Current Issues in Linguistic Theory
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Introduction

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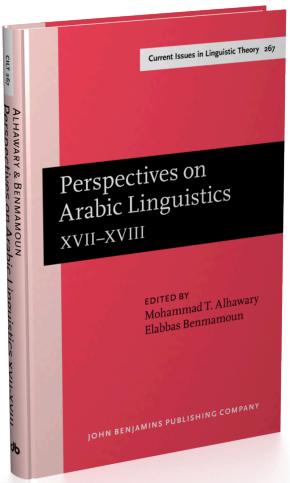
https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.267.02alh



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Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics. Volume XVII–XVIII: Alexandria, 2003 and Norman, Oklahoma 2004 : Papers from the annual symposium on Arabic linguistics
Edited by Mohammad T. Alhawary and Elabbas Benmamoun
[Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, 267]
2005. xvi, 315 pp.

INTRODUCTION

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The papers in this volume tackle a broad range of issues in current linguistic research, particularly in the areas of phonology, morphology/lexicon, sociolinguistics and first and second language acquisition. Contributions to the Perspectives series continue to be distinguished for the depth of coverage and the types of data considered.

The paper by John McCarthy addresses the long-standing problem of vowel length alternation in Arabic dialects. In various dialects, final short vowels lengthen when followed by a suffix. Within traditional analyses, there is no consensus as to which vowel form is basic and which form is derived. Both logical options have been adopted with no clear argument as to which one is more empirically adequate. McCarthy provides an alternative analysis within the Optimality Theory (OT) framework. He argues that OT provides a better account for the indeterminacy provided that one accepts the view that the base is richer than traditionally assumed. Given this assumption, together with a number of constraints, one can rely on grammar, rather than lexical stipulations governing so-called underlying representations, to filter out non-occurring forms.

Also assuming the OT framework, Abdessatar Mahfoudhi focuses attention on the related issue of the distribution of complex syllables in Arabic dialects, particularly Cairene Arabic, Makkan Arabic and Tunisian Arabic. While all Arabic dialects generally display the CV, CVC and CVV patterns, they differ with respect to the complexity of the edges of syllables. Tunisian Arabic allows complex onsets but not Cairene Arabic and Makkan Arabic. On the other hand, all three dialects allow CVVC and CVCC in the final position but only Tunisian Arabic allows the latter internally while only Cairene Arabic and Makkan Arabic allow it domain-finally. The author recapitulates arguments, mostly based on stress, that the final consonant in the CVVC and CVCC syllables in particular is not moraic, because it is not considered in the computation of weight for stress assignment. The final syllable is rather remotely licensed essentially through adjunction

to the syllable. Typical of OT accounts, Mahfoudhi relies on a number of constraints that govern the distribution of syllables and their edges and 'operations' that can affect the base (faithfulness constraints) to derive the occurring patterns and the variation that Arabic dialects display.

Khaled Rifaat presents a preliminary descriptive account of the intonation of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) on the sentence level. In particular, the study is designed to verify the widely held claim that Arabic intonation system is 'simple' and plays a minor role in the prosodic system of Arabic. Rifaat's analysis focuses on the notion of 'structural simplicity' where the notion of a 'simple' intonation system is defined as one containing few elements and rules. Rifaat relied on a corpus of approximately 15 hours of MSA recorded data from the Egyptian radio which he analyzed for tone-sequence within autosegmental metrical phonology framework. The analysis reveals that MSA has a 'simple' intonation system with a tendency of pitch accents to be accentuated, basic declined trend line tunes, association of non-final or continuation tunes with rising trend line or rising pitch accents and a limited use of pitch accents span to denote 'focus'. In addition, a small number of tune structures, pitch accent types and combinatorial properties were detected.

Hanaa Salem's paper is also descriptive in nature. The paper provides a descriptive account of phonological processes in connected speech in Colloquial Egyptian Arabic (CEA) in Alexandria together with their possible phonemic variations. The data of the study were recorded from normal, conversational speech of CEA in Alexandria on the radio. The data were analyzed for the types of processes exhibited as well as their frequency of occurrence. The analysis shows that a number of processes, such as elision, shortening, germination, and assimilation, are at play with different frequencies of occurrence.

