Semitic Languages in Contact

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Expression of Attributive Possession in Tunisian Arabic: The Role of Language Contact

Lotfi Sayahi

1 Introduction

Possession is a universal concept that describes a particular link between two entities. It can denote a set of relationships that range from strict ownership to more loose connections that are open to interpretations. At the semantic level, a major distinction has been established between alienable possession and inalienable possession. Alienable possession refers to relationships that are temporary or which can be ended freely such as ownership of material objects. In the case of inalienable possession the possessed entity is intrinsically linked to the possessor, as in the case of part-whole relations (e.g., body parts) or kinship relations. Languages, however, vary when it comes to what counts as alienable vs. inalienable possession (Heine 1997; Payne and Barshi 1999; Herslund and Baron 2001). At the structural level, two major types of possessive structures exist. The first type, which is not the object of the current study, is predicative possession which uses verb forms to express the possessive link. The second type is attributive possession, also referred to as adnominal possession, which marks the possession in the noun phrase through different morphosyntactic structures.

Despite being such a common category, only a few studies have described change in the expression of possession in cases of language contact. Weinreich (1963) in his seminal work mentions the case of Estonian, Amharic, and Modern Hebrew which developed or increased the use of analytic possession constructions as a result of contact with other languages (Weinreich 1963: 41–42). Hickey (2010: 16) makes an argument for the role of Celtic languages in the change in Middle English towards the use of possessive pronouns with inalienable nouns instead of the old Germanic form that marked this type of possession through use of the personal dative. In the United States, a few studies have shown variation in the expression of possession in the speech of Hispanic speakers as a result of contact between Spanish and English (Wolford 2006; Montoya 2011; Orozco 2009). Montoya, in her study of second generation Hispanic immigrants to New York State, found that they extend the use of the possessive adjective to contexts where the Spanish definite article is the unmarked option in non-contact Spanish varieties. She attributes such
extension in the use of the possessive adjective to influence from English. In this paper the objective, then, is to look into the expression of attributive possession in Tunisian Arabic and the possible role that contact with French plays in the additional spread of the analytic form.

In Standard Arabic, synthetic constructions are formed by means of the construct state (ʔiḍafa): two nouns are juxtaposed, with the second noun being the possessor (N+N) as in (1), or through a suffixed pronominal possessor instead of a noun (N+PRO) as in (2). As mentioned by Eksell Harning (1980: 10), prepositions can also be used to express possession in Standard Arabic but the focus here is on attributive possession within the noun phrase and not on possession in other classes of phrases.

(1) kita:bu Salma
    book Salma
    ‘Salma’s book’

(2) kita:bu-ha:
    book-GEN.3.SG.F
    ‘her book’

Analytic constructions, understood here as constructions that are formed with the genitive exponent as opposed to constructions formed with prepositions, on the other hand, are non-existent in Standard Arabic, although they appear in the majority of the dialects (Eksell Harning 1980; Taine-Cheikh 2010; among others). In Maghrebi Arabic, in addition to the synthetic constructions mentioned for Standard Arabic, there are analytic constructions that are formed through the use of the genitive exponent mte:ʕ, originally a noun meaning ‘possession’, or similar particles such as dyal in Moroccan Arabic, followed either by a lexical or a pronominal possessor:

(3) l-kte:b mte:ʕ Salma
    DEF-book of Salma
    ‘Salma’s book’

(4) l-kte:b mte:ʕ-ha
    DEF-book of-3.SG.F
    ‘her book’

Much importance has been given to the value of the genitive exponent in showcasing the analytic nature of the dialects (Eksell Harning 1980), but also
in variation and change across regions and social groups. The argument that will be advanced in this study is that the presence of a considerable number of French loanwords and code-switched noun phrases in the Tunisian dialect, as evidenced in previous work (Sayahi 2011, 2014), contributes to the spread of the analytic form. This represents a case of indirect transfer as opposed to direct morphosyntactic interference given that the analytic from whose usage increases already exists in vernacular Arabic (Silva-Corvalán 2008; Poplack and Levey 2010). It is true that the analytic form has been spreading in Arabic vernaculars in general, but the position that will be adopted here is that lexical insertions from other languages have historically contributed to the acceleration of such a change in the affected dialects. I will start by showing that such a process, an increase in the frequency of the usage of the genitive exponent as a result of lexical borrowing and code-switching, has been documented in previous studies of attributive possession in Arabic in contact with other languages.

