ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTS AND INALIENABLE CONSTRUCTIONS*

1. INTRODUCTION


(1) yaldey ha-šxenim nixnesu la-xeder.
children the-neighbors entered to+the-room
'The neighbors' children entered the room'

Yet, there is a controversy as to what it is exactly that allows and requires the use of a construct in specific conditions, which, by now, are well-described. In a series of articles, Ritter ascribes the occurrence of a construct to the appearance in D of a genitive determiner that has to discharge genitive Case. For various executions of the same approach, see Fassi Fehri (1989), Mohammad (1988), or Siloni (1991). Borer (1996; 1999) proposes that the defining property of the construct state is the lack of definiteness specification, which forces the head noun to head a construct, through which it gets associated with the missing specification. Finally, according to Siloni (1994; 1997), lexical heads that do not bear tense specifications can be endowed with genitive features; such endowment results in the construct state.1

The distinct approaches make different predictions. While the latter approach, the '[tense]' approach, predicts that other nontensed lexical heads could also form construct states, the '[definiteness] approach' advanced by Borer associates constructs mainly with nominal heads. Under approaches à la Ritter, the possibility to form constructs hinges upon the projection of a genitive determiner.

Construct states are not limited to nominal heads. A variety of lexical heads seems to be able to appear in a genitival relation with a noun phrase: verbal gerunds (see Siloni 1994; 1997), adjectives, and most probably even prepositions. This paper analyzes two nonnominal occurrences of the construct state in Semitic languages (in particular, Hebrew), which have received very little attention in the generative literature (for short mentions, see Berman (1978), Hazout (1991), Borer (1996));2 the construct state headed by an adjective (for example, yefat mar'e, 'beautiful look' in (2a)), and the construct
headed by the so-called beynoni form, which is usually a verbal form functioning as a present tense form or as a participle (nos'ey matanot, 'carry(bey) gifts' in (2b)):

(2) a  yalda yefat mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
    girl(fm sg) beautiful(adj fm sg) look(ms sg) entered to+the-room
    'A good looking girl entered the room'

 b  yeladim nos'ey matanot nixnesu la-xeder.
    children(ms pl) carry(bey ms pl) gifts(fm pl) entered to+the-room
    'Children carrying gifts entered the room'

The paper adopts and supports the [-tense] approach to constructs, which is the only approach immediately extendable across syntactic categories. Section 2 shows that the constructions in (2) are indeed constructs as they show the typical characteristics of construct states. However, the paper does not focus on these characteristics (for discussion, see the cited references), but rather deals with the peculiarities of the nonnominal constructs in (2). Section 3 is devoted to adjectival constructs. As will become clear in the course of the section, most of their particularities follow from the fact that they are obligatorily inalienable constructions whose possessor is the modified noun. Beynoni constructs are analyzed in section 4. Unlike other occurrences of the beynoni form, in constructs it is not verbal nor does it denote an event; rather, it is a derived adjective. The common properties of beynoni and adjectival constructs are derived from the fact that both constructions are adjectival. The distinctions they show follow from the fact that the latter, but not the former, are obligatorily inalienable constructions. Finally, section 5 offers a brief discussion of constructs across categories.

2. CONSTRUCT STATE PROPERTIES

Adjectival and beynoni constructs show characteristics typical of construct states. First, they are head initial. More importantly, their head is a stressless weak form subject to phonological rules that operate in nonstressed environments. Phonologically, it cliticizes onto the nonhead member of the construct, on a par with nominal heads of constructs (that is, the head and the nonhead member must be adjacent). Thus, phonological alternations are observed between the construct state forms ye'fat (2a), nos'ey (2b) and the free (nonconstruct) state forms yafa (3a), nos'im (3b), which are parallel to the alternations their nominal equivalents undergo. For example, compare the construct forms yaldat in (3c) and yaldey in (1) with the free forms yalda (3a) and yeladim (3b):

(3) a  yalda yafa
    girl beautiful
    'A beautiful girl'

 b  ha-yeladim nos'im praxim.
    the-children carry flowers
ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTS AND INALIENABLE CONSTRUCTIONS

As is well known, nominal heads of constructs can never realize the article (Hebrew has only a definite article) (4). In the unmarked case, their definiteness value matches that of the nonhead member of the construct, as in (3c) for example:

(4)  (*ha-)yaldat (ha-)šxenim
     girl     the-neighbors
     'The neighbors' girl'

As Hebrew modifying adjectives show agreement with the head they modify not only in gender and number but also in definiteness, it is appropriate to examine the behavior of adjectival constructs in this regard. As illustrated below, while adjectives must surface with the article when the head they modify is definite (5a), adjectival heads of constructs can never appear with the article (5b). Rather, if the modified noun is definite, it is the nonhead member of the construct which has to bear the definite article. For example, consider the adjectival construct yefat ha-mar'e ('beautiful the-look') in (5c):

(5) a  ha-yalda *(ha-)yafa
       the-girl     (the-)beautiful
       'the beautiful girl'

b  * ha-yalda ha-yefat  (ha-)mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
   the girl     the-beautiful (the-)look entered to+the-room

c  ha-yalda yefat *(ha-)mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
    the girl     beautiful (the-)look entered to+the-room
     'The good looking girl entered the room'

d  yalda yefat *(ha-)mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
    girl     beautiful (the-)look entered to+the-room
     'A good looking girl entered the room'

Beynoni constructs show similar behavior. The nominal member of the beynoni construct (ha-praxim, 'the flowers' in (6a)) must bear the article when the noun the construct modifies is definite (ha-yeladim, 'the children' in (6a)), and cannot bear it when the modified noun is indefinite (6b). The beynoni head of constructs can never occur with the article (6c):

(5) a  ha-yalda *(ha-)yafa
       the-girl     (the-)beautiful
       'the beautiful girl'

b  * ha-yalda ha-yefat  (ha-)mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
   the girl     the-beautiful (the-)look entered to+the-room

c  ha-yalda yefat *(ha-)mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
    the girl     beautiful (the-)look entered to+the-room
     'The good looking girl entered the room'

d  yalda yefat *(ha-)mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
    girl     beautiful (the-)look entered to+the-room
     'A good looking girl entered the room'