The paper on root formation, by Lazhar Zanned, addresses the notion of polysemy in Classical Arabic lexicon. Zanned argues that the rules governing Arabic root formation generate polysemy in an unavoidable way. Assuming a root organization and generation stance divergent from those proposed in earlier models, such as the Extensionist Model, the Epenthesis Model, and the Combinatorial Model, Zanned presents the Probabilistic Model as an alternative model

that can better account for the phenomenon of polysemy. Rejecting a bi-radical or any diachronic basis for Arabic root formation, Zanned argues that root formation is probabilistic and can instead be assumed to be triconsonantal, quadriconsonantal or quinqueconsonantal. Focusing on triconsonantal roots, Zanned claims that three listemes cross at any given root resulting in a polysemic form (bearing, at least, three meanings) and comprising three identical consonantal copies, each of which bears its own meaning inherited from its own listeme; hence, polysemy is unavoidable. The model is further claimed to account for the morphological phenomenon of reduplication based on the same rationale.

Amr Ibrahim engages the important, but still understudied, issue of light verbs in Arabic, with special focus on Modern Standard Arabic. The paper provides a survey of modern linguistic and traditional Arabic linguistics views on the distribution of verbal and nominal predicates, which in the latter case may involve the use of a light verb plus the nominal form of the main predicate. Ibrahim also discusses the semantic and pragmatic interpretations of constructions using light verbs and constructions that do not use them, claiming that the former are less ambiguous than the latter, which they subsume. Another important issue that arises in this context, and which the paper briefly discusses, concerns the fact that the lexical origins of light verbs vary crosslinguistically. In fact, even within the same linguistic family, such as Arabic, a light verb that has more extensive usage in Standard Arabic may have a more narrowly constructed usage in the modern dialects. This, in turn, raises its own questions related to language change and the so-called process of grammaticalization.

Mustafa Mughazy deals with lexical aspect in Egyptian Arabic, a complex topic that, with few notable exceptions, has not received the adequate attention it deserves within Arabic linguistics. He presents a number of morphological and syntactic cues to help classify Egyptian Arabic verbs along aspectual dimensions. He claims that verbs adhere to the universal classifications assumed for other languages where verbs belong to four classes of State, Activities, Achievement or Accomplishment, which are in turn based on the set of the universal primitive features [+durative], [+telic], [+dynamic]. Mughazy then argues that lexical aspect relates to event descriptions, which can vary.

Thus, the same event can be rendered by an achievement or an accomplishment predicate. Consequently, language variation has to do with how eventualities are described. This analysis allows Mughazy to account for the distribution of different classes of verbs in Egyptian Arabic and for the differences between the behavior of such verbs in Egyptian Arabic and other languages such as English and possibly other dialects of Arabic, though this potentially fruitful issue of dialectal variation as it pertains to lexical aspect still needs to be investigated.

The paper on building a computational lexicon, by Sameh Al-Ansary, discusses a corpus-based approach for building a computational lexicon of MSA. The proposed lexicon is implemented in AGFL (Affix Grammar over Finite Lattices) format to be used by any corpus analysis software designed with AGFL formalism. The lexicon contains lexical entries, a tagset for morphological, syntactic and semantic features, a text analysis interface, a database management system (to automatically examine analyzed data), an interactive component, a statistical component, and an AGFL formalism. Al-Ansary's contribution lies not so much in the discussion of the component parts and tools of the proposed lexicon, for indeed there are other attempts, as much as it lies in the specific handling of tagging corpora with the implemented set of morphological and grammatical parts of speech tags, such as categorical information, morphological patterns, suffixes, root, gender, number, aspect, etc. As the corpus gets tagged and each surface word is assigned linguistic features from the tagset, a practical lexicon does emerge from the tagging process that is adequate for a proper morphological, syntactic and semantic description of naturally occurring Arabic data and for various Arabic NLP applications. Although the lexicon in question is small (consisting of 1500 entries), it is claimed to have been sufficiently tested and proven adequate in the corpus analysis tasks for which it is intended initially, such as morphological decomposition, lemmatization, tagging, and parsing.

