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REVIEW

THE EPENTHETIC VOWEL QUALITY IN DAGBANI LOANS: A FEATURE GEOMETRY ACCOUNT

Kadir Fuseini*

Abstract: This paper explores the epenthetic vowel quality in Dagbani loanwords adapted from English and Arabic within the Feature Geometry (FG) model of Clements & Hume (1995). The findings reveal that vowel epenthesis plays a pivotal role as a syllable repair strategy in Dagbani. Three distinct strategies, namely vowel harmony, local/consonantal assimilation, and default vowel epenthesis, were identified to account for the quality of epenthetic vowels in Dagbani loanwords. Default vowel insertion emerged as the primary strategy, with the insertion of the central high vowel /ɨ/ and the front high vowel /i/. Vowel harmony was employed when the intervening consonant was a liquid or dorsal, occurring in word-initial, word-medial, and word-final positions. Conversely, the consonantal assimilation strategy was applied primarily in word-final position. In the context of vowel harmony, only labial features were observed to harmonize, while the consonantal assimilation strategy entailed the spreading of both coronal (palato-alveolar) and labial features. Finally, a segmental representation is provided of the Dagbani place feature in borrowed words, in which both left-to-right and right-to-left feature spreading are attested

Keywords: epenthesis, vowel harmony, local assimilation, default epenthesis

1. Introduction

Dagbani has substantially borrowed from most languages, particularly English and other languages. As a result, these words undergo multiple repair processes such as vowel epenthesis and consonant deletion to conform to Dagbani phonotactics to become a permanent part of her vocabulary. Scholars such as Uffmann (2006) and Kenstowicz (2007) emphasize the fact that vowel epenthesis is the general strategy that can be used to cope with restricted syllable formations and resist consonant deletion. However, Yip (1987) indicates that target phonemes in the listener's mind influence the likelihood of consonant deletion. He points out that when adapting foreign words, the decision between vowel epenthesis and consonant deletion depends on the class and situation in which a phoneme occurs in a syllable structure. These patterns in loanword processing suggest that a salient segment will be maintained while a non-salient segment will be deleted (Bamisaye & Ojo 2015). The idea of loanword adaptation or nativization at the phonological level is governed by syllable well-formedness in the recipient language – when a word is loaned from one language to another, in most cases it violates some constraints of syllable wellformedness (Mwita 2009). Kenstowicz (2007) claims that loanwords are no longer just a minor phonological curiosity or nuisance and merit the serious attention of theoretical research. According to Davis (1993: 1), "loanwords are of interest to phonologists for at least two reasons". The fundamental reason loanwords are of concern to phonologists is due to how loanwords are produced and perceived in the recipient language, and the reason for the change in pronunciation is frequently because the borrowed word may have particular segments that are absent from the language that is receiving the loanword.

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2. Vowel epenthesis

As shown by Uffmann (2006), vowel epenthesis is one of the major repair strategies in loanword adaptation to satisfy constraints on phonotactics and syllable structure in the borrowing language. Hall (2011: 1576) also points out that "the function of the epenthetic vowel is to repair an input that does not match the structure of a language or to allow the syllabification of stray consonants". The phonotactic of a language determines the patterns of phonological elements which should be tolerated or not tolerated. The tolerated ones are allowed to function while structures that are not tolerated need to be repaired before they can be used in the language. In accounting for loanword epenthesis in Bangali loanwords, Karim (2009) claims that, the language disallows initial consonant clusters and many word-initial consonant clusters, and that loanwords are simplified according to these phonotactic. The typology of English source words adapted in a variety of languages is presented in Uffmann (2006), where the illicit structures are repaired to conform to the receiving languages' phonotactics.

(1) Epenthetic vowels in loanwords

Yoruba	k´[ɪ]la´a`s[**i**]	'class'
Kikuyu	ng[**i**]rath[i]	'glass'
Japanese	s[**ɯ**]toraik[ɯ]	'strike'
Samoan	s[**i**]kaut[i]	'scout'
Fijian	s[**i**]piinij[i]	'spinach'

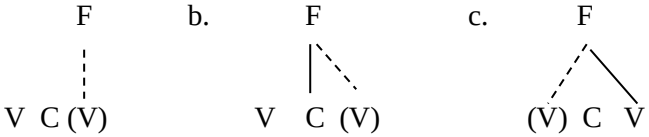
(Uffmann 2006: 1080)

The illicit structures in English source words in the above data are repaired through vowel epenthesis. Both consonant clusters and syllabic coda in the loanwords are banned from surfacing in the phonotactics of the recipient languages.