2 Attributive Possession in Arabic in Contact

Among the Arabic varieties, Maltese stands out as one that has gone through intense contact with other languages for centuries. Contact with Romance languages, principally Sicilian and Italian, and more recently English, has led to hundreds of loanwords in Maltese and to significant structural change (Aquilina 1958, 1959; Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander 1997; Misfud 1995; among others). Estimates vary as to the exact number of loanwords in Maltese. In a work in progress, Comrie (2011) estimated that about 61.2% of Maltese vocabulary is Arabic while the rest is from other sources. Mori (2009: 295), on the other hand, suggested that about 57% of the Maltese lexicon is in fact non-Semitic. The degree of impact that other languages have had on Maltese led Misfud (1995: 33–34) to distinguish between a Semitic Maltese morphology and a non-Semitic Maltese morphology.

With regard to possession, it is notable that Maltese uses the synthetic form mainly with inalienable nouns (Borg 1994: 33; Fabri 1996: 230; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996: 264), while it uses the analytic construction, formed with genitive exponent ta’, as the less marked option to express attributive possession (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander 1997: 112–113). Analyzing historic data, Mori (2009: 299) argues that, increasingly, the synthetic form has been reduced to use with inalienable nouns but that was not always the case. Given the number of loanwords in Maltese, which do not affect in a significant manner the basic vocabulary, it could be a possible player in the contraction of the synthetic form as posited by Koptjevskaja-Tamm: “One of the possible factors promoting
the Maltese pattern may be a strong influence of Italian which extensively uses analytical genitives” (1996: 271).

In a corpus of Nigerian Arabic that contains lexical insertions from English, Owens (2005) argued that, when the possessor is a pronoun, overwhelmingly the analytic form is favored when the possessed noun is in English (83/89) as opposed to Arabic (6/89). In total, analytic constructions, which predominantly occur with an English possessed noun, represented only 12.7% of the total possessive constructions. On the other hand, synthetic constructions represented 87.3% of all possessive construction in the corpus and happened overwhelmingly with an Arabic noun in the role of the possessed noun 99.97%. English nouns were used only marginally in synthetic constructions: 21 out of 610 (.03%). In his study of the use of the particle hana as part of the analytic construction in Nigerian Arabic, Owens reaches the conclusion that “English-inserted items overproportionally use the hana possessive and underutilize the idafa” (2002: 188).

For Moroccan Arabic, a study of children living in the Netherlands by Boumans showed that lexical insertions also favor the analytic form: “When Standard Arabic or French words for kinship terms or body parts are used as possessed forms in MA [Moroccan Arabic], they occur in the analytic construction” (Boumans 2006: 220). The same was true for an older member of the western Arabic dialect group: Andalusi Arabic. This variety was in intense contact with Romance leading to bidirectional code-switching and lexical borrowing (Thomas and Sayahi 2012; Sayahi 2014). With regard to the role of contact with Romance on the expression of possession in Hispanic Arabic, Ferrando argued that:

It seems that in many cases, especially those that include Romance nouns, but not only these, the disappearance of the idafa and its replacement by a preposition represents an attempt to translate too literally the Romance version. This Romance syntactic influence must have had an important contribution to the development of the analytical genitive in our materials, particularly related to the Mozarabic and Christian culture and institutions. (1995: 74; my translation from Spanish)

All these cases point towards the fact that lexical insertions into the vernacular varieties from other languages favor the use of the analytic form over the synthetic form. I will now show how this obtains in the case of Tunisian Arabic.
3 Attributive Possession in Tunisian Arabic

3.1 Current Study

The linguistic situation in Tunisia bears many similarities to Algeria and Morocco with regard to the existence of classical diglossia between Arabic and the dialects and also societal bilingualism between Arabic vernaculars and French. The presence of Berber in Tunisia is miniscule when compared to the robust, although dwindling, numbers of Berber speakers in the other two countries. French introduced during the Protectorate (1881–1956) was not wide-spread during the colonial period among the Tunisian population although France managed to form a francophone elite that kept French language as part of the educational system after independence. Interestingly, with the democratization of education, the French language started to spread further among the educated Tunisian population which has been among the fastest growing in the Arab world. According to Foster, cited in Payne (1983: 264), after independence, the French educated elite “had succeeded in achieving what the French had failed to do, that is make almost the whole of Tunisian education Francophone.” Today education is compulsory in Tunisia, and all students have access to French starting from elementary school. While it is true that some school subjects have been Arabized, the majority of the science and technology subjects continue to be taught in French. More significantly, at the higher education level, many fields of specialization such as the hard sciences, medicine, or engineering are taught entirely in French.

