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Comparative Morphology of Standard and Egyptian Arabic

Hassan A. H. Gadalla

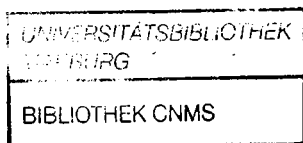
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

(القرآن الكريم - سورة الروم - الآية ٢٢)

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: Verily in that are signs for those who know.

(The Holy Quran 30: 22)

Foreword

It is my great pleasure to introduce this important monograph devoted to a comparison of Cairene and Standard Arabic morphology, written by Dr. Hassan Gadalla, currently of the Department of English at Assiut University, Egypt. Dr. Gadalla's study originated as a doctoral dissertation in Linguistics, written partly under my supervision at the Department of Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania, during a two-year period while Dr. Gadalla was supported as a visiting scholar under the joint-supervision scholarship program of Assiut University. While completing the dissertation, Dr. Gadalla was also employed by the Linguistic Data Consortium at Penn, leading an annotation team that examined a large corpus of naturally occurring Arabic telephone conversations and other specimens of modern spoken Arabic. The results of this work were compiled as the *LDC CallHome Egyptian Arabic Lexicon* (H. Gadalla et. al. (1998). This work represents the first electronic phonological and morphological dictionary of Egyptian Arabic.

The present monograph is therefore based both on a variety of previously published descriptive sources as well as the above-mentioned electronic database, which revealed a number of previously unnoticed linguistic phenomena of the Cairene dialect. It contains a systematic comparison of the stem types of both languages and a descriptive treatment of both languages' phonologies using an easily interpreted rule-based formalism. It is shown that while Cairene Arabic can normally be derived from the same underlying forms as Standard Arabic with the addition of a suite of dialect-specific phonological rules, Cairene Arabic also differs from Standard Arabic in the loss of certain stem types, in certain sporadic phonological changes, and in the impoverishment of inflectional categories. The historical development of these latter changes all invite future research and pose an important agenda for scholars studying the development of modern Arabic. Remarkably exhaustive in its treatment of the categories and forms of both the standard and modern colloquial Cairene varieties of Arabic, this work should serve as a useful reference for linguistic researchers as well as teachers of modern Egyptian Arabic phonology and morphology.

Rolf Noyer, PhD
Philadelphia, March 2000

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My research has also benefited greatly from my weekly meetings with Prof. Rolf Noyer for two years at the University of Pennsylvania. I am proud to have been his student and proud of his words in the first letter to me: "we will have much to learn from each other". Indeed it was he who has taught me exactly what it is like to be a linguistics researcher. I also appreciate the assistance of Prof. Tony Kroch, Chair of the Dept. of Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania who has been very helpful to me. Finally, I thank all the members of my family, particularly my parents, my wife and my children Gehad, Hamza and Sarah for their moral support at every stage of this work.

Introduction

0.1. The Arabic Language Situation:

Arabic is the most widespread member of the Semitic group of languages¹. Two main varieties of this language can be distinguished in the Arab world nowadays: Standard Arabic (SA), also called "Modern Standard Arabic" (MSA) and Colloquial Arabic. The first variety is the offspring of Classical Arabic, also called "Quranic Arabic" (e.g. by Thackston 1984), which is now used in religious settings and the recitation of the Holy Quran. Thus, Standard Arabic is considered "the direct descendant of the classical language, with modifications and simplifications more suited to communication in a world quite different from that of the Arab Golden Age in medieval times" (Travis 1979: 6). It has also been defined by Gaber (1986: 1) as "the written form taught at schools²". He goes on to say that in its spoken form it is "the 'formal' speech of the educated people in public speeches, radio comments, news broadcasts on radio and television." The written form of SA is relatively uniform throughout the Arab world. The spoken form, on the other hand, is more or less different from one Arab country to another since it is affected by the local dialects.

Many labels have been given in the linguistic literature to the Standard variety of Arabic. It has been named "Literary Arabic" (e.g. by Becker 1964) although many of its manifestations are not related to literature, as in the language of newspapers and magazines. Also, it has been termed "Written Arabic" (e.g. by Beeston 1968) in spite of the fact that it is frequently used as the means of spoken communication, as in academic lectures and some radio and television programs. So, none of these terms gives a well-defined description of this variety. The term 'Standard Arabic' will be employed in this book for three reasons. First, it refers to all forms of Arabic stated above. Second, it covers the areas missed by other terms. Third, the use of this term has become a long-established tradition in modern linguistic studies. (See, for instance, Cowan (1968), Malik (1976) and Abdel-Hafiz (1991) among many others).

