International Journal of Arabic Linguistics

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MORPHOLOGICAL TRUNCATION: THE CASE OF TRUNCATED PERSON NAMES IN FAIFI ARABIC

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the structure of truncated person names in Faifi Arabic (FA), an isolated dialect of Arabic spoken in mountain areas called Faifa in the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula. FA exhibits word-shortening tactics that are slightly different from those found in other languages. Yet, they conform to Minimal-Word requirements universal principles, which are believed to govern truncation processes in all languages. This paper argues that a word in FA must be at least two moras ($\mu.\mu$) to satisfy the minimum requirement. Hence, when truncation applies, speakers extract only two moras from the left edge of the source name (whether one name or compound of names) and use the extracted segments as the truncated name, e.g., [si.lay.maːn] 'person name'→[si.la] 'vocative from Silayman'. The paper discusses four different patterns of truncation processes found in FA. The paper answers the following questions: What part of a name is usually cut-off? What part of a name must remain after shortening? And how do the truncation patterns in FA fit with the universal patterns observed in most languages?

Keywords

Truncation; Arabic; Faifi Arabic; morphology; names; compound names

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