Beynoni constructs show similar behavior. The nominal member of the beynoni construct (ha-praxim, 'the flowers' in (6a)) must bear the article when the noun the construct modifies is definite (ha-yeladim, 'the children' in (6a)), and cannot bear it when the modified noun is indefinite (6b). The beynoni head of constructs can never occur with the article (6c):
Finally, consider the issue of Case. In Hebrew the nonhead member of adjectival and beynoni constructs does not show morphological Case, just like its equivalent in nominal constructs is not morphologically Case-marked. In Standard Arabic, however, the noun phrase member of all types of constructs shows genitive Case, as is illustrated by the adjectival construct in (7). Reasonably, then, in Hebrew, too, all constructs express genitival relations:

(7)  r-rajul-u l-jamiil-u l-wajh-i (Standard Arabic)
the-man-nom the-beautiful-nom the-face-gen
'the beautiful faced man'

The genitive member of adjectival and beynoni constructs is obligatory (8a-b), as is its counterpart in nominal constructs (8c):

(8) a  yalda yefat *(mar'e) nixnesa la-xeder.
girl beautiful (look) entered to+the-room
'A good looking girl entered the room'

b  yeladim kotvey *(šira) huzmenu la-pgiša.
children write(bey) (poetry) were+invited to+the-meeting
'Children writing poetry were invited to the meeting'

c  yaldat *(ha-šxenim)
girl (the-neighbors)
'The neighbors’ girl'

In sum, the adjectival and beynoni constructions under scrutiny are constructs; they show the typical characteristics of construct states. However, whereas nouns can appear either in the construct state or in the free state, realizing the genitive DP in a šel phrase (9a), both adjectival and beynoni constructs do not have šel ('of') phrase paraphrases (9b-c). As šel appears only in nominal contexts, it is not surprising that it is disallowed by adjectives. The fact that beynoni forms do not allow it is derived in section 4 from the claim that beynoni constructs are also adjectival constructions:
Moreover, while the genitive member of nominal constructs does not seem to be thematically constrained (it can be the Theme argument, the Agent, the Possessor), adjectival and beynoni forms are more restricted in the formation of constructs. I first discuss the constraints imposed on the genitive member of adjectival constructs, among other peculiarities they show. I return to beynoni constructs in section 4.

3. ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTS

Adjectives productively form constructs with noun phrases denoting body-parts, such as eyes, hands, head etc’ (10a). Body-part nouns are typically referred to as inalienable nouns because they are intrinsically associated with another object of which they are parts. Alienable nouns are excluded from adjectival constructs (10b). But nouns designating objects that, in an obvious way, are parts of a whole can function as extended inalienables and combine with an adjective to form an adjectival construct. For example, ceiling is an inalienable part of a room (10c), and mast of a sailing boat (10d):

(10) a  yalda yefat ‘eynayim/se’ar
girl beautiful eyes/hair
’a girl with beautiful eyes/hair’

b  *yalda yefat ‘ofana’im/mexonit/bayit
girl beautiful bicycle/car/house

c  xadarim gvohey tikra
rooms high ceiling
’high-ceiling rooms’

d  sira gvohat toren
boat high mast
’a high-mast boat’

Kinship nouns such as mother, brother etc’ are banned from adjectival constructs as shown in (11) below. Although kinship nouns are often grouped together with body-
part nouns under the label relational nouns, their syntactic behavior is different, as will be further discussed in the subsequent section:

(11) *yalda yefat 'axot/'em/savta
girl beautiful sister/mother/grand-mother

Before turning to discuss the inalienability requirement just revealed, I would like to discard the possibility that adjectival constructs are compounds of the English long legged type. After all, Hebrew construct states do give rise to compounds, as illustrated in (12) (see Borer 1989). However, unlike English inalienable compounds and Hebrew construct state compounds, adjectival constructs are productive complexes that do not give rise to idiosyncratic meaning (compare with (12)), and allow their genitive member to occur in a coordinate structure (13a-b), unlike compounds (13c-d):

(12) a  gan yeladim
garden children
'a kindergarten'

  b  gan xayot
garden animals
'a zoo'

(13) a  yalda 'arukat yadyim ve-raglayim
girl long arms and-legs
'a girl with long arms and long legs'

  b  bayit rexav xalonot u-dlatot
house wide windows and-doors
'a house with wide windows and wide doors'

  c  * gan yeladim ve-xayot
garden children and-animals
'a kindergarten and a zoo'

  d  * long legged and armed

The question then arises as to why adjectival constructs can only be formed with inalienable nouns.

3.1 The Inalienability Requirement

To answer the above question, let us first consider simple (nonconstruct) examples involving an adjective, such as the ones in (14):
ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTS AND INALIENABLE CONSTRUCTIONS

(14) a 'eynayim šxorot
   eyes        black
   'black eyes'

 b 'orvim hem šxorim.
 ravens are    black

Simplifying much work on the topic (and abstracting away from the distinction between attributive adjectives (14a) and predicative adjectives (14b), which is immaterial here), I
take adjectives to be constituents with an empty slot, open constituents, which are
saturated by an argument, a closed expression. In the above examples, the AP is
saturated by the argument 'eynayim ('eyes') (14a) or 'orvim ('ravens') (14b).

Turning our attention back to adjectival constructs, consider the examples in (15).
Although the modifying adjective šxorat ('black') agrees with the noun yalda ('girl'), it
actually modifies the noun 'eynayim ('eyes'), as we judge the sentence true if the eyes
are black, not the girl. Likewise, the adjective rexavat (wide) in (15b) agrees with the
noun dira (apartment), but for the sentence to be true, the windows ought to be wide;
the width of the apartment is irrelevant. The modification relation holds between the
two members of the construct, the adjective and the genitive constituent:

(15) a zo yalda šxorat       'eynayim.
   this girl     black(fm sg) eyes
   'This is a black-eyed girl'

 b zo dira          rexavat        xalonot.
   this apartment wide(fm sg) windows
   'This is an apartment with wide windows'

If this is so, it means that the empty slot of the adjective can be saturated not only by
an element external to the AP as in (14), but by an internal genitive, too (15). In fact, as
the adjective in (15) does not have any internal semantic role to assign, the genitive
complement can only be licensed through modification, or else its presence would
violate Full Interpretation (Chomsky 1986, 1995). But if the AP has already been
saturated internally, how is the adjectival construct associated with the AP-external
noun, yalda ('girl') and dira ('apartment') in (15a) and (15b) respectively? The answer to
this question will turn out to be relevant for the puzzle we started with; that is, what is
the particularity of inalienable nouns which qualifies them (and them only) to form
adjectival constructs?

