Linguistics in the Gulf-3

The Department of English Literature and Linguistics in the College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University is pleased to announce its third conference on “Linguistics in the Gulf” to be held on March 6-7, 2011.

- The Conference aims to achieve the following objectives
- Provide a common platform for scholars who are engaged in linguistic research in the region
- Promote the study of language in the region
- Emphasize the importance of linguistic research and of linguistics as a scientific field
- Address new problematics facing researchers in the linguistics of the region while contextualizing the discussion within broader historical and theoretical perspectives
- Bring researchers from the region and abroad to a productive exchange of ideas, debates and reflections on current and future developments in the science of language and in their respective areas of interest and scholarship

Contact Us

Michael Grosvald, PhD
lingingulf@qu.edu.qa

Mailing Address
Department of English Literature and Linguistics
College of Arts and Sciences
Qatar University
P.O. Box 2713, Doha,
State of Qatar

Organizing Committee

Moneera Al-Ghadeer (Chair)
Darwish Al-Emadi
Haifa Al-Buainain
Eiman Mustafawi
Eirini Theodoropoulou
Kimary Shahin
Rizwan Ahmad
Iglal Ahmed
Variation on the same Theme: Comparative Syntax of Negation in Arabic Varieties

A cursory study of the realization of sentential negation in Arabic varieties reveals that it differs according to region and within the same region. However, based on a systematic study of their syntax we will demonstrate that they are subject to the same principles, which in turns confirms the hypothesis that the varieties share the same core syntax. We will use data from the varieties spoken in the Maghreb, Levant, and Gulf. In some varieties, such as those spoken in the Maghreb, there are two main ways of expressing sentential negation, by the discontinuous particles ma-š or the particle maš(i). On the other hand, some Gulf dialects have two main negative particles, maa and muu. However, though the negative particles in the two varieties differ, they seem to have the same syntactic distribution. Thus, Moroccan maši and Kuwaiti muu are usually found in the context of nominal and adjectival predicates. By contrast, the Moroccan discontinuous ma-š, and Kuwaiti maa are found in the context of verbal, possessive and existential heads. We will argue that this is not due to the syntax of negation per se but rather to the temporal syntax of the Arabic clause (Aoun et al. 2010), which is clearly uniform across varieties, including Standard Arabic. Consider next the merger of pronouns and negation. Across varieties, a pronoun can be combined with a negative (m anni, ma-huwa-š, etc.) to form a negative copula in the sense of Eid 1983). The distribution of this negative complex is restricted to non-verbal contexts (with nominal, participial, prepositional, and adjectival predicates). Again this follows from the syntax of clause structure: In verbal contexts, we will argue, the negative complex would disrupt the relation between tense and the clause, which is not the case in verbless sentences. In fact, it is this similarity in the clausal syntax that has allowed the Arabic varieties, including Classical Arabic, to evolve similar patterns of negative copulas. Thus, in Classical Arabic we have laysa which is historically a combination of the negative laa and a pronominal enclitic. This is exactly how the negative muu in the Gulf varieties evolved and what we are witnessing in other varieties of Arabic. In other words, because all the Arabic varieties share the same underlying syntax, they have been reproducing similar patterns. This conclusion has implications for issues of variation and the relations between the Arabic varieties.

Research on the Structure of Arabic: Beyond Classical Distributional Data

A leading assumption in generative linguistics is that language is an abstract object that is ‘internal’ to its speakers and about which they have intuitions. By virtue of their linguistic knowledge, speakers can make judgments on among other things the acceptability or unacceptability of a sequence of sounds (e.g., a complex onset, a syllable, a word, or a sentence) in their language. Armed with these intuitions, linguists observe the distribution and patterns of linguistic units (e.g., features, sounds, morphemes, words, phrases, etc…) to make generalizations and build theories of language. While it has been the practice of theoretical linguists to rely to a large extent on distributional data, in addition to considerations such as economy and simplicity, in building their theory(ies) of language, such data have often proven insufficient for enough substantive progress to be made. I briefly discuss the limitations of distributional data in some areas of research on Arabic morphology and argue that behavioral and developmental data do not only make up for those limitations but they also are another, and probably more revealing, type of distributional data which must be
accounted for. Recent research in Arabic has shown that brain-damaged adult (Prunet et al. 2000; Idrissi et al.
2008; Idrissi et al. 2010; Boudelaa et al. 2011) and neurologically intact adult and child speech data (Idrissi et
al. 2009) can reveal dissociations which provide more insight than ‘classical’ distributional data and which are,
theory-wise, equally relevant. Also, with the advent of sophisticated brain-imaging technologies, new ways to
elucidate the mysteries of Arabic linguistic structure become available. The potential of research using
techniques such as Electroencephalography (Boudelaa et al. 2010) and Magnetoencephalography to investigate
Arabic word structure will also be discussed. Finally, a parallel is drawn between the dissociations observed in
deviant and normal adult or child language or in brain responses to linguistic stimuli, on the one hand, and the
regularities observed in (spoken or written) language data sets through standard methods of linguistic inquiry,
on the other.