This strong presence of the French language in the educational system carries over to the professional fields with varying degrees. Although public administration has been officially Arabized, for practical purposes, code-switching between Arabic and French is common in many professions particularly those that have to do with science and technology. In addition, mass media has been open to the use of French since independence and continue to play a major role in its maintenance as a viable code of communication. The sociopolitical changes that started with the Tunisian Revolution of 2011 have led to the emergence of private mass media outlets that are more open to the use of French as an embedded language in Tunisian Arabic discourse. While competence in the French language varies across a wide spectrum that ranges from advanced competence to passive familiarity, as is the case in any situation of educational bilingualism, access to French is available to any Tunisian with some educational background. This access to French has allowed its usage in the different domains mentioned above and often leads to frequent code-switching between Tunisian Arabic and French (Belazi 1992; Lawson and Sachdev 2000;
Sayahi 2011; among others). Tunisians, however, remain dominant speakers of Arabic making Tunisian Arabic almost always the base language from which they may code-switch to French.

The nature of code-switching between the two languages more often than not takes the form of single insertions, in the majority of the cases nouns. Many terms that refer to modern life, science, and technology are used in French in an otherwise Arabic discourse. This was also observed by Bentahila and Davies (1995) who studied code-switching between Moroccan Arabic and French among the younger generations in Morocco. The proliferation of single-word code-switches provides a good context for the study of the expression of possession within a context of language contact. When French nouns are inserted in an Arabic discourse speakers have the choice between the synthetic and the analytic forms described above.

In her comparative study, Eksell Harning (1980: 102) looked at the expression of attributive possession in the Tunisian and Libyan Arabic dialects. Her main findings show that in the texts she examined, extracted from previously published works by other scholars, there are overall many more instances of the synthetic form than the analytic form. She estimated that, in urban Tunisian dialects, there was one occurrence of the analytic form for every three occurrences of synthetic constructions. In particular, an important remark that she made is the almost categorical rule for the use of the analytic form with lexical insertions from other languages to the degree that “in some cases, it may even be difficult to imagine the possibility of a synthetic construction” (Eksell Harning 1980: 107).

In order to test Eksell Harning’s claim and evaluate the role insertions from French, be they cases of nominal code-switching or established loanwords, play in increasing the use of the analytical form, this paper examines the use of possession in twelve sociolinguistic interviews with Tunisian speakers. The interviews were recorded with participants from the Greater Tunis region. For the purpose of this study, I use an average of fifteen minutes from each interview for a total of three hours analyzed. The participants include a variety of speakers that are divided in three main groups according to gender and level of education: 4 university-educated male speakers, 4 university-educated female speakers, and 4 high school-educated male speakers. Lack of availability of high school-educated female speakers at the time of the interviews did not allow the possibility for a more balanced set of groups of speakers that would have included high school-educated female speakers. The interviews covered different topics but the major focus was on education, family, and work. The speech sample analyzed is representative of the Tunisian dialect,
including frequent insertion of French items especially by university-educated speakers (Sayahi 2011, 2014).

In addition to analyzing the overall frequency for each type of constructions per group of speakers, I use a set of linguistic and extra-linguistic variables, based on Rosenbach (2002) and Wolford (2006), to determine what drives the choice for one form over the other. The linguistic variables considered include: language of the possessed and the possessor (Arabic vs. French), gender of the possessed noun, number of the possessed/possessor, final sound in the possessed noun (vowel vs. consonant), class of the possessor (lexical vs. pronominal), use of determiner with the possessed and/or possessor, use of adjectives with the possessed and/or the possessor, animacy of the possessor/possessed, multiple annexation (when multiple layers of possession exist in the same phrase, as in: the book of the principal of the school), coordinate possessed and or possessor nouns (as in: the book and the pen of the principal or the books of the students and the teacher), and nature of the possession relation (real possessives vs. non-real possession). At the extra-linguistic level, I consider gender of the speaker and level of education. Age was not a factor as speakers’ ages ranged between 25 and 45 at the time of the interviews.

