

We provide evidence for these conditions below:

In support of (5a). When the subject does not co-refer with Z, Z cannot be in the comparison set denoted by “Z’s NP”. In particular, (6a) does not entail that Bakr is taller than Zaid.

(6) Bakr is the tallest of Zaid’s brothers. #So, in particular, he is taller than Zaid.

In support of (5b). The noun used in the partitive construction must express a symmetric relation (R symmetric iff $\forall x, y, R(x)(y) \rightarrow R(y)(x)$), as in (7b). The relation need not be transitive like *sibling* (R transitive iff $\forall x, y, z, (R(x)(y) \wedge R(y)(z)) \rightarrow R(x)(z)$), as illustrated in (7).

- (7) a. **Non-transitive symmetric relation: friend**
Zaid is the only one of his friends who suffers from self-hatred.
 $\not\rightarrow$ Zaid is his own friend.
- b. **Transitive non-symmetric relation: ancestor**
I am the only one of my ancestors with green eyes.
 \rightsquigarrow I am my own ancestor.
- c. **Non-transitive non-symmetric relation: son**
Zaid is the only one of his sons who smokes.
 \rightsquigarrow Zaid is his own son.

Symmetric relations formed compositionally do not give rise to al-Sirafi’s reading.

(8) #Boston is the only one of the cities connected to it that has good food.

But morphologically complex nouns like *co-worker* can:

(9) I am the only of my co-workers who works at a standing desk.

One clue. Although we cannot explain al-Sirafi’s reading, Kai von Fintel (p.c.) notes a related paradox. If *other* is co-indexed with *I* in (10), then its presupposition (Heim et al., 1991) should require that I am my own sibling. Here too, the reading only arises with symmetric relations, as the contrast with (10b) shows.

- (10) a. I live in Burma. My other siblings live in Tanzania.
b. I lived in Burma. # My other ancestors lived in Tanzania.

References

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