The second variety, Colloquial Arabic, has been defined by Al-Toma (1969: 3) as "the actual language of everyday activities, mainly spoken, though occasionally written". He adds that, "it varies not only from one Arab territory to another, but also from one area to another within each territory". Hence, nearly every Arab country has its own colloquial dialects that are more or less different from each other and

naturally from those of other countries. Several names have also been given to this variety of Arabic, among which are "Vernacular Arabic" (e.g. by Smith 1917) and "Spoken Arabic" (e.g. by Salib 1981). The term 'Colloquial' is chosen here because it is more common than all of the other terms.

0.2. The Diglossic Situation in Egypt:

In Egypt, two main varieties of Arabic are commonly used: Standard Arabic and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. The former is the language of reading and writing, while the latter is the language of daily social intercourse. However, the latter appears in writing in certain situations, e.g. some poets and playwrights adopt it in their works. Within the Colloquial variety there are many vernacular dialects, such as the Cairene, the Upper-Egyptian and other regional dialects.

For many reasons, the most prestigious dialect throughout the country is Cairene Arabic (CrA). First, it is the language of the capital where the government administration offices are located. Second, it is the language of the cinema, theater and mass media. Third, it is spoken by a great number of educated and cultured people. This prestige has led some linguists studying 'Egyptian Arabic' to concentrate on this dialect giving generalizations on the dialects spoken in the whole country. (See, for example, Gamal-Eldin (1967), Hanna (1967) and Omar (1976)). Needless to say, this dialect does not cover the whole of Egypt. That is why some researchers focused on the study of other regional dialects, such as Abu Farag (1960) and Khalafallah (1969).

Some sociolinguists state that there are five levels of Arabic used in Egypt. This was initiated by Badawi (1973) who posited these five levels in his socio-linguistic analysis of contemporary Arabic in Egypt:

- (a) fuShā al-turaaθ 'Classical Arabic of the heritage',
- (b) fuShā al-9aSr 'Contemporary Classical Arabic',
- (c) 9aamiyyat al-muθaqqafiin 'Colloquial of the educated',
- (d) 9aamiyyat al-mutanawwiriin 'Colloquial of the enlightened' and
- (e) 9aamiyyat al-ʔummiyyiin 'Colloquial of the illiterate'.

In his English paper (1985: 16), Badawi used different terms: (a) Classical Arabic, (b) Modern Standard Arabic, (c) Educated Spoken Arabic, (d) Semi-literate Spoken Arabic and (e) Illiterate Spoken Arabic.

In this book, I will recognize a division of these five levels into two levels because, as Parkinson (1981: 24-5) comments, in Badawi's schema there would be a relatively sharp break between Standard and Colloquial Arabic:

MSA and the Colloquials do share a large proportion of their lexicon; there are, however, numerous very common markers that immediately let the reader/hearer know which variety is being used. These include certain verbal prefixes, the negative construction, the demonstrative construction and a lot of the most common words. ... With them, there is a sharp break between MSA and Colloquial with very little mixing.

In other words, there is a big difference between the Standard levels, on the one hand, and the Colloquial levels, on the other, particularly in the morphological domain. This will be detailed in Chapters Two through Five.

The existence of two varieties of the same language in one society is known in the linguistic literature as 'diglossia'. This term has been defined by Ferguson (1972: 242) as:

a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

In diglossic situations, the two varieties are sometimes called "high" and "low" in terms of formality (Crystal 1985: 93). In our case, SA is the high variety and EA is the low one. Evidently, the members of diglossic communities are aware that their varieties or languages are associated with particular domains. Thus, SA, on the one hand, is restricted to the formal domain; it is taught at school and used in formal settings. It is also the language of all printed materials such as literary books, schoolbooks, newspapers, government publications and the like. Consequently, it has greater social prestige. EA, on the other hand, is confined to the informal domain; it is utilized by every member of the community in Cairo as the major vehicle of communication at home, in the market place, etc.