I recognize that the use of the analytic or the synthetic forms, as expected, can be conditioned by pragmatic functions as well. In (5), the speaker talking about his profession as a barber describes how standing as part of this job is too much and is tiring. First, he uses waqfa with the synthetic form, then he reiterates what he said by emphasizing that standing is tiring but this time he uses waqfa with the genitive exponent and the possessive pronoun. This type of variation at the pragmatic level is not, however, the object of this study. In addition, given the similar nature of the interviews, no stylistic factors were considered in this analysis. For a discussion of the role of stylistic factors in the choice between synthetic and analytic constructions of possession, see Brustad (2000).

(5) a-waquito-fit-ha barcha, l-waqfa mte:iha ttai:ib s-saqqi:n
standing-GEN.3.SG.F a lot DEF-standing of-GEN.3.SG.F tires the legs

‘[Its] standing is a lot, [its] standing tires the legs’

3.2 Results
In terms of absolute frequency, the data analyzed shows that there are 472 tokens of attributive possession in the sample, 68.64% of the cases are synthetic
constructions \((N = 324)\) while 31.36\% are analytic constructions \((N = 148)\). The fact that, overall, tokens of synthetic possessive constructions are more frequent than tokens of analytic constructions is not surprising. This is what would have been expected given previous studies on possession in the Arabic dialects and the conclusions reached by Eksell Harning (1980: 102) that in Tunisian Arabic there is much more usage of the synthetic form. In fact, she argued that, in her analysis mentioned above, synthetic forms are three times more frequent than analytic forms, while the data here shows that it is closer to being only two times more. One possible explanation is that the analytic form is continuing to spread in Tunisian Arabic. A major factor is the fact that, in my sample, the participants are all educated with 8 out of 12 possessing a higher education. Access to higher education is closely tied to competence in French, and, by consequence, it leads to more frequent insertions from that language into the speech of these speakers. As will be argued now, French nouns predominantly favor the analytic form.

With regard to the language of the possessed noun, there were 385 cases where the possessed noun was in Arabic (81.57\%), and in 87 cases it was in French. In the case of the Arabic possessed nouns, 81.6\% \((N = 314)\) were in synthetic constructions, and only 18.4\% \((N = 71)\) were in analytic construction. On the other hand, in cases where the possessed noun was in French, 11.5\% \((N = 10)\) of the cases were synthetic constructions, and 88.5\% \((N = 77)\) were analytic constructions. There is a statistically significant correlation between the language of the possessed noun and the type of the construction confirmed through a Pearson Chi-Square test \((P = .00)\). In (6), the same speaker uses the word ‘pronunciation’ in Arabic and French but with the Arabic word she uses the synthetic construction while with the French equivalent she uses the analytic form. In some cases, both the possessed noun and the possessor noun are in French but linked with the Arabic genitive exponent as in (7). French possessed nouns that are part of a noun phrase are always in the analytic form as in (8)

\[(6a)\] ma naʕrifijʃ yizrib wa illa nutqu xayib

[I] don’t know [he] goes fast or pronunciation-GEN.3.SG.M is bad

‘I don’t know, he speaks too fast or his pronunciation is bad’

\[(6b)\] hỳyya déjà l-prononciation mteːʃha ndra kifːʃ

she already DEF-pronunciation of-GEN.3.SG.F who knows how

‘Already her pronunciation is strange’
(7a) naqra fi cours mte:S traduction
[I] study in course of translation
‘I am taking a course in translation’

(7b) ingénieur mte:S informatique
engineer of computer science
‘a computer science engineer’

(8a) les certificats medicaux mte:Su
the certificates medical of GEN.3.SG.M
‘his medical certificates’

(8b) c’est le rythme mte:S l-haye:t l-ʕa:di
it is the rhythm of the-life the-normal
‘It is the daily rhythm of life’

Use of synthetic form is more common with inalienable nouns, especially those that are of higher frequency such as ru:ħ in (9), where ru:ħ is used to mean ‘self’ as opposed to Standard Arabic ‘spirit’. This particular word was used in 37 cases significantly contributing to the overall higher number of synthetic forms. While an argument can be made about the grammaticalization of this particular word, its contribution to a higher number of synthetic constructions is also true for other inalienable nouns that are much less commonly used with the genitive exponent (e.g., umm ‘mother’, bu ‘father’, ša:hib ‘friend’, damm ‘blood’, etc.). This doesn’t mean the impossibility of the occurrence of the analytic construction with these and other similar inalienable words but that it is much less frequent and pragmatically more neutral.