Papers Submission

We invite contributions in any area of research on the language scene in the Gulf region including, but not
limited to:

1. Formal aspects of the Gulf spoken dialects (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics)
2. Contact of the native Arabic dialects with other languages in the region
3. Linguistic variation Linguistic change Standardization and linguistic leveling language planning and language
policies
4. Linguistic attitudes relation to Standard Arabic Language and the mass media
5. Discourse analysis of Arabic literary and non-literary texts
7. Forensic linguistics in Arabic context
8. Computational linguistics and Arabic data processing
9. Neurolinguistics and bilingual language processing

The conference will also host two prominent keynote speakers. There will be a special session on new trends in
linguistics which will not be limited to Arabic.

After the first two successful rounds of this conference, held in 2007 and 2009, this third event aims to bring
together more researchers and experts investigating a wide range of topics related to the study of language in the
Gulf region.

Submission of Abstracts

Abstracts (of 400 words max) should be submitted electronically as an attachment (in rich text format, or pdf
especially if especial characters are used). Please complete the participation form and send it with your abstract
to the chair of the Conference Organizing Committee: Dr. Moneera Al-Ghadeer: malghadeer@qu.edu.qa

Deadline for abstracts: November 20, 2010. Receipt of abstracts will be acknowledged as soon as possible.
Notification of acceptance will be sent by the beginning of January 2011.
Program

Linguistics in the Gulf III

March 6-7, 2011

Conference Program

First Day: Sunday, March 6, 2011

Venue: Conference Hall/Administration Building

9:00 AM. Welcome:
Moneera Al- Ghadeer (Chair of Department of English Literature & Linguistics, Qatar University)

9:10 AM. Opening Remarks:
Kassim Shaaban (Dean of College of Arts & Sciences, Qatar University)

9:30-10:15 AM. Keynote Address:
Elabbas Benmamoun (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
Variation on the same Theme: Comparative Syntax of Negation in Arabic Varieties
Introduced by Eiman Mustafawi

10:15-10:30 AM. Coffee Break

10:30 AM-12:30 PM. First Session
Chair: Kassim Shaaban (Qatar University)

1. Strategies of Wh-questions in Jibbali
   Murtadha J. Bakir (Dhofar University)

2. (Optionally) Verbless Constructions in Gulf Arabic Dialects
   Maris Camilleri (University of Surrey)
   Co-author: Duha Alaskar (Kuwait University)

3. Vulnerable Features of Heritage Arabic Speech
   Abdulkafi Albirini (Utah State University)
   Co-author: Elabbas Benmamoun (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

12:30-1:45 PM. Lunch Break

2:00-4:00 PM. Second Session
Chair: Murtadha J. Bakir (Dhofar University)
1. A Study of the Phonological Structure and Representation of First Words in Arabic
2. The Phonetic Realization of Punctuation Marks In Arabic: Psycho – Acoustic Study
Mervat Fashal (University of Alexandria)
Co-author: Eiman Qasem (University of Alexandria)

3. Sociolinguistic Variation in Gulf Pidgin Arabic
Mohammad Al-Moaily (Newcastle University)

Manal Ismail (King Saud University)

7:00 PM. Dinner at the Pearl

Second Day: Monday, 7th March
Venue: Conference Hall/Administration Building

9:00-9:45 AM. Keynote Address:
Ali Idrissi (United Arab Emirates University and the University of Montreal)
Research on the Structure of Arabic: Beyond Classical Distributional Data
Introduced by Darwish Al-Emadi

9:45-10:00 AM. Coffee Break

10:00 AM-12:00 PM. Third Session
Chair: Darwish Al-Emadi (Qatar University)
1. Baseline Data for Arabic Acquisition with Clinical Applications: Collecting Qatari Data
   Haifa Al-Buainain (Qatar University)
   Co-authors: Kimary Shahin (Qatar University)
   Ranya Morsi (Qatar University)
   Ghada Khattab (Newcastle University)
   Feda Al-Tamimi (Jordan University of Science and Technology)

2. Semantic Forensics: Building an Arabic Semantic Ontology of Terrorism
   Inas Youssef (Ain Shams University)

3. The Linguistic Impairment and its Relation to the Brain :a Neuro-Linguistic Study on Some Aphasic People in Yemen
   Hasan Jaashan (Sanaa University)

4. Verbal Inflections in the Acquisition of Kuwaiti Arabic and Hijazi Arabic: A Comparative Study
   Khawla Aljenaie (Kuwait University)
   Co-author: Fatima Basaffar (King Abdulaziz University)

12:00-1:15 PM. Lunch Break
1:30-3:30 PM. Fourth Session
Chair: G. Richard Tucker (Carnegie-Mellon University)

1. Using Web Mining Techniques to Build a Multi-Dialect Lexicon of Arabic
   Rania Al-Sabbagh (University of Illinois)
   Co-authors: Elabbas Benamoun (University of Illinois)
               Roxana Girju (University of Illinois)
               Mark Hasgawa-Johnson (University of Illinois)
               Rehab Duwairi (Qatar University)

2. Rethinking Language Awareness – A (Meta)pragmatic Perspective
   Peter Grundy (Durham University)

3. Language as Evidence: Cases on Forensic Authorship Attribution
   Rahma Al-Busafi (Colleges of Applied Sciences, Oman)

4. Idioms of Body Parts in Hijazi Dialect of Arabic: A Study Based on Cognitive Semantics
   Najah Ali Al-Jahdali (King Abdulaziz University)