Fassi Fehri, Abdelkader. 2018. *Constructing feminine to mean: Gender, number, numeral, and quantifier extensions in Arabic*. London: Rowman & Littlefield. Pp. 233.

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1 Introduction

The grammatical category 'feminine' has been viewed in various ways in the relevant literature, typically as the marked member of the category Gender (henceforth Gen), i. e. denoting sex (Kibort & Greville 2008) and/or animacy (Dahl 2000). It enters into an Agree relation in Chomsky's work (1995; 2000) and as such is interpretable on the controller or the original locus but uninterpretable on its target (as in e. g. Moravcsik 1988). In this regard, interpretable or valued features make a semantic contribution to the interpretation of an item at an interface level, while uninterpretable or unvalued ones do not. Yet, the studies that have tackled Gender have not clearly explained why it is that not only general categories, e. g. nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, but also numerals, pluralities, singularities and quantifiers are 'feminisable'. Fassi Fehri's monograph is the first attempt to provide an answer to the above question. In addition, the author furnishes a systematic account of the feminine in Arabic, as well as its use in Afro-Asiatic, Germanic, Slavic, and Romance languages.

The author begins by providing an overview of the main themes discussed in his book. The feminization of numerals, singulatives,[1] pluratives,[2] and quantifiers is examined first. Next, an account of the constructional nature of Gender is set out, explaining the way in which this latter is not inherent, but must actively be built into the nominal domain (see Alexiadou 2004; Kihm 2005; Lowenstamm 2008). Thirdly, he discusses *Unity* which is, according to him, a process that creates a unit either by packaging things or by taking several individuals or objects and putting them together to create a new unit. He also sheds more light on the role of unity in the grammar of individuation and Number (henceforth Num; Fassi Fehri 2003). The structure of Quantifier

[1] The *singulative* is a process through which a collective is changed into a single unit or individual, commonly marked via Gender (*-at*) triggering feminine singular agreement on its target (p. 7).
[2] The *plurative* is a process through which a collective noun phrase (NP) is changed into a group unit or a collection unit resulting in an integrated whole. It is morphologically marked on the controller, the target or both using the same feminine suffix as the singulative (p. 10).

expressions and the peculiar practice of counting in the feminine in Arabic are then discussed in detail. Finally, Fassi Fehri illustrates the different projections and labels of Gen, its multiple uses and senses, as well as its role as a Classifier, and how it plays a part in the taxonomy of numbers in Arabic and Hebrew.

2 Summary of the chapters

The book comprises five chapters. In Chapter 1, based on empirical data from both Standard Arabic (SA) and Moroccan Arabic (MA), Fassi Fehri demonstrates that Gender is more active not only in the Noun Phrase (NP) or Determiner Phrase (DP) structure but also in the upper Complementizer Phrase (CP) structure. This suggests that Gender is found in various layers, which are projections of head categories, e. g. verbs, nouns, prepositions, adjectives, etc., and not uniquely in nouns (N). The analysis illuminates the semantic diversity of Gender over and above the narrower scope of sex differentiation to include *individuation* (e. g. singulative vs. plurative), *collectivity*, *quantity*, *abstractness*, *size*, *evaluation* and *perspectivization*. Relying on the structure of the layer as well as on whether it is interpretable or non-interpretable, Gen involves various features and values, including [+indiv], [+fem], [+group], [+endearing], [+small/big], or [+good/bad].

In Chapter 2, Fassi Fehri explains that Gender in Arabic co-occurs with Number, suggesting that typologies such as *classifier languages*, *gender languages*, or *number languages* are no longer feasible. This is because Gender may co-occur with Number in other languages such as the Romance languages and in Hebrew, and Berber, which would necessitate a new typology. Instead, Fassi Fehri adopts a multi-layered and polysemous view of Gender, proposing that Gen (and typically the feminine) cannot be restricted only to the noun (N) domain as has generally been posited in dominant analyses of Indo-European gender. It is in fact *hyperonymic*, a general category that integrates more diverse and structurally organized meanings found cross-linguistically, with sex/animacy only a *hyponymic* or a special case. Fassi Fehri also argues that this multi-layered analysis can be extended to languages other than Arabic, including Hebrew, Berber, and the Romance languages.

In Chapter 3, Fassi Fehri first argues against a simple derivation of numerals based on Merge (cf. Chomsky 2008). Dispensing with the Merge analysis explains why 3 ('three') in Semitic is 3-GROUP or 3-SET which is

directly countable and collective, suggesting that 3 exhibits some individual or atomic properties making it indirectly countable. On the other hand, 3 in Slavic languages has some additional peculiarities because it uses Gen (neutral, fem and variable) to distinguish three kinds of collective numerals. These are identified as *n*-numerals (for counting numbers), *c*-numerals (for counting objects), and *o*-numerals (for ranking objects). Adopting a *root-category* model (Marantz 2005; Borer 2005; Harley 2014), Fassi Fehri proposes then that numerals are "born" as linguistic expressions of *number* of type N, i. e. are created for counting or *cardinalizing*. As such, the numerosity sense of numerals is at the Root, whereas their other sense is compositionally derived via categorization, i. e. noun (N), adjective (A), verb (V), and preposition (P), on the one hand, and other combinations, e. g. Num and Gen, on the other. One of the main contributions of this third chapter its demonstration of how *Gen polarity* is characteristic of Semitic languages, but does not occur in Germanic, Slavic, or Romance languages. Fassi Fehri argues that this polarity is better accounted for as a rule of pronunciation rather than as a switch gender rule.

