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Introduction

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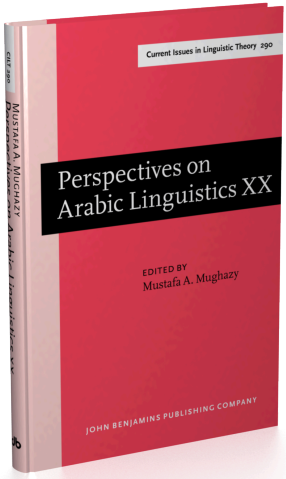

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INTRODUCTION

Mustafa Mughazy

The papers in this volume address a broad range of theoretical issues pertaining to Arabic, particularly in the areas of phonology, morphology, syntax, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, and computational linguistics. These contributions represent the emerging trend of interface analyses, where linguistic phenomena are investigated using the techniques, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks of different linguistic research areas.

The paper by Jeffery Heath on ablaut in Moroccan Arabic presents an interesting puzzle for the established views on Arabic morpho-phonology. He identifies six nouns and adjectives of the forms *CCi* and *CCu* involving a stem template that does not exist elsewhere in Muslim or Jewish Moroccan dialects. The final high vowel in these forms is quite problematic for the ablaut processes that derive diminutives and plurals. This paper surveys the diminutives and plurals of these forms in a wide variety of Moroccan dialects and proposes theoretical models of the historical pattern of upgrading from triliteral to (pseudo-)quadriliteral stems for ablaut purposes.

Samira Farwaneh addresses the long standing issue of the theoretical nature of Semitic roots and templates. She develops a purely word-based surface-to-surface analysis of hypocoristics in Spoken Arabic within the frameworks of Optimality Theory and Correspondence Theory. This analysis successfully accounts for the grammatical forms and rules out ungrammatical ones without making any reference to roots or templates. In fact, templates are treated as well-formedness constraints that unify hypocoristics with intensive nouns and verbs, with the potential of extending to other forms as well.

The paper on thematic arity operations by Lior Laks investigates the interaction between morpho-phonolgy and the theta system. Laks examines five Standard Arabic derivational processes that generate verbal predicates, such as passives, causatives, and reciprocals in order to motivate a distinction between syntactic and lexical derivations. He demonstrates that lexical operations, such as causativization, are bi-directional with less than full predictability, as they involve a wide range of complex morpho-phonological processes. On the other hand, syntactic operations, such as passivization, are unidirectional, predictable, and often restricted to simple morpho-phonological processes. This analysis argues against root extraction views by establishing an interface between morphology and the syntax as well as the lexicon.

Usama Soltan approaches the diverse syntactic properties of free state possessives in Egyptian Arabic from a semantic perspective. His paper establishes a semantic distinction between individual-denoting and property-denoting free state possessives. This distinction is coupled with syntactic arguments that individual-denoting possessives occupy a higher position (adjunct to DP) than property-denoting possessives (adjunct to NP). The result is a straightforward analysis of the distribution patterns of the two types of possessives. Soltan's analysis has significant theoretical implications, as it suggests that cross-linguistic variations in possessive constructions can be reduced parametric settings. Moreover, it supports a theory of grammar with transparent mapping between syntax and semantics.

Nouman Malkawi and Nicolas Guilliot present new types of data from Jordanian Arabic that motivate reconsidering the standard assumptions regarding reconstruction and islandhood. They propose an alternative fine-grained account based on two main claims: (a) the reconstruction effects of an XP indicate the existence of a copy of this XP, and (b) reconstruction with weak resumption (clitics and double clitics) follows from the NP deletion of pronouns. Reconstruction with strong resumption (strong pronouns and epithets), on the other hand, is triggered by A' movement with two possible outcomes: apparent resumption, if movement is available, and true resumption, if movement is disallowed. This analysis has far reaching theoretical implications, as it involves redefining the basic concepts of reconstruction and islandhood.

The paper on negation in Palestinian Arabic by Fredrick Hoyt introduces new directions for research on linguistic phenomena traditionally assumed to be purely syntactic. He argues that the distribution patterns of the negation morphemes *maa-* and *-ʃ* are mainly determined by prosodic rather than syntactic constraints. This analysis is based on the claim that these morphemes are special clitics, as they are unselective affixes that attach to words already hosting other clitics and whose distribution is influenced by non-syntactic factors. Hoyt proposes a view where the domain of negation is defined in terms of phonological or prosodic phrases rather than syntactic constituents.

Mohammad Alhawary uses L2 Arabic production data from L1 English and Japanese speakers to test the psycholinguistic reality of the Split-INFL Hypothesis. Two sets of elicitation tasks are used to collect tense and subject-verb agreement data from both groups. The data is statistically analyzed to investigate whether the agreement features associated with these forms develop at the same stage, i.e., as a single projection, and whether L1 transfer affects interlanguage systems. The results indicate that the two groups follow different developments paths, as the L1 Japanese group acquires tense and verbal agreement at the same stage suggesting a single maximal projection, while the L1 English group follows a different pattern. The fact that the Japanese

participants acquire tense and subject-verb agreement at the same stage suggests that there is no L1 transfer effect, since their L1 exhibits tense, but not subject-verb agreement.

The paper by Reem Khamis-Dakwar and Karen Froud is a breakthrough in the debate over the relation between Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial varieties, an issue that has dominated Arabic Linguistics for over half a century. They use the event-related potential method to measure neural responses to controlled stimuli involving code-switching between MSA and Palestinian Arabic. The results indicate that educated Palestinians process switching between MSA and Palestinian Arabic in a fashion similar to that of switching between different language pairs such as English and Spanish. These results confirm the hypothesis that Palestinian Arabic is processed as a first language, whereas MSA is processed as a second language.

Amel Khalfaoui challenges the traditional assumption that demonstratives are pointing words that are interpreted according to the spatial or temporal distance of their referents from the speech context. She uses data from Tunisian Arabic to argue that the felicity of demonstratives depends on the cognitive statuses conventionally associated with these forms. The analysis, which is based on native speakers' responses to a questionnaire, leads to a pairing of demonstratives and the cognitive statuses that are necessary and sufficient for their felicitous use. She extends this analysis to phrases with "double demonstratives" such as *ha-l-ktab haða* (literally: this-the-book this) to show that there are no differences between their felicity conditions and those of their single demonstrative counterparts.

Nigel Ward and Yaffa Al Bayyari examine the prosodic contours that prompt back-channeling, a discourse pragmatic phenomenon that has been largely understudied in Arabic. Their analysis, which is based on an integrated qualitative and quantitative approach, yields two main acoustic cues for back-channeling in Egyptian Arabic: a phrase-final pitch upturn and a sharp pitch down-slope. Ward and Al Bayyari use their findings to develop a set of conditions that reliably predict the appearance of back-channeling behavior.

The open source resource grammar described by Ali Dada and Aarne Ranta involves the development of a library of constructs and rules for Arabic using Grammatical Framework. The system implements two types of rules: abstract syntax, which is a formal language-independent set of rules or algorithms, and concrete syntax including the grammar of Arabic. An application programming interface can use this resource grammar to generate grammatical Arabic sentences as well as sample lexical and morphological paradigms.

Warren Casbeer, Jon Dehdari, and Deryle Lonsdale tackle the challenging task of developing a wide-coverage cost-effective Link Gramar parser for Arabic. One of the main advantages of this system is that it can handle lexical

and syntactic ambiguities, as it provides multiple parses that are ranked according to a cost vector. It can even guess the category of words that are not included in the lexicon based on their syntactic environments. This system can be used as a grammar checker or as a tool for corpus linguistics.