However, while the motivation behind the vowel epenthesis in loanwords is explicitly understood as a syllable structure reason, the question that arises among the loanwords phonologies has to do with the quality of the epenthetic vowel, that is which vowel is then inserted? Languages behave differently regarding the vowels they epenthesized, even when they possess the same vowel system (Alelaiwi 2014). For instance, the back high vowel [ɯ] is usually inserted in Japanese words (Shinohara 1997, Katayama 1998). While the front high [i] is also perceived as a fixed/default quality in some languages, including that of Haya (Byarushengo 1976), Yoruba (Pulleyblank 1988) and Fijian (Kenstowicz 2007. Hall (2011: 1581) also argues that the quality of an epenthetic vowel may be influenced in one of two ways: "it is either a fixed/default quality (which may, of course, be subject to normal allophonic variation according to the language's phonology), or else the quality is determined by some part of the phonological context". Similar observations were made by Uffmann (2004, 2006), Rose & Demuth (2006) and Adomako (2008) where they identified default vowel insertion, consonantal assimilation, and harmonic assimilation as the factors that determine epenthetic vowel quality in the loanwords repair process. Consequently, three types of vowel epenthesis are realized in loanwords; that is, vowel copying epenthesis, consonantal assimilation, and fixed or default or predictable vowel epenthesis. Uffmann (2006) proposed three epenthetic vowel strategies in loanwords, as shown below:

(2) Epenthesis strategies: autosegmental representation[1].

a. b. c.



a. insertion of a default (feature insertion)
b. spreading of feature from neighboring consonant
c. vowel harmony (spreading of vocalic feature)

(Uffman 2006:1095)

The epenthetic vowel in (2) is inserted in three different ways, (2a) a new feature is usually inserted, which neither bears the place feature of the adjacent consonant nor the neighboring vowel. For (2b) the place feature specifies for the adjacent consonant spreads onto the epenthetic vowel slot. In (2c) the preceding vowel shares its place feature with the epenthetic vowel site.

The fixed or default inserted vowel has been looked at differently "depending on the researcher's theoretical affiliation" (Uffman 2006: 1080). On phonetics grounds, the default vowel has been perceived as "the unmarked or perceptually least salient vowel" (Repetti 2012: 168). The default vowel epenthesis has received remarkable attention in most phonologically-oriented approaches, including the work of Pulleyblank (1988), Abaglo & Archangeli (1989), Rose & Demuth (2006) and among others which suggests that the default vowel insertion is underspecified. The phonological studies of default epenthetic are also attributed to segmental markedness (Lombardi 2002, as cited in Uffmann 2006). This made the default epenthetic vowel difficult to completely account for the behavior of epenthetic vowels; thus, incorporating the use of other epenthetic strategies like vowel harmony and place spreading of the neighbouring sound (Uffmann 2006).

3. Methodology

Data was collected from two sources: primary and secondary. The primary data was obtained through direct interaction with the participants. The secondary data was obtained from English-Dagbani dictionary (Mahama 2010), the Dagbani-English dictionary (Mahama 2015), phonological and morphological adaptation of Dagbani loanwords (Iddrisu 2020).

Data collection for this study spanned from July to September 2022. The initial phase involved conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in four northern region towns: Tamale, Yendi, Mion, and Savulugu. In Tamale, two FGDs were held at Tamale College of Education, each with ten participants grouped into two sets of five. These discussions revolved around specific topics and lasted 1.5 to 2 hours. The conversations were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

[1] The three strategies can be used to account for epenthetic vowel quality in loanwords. Certain languages may vary or impose some restrictions on how the quality of the epenthetic is determined, especially for languages that possess unmarked vowels like /ɨ/, /ə/, /ɯ/, etc. to which Dagbani is no exception.