0.3. Purpose & Procedures of the Research:

As will be evident from the survey of literature in (1.5), most researches, until now, have considered only certain aspects of Standard Arabic or Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. Moreover, there is a great emphasis on Arabic syntax in modern linguistic studies at the expense of phonology and morphology; which has led Elgibali (1996: 10) to say:

A cursory review of current research reveals that syntax has steadfastly and rapidly become the most dominant single constituent of formal work in Arabic linguistics in general. The situation is such that one hardly ever hears of ample or systematic work being done involving other major elements of linguistic analysis such as semantics, morphology, or phonology.

The present book, in embracing both the Standard and Egyptian varieties of the language, will attempt to elucidate their basic natural relationship and to explain their differences in terms of morphological comparison. Hence, this book aims to provide a comparative account of the morphological aspects of SA and EA. It will focus on the similarities and differences of the two varieties of Arabic in relation to their verbal, nominal, adjectival, and closed-list class morphology.

So, the objective is to fill in a gap in Arabic studies, which has not been adequately covered in previous works. Hopefully, there will be also some pedagogical applications. This book is of great importance for language teaching, since it serves as a guide for teachers of Arabic to native and non-naive speakers. It can be used by course-designers for a new approach to Arabic grammar based on modern linguistics. It can also be helpful to teachers of foreign languages, particularly English, to determine the degree of difficulty, due to Arabic interference, encountered by Arab students when they are introduced to the basic morphological phenomena of the foreign language(s). The book may also be beneficial for non-native speakers when they start to learn Arabic, for it provides them with an understanding of the morphological aspects of two varieties of the language.

Moreover, this book offers material for contrastive and comparative studies on Arabic. It is also significant for studies on language problems related to diglossia and computer programs on the Arabic language. Needless to say that this book will be useful to linguists working

on universal grammar who do not confine themselves to one language but try to find common properties of all languages in the world.

This book is based on the comparative description of SA and EA. It will not be confined to any particular school of thought, or to any particular model proposed by a given school. Although, at some points, resort will be made to the theory of "Prosodic Morphology" developed by McCarthy & Prince (1986, 1988), yet there will be no exclusive dependence on this theory. A brief sketch on this theory is provided in (1.6). Thus, the framework adopted in the book is chiefly a descriptive one, taking SA as the basis of description. The Standard feature will be described first and the Colloquial counterpart will be shown afterwards. I will concentrate on the morphological aspects because the morphological component in Arabic overshadows other components in a way that makes it quite fair to give it special consideration.

The Standard variety dealt with in this book is the language taught in the Arabic language courses at Egyptian schools and adopted in the literary pages of Egyptian newspapers. Since this conventional definition of SA designates such sources, the data employed for the research is taken from the grammar books used at schools as well as from the literary pages of *Al-Ahram* newspaper.

On the other hand, the Colloquial variety described in this book represents the dialect spoken in Cairo, the most prestigious dialect in Egypt. Apart from my familiarity with this dialect, being myself a resident of Cairo for a number of years, several informants from Cairo and Egyptian Colloquial texts (both written and spoken) are intensively consulted. In addition, I had the opportunity to dig into the depths of this dialect by participating in the compilation of the *LDC CallHome Egyptian Arabic Lexicon*, published as Gadalla et al. (1998) by the Linguistic Data Consortium of the University of Pennsylvania, USA. This lexicon represents the first electronic pronunciation dictionary of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, Cairene Dialect. It consists of 54,375 words. It contains tab-separated information fields including orthographic representation in both romanized and Arabic scripts, morphological structure, pronunciation, stress, source and frequency information for each word. The lexical entries found in the lexicon come primarily from the transcripts of 100 ten-minute segments from 200 telephone calls initiated from the USA and Canada and made to people in Cairo.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first is an introductory chapter which sets the scene for the whole work. It presents a phonological summary of the consonant and vowel systems of the two varieties as well as their stress and syllable structure. Then, it analyses the important phonological alternations involved in the formation of surface forms. Moreover, it offers a comparison of the basic morphological and morphosyntactic features of the two varieties. At the end, it surveys the previous literature on the morphology of both varieties and explains the theory of Prosodic Morphology.

