

**ETYMOLOGICAL ITINERARIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE PHONOLOGY:
THE CASE OF ARABIC**

By Youssef A. Haddad – University of Florida in Gainesville

THE PROBLEM:

- Non-native learners of Arabic usually begin by learning Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).
- When these learners start learning a dialect, they have already formed a lexicon or a set of underlying forms.
- These underlying forms are different from those of the native speaker of the dialect.
- As a result, the grammar of the learner is different from that of the non-native speaker.
- The grammar of the learner accounts for the etymological origin of the dialect in MSA.

ARGUMENT

Non-native speakers of Arabic should start with a dialect and then move to MSA.

FOCUS

MSA vs. Cairene Arabic (CA) – the leftmost edge of Stem-V (five) verbs:

- MSA: $C_1V_2C_3V_4C_5C_6V_7C_8$ - /tafaʕʕal/; e.g. /takallam / to speak / talk
- CA: $C_1C_3V_4C_5C_6V_7C_8$ - /tfa al/; e.g. /tkallim / to speak

ANALYSIS

- MSA vs CA: the leftmost edge of words
 - In both MSA and CA, no consonant clusters or onsetless syllables are allowed at the left edge of the word.
 - The repair strategy is epenthesis of [ʔi] or [u] at the beginning of the prosodic word.
 - E.g., the underlying form of the imperative mood of *to study* is /drus/, and that of *to teach* is /darris/. The output of /drus/ is [idrus], whereas that of /darris/ is [darris].

OT account

drus	ONSET	*[CC	CONTIGUITY-IO	MAX-IO	DEP-IO(C)	DEP-IO(V)
udrus					*	*
udrus	*!					*
drus		*!				
drus			*!			*
dus			*!	*		

- First language acquisition of CA Stem-V verbs:
 - To form the imperative mood of the /tkallim / to speak, a native speaker of CA applies the same ranking used for /drus/. Thus, [ʔitkallim].
- Second language acquisition of CA Stem-V verbs:
 - For the MSA→CA learner (the CA learner who comes for MSA), the underlying form of *to speak* is /takallam /.
 - Faced by the output [ʔitkallim], the learner tries to do one of two things:
 - Modify the underlying form into /tkallim /.
 - Modify the grammar
 - According to Tesar et al. (2003), the learner first attempts to modify the grammar; if this doesn't work, the learner modifies the input through surgery.
- From MSA Input to CA Output: The Grammar

- To understand how MSA /takallam/ surfaces as CA [itkallim], which also applies to the perfective paradigm:

Person		MSA PERFECTIVE	CA PERFECTIVE
1 st	Sg Mas/Fem	takallam -tu	itkallim -t
	Pl Mas/Fem	takallam -na	itkallim -na

we have to examine the CA imperfective paradigm as compared to the MSA paradigm:

Person		MSA IMPERFECTIVE	CA IMPERFECTIVE
1 st	Sg Mas/Fem	-takallam -u	a-tkallim
	Pl Mas/Fem	na-takallam -n	n-itkallim

- Words in CA like to be Bi-syllabic, satisfying the constraint WD-BIN:
 - [ɪrɪb] *he drank*; [ɪrɪbu] *they drank (also, he drank it (mas))*
 - [kaatɪb] *a writer (mas)*; [katɪba] *a writer (fem)*
- If we apply this to the MSA underlying form of the imperfective / -takallam / *I speak*, we get the CA [tkallim]:

-takallam	ONSET	*[CC	MAX-IO (C)	WD-BIN	CONTIG UITY-IO	MAX- IO(V)	DEP- IO(C)	DEP- IO(V)
☺ atkallim				*	*	*		
a.ta.kallim				**!				
ta.kallim		*!		*		*		

- In the perfective mood, however, there is no gain in deletion: [itkallim t] is the same size as [ta.kal.lim t].
- Optimal Paradigm Theory:
 - Members of the same paradigm strive to have the same form.
 - The form all the members try to resemble is the “attractor,” which is usually the least marked, satisfying some high-ranking markedness constraint.
 - In our case, the imperfective form is the least marked, and the perfective mood tries to resemble it in accordance with the OO-Constraint, DEP-OP(V).