Inalienable nouns are intrinsically associated with another element of which they are
parts. Moreover, this element, their possessor, has to be present in the sentence (for
inspiring discussions of French inalienable nouns, see Authier (1988), Tellier (1991),
and Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992)). Consider the examples in (16). (16a) is odd
because ha-roš ('the-head') cannot be understood inalienably as the sentence does not
contain a candidate to constitute its possessor, the whole of which it is part. Except DP
internal-possessors (16b), datives (16c) and subjects (16d) can also function as
possessors of Hebrew inalienable nouns (English, as is clear from the glosses, requires a DP-internal possessor in the same environments):

(16) a     # ha-roš     nifga.
the-head was+hurt

b ha-roš     šelo nifga.
the-head his was+hurt
   'His head was hurt'

c nifga        lo         ha-roš.
was+hurt to+him the-head .
   'His head was hurt'

d hu raxac    'et   ha-panim.
he washed acc the-face
   'He washed his face'

Only generic contexts license the occurrence of inalienable nouns lacking a lexical possessor. The latter then receives an arbitrary, quasi-universal interpretation (in Cinque's (1988) terms):

(17) be-mitkan      ze   ha-roš     zakuk    le-hagana      meyuxedet.
in-installation this the-head requires to-protection special
   'In this installation the head requires a special protection'

Thus, unless genericity obtains and licenses an arbitrary possessor, a lexical possessor is obligatory. It follows that inalienable nouns specify in their lexical representation a possessor slot, as also concluded by Authier (1988), Tellier (1991), and Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992)). In Hebrew (like in French) the possessor can be either DP-internal as in (16b) or DP-external as in (16c-d). I henceforth refer to constructions of the latter type (16c-d) as inalienable constructions (Vergnaud and Zubizarreta's external-possessor constructions).

I would like to propose that in adjectival constructs the possessor slot of the inalienable noun is saturated by the noun the adjectival construct modifies, *yalda* ('girl') in (15a), *dira* ('apartment') in (15b). More precisely, I propose that the inalienable noun and the adjectival head form a complex predicate - an unsaturated expression due to the empty slot of the inalienable noun - which is saturated by the external noun.

The proposal has the following advantages. First, it satisfies the requirement imposed on the inalienable noun to be provided with a lexical possessor. Second, it defines the nature of the relationship between the adjectival construct and the AP-external noun. Moreover, it captures the interpretation of the construction. The complex *šxorat 'eynayim* ('black-eyed') does not refer to a subset of eyes but rather to someone having black eyes. Finally, it explains why alienable nouns are excluded. As alienable nouns do not have a possessor slot, they cannot render the adjectival construct an open
ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTS AND INALIENABLE CONSTRUCTIONS

A constituent that can function as a predicate of the external noun. Therefore, they are banned from adjectival constructs.

If this proposal is correct, then adjectival constructs are inalienable constructions forming complex predicates. Section 3.2 presents the characteristics typical of inalienable constructions. Section 3.3 shows that adjectival constructs indeed exhibit these characteristics. It also reinforces the idea that they constitute complex predicates.

Prior to that, however, let me briefly return to kinship nouns.

Kinship nouns also require a possessor in the sentence (see (18)). Nonetheless, they cannot occur in adjectival constructs (11). I believe that kinship nouns reject an external possessor altogether. As shown below, other inalienable constructions also disallow kinship nouns, whether the external possessor is a dative element (19a vs 19b) or a subject ((16d) repeated as (20a) vs (20b)):

(18)  * ha-’axot higi’a.
the-sister arrived

(19) a  ha-rofe badak lo ’et ha-’ozen.
the-doctor examined to+him acc the-ear
‘The doctor examined his ear’

b  * ha-rofe badak lo ’et ha-’axot.
the-doctor examined to+him acc the-sister

(20) a  hu raxac ’et ha-panim.
he washed acc the-face
‘He washed his face’

b  * hu raxac ’et ha-’axot.
he washed acc the-sister

Moreover, generic contexts do not license possessorless kinship nouns (21) although they license inalienable nouns in the absence of an overt possessor (17), again suggesting that kinship nouns have to realize their possessor DP-internally.

(21)  * ba-kibuc ha-’axot tamid mefuneket.
in+the-kibbutz the-sister always spoiled

Let us now survey the properties of inalienable constructions.

3.2 Characteristics of Inalienable Constructions

Work on French inalienable constructions has revealed the following typical properties:
(22) a  The distributivity effect: Inalienable constructions have a distributive interpretation (Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992).

b  The singular constraint: If the inalienable noun is a body-part that has only one occurrence per human-body, it has to appear in singular, even if its possessor is plural (Kayne 1975).

c  Modification: The inalienable noun cannot be freely modified (Kayne 1975); it is modifiable only by restrictive modifiers (Authier 1988).

As will become clear below, Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992) derive these characteristics from the relationship holding between the inalienable noun and its external possessor, relationship which they reduce to binding à la Williams (1980). Thus, the external possessor binds the empty slot of the inalienable noun (its variable-like position), thereby saturating the inalienable noun.

Now, as shown in (16c-d) or (20a) above, Hebrew has inalienable constructions. Moreover, the constructions show all the characteristics in (22). In section 3.3, it is shown that adjectival constructs also show these characteristics. This is straightforward under the present proposal, which takes adjectival constructs to be inalienable constructions. Let me first discuss the properties in (22).

First, inalienable constructions have a distributive interpretation. In (23a), although the inalienable noun is singular, the interpretation of the sentence implies a plurality of heads, by virtue of the plural external possessor. In (23b), the distributivity is manifested in that the obligatory interpretation takes each child to raise both hands.