Similarly, in Yendi, a focus group discussion was conducted at the community center, involving ten participants. In the Mion and Savulugu districts, five participants from each location were selected, and FGDs were held at Sang Islamic Junior High School and Sevulugu Senior High School, respectively.

Furthermore, additional data was drawn from various sources, including the English-Dagbani dictionary (Mahama 2010), Dagbani-English dictionary (Mahama 2015), and the phonological and morphological adaptation of Dagbani loanwords (Iddrisu 2020). Numerous words were gathered during this period, resulting in 102 loanwords from the English-Dagbani and Dagbani-English dictionaries and 605 words derived from the phonological and morphological adaptation of Dagbani loanwords, totaling 707 loanwords from these sources.

4. Literature review

Previous studies on vowel quality argue that three strategies determine the quality of the epenthetic vowel in loanwords, (Uffmann 2006, Rose & Demuth 2006, Adomako 2008, Balan 2015). Uffmann notes that different phonological processes influence the epenthetic vowel quality in loanwords, namely, vowel harmony and local assimilation to the proceeding consonant. He adds that default vowel epenthesis will determine the epenthetic vowel quality if both vowel harmony and consonantal assimilation fail to spread its place feature onto the epenthetic vowel site. He states that, languages behave differently in terms of applying these strategies, and that some generalization could also be made possible to allow some common patterns to account for most languages. In discussing epenthetic vowels in Shona loanwords, Uffmann argues that the front high vowel [i] is frequently inserted followed by the back high vowel [u]. He opines that the front high vowel **[**i**]** is inserted when the proceeding consonant is coronal, whereas the back high vowel **[**u**] i**s usually after a labial consonant and after dorsal consonant **[**i**]** is preferred as a default. He postulates that liquids are not actively involved in predicting the quality of the epenthetic vowel, therefore a whole range of vowels may occur after liquids. He argues further that there are some cases where the front vowel **[**i] is preferred as an epenthetic vowel even when the adjacent consonant is labial, i.e. when the preceding vowel is [**i]** and the labial consonant is obstruent /p, b, f, v/ – in such case vowel harmony will help to determine the epenthetic vowel quality over local/ consonantal assimilation. However, when the labial consonant is sonorant, like [m], the back/round vowel [u] is usually preferred in the epenthetic vowel site. Conversely, Uffmann postulates that [u**]** is also seen to be preferred in some environments when the intervening consonant is a stop preceding [u]. He states that the front high [i] is highly inserted, and it may be due to its default status in Shona.

In Sranan, Uffman noted that vowel harmony is the best predictor of the quality of the epenthetic vowel, unlike Shona where the consonantal assimilation strategy dominates the vowel harmony strategy. He maintains that the front vowel [i] is always inserted when the neighbouring vowel is the front vowel [i] or [e] whereas the back vowel [u] is inserted after a back vowel [u] or [o] this is exemplified below:

(3) Epenthesis in Sranan

a.	pres[i] ‘place’	berg[i] ‘hill
b.	lont[u] ‘round’	wort[u] ‘word’
c.	luk[u] ‘look’	ud[u] ‘wood’
d.	big[i] ‘big’	srib[i] ‘sleep’

(Uffmann 2006: 1089)

As seen in (3a-d) the place feature of the consonant does not spread onto the epenthetic vowel but rather the preceding vowels which harmonized its place feature onto the epenthetic site. Uffman argues that after the central low **[**a**]**, vowel harmony does not determine the epenthetic vowel quality as illustrated in **(**4) below.

(4) Epenthesis after [a] in Sranan

a.	laf[u] ‘laugh’	grab[u] ‘grab’
b.	at[i] ‘hot’	grass[i] ‘glass, grass’
c.	wak[a] ‘walk’	tak[i] ‘talk’
d.	kar[i] ‘call’	al[a] ‘all’

(Uffmann 2006: 1090)

In such cases, consonantal assimilation applies to determine the epenthetic vowel quality, but it has been realized that the dorsal and liquids do not participate in the assimilatory process. Uffmann argues that the general epenthetic vowel strategy for Shona is consonantal assimilation, and this language resorts to vowel harmony if consonantal assimilation fails to account for the epenthetic vowel quality. If both strategies fail then, the default insertion of [i] will be the last resort. Unlike Shona, where the general strategy is consonantal assimilation, in Sranan the general epenthetic strategy is vowel harmony; consonantal assimilation will only be applied if vowel harmony fails to account for the quality of the epenthetic vowel, and the last resort is the default insertion of [i].

