

## DOES GRAMMATICALIZED RESUMPTION REPAIR ISLANDS? ACCEPTABILITY DATA FROM STANDARD ARABIC READING

One consistently examined question in both theoretical and experimental approaches to syntactic islands is the extent to which violations of island constraints/principles can be ameliorated or repaired. Specifically, theoretical and experimental researchers alike have claimed that *resumptive pronouns* – pronouns that replace the gap position in a filler-gap dependency – ameliorate island violations. However, to date these claims have largely been verified only in languages such as English for which resumption is not generally acceptable and do not attempt to distinguish the amelioration of an island *qua* grammatical constraint from amelioration of other parts of an island violation which contribute to unacceptability (such as dependency length). Here we report the results of a Likert acceptability study on islands in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA/فصحى) which shows that while islands do in fact exist in filler-gap dependencies in the language, resumption only lessens, but does not repair, unacceptability. Moreover, this amelioration seems to effect only a part of the unacceptability, leaving portions attributable to length and structure as possible explanations for unacceptability.

Emerging work on the relationship between syntactic theory and experimental acceptability judgments has yielded an important diagnostic for syntactic island-hood: the phenomenon of RATING SUPER-ADDITIVITY (Sprouse, *et al.*, 2012). In 1-7 point acceptability tasks, extraction from islands is shown to induce a rating penalty relative to non-island contexts *greater* than the sum of the costs of both the island structure and the extraction alone. We therefore diagnosed the presence of an island in MSA by examining the presence or absence of super-additivity in two syntactic islands: whether islands (with *ما إذا كان*) and adjunct clauses (with adjunct phrases introduced by *إذا*). We did this by independently manipulating two factors: (i) length of the filler-gap dependency (short, long) and (ii) presence or absence of the island structure (present, absent). To assess the impact of resumption, we added resumptive pronoun to the *long* extraction conditions. We examined these variables with constituent wh-questions in two experiments, one utilizing bare wh-words and a second containing d-linked wh-phrases.

Our results concerning super-additivity alone show that both whether and adjunct clauses are islands to the formation of filler-gap dependencies in MSA (under the super-additive definition of island-hood) with both d-linked and non-d-linked fillers. Therefore both kinds of islands show a larger decrease in standardized acceptability ratings while moving from short to long in island as opposed to non-island contexts. In both these islands, moreover, the presence of a resumptive yielded a higher rating in island contexts. However, the resulting ratings were still quite low, even in resumptive contexts for bare wh-words, whereas d-linked fillers resulted in significant improvements in island contexts, though the results still indicated speaker dis-preference for these structures. Crucially, though, this amelioration was sufficient to obliterate the super-additive effect present in the no-resumption conditions in the d-linked experiment and for one of the islands (adjunct islands) in the non-d-linked experiment. We therefore conclude that (i) resumption is not helpful in non-island contexts, (ii) while resumption helps ameliorate an island violation, it does not make the result acceptable without d-linking, but (iii) the repair is sufficient to eliminate the effect of islands not attributable to length and complex structure alone.

These results have implications for syntactic theory: while it is true that resumption yields a reduction in island effects, it cannot be the case that resumptives are required in island-violation contexts (*contra, e.g.*, Shlonsky, 1992) even in a language such as MSA which has grammaticalized resumption – something that only Arabic can show us. However, these results also raise the terms of the debate by intimating that work on filler-gap dependencies in islands should focus on the different components of unacceptability when assessing notions of repair and violation.