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Preface

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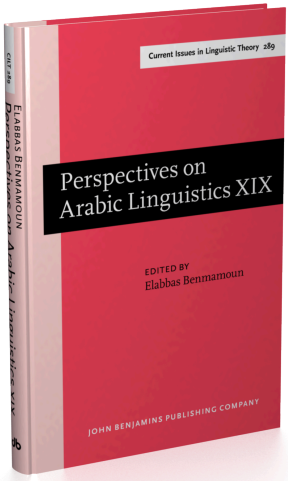

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FOREWORD

The fourteen papers in this volume engage various issues in Arabic linguistics. The majority of the papers rely on quantitative methods to analyze data from corpora or data elicited from speakers using experimentally grounded methods. While most of the papers focus on Standard Arabic, some deal with spoken colloquial dialects from the Maghreb and the Gulf region.

Section I includes five papers that deal with computational and corpus-based studies of Arabic. The topic of the paper by Bromberg is the relation between form and meaning. More precisely, the paper studies the correlation between the phonetic form of a word and its meaning in Arabic. Bromberg bases her study on the analysis of 1,000 words selected for their frequency from the Linguistic Data Consortium's Agence France Press corpus. The author's aim is to see whether there is predictable similarity along the semantic and phonetic dimensions. She claims that to a certain extent such correlation exists. Then she explores the psycho-linguistics implications of the study, particularly whether the observed systematic relation between form and meaning can facilitate acquisition.

The paper by Fong describes the properties of PAPPI, a multilingual parser, as it is implemented to handle Arabic clause structure analyzed in the Principles and Parameters (P&P) framework. The author relies on assumptions and principles posited in the P&P framework to develop a parser that captures patterns that relate to clause structure, word order, agreement, placement of verbs, etc. There aren't many parsers, in the public domain at least, that have been developed for Arabic using the P&P framework.

Ghazali provides a large corpus study of the distribution of a number of Arabic words and grammatical particles. By looking at the collocation and colligation patterns, the author is able to demonstrate that some nearly synonymous words have different distributions depending on the words and expressions they co-occur with. This finding, based on extensive corpus investigations, shows the limits of current studies of the Arabic lexicon based on limited dictionary definitions. The results will be beneficial to researchers and teachers of Arabic alike.

The paper by Rodrigues & Ćavar discusses a machine learning model of Arabic morphology. Assuming a root-based system for Arabic morphology, they developed an unsupervised constraint-based, statistical learning model that does not rely on the use of a dictionary, as previous models have done. The success rate of the model in learning the root system and deciding whether a consonant is part of the root system is 75%. The authors deal mainly with roots that contain three radicals.

Smrž, Pajas, Žabokrtský, Hajič, Mírovský, & Němec outline the data structures of the Prague Arabic Dependecy Treebank (PADT), available from the Linguistics Data Consortium (LDC). The corpus contains annotated newswire Modern Standard Arabic texts based on the Arabic Gigaword (LDC). They illustrate the working of the corpus and its annotated data by focusing on searching for instances of Arabic improper annexation (part of the Construct State pattern), which involves a complex semantic relation between its members.

Section II includes papers on Arabic phonology, morphology, and syntax. The paper by Ghazali, Hamdi & Knis takes up the issues of phonological and prosodic differences between various dialects from the western and eastern regions of the Arab world. For example, experimental studies of intonation patterns in Egyptian Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Iraqi Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, and Tunisian Arabic, reveal differences between the dialects. Thus, while the eastern dialects exhibit the declination phenomenon, Moroccan Arabic does not seem to display the same pattern. On the other hand, Iraqi Arabic displays a falling pattern (HL) and seems to be almost unique. These differences are, of course, on top of other differences such as vowel duration.

Focusing on one Eastern dialect, Qatari Arabic, Mustafwi discusses affrication of the voiced velar stop. Departing from previous studies, she argues that affrication is confined to contexts where the voice velar stop is adjacent to high front vowels. One critical factor in the analysis concerns the fact that the affrication process is limited to the stem. Another interesting fact is that the process applies only within restricted paradigms. For example, it does not apply to broken plurals, verbs, and participles. The analysis is framed within the Optimality Theoretic framework and the author proposes a number of rankable constraints to derive the observed patterns in Qatari phonology.

The role of the root in Arabic morphology is explored by Mahfoudi from a psycholinguistic perspective. He revisits the longstanding debate regarding the nature of lexical relations in Arabic, whether they are root-based or stem-based. He also explores the role of the patterns in anchoring those relations. Based on experiments he comes to the conclusion that the root has a priming effect. This effect is not dependent on any shared orthography or meaning. The same claim cannot be made about the patterns (both sound and weak), which did not display the same priming effects. The results of the study are in line with recent studies that have argued for the psychological reality of the root with regard to the organization of the Arabic lexicon. The question that remains to be addressed is how these results can be reconciled with other studies that have shown that stems seem to play a role in establishing lexical relations.

Ouali & Fortin add to the debate about clause structure in Arabic. The authors focus specifically on complex tenses in Moroccan Arabic and provide an analysis that is in the spirit of the P&P framework and its minimalist incarnation. They discuss the dependency relations that exist between tense and aspect in Moroccan Arabic, which they derive through a selectional relation between the two heads (and their projections). They also put forward an analysis whereby particles that elsewhere are analyzed as aspectual markers (such as the *ka*/*ta* morpheme) are claimed to realize the present tense. One innovative idea they advance is that complex tenses are biclausal, contrary to what has been argued before.