Chapter 4 focuses on the means by which the inflectional ingredients within quantifier extensions, e. g. Gender, Number, Definiteness, etc. work together to construct the various interpretations of Arabic quantifiers. This means that Gender appears as [±fem] or [±unit] in Quantifier Phrases. The [±unit] Gen matching found in the Quantifier Phrase (QP) is subject to the Gen polarity constraint, while the [±fem] is governed by Probe-Goal Agree. This specifically demonstrates how the QP as well as other functional elements in the DP architecture are built and compositionally interpreted. Taking into account that a single vocabulary counterpart in Arabic, i. e. *kull* expresses English universal quantification (*all*, *every*, and *each*), Fassi Fehri identifies a trilogy of Distributive Quantifier patterns and meanings linked to the quantifier kull: the *kull* (all) type, the *kull* (each) type, and the *kull* (every) type. While all types are conceivably analyzable as forms of Partitive Phrase (PartP) structures, they do have differences. The $kull_{al}$ type is a PartP in which the whole and the part are definite. $kull_{ea}$ is a PartP in which the second member is definite, whereas the first is indefinite. In $kull_{ev}$ both its Q and its complement are indefinite. As such, if the latter is analyzed as PartP, it has a pseudo-partitive structure rather than a true partitive structure.

While the author provides a thorough analysis of the three types of quantifiers that can contribute to our understanding of the internal syntax and partly semantics of quantifiers cross-linguistically, he pays less attention to other quantifiers such as *ʔaġlab* 'most', *ḅaʕḍ* 'some', *jamiiʕ* 'all', and *ʔakṯar*

'more'. Additional analysis of the scope and semantics of the quantifiers discussed (and of others omitted) would be helpful, as well discussion of how this can cause ambiguous readings.

The final chapter offers a description of the most prominent properties of Arabic numbers based on a new theory of Number. The unique contribution of this chapter is that it introduces the notion of plurative. While the majority of theories around Number have focused on its grammatical facets, including singular, plural and dual (designated by the author as the *atomic* function of Number), this chapter is centered on the less-investigated aspects of singulatives and pluratives (see Fassi Fehri and Vinet 2008) by integrating what he calls the unity property. It is proposed that some singularities and pluralities are atomicities (e. g. *kalb* 'dog', *rijaal* 'men'), while others are unities (e. g. *tuffaaḥ-at* 'apple-unit', *najjaar-at* 'carpenters as a group'). Unities are grammatically marked as feminine, and realized as singulatives for singulars and pluratives for plurals. Atomicities and unities project as AtomP and UnitP, respectively (splitting Borer's DivP), subsuming two crucial senses of traditional classifier phrases. Employing [+atom] and [+unit] features, the author then establishes four number classes: (1) singulative = [+atom; +unit]; (2) singular = [+atom; -unit]; (3) plural = [-atom; -unit]; and (4) plurative = [-atom; +unit]. Such an elaboration of the grammatical notion of individuation may account for the many ways of numbering and counting. Feminine then differentiates between two classes of counted entities and numerals: (a) natural members and (b) objects, thus providing an answer to one of the most challenging questions in dealing with Gender.

3 Conclusion

Despite the fact that Fassi Fehri includes significant analyses from different language groups, including Romance, Slavic, Germanic, etc. in relation to Gender and individuation, more data from these languages is needed to confirm the proposed analyses. Additionally, even though the greater part of the empirical analysis is built on an examination of Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic, the author argues that his analysis can be extended to cover a number of diverse languages. Fassi Fehri's investigation may not be applicable, however, to some varieties of Arabic. In Jordanian Arabic (JA), for instance, unlike in Moroccan Arabic, the plurative *najjaar-ah* 'carpenters' is not used, instead of which the sound plural *najjaareen* 'carpenters' (p. 149)

is used. The former denotes the plural form for 'female carpenter' in JA. In addition, JA uses neither endearing Gen *-at* nor the feminine *-ii* for the imperative verb (pp. 28–30). For these reasons, in spite of its title, this monograph does not fully achieve the claimed comprehensive coverage of femininity in Arabic.

The greatest value of this monograph lies in its thorough investigation of Gender, and how it is indeed interpretable on all nominal categories and other categories in Arabic and possibly in other Afro-Asiatic, Romance, Germanic, and Slavic languages. Its importance also stems from the author's attempt to explicate the nature of categories such as Numeral, Number, and Quantifier, their roles, and their projections in the nominal spine and causal architecture, using less technical terms. Readers are presented with examples illustrating each argument and analysis and are guided through various approaches to interpret data which provide an explanation for the analysis adopted in this monograph. Such an approach makes this book reader-friendly for an international linguistic readership.

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