Naima Boussofara-Omar's paper contributes to ongoing discussions of language and power; in particular, the 'linkages' between language ideologies and speakers' language valuation and language use in institutions of power with a special focus on political speeches in diglossic and bilingual Tunisia. Boussofara-Omar analyzes the original

text of a presidential speech/Communiqué together with the corrections brought to the original handwritten draft and attempts to explore the dialectic relation between form and ideology through an analysis of the significance of the Communiqué in terms of the socio-political conditions of its production and in terms of its linguistic forms. The main premise of Boussafara-Omar's thesis is that, following Bourdieu (1991), Spitulnik (1998) and others, language ideologies and processes of language valuation are never just about language and that language ideologies are about the construction and legitimization of power. Boussofara-Omar claims that constructs of prestige, power and authority of a linguistic code (Classical Arabic) do not "accrue" transparently and automatically to the privileged social group that uses it and that such processes may also be "costly". This is because, according to Boussofara-Omar, any incorrect or faulty use of *fuṣħaa* takes authority away from its user, especially when the text is an official presidential speech and the language of choice is being used as an attempt to legitimize the new authority. Accordingly, this accounts for the user's need to subject their linguistic texts to the scrutiny of professional and even non-professional correctors both of which seem to be in turn equally aware of 'correction' as an institution and of *fuṣħaa* as a language of authority.

In her paper on agreement alternations, Heidi Lorimor revisits the issue of subject-verb agreement in Arabic. Lorimor focuses on the issue of agreement alternations whereby the verb that usually fully agrees with a preverbal subject may agree only partially, for example, in gender but not number, or may agree with one NP only in the context of coordination. She also brings into the picture the case of singular agreement in the context of inanimate plural subjects attested in a number of dialects such as Cairene Arabic. Lorimor discusses a number of alternative options to capture the alternations. The two most prominent alternatives are whether the agreement alternations in question are semantically grounded or whether a syntactic account is better suited to the facts. The semantic account is based on findings in psycholiguistic experiments which seem to indicate that agreement morphology, whether singular or plural, depends on whether the speaker perceives the subject as notionally plural. The syntactic account relies mainly on the lexical entries of the noun phrase (the features for

which it is specified) and the structural configuration it finds itself in, yielding a single output that may or may not undergo further alterations in the morpho-phonology. The question then is whether all the agreement alternations in Arabic can receive one uniform account. Lorimor provides arguments to show that, despite attempts to provide such uniform accounts, the agreement alternations in Arabic cannot all be collapsed under the same generalization. Agreement in the context of inanimate nouns lends itself readily to a semantically grounded account while first conjunct agreement is better handled by a syntactic account whereby the conjunction in question is clausal rather than phrasal.

Fatima Badry reports on a study that investigated cognitive and typological predispositions employed in the development of lexical derivational processes by Moroccan Arabic speaking children learning Arabic as an L1. The study attempted to replicate evidence from crosslinguistic studies suggesting that children's acquisition strategies are influenced both by their universal predispositions as well as by the pervasiveness and regularity of the word formation rules in their language. Based on L1 cross-sectional acquisition data, the results of the study show that 3;5 year olds are already able to derive the causative verb patterns and have begun to derive reciprocal patterns followed by the medio-passive—a sequence in line with a cross-linguistic observation attributed usually to cognitive development. More importantly, the results also showed that the pervasiveness of root-based derivations in the Arabic lexicon draws the attention of L1 Arabic children to such processes and leads them to rely on root/pattern alternations in their production of novel words to fill lexical gaps. The L1 participant children showed a tendency to rely on both vertical (root based) and horizontal (word based) derivations when dealing with sound and weak forms, respectively. By analyzing the participants' productive utterances as well as their errors in comparison with certain adult L1 Arabic speakers' errors (such as slips of the tongue, hypocoristics and aphasic errors), Badry further argues that her data support the psychological reality of the root. Hence, the paper is also a contribution to the on-going debate about the nature of the root.

Finally, Mohammad Alhawary reports on an L2 acquisition study conducted within the latest generative framework of Principles and

Parameters. The study investigated the status of UG access and the nature of second language competence or ultimate attainment in adult monolingual English and French L1 speakers learning Arabic as an L2. In particular, the study examined three most recent hypotheses posited for L2 development**:** the Local Impairment Hypothesis, the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis and the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis. Based on cross-sectional acquisition data, analyzed for the feature gender and number agreement in nominal and verbal constructions, the findings indicate that L1 English participants were more likely to have problems with grammatical gender than their L1 French counterparts. The findings are argued to be in support of a modified temporary (access to UG) impairment view, especially in L2 contexts where L1 does not exhibit similar functional categories as those available in L2. The temporary status conclusion is based on the performance of (advanced) participants of both L1 backgrounds who exhibited 100% correct agreement ratios. Alhawary argues that the findings concomitantly lend further support to the role of L1 transfer in L2 acquisition.