Second, body-parts like 'stomach', 'head', or 'nose', which typically have one occurrence per human-body, are obligatorily singular in inalienable constructions, whether their external possessor is singular or plural. Compare (23a) with the infelicitous (23c):

(23) a  ha-rofe badak lahem 'et ha-roš.
the-doctor examined to+them acc the-head
'The doctor examined their heads'

b  ha-yeladim herimu 'et ha-yadayim.
the-children raised acc the-hands
'The children raised acc the-hands'

c  *ha-rofe badak lahem 'et ha-rašim.
the-doctor examined to+them acc the-heads

And third, inalienable nouns in inalienable constructions are modifiable only by restrictive modifiers:
ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTS AND INALIENABLE CONSTRUCTIONS

(24) a *ha-rofe badak lo 'et ha-roš ha-pacu'a.
the-doctor examined to+him acc the-head (the-wounded)

b ha-rofe badak la 'et ha-yad (ha-švura).
the-doctor examined to+her acc the-hand (the-broken)
'The doctor examined her (broken) hand'

To capture the restrictive versus appositive contrast, Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992) suggest that appositive modifiers can modify only closed expressions. The inalienable noun does not qualify as such, because it is an open constituent saturated externally.

Further, the distributivity effect, according to them, arises as a consequence of the binding relation between the plural possessor and the inalienable noun, as is the case when a universally quantified element binds a nominal expression.

Finally, utilizing the "type" versus "token" distinction, Vergnaud and Zubizarreta propose that inalienable nouns denote objects of the kind "type". A "type" does not refer to a specific instantiation of an entity in the world, while a "token" is a specific instantiation of a "type" in the world. They hypothesize that NPs denote types, while DPs denote tokens: the D projection instantiates a type as a token, unless the determiner is an expletive. Now, for the inalienable noun to be associated with (bound by) an external possessor, D has to contain an expletive, or else it would block the required association. English does not have an expletive determiner and therefore parallel inalienable constructions are impossible.11

It follows that inalienable nouns in inalienable constructions obligatorily denote types. Body-parts such as 'stomach' or 'head' cannot be interpreted as denoting a plural type because their types are inherently singular in virtue of what we know about individual (human) bodies in the world. The singular constraint falls out. For a more detailed analysis, see Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992).

It is important to note here that the relationship between the external possessor and the inalienable noun cannot simply be reduced to a (movement) chain, resulting from possessor raising out of the possessed inalienable noun phrase (where the base-position of the possessor would be). Kayne (1975) has already argued against the possibility that sentences such as (24b) are generated transformationally from sentences involving an internal possessor, D has to contain an expletive, or else it would block the required association. English does not have an expletive determiner and therefore parallel inalienable constructions are impossible.11

First, a possessor external to the inalienable noun phrase can occur in a variety of contexts, which do not all lend themselves to a movement analysis. Movement seems possible for structures such as (24b), in which the dative could be generated within the possessed DP, receiving a Possessor \-role from the inalienable noun and raising in the course of the derivation. But, it would be harder to advance such an analysis for structures like (23b) or structures involving adjectival constructs. In (23b) it is the subject which functions as the external possessor. Hence, a movement analysis would have to raise the possessor out of the possessed-DP into a \-position (the subject position), contrary to standard assumptions. Similarly, in adjectival constructs, any
argument can serve as the external possessor, which again is problematic for a
movement analysis.

Moreover, constructions involving an inalienable noun whose possessor is DP-
internal do not show the constraints in (22). For example, (25a) is felicitous although
the inalienable noun is plural (compare with (23c)), and in (25b), the inalienable noun is
modified by an appositive adjective (compare with (24a)). It is, of course, implausible
that movement in itself would bring about the constraining effects of (22):

(25) a hi badka 'et ha-rašim šel ha-yeladim.
she examined acc the-heads of the-children
'She examined the children's heads'

b hi ciyra 'et ha-pe ha-yafe šel 'axot-a.
she drew acc the-mouth the-beautiful of sister-her
'She drew her sister's beautiful mouth'

In short, the relationship holding betweenthe inalienable noun and its external
possessor cannot be a straightforward result of movement.\textsuperscript{12}

3.3. Back to Adjectival Constructs

Let us now return to adjectival constructs. As already mentioned, it turns out that they
show the characteristics discussed in the previous section. This is expected if their
inalienable noun is indeed associated with an external possessor, as argued here.

First, adjectival constructs exhibit the singular constraint. Compare (26a) with the
infelicitous (26b). Under Vergnaud and Zubizarreta's account, the type denotation of the
inalienable noun xotem ('nose') is inherently singular. (26b) is infelicitous because
'noses' cannot be interpreted as denoting a plural type, according to our knowledge of
the world. (15a) above is acceptable because the plural (dual) form 'eynayim ('eyes')
does denote an interpretable body-part type:

(26) a ne'arim 'arukey xotem hištatfu ba-taxrut.
guys long nose participated in+the-contest
'Long-nosed guys participated in the contest'

b * ne'arim 'arukey xotamim hištatfu ba-taxrut.
guys long noses participated in+the-contest.

Second, Adjectival constructs show the distributivity effect. Although the
inalienable noun xotem ('nose') in (26a) is singular, the interpretation of (26a) implies
the existence of a plurality of long noses. In the same vein, the interpretation of (26b)
would have to associate more than one nose per individual, which, of course, is
infelicitous, as just explained.
In brief, adjectival constructs, on a par with clausal inalienable constructions such as (23), show the distributivity effect and the singular constraint, because they contain an inalienable noun whose possessor slot is associated with an external argument.

Now consider modification. The inalienable noun in adjectival constructs does not allow any modification, neither appositive (27a) nor restrictive (27b):

(27) a  * yalda kxulat ʿeynayim yafot
girl  blue  eyes(=ms pl) beautiful(=ms pl)

b  * yalda ʿarukat gav ʿelyon
girl  long  back higher

In addition, the inalienable noun itself can neither head a construct state (28a) nor take a šel (‘of’) phrase (28b):

(28) a  * yalda yefat taltaley zahav nixnesa la-xeder.
girl beautiful curls  gold  entered to+the-room

b  * yalda yefat taltalim šel zahav
girl beautiful curls  of  gold

I would like to propose that the more rigorous restrictions imposed on the inalienable noun in adjectival constructs do not follow directly from the fact that it is associated with an external possessor, but rather from the fact that it does not project a full referential DP. What is the evidence in favor of the proposed absence of DP? After all, the inalienable noun does bear an article, when the noun the adjectival construct modifies is definite, as in (5c) or (29) below. However, the article then is the adjectival article, whose occurrence is contingent upon the definiteness of the noun the adjectival construct modifies (recall that the article cannot surface on the adjectival head, as heads of constructs can never occur with the article). More importantly, the article does not render the inalienable noun referential, as shown by the fact that the latter cannot be construed as coreferential with a pronominal noun phrase:

(29) ha-yalda yefat ha-ʿeynayim, higiʿa. *hen, hayu šxorot va-ʿacuvot.
the-girl beautiful the-eyes arrived. they were black and-sad

If D is what turns the noun phrase into a referential expression (as proposed by Longobardi (1994), Siloni (1994;1997), Stowell (1989;1991), Szabolcsi (1987;1989)), in its absence the noun phrase is nonreferential and cannot be coindexed with pronominals.