(9a) this ru:hik fi ya:ba
[you] feel self-GEN.2.SG.M in jungle
‘You feel yourself in a jungle’

(9b) hu:ma déjà yaʕtabru arwe:hum n-nuxba
they already consider selves-GEN.3.PL.M the-elite
‘They already consider themselves the elite’

There are cases that are in-between code-switching and borrowing as in (10). The fact that these nouns are used with the synthetic form is an additional argument for their consideration as borrowings given their behavior as Arabic
nouns and not French nouns, as argued by Poplack and Meechan (1998). In (10b), the word *moyenne* is used with the plural marker *-ɛ:t* which facilitates its treatment as an Arabic word to which the possessive pronoun can be attached (see Owens 2002: 192 for a discussion of the same phenomenon in Nigerian Arabic).

(10a)  
\[ hatta \ kɛ:n \ moyenne-ik \ xayib \]
\[ \text{even if average-GEN.2.SG.M bad} \]
\[ \text{‘Even if your grade average is bad’} \]

(10b)  
\[ dima \ moyenne-ɛ:ti \ ça \ va \]
\[ \text{always average-GEN.1.SG.M fine} \]
\[ \text{‘My grade averages are always fine’} \]

(10c)  
\[ salaire-hum \ fay \ aʕjabb \]
\[ \text{salary-GEN.3.PL.M something extraordinary} \]
\[ \text{‘Their salary is extraordinary’} \]

It has to be noted that established loans from French, such as *blaṣa* < *place* ‘place’, are here considered Arabic words. The fact that these words are known and used by even monolingual speakers and that they do not get reanalyzed by educated speakers with access to French is a strong argument in favor of considering them established loans behaving like other native vocabulary. It is easier for these words to be used with the synthetic construction as in the case of the word *blaṣa* in (11).

(11a)  
\[ tawwa \ fi \ blayiṣ-hum \]
\[ \text{now in place-GEN.3.PL.M} \]
\[ \text{‘now in their places’} \]

(11b)  
\[ ma \ hifî \ blaṣ-tik \ mʕa:na \]
\[ \text{not it[is] place-GEN.2.SG.M with-us} \]
\[ \text{‘Your place is not with us’} \]

In the case of the language of the possessor, the same tendency is observed with slightly different rates. In total, there were 432 cases where the possessor was in Arabic and only 40 cases where the possessor was in French. This is due mainly to the fact that the pronominal possessors were all in Arabic and the nature of the conversation, which evolved around the speakers’ education, profession, and family and didn’t allow for more French possessors. The
speakers more often than not were speaking about themselves and entities that are linked to them. In additions, these conversations, although containing frequent code-switching to French, remain predominantly in Tunisian Arabic, and the majority of the code-switches are at the single word level. In 73.6% of the cases where the possessor was in Arabic, the construction was a synthetic one ($N = 318$), and in 26.4% ($N = 114$) it was an analytic construction. In the case of the French possessors, 15.0% ($N = 6$) were part of a synthetic construction, and 85.0% ($N = 34$) were in analytic constructions. Despite the smaller number of tokens, the language of the possessor clearly plays a role in determining the type of the construction ($P = .00$), as it does in the case of the possessed noun.

On the other hand, pronominal possessors strongly favor synthetic constructions in 83.28% ($N = 284$) of the cases, while lexical possessors favor analytic possession in 69.47% ($N = 91$). Pronominal possessors are easier to attach to the possessed nouns while with lexical possessors there is a need for the construct state to be used, a form that is not much different than the constructions that use the genitive exponent. This also reflects the fact already mentioned above that all pronominal possessors are in Arabic. The Chi-Square test confirms that there is a statistically significant correlation between the class of the possessor, i.e., pronominal vs. lexical, and the type of construction ($P = .00$), with lexical possessors favoring analytic possession.