Also working within the minimalist version of the P&P framework, Soltan deals with the ongoing debate about subject agreement and coordination in Arabic. The paper focuses mainly on Standard Arabic and tries to account for why agreement is with the first conjunct when the latter is in the postverbal position, i.e., in the VS order. This has been a matter of concern for a number of students of Arabic. The question is why agreement in the SV pattern is with whole conjunct. To derive the phenomenon of first conjunct agreement, the author argues that a simple analysis deploying the operation Agree, as understood in recent minimalist studies, can explain the facts if one assumes that in coordination the second conjunct is in fact an adjunct that is essentially not present at the point where the agreement relation is computed. This ensures first conjunct agreement. With regard to the

SV order, full agreement follows from the assumption that the real subject is a pronominal that is related to the preverbal conjunct, an assumption that, while not uncontroversial, has been advanced and adopted by a number of students of Arabic.

Section III includes papers in Arabic sociolinguistics and acquisition of Arabic as a second language. Bahloul's paper provides an analysis of the distribution of the phoneme /q/ and its many variants in eighteen Arabic dialects from the Maghreb to the Gulf. The data was collected based on questionnaires given to native speakers of the relevant dialects. In addition to the well-known variants of /q/, namely the voiced velar /g/ and the glottal stop, some eastern dialects of Arabic (but also some pockets of North Africa) display other variants such as /k/. Bahloul shows that within the same country and/or region two variants may have a distribution according to the urban/non-urban split. For example, in Syria the glottal stop variant is found in the major cities, such as Damascus, Hama, and Homs while /g/ is found in the rural areas. In fact, this split seems to hold across the eastern Mediterranean region, including lower Egypt. The author argues that the distribution of /q/ and its many variants leads to a linguistic map that divides the whole region into five main areas. Of course it remains to be seen how the distribution of /q/ and its variants line up with other linguistic features that distinguish Arabic dialects from each other.

The issue of multilingualism in contexts where Arabic is spoken as a native language is the topic of Ennaji's paper. The paper discusses the complexity of the linguistics situation in Morocco, where five languages compete for space: Moroccan Arabic, Classical Arabic, Standard Arabic, Berber, and French (and one can add English as well). Ennaji uses the term quadriglossia to refer to the situation with Arabic, echoing Ferguson who uses the term diglossia (for colloquial and standard Arabic) and Youssi who uses the term triglossia (which adds educated/middle Arabic to the mix). The four varieties according to the author include Classical Arabic, Standard Arabic, Educated Spoken Arabic and Moroccan Arabic. Given this complex linguistic space it is inevitable that competition would exist between the different media. Ennaji traces the history of the linguistic situation in Morocco and the cultural, social, and political dimensions and the factors that have played a role in marginalizing or strengthening a particular language or variety at the expense of the others. For example, Berber, the original

language of the country and the region, has not been given the space that is commensurate with its history and demographic weight. However, Berber has recently been introduced in schools in Morocco and there seems to be a strong push to give it a more prominent role. The author provides a succinct but informative overview of the different facets of the debate and its history.

Staying with the same linguistic context of Morocco, Sadiqi turns her attention to language and gender in the country. She focuses on the interplay between Arabic, French and Berber. Given the colonial history of the country, its high illiteracy rate, particularly among women, and its ethnic make-up, language naturally reflects how these issues relate to gender and how language use evolves with the changing position of women in the Moroccan society. Thus, according to the author, Standard Arabic used to be predominantly a male language, partly due to the fact that it is closely associated with the Islamic faith whose leadership and public figures used to be exclusively males. However, this situation has started to change with the increasing prominence of women who write in Standard Arabic and use it to engage in religious debates. Such use of Standard Arabic is seen as a form of empowerment for women who have reclaimed Standard Arabic as a vehicle for their own discourse. With respect to Berber, the author argues that women played an important role in maintaining the language and, with it, Berber identity. The author goes as far as to put forward the thesis that the fate of Berber parallels the fate of women in Morocco. More rights for women in Morocco have also been accompanied by more rights for Berber. On the other hand, Moroccan Arabic is less associated with a specific gender but French is used by women to reflect their social prestige while males use it to assert their economic and political positions. Though the issues are complex given the many factors at play in a society where gender issues play a major role in the social system, it is to be expected that language would reflect those dynamics.

Acquisition of Arabic as a second language is the main topic of Alhawary's paper. The paper focuses particularly on the status of the null subject (sentences without overt subjects) in the language of Arabic learners whose first language is Spanish or English. Spanish is a null subject language while English is not. Moreover, like Arabic, Spanish drops the subject because it can be retrieved from agreement

on the verb. Thus, there is a tight connection between the presence of null subjects and agreement. The paper seeks to investigate the distribution of the null subject in the production of Arabic data by native Spanish and American English speakers, and the issue of transfer, i.e., whether native language use of the subjects carries over to Arabic, and the connection between the development of the null subject and agreement inflection in their Arabic data. The subjects of the study are all college students with no prior exposure to Arabic in high school or at home. One interesting finding of the experimental study is the early presence of null subjects in the Arabic data of native English speakers relative to native Spanish speakers, which is surprising since the latter have null subjects in their own native language. Moreover, English speakers also acquired the use of agreement inflection early, which shows the link between null subjects and agreement. The Spanish speakers did "improve" eventually but the differences in the production data for beginners is quite striking.

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