Indeed, as expected, in clausal inalienable constructions (such as (24)), which do not exhibit the rigorous opacity phenomena, the inalienable noun projects a DP-level, and can be coindexed with a pronoun:
The doctor examined her eyes. They were red and swollen.

If this proposal is on the right track, then DP-less noun phrases disallow syntactic procedures, such as modification and complementation. Hence, the inalienable noun cannot be modified by adjectives (27); it can neither head a construct (28a), nor take a šel (‘of’) phrase (28b). In the next section, I will show that beynoni constructs do not exhibit opacity phenomena, and again as predicted by the present proposal, their nonhead constituent is referential.

Further, I would like to suggest that the reason for which the inalienable noun has to be DP-less in adjectival constructs is that the presence of functional material would not allow the formation of a complex predicate, which is crucial for the well-formedness of the construction. It is thus precisely the projection of a deficient noun phrase that allows and forces the formation of a complex predicate. The resulting predicate, in turn, allows the adjectival construct to be linked to the noun it modifies via the possessor slot (variable) of the inalienable noun, as explained in section 3.1.

Let me conclude the section with some additional supporting observations. First, all things being equal, we would expect a language that exhibits clausal inalienable constructions of the type in (23-24) to also manifest adjectival inalienable constructions, because it allows the association of an inalienable noun with an external possessor. Second, the constructions should show the rigorous opacity phenomena, alongside the distributivity effect and the singular constraint.

The prediction turns out to be correct. Standard French, whose clausal inalienable constructions have been extensively discussed, also shows adjectival inalienable constructions of the type in (31), which, to my knowledge, have not received attention in the generative literature. The construction obeys the inalienability requirement, disallowing alienable nouns:

(31) a une fille belle de peau
   a girl beautiful of skin
   'A girl with a beautiful skin'

   b * une fille belle de voiture
   a girl beautiful of car

Nouns referring to parts of a whole can function as extended inalienables (compare (32) with (10c-d) above):

(32) a une chambre haute de plafond
   a room high of ceiling
   'A high ceiling room'
ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTS AND INALIENABLE CONSTRUCTIONS

b un bateau haut de mât
a boat high of mast
'A high mast boat'

Kinship nouns are disallowed, just like in Hebrew (compare (33) with (11) above):

(33) * une fille belle de soeur/mère/grand-mère
a girl beautiful of sister/mother/grand-mother

As predicted, the construction shows the distributivity effect, the singular constraint, and rigorous opacity phenomena. (34a) implies a plurality of eyes of needles, (34b) is infelicitous as it implies that each needle has more than one eye. Neither an appositive nor a restrictive adjective can modify the inalienable noun (34c-d). And finally, the inalienable noun cannot take a genitive complement (34e):

(34) a Ces aiguilles sont trop étroites d'oeil pour y passer ce fil. 'The eyes of these needles are too narrow to pass this thread'

b * Ces aiguilles sont trop étroites d'yeux pour y passer ce fil. 'These needles are too narrow of eyes to there pass this thread'

c * une fille blanche de peau soyeuse
a girl white of skin silky

d * une goélette haute de mât postérieur
a schooner high of mast rear

e * une fille blanche de peau des bras
a girl white of skin of the arms

Moreover, a random search of such constructions reveals that the inalienable noun tends to appear articleless (recall that French has both a definite and an indefinite article), which provides some additional support to the proposal that the inalienable noun in adjectival constructions does not project the DP-level:

(35) a large d' épaules
large of shoulders

b long de dos
long of back

c long de jambes
long of legs
As expected, the inalienable noun cannot be construed as coreferential with a pronominal noun phrase:

(36)  La fille longue de dos est arrivée. *Il était également assez large.
the girl long of back has arrived. It was also rather wide

Let us now examine the behavior of beynoni constructs, before concluding with a short discussion of constructs across categories.

4. BEYNONI CONSTRUCTS

4.1 Thematic Properties

As mentioned in section 1, the beynoni is primarily a verbal element that functions as a present tense form or as a participle. In constructs the beynoni must be derived from a transitive verb whose external argument slot serves as the empty slot of the predicate, and whose direct object becomes the genitive member of the construct (37); the genitive member cannot be derived from an indirect object (or a PP complement) (38); genitive Case in general cannot override prepositions:

(37) yeladim nos'ey praxim nixnesu la-xeder.
children carry(bey) flowers entered to+the-room
'Children carrying flowers entered the room'

(38) a ha-studentim 'ozrim la-yeladim.
the-students help to+the-children
'The students help the children'

b * studentim 'ozrey yeladim
students help(bey) children

Unlike the genitive member of adjectival constructs, the genitive member of beynoni constructs is not associated with an external possessor; rather it is assigned a \role by the beynoni. The beynoni construct constitutes a predicate due to its external argument slot, which is saturated externally, by yeladim ('children') in (37). In this regard then, the beynoni resembles adjectives that have a thematic structure, such as proud (39a) or fier in the French paraphrase (39b). It differs from nonthematic adjectives like yafe or beau ('beautiful'), whose genitive element can only be an inalienable noun in order for the construction to be licensed through association with an external possessor, as explained in the previous section:

(39) a a teacher proud of his work
b un professeur fier de son travail
As beynoni constructs do not have to obey the inalienable requirement, they do not give rise to the distributivity effect, the singular constraint, nor to opacity phenomena. 