Another factor, animacy, also favors synthetic forms which correlates with inalienable possession: when both the possessor and the possessed are animate, 90.91% ($N = 80$) of the cases were used in a synthetic construction. This refers specifically to kinship relationships. When it comes to the nature of the possessive relation itself, real possession or prototypical possession as defined in the literature (Rosenbach 2002: 121; Hammarberg and Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003: 126), strongly favors the synthetic form (90.12%, $N = 292$), while other types of possession slightly favor the analytic form at 54.06% ($N = 80$). This is also tied up with the fact that inalienable possession, including family members and body parts, favors the synthetic form. Finally, both first person and second person strongly favor synthetic forms (first person 88.05% [$N = 140$]; second person 92.86% [$N = 26$]), while third person shows preference for the synthetic form but with a significant use of the analytic at 44.5% ($N = 126$). While first person and second person frequently referred to both alienable and inalienable possession, many cases where third person possessors were used referred to inanimate entities in alienable possessive relations.

The results also show that the gender of the possessed noun doesn’t affect the choice between synthetic and analytic possessive constructions and neither does the number of the possessed or the possessor. Other factors that did
not prove significant are multiple annexation and coordination as there were very few cases of these two.

In sum, at the linguistic level, the factors that favor the use of the synthetic form as opposed to the analytic form are: the use of Arabic nouns, pronominal possessors, animacy of the entities involved, and first and second persons. Particularly significant for this study is the fact that the language of the possessed noun shows that French nouns heavily favor the usage of the analytic construction.

With regard to the social factors, both groups of males and females produced overall more synthetic forms than analytic ones. Males used a synthetic form in 63.88% ($N = 168$) of the cases and females in 74.64% ($N = 156$) of the cases. With regard to education, comparing university-educated male speakers to high school-educated male speakers shows that there is a correlation between level of education and use of either forms of possession ($P = .02$). While both groups produced similar numbers of tokens, high school-educated participants produced 137 cases while university educated produced 126, high school-educated male speakers used synthetic possession in 70.07% ($N = 96$) of the cases while university-educated speakers used it in 57.14% ($N = 72$) of the cases. This could be explained by the fact that university-educated participants used more possessed nouns in French (27.87%, $N = 35$) than their high school educated peers (16.06%, $N = 22$). This difference has to do with the use speakers made of French nouns when talking about their professions and education. As mentioned above, more educated Tunisians tend to code-switch to French frequently in conversations that deal with these two topics.

(12) *s-service* mte:ʕ-na l-*mortalité* mte:ʕ-u

*service of-GEN.1.PL.M the -mortality of- GEN.1.PL.M*

vingt-sept pour cent

‘The mortality rate of our unit is twenty seven percent’

Example (12) shows how with French nouns the tendency is to use the genitive exponent as opposed to the suffixed pronoun. Although different forms of the word *service* can be produced in Tunisian Arabic, including a more established loan where the first vowel is raised and the labiodental sound is devoiced, here the speaker uses the genitive exponent. In the case of the word *mortalité*, the use of the exponent appears to be more necessary as the use of a French feminine noun with a suffixed genitive possessor would require the obligatory insertion of the feminine marker [-it] which would further modify the morphophonological structure of the word. Owens raised this issue when he
discussed English insertions in Nigerian Arabic. He argued that in the case of the need to add the feminine marker “The use of the *hana* possessor, however, obviates the need to make morphophonological adjustments to the English-mixed word” (2002: 191). French possessed nouns that end in vowels represent 52.87% of all French possessed nouns, and in their majority they favored analytic possession (93.48%) at the same time 82.93% of possessed French nouns that end in consonants favor analytic possession as well. This is not a big different especially given the small size of the sample.

4 Conclusion

This study shows that in the Tunisian dialect the rate of usage of the analytic possessive construction is a little less than half that of the synthetic form. This rate is higher than what was found in the study of Eksell Harning (1980). While the internal change towards a more analytic structure should be the main reason, an argument can be made based on the results discussed in the previous section and the results reported in the literature, that contact with French is accelerating the change by increasing the use of the analytic form with French nouns that favor it. In addition to established borrowings, French bare nouns are commonly used by the population that has access to French and often tend to preserve the morphological shape of the inserted noun and “maintain its discrete integrity” (Owens 2002: 190) by not using the synthetic form. The fact that the spread of education increased the use of French insertions by a growing sector of the Tunisian population should not be underestimated as a factor in accelerating a change that has been in progress for a long time.

References


Attributive possession in Tunisian Arabic


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