

## *THE SILENCE OF THE KINDS*

### *Agreement Asymmetry in Lebanese kind-expressions*

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In Lebanese, attributive *kind*-referring expressions are grammatically encoded through instances of non-canonical agreement between the modifier and the head noun with the modifier always being [+Fem] [+Sing].

- (1) a. leʕju:n      el-helwe  
the eye-M-PL the-beautiful-F.S  
'beautiful eyes'
- b. leʕju:n      el-helwi:n  
the eye-M-PL the-beautiful-PL  
'beautiful eyes'

Similar facts also appear in copular constructions where the predicative adjective fails to agree with the subject. Instead of treating this mismatch as a case of non-canonical agreement where the apparent modifier of the Noun Phrase fails to agree with the noun it modifies, this paper will argue for a silent head-noun as the true controller of agreement.

Kayne (2005a, 2006) proposes a notion of lexical silence that treats unpronounced syntactic elements as failing to be specified for pronunciation, which often involves a semantic denotation that has no single overt representation in the particular language. This is similar to the Lebanese case where the English noun *kind* has no single overt phonological counterpart. Based on evidence from Lebanese, I will show how adjectives such as the one in (1a) are in fact agreeing with a head-nominal other than the noun that traditionally has been interpreted as denoting a kind, a collectivity, or generality of some sort. I will argue for a canonical agreement between the NP and a silent-abstract nominal KIND which bears the [+Fem] [+Sing] features.

Zamparelli (2000) claimed that *kind*-referring expressions as in *a car of this kind* contains an overt *kind*-nominal where the head-nominal *kind* is being predicated of the subject noun whenever it appears in a *kind*-final order. There is much evidence that points to the conclusion that the structure of the Lebanese modificational *kind*-referring expression reflects the surface structure of the *N of this kind* construction as discussed by Zamparelli. The Lebanese data on the other hand, appears to be more compatible with den Dikken's (2006) account of *N of an N* constructions, where “*of*” is treated as a “nominal copula” that functions as a RELATOR between a subject and its predicate, which often can be silent.

The data describing the distributional property of KIND show that the silent nominal can be posited in the presence of adjectival modifiers as in (2) as well with *modifying* demonstratives as in (3), which itself can be silent.

- (2) hejdi        maʃlume:t        KIND        ktɪ:r əmhəm:e  
 this-F    Ø<sub>COP</sub> information-PL    KIND-F.S    very important-F.S  
 “*this, is very important information*”  
 [This is information of the important kind]
- (3) le-bjut        KIND (hejdi)        Ø<sub>COP</sub>    ye:lje  
 the house-PL    KIND-F.S    this-F.S    Ø<sub>COP</sub> expensive-F.S  
 “*these houses were expensive*”  
 [houses of this kind were expensive]

The Lebanese data has been found to be consistent in treating Lebanese *kind*-referring NP's in terms of an *N of this KIND* small clause construction that can be analyzed as a complex NP headed by KIND. This complex NP manifests all the property of the head noun KIND via an agreement mechanism similar to Shlonsky's (2004) proposal regarding the Semitic Noun Phrase; mainly through the transmission of the agreement features from the lowest head of the clause to the highest agreement bearing head of that clause.

My analysis provides an additional piece to understanding the internal structure of kind-denoting NP's. The paper draws on the Lebanese agreement facts to show that *N of that kind* constructions can be used as the underlying basis for deriving Lebanese kind-expressions while resolving the issue of agreement mismatch.

## **References:**

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