(40a) does not have to imply a plurality of bouquets, and (40b) does not require that each child carry more than one bouquet. In (40c) zerim ('bouquets') is modified, and in (40d) it heads a construct, zerey praxim ('bouquets of flowers'):

(40) a yeladim nos'ey zer nixnesu la-xeder.  
children carry(bey) bouquet entered to+the-room  
'Children carrying a bouquet entered the room'  

b yeladim nos'ey zerim nixnesu la-xeder.  
children carry(bey) bouquets entered to+the-room  
'Children carrying bouquets entered the room'  

c yeladim nos'ey zerim gdolim nixnesu la-xeder.  
children carry(bey) bouquets big entered to+the-room  
'Children carrying big bouquets entered the room'  

d yeladim nos'ey zerey praxim nixnesu la-xeder.  
children carry(bey) bouquets flowers entered to+the-room  
'Children carrying bouquets of flowers entered the room'  

Moreover, the genitive member can be construed as coreferential with a pronominal noun phrase, suggesting that it is referential and projects a DP. This is predicted under the present analysis that relates the occurrence of opacity phenomena to the absence of the DP-layer (see previous section): 

(41) ha-yeladim nos'ey ha-krazot, higi'u. hen hayu gdolot ve-the-children carry(bey) the-posters arrived. they were big and-sasoniyot. multicolored  
'The children carrying the posters arrived. They were big and multicolored'  

As the beynoni is originally a verbal form, the question arises as to whether beynoni constructs involve a verbal projection. In the next section, I show that they do not contain a syntactically present verbal projection, nor do they denote an event.

4.2 Categorial Nature and Interpretation

According to Hazout (1991), beynoni constructs contain a verbal projection in syntax. However, the beynoni in constructs cannot realize its direct object as an accusative complement (42b), unlike transitive verbal forms (42a). Moreover, it cannot be modified by adverbs (42c), which typically are verbal modifiers:
This suggests that the *beynoni* head of the construct is not inserted as a verbal head, but rather undergoes a lexical operation that changes its category-type. Note, further, that diagnostics of eventhood show that the *beynoni* in constructs does not denote an event either. Thus, unlike event nominals (44), it allows neither rationale clauses (43a) nor adverbial PPs (43b), which are both licensed by an event:\(^{21,22}\)

(43) a  'itonay kotev masot (*kedey li-zkot be-milgot) zaxa ha-pras.
journalist write(bey) essays (in+order to-win in-grants) won in+the-prize
b  'itonay kotev masot (*bi-mehirut) zaxa ba-milga.
journalist write(bey) essays (in-quickness) won in+the-grant

(44) a  ktivat masot kedey li-zkot be-milga...
writing essays in+order to-win in-grant
b  ktivat masot bi-mehirut...
writing essays in-quickness

Recall that *beynoni* constructs, like adjectival constructs, do not have *šel* paraphrases (that is, they cannot occur in the free state), while nominal constructs do ((9) repeated in (45)). Moreover, neither adjectival constructs (46b) nor *beynoni* constructs (46c) can realize the genitive member of the construct as a pronominal clitic, again in contrast with nominal constructs (46a). Obviously then, they disallow clitic doubling configurations (47b-c), unlike their nominal equivalent (47a):

(45) a  ha-yeladim šel ha-šxenim nixnesu la-xeder.
the-children of the-neighbors entered to+the-room
'The neighbors’ children entered the room'
b  * yalda yafa šel mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
girl beautiful of look entered to+the-room
c  * yeladim kotvim šel šira huzmenu la-pgiša
children write(bey) of poetry were+invited to+the-meeting
Hebrew adjectives, unlike nouns, can neither take šel phrases nor host clitics (the (b) examples). The fact that the beynoni heads show the same behavior (the (c) examples) suggests that the beynoni in constructs is not nominal either, but rather adjectival. It is a deverb al adjective that has undergone adjectivalization prior to syntactic insertion, and therefore does not show any typically verbal nor nominal properties. Indeed, both adjectival constructs and beynoni constructs have adjectival distribution. They occur either as modifiers (as extensively illustrated in the course of the paper) or in a predicative position:

(46) a yaldëy-hem nixnesu la-xeder.
    children-their entered to+the-room
    'Their children entered the room'

b * yeled yefe mar'e ve-yaldë yefat-o gam-ken
    boy beautiful look and-girl beautiful-its too

c * ha-zerim ve-ha-yeladim nos'ey-hem higi'u.
    the-bouquets and-the-children carry(bey)-their arrived

(47) a yaldëy-hem šel ha-šxenim nixnesu la-xeder.
    children-their of the-neighbors entered to+the-room
    'The neighbors' children entered the room'

b * yaldë yefat-o šel mar'e nixnesa la-xeder.
    girl beautiful-its of look entered to+the-room

c * ha-yeladim nos'ey-hem šel ha-zerim higi'u.
    the-children carry(bey)-their of the-bouquets arrived

(48) a rina yefat mar'e.
    Rina beautiful look
    'Rina is good looking'

b rina ve-dan 'orexy sratim.
    Rina and-Dan edit(bey) movies
    'Rina and Dan are movies editors'

(49) a ha-yaldë nixnesa la-xeder 'adumat'eynayim.
    the-girl entered to+the-room red eyes
    'The girl entered the room with red eyes'

b ha-yeladim xazru mc-amerika dovrey 'anglit.
    the-children came+back from-America speak(bey) English
    'The children came back from America speaking English'
5. CONSTRUCTS ACROSS CATEGORIES

The existence of various category types of constructs argues against a category-specific analysis of the construct state. If what triggers nouns to form a construct is the lack of definiteness specification as suggested by Borer (1996;1999), a distinct account is needed to explain adjectival constructs or gerundive constructs, as their heads do not demand a definiteness value. Notice that although adjectival constructs in attributive positions agree in definiteness with the noun they modify (section 2), they are insensitive to definiteness when they occur in predicative positions (see (49) above, for example). Under the Borer’s approach, the construct phenomenon cannot receive an across-the-board analysis.

If one is to adopt the hypothesis that constructs involve a genitive determiner that assigns Case to the genitive member of the construct (Ritter (1988;1991), among others), and apply it to nonnominal constructs, one would have to assume that the latter contain a genitive determiner, too. Again, it seems unwarranted to assume that the various heads of constructs are each associated with a D position hosting a genitive determiner.

