

Prenominal vs. postnominal modification

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In this presentation, I look at three different patterns of adjectival agreement which arise in three different contexts in the Arabic noun phrase. In the first context, the adjective is postnominal [NA] and must agree with the modified noun in all features. In the second context, the adjective is prenominal [AN] and cannot agree with the modified noun in any feature. In the third context, the adjective is internominal in the [N1-A-N2] configuration, i.e. cases where an adjective modifying a following noun ([N2]) is preceded by another noun ([N1]). Here, the adjective, unexpectedly, displays split agreement, agreeing with [N1] in definiteness and case and with [N2] in number and gender. A closer look at agreement inflection on adjectives in this language reveals that they have a different syntactic representation from what has been presumed previously, consequently their accessibility/inaccessibility to nominal features is not after all unexpected. The upshot of this discussion is that nominal modification can take many forms, and nominal agreement is syntactic and subject to locality.