Uffmann (2006) also argues that a similar situation is found in Samoan. He writes that the front vowels [i] and [e] harmonize irrespective of the preceding consonant as in (5a-b) while the back vowels never harmonize. He maintains that, when the neighboring vowel is a non-front vowel, the place feature of the adjacent consonant or the default vowel insertion will be observed as a determinant of the epenthetic vowel quality.

(5) Epenthetic vowels in Samoan

a.	sip[i]	‘jeep’	tik[i]	‘teak’
b.	pin[e]	‘pin’	kalen[i]	‘gallon’
c.	satan[e]	‘satan’	pelican[a]	‘pelican
d.	tulup[i]	‘tulip’	pam[a]	‘palm’
e.	pam[u]	‘pump,	mop[u]	‘mop’
f.	sos[i]	‘sauce’	letus[i]	‘lettuce’
g.	falelog[i]	‘furlong’	siok[a]	‘chalk’

(Uffmann 2006: 1093)

As seen in (5), vowel harmony as an epenthetic strategy in Samoan is only possible when the neighboring vowel is a front vowel otherwise default or consonantal strategy will be applied. The default vowel insertion seems to dominate both consonantal and harmonic epenthetic strategies as it can apply after coronal, labial and dorsal consonants. Thus, the general epenthetic strategy in Samoan is default vowel insertion, contrary to what was observed in Shona and Sranan which have its general epenthetic strategy as consonantal and harmonic strategy respectively.

Rose & Demuth (2006) also examine the vowel epenthesis in loanwords adaptation in Sesotho. They argue that the direction and quality of the epenthetic vowel are easily predictable. They posit that the phonological processes play a crucial role in determining the strategy of the epenthetic vowel. They write that local assimilation helps to determine the epenthetic vowel quality at word-initial positions, which copies progressively onto the epenthetic vowel environment. Their findings suggest that both labial and coronal consonants spread their place features onto the epenthetic slot over the dorsal place feature which does not necessarily spread. However, they state that vowel harmony applies as an additional strategy from right-to-left when dorsal(velar) fails to spread features to the epenthetic site. This is similar to Shona which uses vowel harmony as a second resort when local assimilation fails to account for the quality of the epenthetic vowel. They argue that the default insertion of [ɑ] is the last resort when consonantal assimilation and vowel harmony fail to determine the epenthetic vowel quality.

Bălan (2015) examines vowel epenthesis in Japanese loanwords. Her findings suggest that vowel harmony, local assimilation and default vowel epenthesis can account for the epenthetic vowel quality in Japanese loanwords. She demonstrated that vowel harmony accounts for the epenthetic vowel quality when the neighboring vowel is a front vowel [i] and the intervening consonant is dorsal such as [k]. Bălan also states that local assimilation can predict the epenthetic vowel quality when the adjacent consonant is palatalized coronals such as [ʃ], [ʧ] and [ʤ], which triggers the insertion of a front high vowel [i]. She postulates that the default insertion of the placeless vowel [ɯ] is the dominant epenthetic strategy over local assimilation and vowel harmony strategies in Japanese loanwords, as well as the frequently inserted vowel to repair illicit structures in Japanese loans. She shows that the placeless vowel [ɯ] can be inserted after all consonants.

In his study of epenthetic vowels in Swahili loanwords, Harvey (2018) writes that consonantal assimilation, vowel harmony and default vowel insertion help to predict the inserted vowel quality in Swahili loanwords. He states that the place feature of the adjacent consonant invariably spreads onto the epenthetic vowel slot at word-final positions. He posits that the front vowel [i] is inserted after the coronal consonant, whereas [u] and [a] are inserted after labial and pharyngeal consonants respectively. He demonstrates that dorsal consonants do not spread their place feature, and that triggers the default insertion of the front high [i]. He further claims that vowel harmony also helps to determine the epenthetic quality at word-medial positions, that, [u] is inserted when the neighboring vowel is back/round, whereas [i] and [a] are inserted after the front and low vowels respectively.