As is already clear, the set of heads forming Semitic constructs is varied. It includes nouns, adjectives, and gerunds (see Siloni 1994;1997). Prepositions (50a,c), I believe, also head constructs in Semitic languages. Note that Semitic prepositions realize pronominal complements only as suffixal clitics, exactly like heads of constructs ((50a-b)). Moreover, in Standard Arabic, in which Case is morphologically marked, the complement of the preposition shows genitive Case (50c), just like the nonhead member of constructs ((7), for example):

\[
\begin{align*}
(50) & \quad a \quad 'ecl-a \\
& \quad \text{at-her} \\
& \quad b \quad beyt-a \\
& \quad \text{house-her} \\
& \quad c \quad min \ zayd-in \\
& \quad \text{from zayd-gen}
\end{align*}
\]

Showing that constructs (gerundive constructs) can be headed by nontensed verbal forms, I have proposed in Siloni (1994;1997) that in Semitic languages heads that are not associated with tense features can bear genitive features, turning thus into heads of construct states, into genitive Case assigners (checkers). Nouns and gerunds, but also adjectives, (adjectivalized) 
beynoni forms and prepositions, do not bear tense features and therefore can be endowed with genitive features, and head a construct state. Under the [-tense] approach, then, the construct is one single phenomenon across lexical categories.
SUMMARY

The paper brings to light the existence of nonnominal construct states, thereby arguing against category-specific accounts of the construct phenomenon. It concentrates on adjectival and beynoni structures that show the classical behavior of the construct state. Adjectival constructs are argued to be inalienable constructions whose external possessor is the modified noun. Despite appearances, it is shown, the beynoni in constructs is not verbal nor does it denote an event; rather it is a derived adjective. The asymmetries between beynoni constructs and nonderived adjectival constructs follow from the fact that the former have a thematic structure and are not constrained by the inalienability requirement.

NOTE

* I thank the participants of the Third Conference on Afroasiatic Languages (CNRS, Nice, 1996) for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper (published as Siloni (2000a)). I am also grateful to the participants of the conference on The Syntax of Semitic Languages (University of Southern California, 1998) and to the editors of this volume, Jamal Ouhalla and Ur Shlonsky.

1 In later work I propose that genitive features in Semitic languages are checked in a prosodic domain at PF (see Siloni 2000b).

2 See also Hazout (2000) who deals with adjectival constructs of the type in (2a). Unfortunately, the present paper was already completed when Hazout’s work became accessible; hence, it is not discussed here.

3 See Siloni (2000b) for discussion of constructs whose members do not share the same definiteness value.

4 Example (7) is thanks to Mohammad Mohammad, who notes that unlike Hebrew, Standard Arabic has to realize an additional article on the adjectival head of the construct, suggesting that it is the same kind of article occurring in semi-relatives (Siloni (1995;1997)). See Hazout (1991:125-130) for some evidence pointing to this direction. I will not discuss this difference between Hebrew and Standard Arabic any further here.

5 Adjectival complexes such as (10a) are often referred to in the studies of Indo-european languages as "bahuvrihi". See Rosén (1966) for a detailed classification of adjectival complexes. The discussion here is limited to the major, productive occurrences, and not to more isolated uses such as (i), which do not represent a productive option (see (11) or (ii)):

(i) mišpaxa mrubat yeladim
    family numerous children
    'a family with many children'

(ii) * mišpaxa yefat/tovat yeladim
    family beautiful/good children

(i) has a close equivalent headed by an adjectival passive (iii). Note, however, that the semantic composition of (i) and (iii) is different: while (i) denotes a family that has many children, (iii) does not denote a family that has
blessed children (see subsequent section). Constructs of the type in (iii) can be headed by a small group of adjectival passives and some other adjectives such as male (‘full’), for example. Thus, (iv) does not denote a box that has ‘full candies’:

(iii)  mišpaxa bruxat yeladim
    family    blessed    children
    ‘a family blessed with children’

(iv)  kufsa mlé’at mamtakim
    box   full      candies
    ‘A box full of candies’

Yet another distinct group of adjectives can form nominalized superlatives:

(v)  tovey ha-talmidim
    good    the-pupils
    ‘The best pupils’

I will not discuss such constructs any further in this paper.

Finally, as pointed out by Idan Landau, the class of adjectives that give rise to adjectival constructs is limited. It seems to me that only simplex adjectives, that is, adjectives that are not formed by an adjectival formative, can occur in adjectival constructs. For example, ‘acbani (‘nervous’) involves an adjectival suffix; it does not have a construct form and cannot head constructs. See Siloni (2000b) for a prosodic account of this difference between simplex and complex adjectives.

6. The second member of the construct state compound is syntactically inaccessible (see Borer (1989) for discussion; (12) and (13c) are from Borer (1989:50)). As will become clear in section 3.3, the inalienable noun in adjectival constructs is also somewhat inaccessible (to modification, for instance), but on different grounds.

7. In contrast, adjectives such as ge’e or its English parallel proud can assign an internal \-role to their complement, and are externally saturated by the noun they modify (i). See also (39) and the relevant discussion.

(i)  yeled ge’e be-‘im-o
    boy   proud in-mother-his
    ‘a boy proud of his mother’

8. ‘Axot also means ‘nurse’, which would give rise to a grammatical but irrelevant reading of (18).

9. Note that plural kinship nouns can occur in generic contexts. In addition, singular possessorsless kinship nouns such as ‘ima (‘Mom’), ‘aba (‘Dad’) are colloquially used without an overt possessor, when the latter is first or second person. On the colloquial use of kinship nouns as proper names, see Longobardi (1996).

10. Vergnaud and Zubizarreta hypothesize that languages such as English, in which the definite article is morphologically invariant, will not have inalienable constructions. Hebrew constitutes a counterexample to their hypothesis, as it has an invariable article alongside inalienable constructions. For more discussion, see subsequent note.

11. More precisely, according to Vergnaud and Zubizarreta, in order for the article to be an expletive, the relation between D and NP must be morphologically licensed through agreement between D and its complement. If their reasoning is on the right track and licensing is indeed required, agreement cannot be the sole device. In Hebrew, the article can function as an expletive, just like its French homologue, giving rise to a type-denoting expression and to inalienable constructions, although it is as invariant as the English article. In
Hebrew, however, the article is a nominal prefix triggering noun raising (Siloni 1991; 1997), which probably suffices to license the relation of complementation.