Chapter Two deals with the verbal morphology component. It presents a comparison between the two varieties in reference to the triradical and quadriradical forms of verbs and the types of verb roots. In addition, the inflection of verbs for aspect/mood and voice will be contrasted in the two varieties. Subjectival and objectival affixes are then illustrated. Verb derivation and transitivity will be dealt with at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Three is related to the nominal morphology component. It handles the primary nominal stems and investigates the nouns derived from verbs: verbal nouns, nouns of place and time and nouns of instrument. It involves a comparison between SA and the Colloquial dialect spoken in Cairo in relation to the inflection of nouns for case, gender, and number as well as a treatment of the suffixation of nouns.

The adjectival morphology component, in Chapter Four, provides a comparison between SA and EA concerning the adjectival stems. Then, the degrees of adjectives: positive, comparative and superlative, and the inflection of adjectives for case, gender and number are discussed. In addition, the derivation of participial forms and relational adjectives will be compared in the two varieties.

Finally, the closed-list class morphology component, in Chapter Five, is concerned with pronouns and prepositions in the two varieties. Moreover, adverbs as well as interrogative and responsive particles in both of them will be compared. Negative and possessive particles will also be dealt with in this chapter.

0.4. List of Symbols & Abbreviations:

C	Consonant	SA	Standard Arabic
V	Vowel	EA	Egyptian Arabic
v	Epenthetic Vowel	sg	singular
G	Glide	du	dual
Adj	Adjective	pl	plural
N	Noun	pf	perfective
Part	Participle	impf	imperfective
Pro	Pronoun	def	definite
1	First Person	fut	future
2	Second Person	Nom	Nominative
3	Third Person	Acc	Accusative
intr	intransitive	Gen	Genitive
trans	transitive	indic	indicative
caus	causative	subj	subjunctive
inch	inchoative	juss	jussive
hi	high vowel	imper	imperative
lo	low vowel	prog	progressive
rd	round vowel	cons	consonantal
son	sonorant	cor	coronal
obstr	obstruent	hum	human
emph	emphatic	m, masc	masculine
non-emph	non-emphatic	f, fem	feminine
>	has the EA equivalent		
<	has the SA equivalent		
→	is changed into or becomes		
*	ungrammatical word or structure		
/ /	phonemic transcription		
[]	morphological forms, elements or transcription		
()	elements found on the surface only, or in SA only		
#	word boundary		
-	morpheme boundary		
σ	syllable		
—	phonological environment		
F-9-L	First, Second and Third consonants of the root, i.e. = C ₁ , C ₂ and C ₃ , respectively		
A → B / Y — Z	A slash-dash notation in which, for instance, A becomes B after Y and before Z.		

Chapter One Phonological & Morphological Basics

1.0. Introduction:

This chapter gives a phonological outline of Standard Arabic (SA) and Egyptian Arabic (EA) and deals with some phonological alternations in both of them (1.1 and 1.2). It handles two of the basic morphological features in Arabic, namely word classification and word formation (1.3). In addition, it presents an analysis of two important morphosyntactic phenomena in Arabic, namely the use of pausal forms and nunation (1.4). It offers a survey of the previous studies on the subject (1.5). Finally, it gives a brief idea about the theory of prosodic morphology (1.6).

1.1. Phonological Preliminaries:

Understanding the morphology of Arabic, or any other language, cannot be accomplished without an understanding of its phonology. So, in this section the phonological preliminaries of the two varieties under analysis are to be discussed. The consonantal systems of the two varieties are to be compared in (1.1.1). Their vocalic systems are to be contrasted in (1.1.2). The syllable structure and the stress patterns in the two varieties are to be contrasted in (1.1.3).

1.1.1. Consonant Systems:

The orthographic alphabet of SA includes twenty-eight letters which represent twenty-eight consonants, though three of them are also used as vowels (See 1.1.2). EA, on the other hand, has no more than twenty-six of these consonants. The consonants of both varieties are represented in Table (1):

Since the SA interdentalals /θ/ and /ð/ are non-existent in EA, they are replaced in some words by the corresponding dental stops /t/ and /d/, respectively, and in other words by the corresponding alveolar fricatives /s/ and /z/, respectively:

<u>SA</u>	<u>EA</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
θaman(-un)	taman	price
ðahab(-un)	dahab	gold
θaabit(-un)	saabit	steady
ðakiyy(-un)	zaki	intelligent