Adomako (2008) claims that the place feature of the adjacent consonant usually helps to determine the epenthetic vowel quality in Akan loanwords. He posits that when the second consonant within the initial cluster is labial, a round/labial vowel is inserted into the epenthetic slot, as exemplified in (6):

(6) Consonantal features spreading onto the epenthetic vowel in Akan loanwords

	English	Akan	Gloss
a.	/spiːd/	s[u]piːdi	'speed'
b.	/sməʊk/	s[u]moku	'smoke'
c.	/speə/	s[ʊ]pɛː	'spare'
d.	/spreɪ/	s[u]pre	'spray'
e.	/spɛktəklz/	s[ʊ]pɛːsɪ	'spectacles'

(Adomako 2008)

In (6), the place feature of the adjacent consonant plays a crucial role in determining the quality of the epenthetic vowel. The adjacent consonant possesses a labial place feature, which is typically copied from right-to-left onto the place of the epenthetic vowel. Similar observations were reported by Rose & Demuth (2006) in their study of Sesotho. However, their findings in Sesotho loanwords revealed that the direction of place feature copying (consonantal place) is left-to-right (progressively), which contrasts with the Akan pattern, where the copying usually occurs regressively onto the epenthetic site. Rose & Demuth (2006) further show that labial and coronal consonants have been perceived to spread over the dorsal. They indicate that labials such as /b/ or /p/ triggers the insertion of a round vowel while coronal consonants like /t/ or /d/ also trigger the insertion of a front vowel.

5. Theoretical framework

The present study adopts the Feature Geometry model of Clements & Hume (1995). Feature Geometry is a non-linear phonological representation of segmental features in structure hierarchy form. In phonological interpretation, feature geometry identifies that some groups of features frequently pattern together. As a result, feature geometry explicitly organizes sets of features under nodes, such that features that frequently pattern together are said to belong to a specific parent node. For instance, there is a laryngeal node that dominates the features that have to do with the larynx, i.e. spread glottis, constricted glottis, and voicing. Another node, which is a place node, dominates place features like labial, coronal and dorsal. The place features of consonants and vowels are presented on different tiers. The vowel place is a mother to a vocalic node which is dominated by consonant place node and a sister to the aperture.

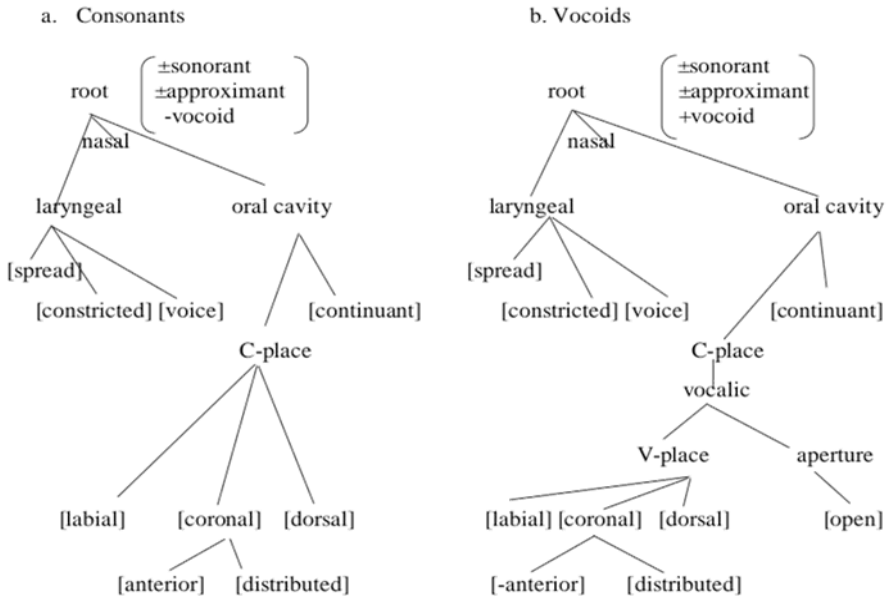


Figure 1. Clements & Hume's (1995) Feature Geometry tree

This study focuses on the place node, which is immediately dominated by the oral node. The place node dominates the vocalic node, within this node; the V-place (vowel place) and aperture node are immediately dominated by the vocalic node.