A movement analysis has been proposed for possessive dative constructions by Landau (1998). As is well known, a possessive dative can act as the possessor of an alienable noun, too. While Landau does not discriminate between alienable and inalienable possessees, I do think this distinction is important. For one thing, alienable structures, of course, do not show any of the constraints in (22). (i) requires neither that each of the owners have more than one book nor vice versa, and (ii) does not require a restrictive interpretation of the modifier:

(i) hi lixlexa la-hem 'et ha-sfarim.
    she dirtied to-them acc the-books.
    'She dirtied their books'

(ii) hi lixlexa lo 'et ha-sefer he-xadaš.
    she dirtied to+him acc the-book the-new
    'She dirtied his new book'

Moreover, possessive dative constructions in standard French do not really allow a full-DP possessor when the possesse is alienable (iv), but allow it more readily when the possessee is an inalienable noun (iii):

(iii) Le médecin a radiographié l'estomac aux enfants.
    the doctor X-rayed the stomach to the children
    'The doctor X-rayed the children's stomachs'
    (Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992))

(iv) * Elle a photographié le jardin aux enfants.
    she photographed the garden to the children
    'She photographed the children's garden'

Borer (1996) discusses the adjectival construct in (i). She does not mention the inalienability requirement, but does note that the complement in adjectival constructs cannot be modified by an adjective, and can neither take a PP complement nor have a cardinal associated with it.

To me, (i) sounds rather marginal and unproductive (as shown by the ungrammaticality of (ii-iii)). However, given the inalienability requirement, one may expect some variation. As already noted by Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992), there is variation among speakers concerning the membership in the class of extended inalienables. It seems that some speakers can treat clothes as inalienables, while others can not:

(i) mešubac xulca
    plaid shirt
    'plaid shirted'
    (Borer 1996: 48)

(ii) * yalda 'arukat mixnasayim
    girl long pants

(iii) * yeled kxol kova
    boy blue hat

To derive the constraints on modification, Borer suggests that adjectival constructs involve an adjective whose nominal complement is a head that incorporates with it. As will become clear shortly, I do not adopt this analysis. First, Borer’s proposal means that the X'-schema should allow heads to take heads as complements. Second, the nominal constituent in adjectival constructs in Standard Arabic is clearly Case-marked, which would be unlikely and superfluous for a head. Third, the parallel constructions in French (discussed at the end
of the section) involve a PP. Borer's proposal cannot simply be extended to analyze them.

14. The fact that the relation between the adjectival head and the inalienable noun is licensed through modification (section 3.1) is not at odds with the present proposal that DP-less noun phrases cannot host modifiers. I leave further questions on the matter for future research.

15. Certain adjectives disallow the construction; others show idiosyncratic behavior, allowing it only with certain inalienables. Moreover, there is some variation among speakers. Finally, the construction seems to denote inherent properties. Hebrew adjectival constructs also tend to express inherent properties.

16. As expected, French kinship nouns are also banned from clausal inalienable constructions, just like their Hebrew counterparts:

(i) Le médecin lui a examiné l'oreille.
    the doctor to+him has examined the ear
    'The doctor examined his ear'

(ii) * Le médecin lui a examiné la soeur.
     the doctor to+him has examined the sister

(iii) Il a les cheveux noirs.
     he has the hair black
     'He has black hair'

(iv) * Il a la soeur blonde/à Paris.
     he has the sister blond/ in Paris

17. French can use oeil ('eye') for the eye of the needle alongside chas. Oeil has one occurrence per needle; the plural form of the word is phonetically detectable. The advantage of using such a noun is that it allows us to prove the existence of the singular constraint and the distributive effect beyond doubts of spelling conventions. Body-part nouns and extended inalienables that are instantiated as single parts of their whole and have a phonetically detectable plural form are difficult to find.

18. The inalienable noun may be a compound, though, as in (i):

(i) une goélette haute de mât d'artimon
    a schooner high of mizzenmast

19. In certain fixed expressions, the genitive member of the beynoni construct is derived from a PP complement (i)-(ii). This is not a productive procedure:

(i) hem 'olim mi-brit-ha-mo'acot
    they go+up from-Soviet Union
    'They immigrate from the Soviet Union'

(ii) 'oley brit-ha-mo'acot
    go+up(hey) Soviet Union
    'immigrants from the Soviet Union'

20. Recall that the article surfaces on the genitive member of a beynoni construct in accordance with the definiteness value of the noun the construct modifies. Nonetheless, it can render the genitive member definite.

22. Beynoni constructs, I believe, parallel English -er nominals (see Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1992) and references cited there), or French -eur nominals. Unlike Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1992), I do not think these nominals denote an event, as briefly shown below by a couple of event diagnostics (the use of a frequency modifier and a rationale clause) adopted from Grimshaw (1990):

(i) *Le fréquent destructeur de ce quartier nous a choqué.
the frequent destroyer of this quarter us has shocked

(ii) *Le destructeur de ce quartier pour construire un hôtel nous a choqué.
the destroyer of this quarter in+order to build a hotel us has shocked

Discussion of these nominals (sometimes referred to as Agent nominals) is beyond the scope of this paper.

23. In sentences such as (48b), beynoni constructs tend to denote inherent properties or professions. I will not develop this point here.

24. On a par with adjectival phrases (i), adjectival (ii) and beynoni (iii) constructs can appear in argumental positions:

(i) ha-yafa nixnesa la-xeder.
the-beautiful(fm sg) entered to+the-room
'The beautiful entered the room'

(ii) yefat ha-mar'e nixnesa la-xeder
beautiful(adj fm sg) the-look entered to+the-room
'The good looking entered the room'

(iii) xovšey ha-kova'im nixnesu la-xeder.
wear(bey ms pl) the-hats entered to+the-room
'The hat-wearers entered the-room'

Interestingly, when the beynoni construct is substantivized, the beynoni seems to be able to bear a pronominal clitic (iv), and to marginally occur in a clitic doubling configuration (v). It cannot occur in the free state (vi), though:

(iv) ha-zerim ve-nos'ey-hem higi'u.
the-bouquets and-carry(bey)-their arrived

(v) ?nos'ey-hem šel ha-zerim higi'u.
carry(bey)-their of the-bouquets arrived

(vi) *ha-nos'im šel ha-zerim higi'u.
the-carry(bey) of the-bouquets arrived

Possibly, these adjectival beynonis are developing into nouns that are obligatorily endowed with genitive features, and hence can only occur in the construct state. In (iv) and (v), the beynoni is in the construct state, realizing the genitive member as a pronominal clitic. In (vi) it is in the free state; hence its ungrammaticality.

25. Quantifiers also head constructs. It seems that they have a nominal structure, though (see Danon (1996)).
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