	{ a - ni - ti - ji } + takallam + { Ø - i - uu - t - na - it - uu - ti - tuu }	WD-BIN	DEP-OP(V)	MAX-IO(V)
Attractor: tkallim	a) ☺ a-tkallim , nitkallim , titkallim , titkallim -i, titkallim -uu, jiktallim , titkallim , jiktallim -uu, iktallim -t, iktallim -na, iktallim -t, iktallim -ti, iktallim -tuu, iktallam , iktallim -it, iktallim -uu	24		16
	b) a-tkallim , nitkallim , titkallim , titkallim -i, titkallim -uu, jiktallim , titkallim , jiktallim -uu, takallam -t, takallam -na, takallam -t, takallam -ti, takallam -tuu, takallam , takallam -it, takallam -uu	24	8!	8

- How does the learner use the two new constraints, WD-BIN and DEP-OP(V), to get to the CA output form? Through BCD

Lexicon	Winner ~ loser
takallam -t	itkallam t~ takallam t
ta-takallam	titkallam ~ ta.takallam

Lexicon	Win ~ lose	WD-BIN	MAX-IO(V)	DEP-IO(V)	DEP-IO(C)
takallam -t	itkallam t~ takallam t		L	L	L
ta-takallam	titkallam ~ ta.takallam	W	L		

Lexicon	Win ~ lose	MAX-IO(V)	DEP-IO(V)	DEP-IO(C)
takallam -t	itkallam t~ takallam t	L	L	L

Lexicon	Attractor	Win ~ lose	DEP-OP(V)	MAX-IO(V)	DEP-IO(V)	DEP-IO(C)
takallam -t	tkallam	itkallam t~ takallam t	W	L	L	L

WD-BIN >> DEP-OP(V) >> MAX-IO(V), DEP-IO(V), DEP-IO(C).

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Since a grammar (a diachronic one!) is possible, then learners will not change the input; this means that they'll never learn the dialect on the terms of the native speakers. Therefore, learners should start by learning a dialect and then move to MSA, or learn them simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that learners of Arabic who learn a dialect after having learnt SA form a grammar that is not only different from that of the native speaker but also more complicated in that it accounts for the etymological roots of the dialect in SA. Cairene Arabic is used as an example. The analysis is developed in the framework of Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993) and the Optimal Paradigm Theory (McCarthy 2003).

The paper argues that a dialect should be taught side by side with (or even before) SA. To my knowledge, only two of all the universities that offer Arabic language courses in the United States actually do this. The rest offer SA courses first; colloquial follows. The weakness of my argument, however, is that it is based on theory only; no field research has been conducted to confirm or otherwise the claims I make. The following step should be a longitudinal study that means to investigate the validity of these claims; such a study may lead to radical changes to the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language.

Besides, the idea covered here can be extended to languages that, like Arabic, have a gap between the formal standard form and the colloquial everyday form (e.g., Chinese and Tamil). Research studies can be designed to examine if such languages also impose an etymological itinerary on the learner if s/he moves from the formal/standard form to the informal/colloquial dialect. If the findings of these studies agree with the argument of this paper, this means that the suggestions listed in the previous section apply not only to Arabic but also to similar languages.

On a larger scale, this paper sheds light on the dilemma of printed material and input in second language phonology in general. Documenting a language in print is like taking a snapshot of a baby. A snapshot! One moment in time, seized for saving ... for scrutiny. It can be visited and re-visited; it may give us a clear idea about what the moment was like. It can probably give us a retrospective foreshadowing of the present. But it is never the present.

The difference between first language acquisition and second language acquisition (more accurately, foreign language acquisition that takes place in the milieu of the classroom) is analogous to the difference between meeting a person of twenty years of age and then seeing a snapshot of hers/his

when s/he was ten on the one hand, and seeing a snapshot of a twenty-year-old person when s/he was ten and then meeting her/him on the other hand.

Stated differently, first language acquisition means acquiring a language synchronically (i.e., as it is used by the community at the time of acquisition), followed by formal education in case of literacy, whereby the learner gets to acquire the standardized form of the language, or more precisely the learner acquires the language that was to a large extent frozen by being documented and by printed material.

Second language acquisition, however, begins with the frozen standardized language through exposure to printed material from the outset; this exposure is accompanied with – or is even followed by – the language as it is currently used by a particular community.

This leads to the following assumptions that are worth researching:

- 1) First language acquisition as described above leads to
 - a. One synchronic grammar: one ranking of constraints
 - b. Two lexicons: a colloquial lexicon and a standardized one.

- 2) Second language acquisition leads to
 - a. One lexicon based on the standardized language as presented in the printed material.
 - b. One diachronic grammar that accounts for the historical change from the standardized form of the language to the current form.

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