns prevent reconstruction.

**Project:** I propose to test the possibility of *de re* / *de dicto* readings of relative clause heads in Cairene Arabic. A preliminary survey indicated that resumptive pronouns in Cairene Arabic are non-optional in all relative clause positions except the subject. My question then was whether or not a mandatory resumptive pronoun would force a *de re* reading of the head of a relative clause, or if it would result in an ambiguous reading as in Hebrew.

I tested relative clauses and embedded clauses in Cairene Arabic with two native speakers. I constructed contexts to prompt a *de re* / *de dicto* ambiguity involving mistaken belief (e.g.(3)) and produced pairs of sentences like (e.g.(4)) where the DP whose reading is in question (bolded in (4)) is a subject, an object of a verb, or an object of a preposition (as in 4).

- (3) CONTEXT: Ahmed sold the book to Salim, Salim is Egyptian, Maha believes that Ahmed sold the book to Salim, Maha believes that Salim is Jordanian, Maha met Salim
- (4) a. Maha fakra en Ahmed ba'a el-ketab li-**wahed masri**  
Maha thinks that Ahmed sold the-book to-**an Egyptian**
- b. Maha 'ablet **el-masri**<sub>1</sub> elli heya fakra en Ahmed ba'a-l-**o**<sub>1</sub> el-ketab  
Maha met **the Egyptian**<sub>1</sub> that she thinks that Ahmed sold-to-**o**<sub>1</sub> the-book

In sentences like (4a), the indefinite DP takes surface scope under the intensional operator *believe*, while in sentences like (4b), the DP has surface scope above the intensional operator, but a co-referential resumptive pronoun is under the scope of the intensional operator. For each context, there were two pairs of sentences like (4), one pair in which the sentences were true under a *de re* reading of the DP, and one under which the sentences were true under a *de dicto* reading of it. I asked my consultants to read the contexts and judge as true or false the two types of sentence given the associated context.

**Results:** My consultants consistently found the *de re* reading true and the *de dicto* reading false for sentences featuring relative clauses (e.g.(4b)) where the DP in question has surface scope above the intensional verb but its coreferential resumptive pronoun is under the verb's scope. In response to a follow-up question, they denied that they found the sentences ambiguous. The opposite was true for sentences with DPs embedded under an intensional verb (e.g.(4a)); these were true under *de dicto* and false under *de re*. Judgements given in (5).

(5)		Embedded clause (4a)	Relative clause (4b)
Subject	<i>de re</i>	F	T
	<i>de dicto</i>	T	F
Object of Verb	<i>de re</i>	F	T
	<i>de dicto</i>	T	F
Object of Prep.	<i>de re</i>	F	T
	<i>de dicto</i>	T	F

This data suggests that in Cairene Arabic, resumptive pronouns, which are mandatory, force a *de re* interpretation. This is contrary to expectation given that in Hebrew, mandatory resumptive pronouns result in ambiguous sentences. That an indefinite DP which scopes below an intensional operator could not receive a *de re* reading was curious, and an effect I intend to explore further with different types of indefinites.

**References:** Doron, E. (2011). On the syntax and semantics of resumptive pronouns. In *Resumptive Pronouns at the Interfaces*, ed. Alain Rouveret. John Benjamins Publishing Co. 287-328 • Sharvit, Y. (1999). Resumptive pronouns in relative clauses. *NLLT*, 17(3): 587-612 • Sichel, I. (2014). Resumptive pronouns and competition. *LI* 45: 655-693