

Introduction

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 <https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.72.03eid>

Pages xi–xiv of

Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics: Papers from the Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics . Volume II: Salt Lake City, Utah 1988

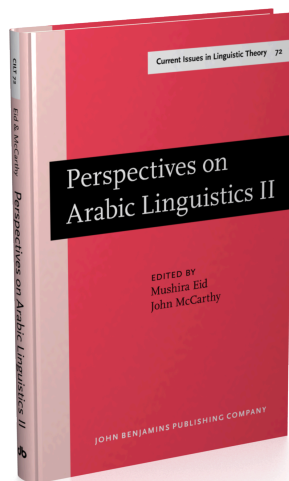
Edited by Mushira Eid and John McCarthy

[*Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 72] 1990. xiv, 332 pp.

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INTRODUCTION

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Occasionally, the facts of a particular language or language family move beyond parochial concerns and enter the collective consciousness of theoretical linguists in general. Such facts then become part of the body of 'classic cases' that all subsequent theorizing must take into account at the very outset. These events are rare, though, and so it is surprising if a single language contributes two classic cases to a single theoretical domain. Yet this is the way it is with Arabic morphology.

The transformational cycle was first discovered by Chomsky, Halle & Lukoff (1956). It was subsequently worked out in considerable detail by Chomsky & Halle (1968), who illustrate it in their analysis of English stress. But a truly broad appreciation of the cross-linguistic importance of the cycle was not achieved until Brame's (1973) demonstration of the central role of the transformational cycle in the phonology of colloquial Arabic.

Two articles in section I of this volume make important contributions to the study of the cycle in Arabic. Johnson addresses the completely novel question of the historical origin of cyclic rule application in Arabic. Ultimately, what he shows is that it is not the cycle per se that is implicated, but rather a distinction among morphological levels—specifically, agreement suffixes versus object clitics. Abu-Mansour, analyzing an intriguing gemination phenomenon among sequences of clitics, demonstrates that cyclic syllabification will account for otherwise very puzzling alternations.

The other classic case presented by Arabic is the system of nonconcatenative morphology. Harris (1941) was perhaps the first to recognize how profoundly the morphological systems of Semitic

languages differ from more familiar ones. While English, for example, forms a causative verb by suffixing *-ize*, Arabic causative verbs like *kattab* "make someone write", *darras* "teach", and so on are identified by doubling of the medial consonant. Harris proposed a system of what he called 'morphemic long components' to express such regularities; subsequent research beginning with McCarthy (1979, 1981) has developed an analysis within the context of the overall autosegmental or nonlinear theory of phonology.

In their contribution to this volume, McCarthy & Prince propose an analysis of the Arabic nonconcatenative morphological system based on units of syllable weight, called moras. Moore, adopting this representational system, shows that it provides an elegant account of the geminate or doubled verbs. Ratcliffe investigates the system of broken plural formation, a long-standing problem in morphology. And Farwanah describes an elegant new system of association, solving various problems in the relation between the morphological templates and the vowels or consonants that fill them.

On the whole, what we have in this section is a set of papers that contribute in important ways to both the study of the Arabic language and to morphological theory in general.

The papers in section II provide a semantic perspective on aspects of Arabic structure so far typically studied within a more syntax-based approach. Eisele develops a classification system, partly based on a modified version of Dowty's (1979) aspectual classification of English, to explain what appear to be peculiar features of the Arabic aspectual system—the various readings associated with the Cairene Arabic present tense in both verb forms and active participles used predicationally. His analysis distinguishes between lexical and formal (or morphological) aspect, classifying verbs according to features within each and explaining the various readings identified on the basis of the interaction of these features. Al-Batal's paper, on the other hand, examines semantic relationships signalled by connectives, traditionally analyzed to belong to different syntactic categories, and the ways by which connectives are used to achieve cohesion in text. His analysis integrates ideas from Halliday & Hassan (1976) and Van Dijk

(1977) and is developed through a detailed analysis of one contemporary Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) text by Abbas Mahmud Al-Aqqad.

The papers in section III address issues related to language use. Parkinson's paper deals with variation in MSA; specifically, orthographic variation. Since MSA is primarily a written language and since there is evidence for orthographic variation in at least one instance—that of the *hamza*, the orthographic representation of the glottal stop—a question is raised regarding the extent to which orthographic variation in written language parallels the more commonly known phonological variation in spoken language. Parkinson shows that there are indeed parallels and suggests introducing the notion 'language use community', as opposed to the more familiar notion 'speech community', to the study of the Arabic linguistic situation. The paper is one of few, if any, to address this issue. Likewise, Tweissi's paper deals with an aspect of language use that has so far not been studied in Arabic—'foreigner talk' as a type of simplified register. The study is based on data collected from telephone calls made to native Jordanian Arabic speakers by both native and nonnative speakers. Tweissi shows that native speakers modify their speech in talking to nonnative speakers and that this modification involves features of simplification on all linguistic levels—phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discourse. He further argues, on the basis of cross-linguistic similarity in characteristics of foreigner talk, that simplification in language is governed by universal principles derivable from the linguistic situation rather than the specific language in question.

The papers in this volume, then, approach the study of Arabic, its structure and use, from different linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives. Some present data and material so far not studied in the Arabic linguistics literature; others examine more familiar data but within current theoretical models, thus providing new insights to both Arabic and linguistic theory. All in all, the papers constitute a contribution to both Arabic and linguistics.

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