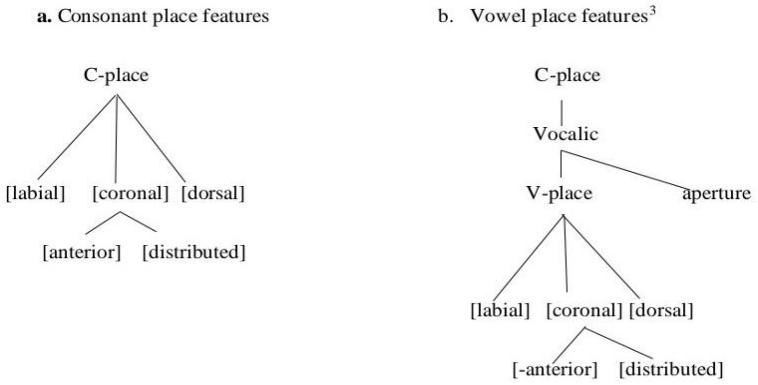


Figure 2. The Place node

In accordance with this model, vowels and consonants can be specified for the same place of articulation that is within the oral tract cavity. So, place features like labial, coronal and dorsal can be specified for vowel place features, as presented in Figure 2. Considering only the place node, the feature labial specifies for both labial consonants and back/rounded vowels, the place feature coronal specifies for both coronal consonants

and front vowels while the dorsal place feature specifies for both dorsal consonants and low vowels (see Clement & Hume 1995 for details). The central vowels satisfy none of the feature specifications above and should be regarded as phonologically placeless, (Clement & Hume 1995:24-25). Now, since this happens, vowels and consonants can bi-directional share their place features with each other, i.e. a vowel can be assimilated to a consonant, and it can also be assimilated by a consonant if there is the bearer of place features.

Now, the feature spreading within this node (place node) will result in partial or incomplete assimilation, since the place features (except coronal) are terminal nodes – it is the place feature only that assimilates to the neighboring segment since the major (top-most) and other higher nodes are excluded.

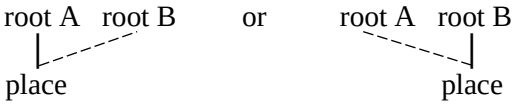


Figure 3. Place Feature spreading (from Clements & Hume 1995)

The place feature sharing those results in node A to node B is an instance of progressive assimilation (left-to-right) whereas in (b) the root node B triggers the feature sharing resulting in regressive place assimilation (right-to-left). The crucial aspect of this model is that feature sharing can occur from one tier to another tier without violating Goldsmith's No Crossing Condition (NCC).

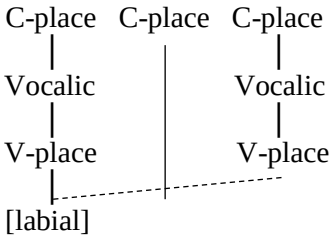


Figure 4. Spreading across intervening consonant (from Clements & Hume 1995)

The place feature of the vowel spread onto the neighboring vowel across the intervening consonant in Figure 6 above. Clements & Hume (1995) state that line-crossing must be allowed since they do not violate NCC. Thus, NCC would only be possible if the C-place node and V-place node are on the same tier. Ćavar (1997) states that the consonantal node in the representation of vowels is motivated by the fact that there are assimilations of the place of vowels across consonants but there are no assimilations of a place of consonants across vowels, and thus vowels have the consonantal node which prevents the linkage of consonantal features.

Assuming Clements & Hume's (1995) model, since vowels and consonants can share the same place specification, place feature specified for the consonant can be linked to the adjacent vowel (Clements & Humes 1995), as exemplified below:

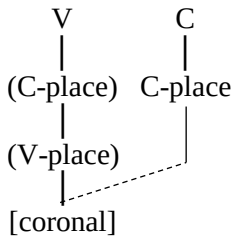


Figure 5. Spreading from consonant onto a vowel (from Clements & Hume 1995)

6. Vowel epenthesis in Dagbani loans

Vowel epenthesis is one of the major repair strategies in Dagbani loanwords adaptation. However, the language uses about five different vowels to solve illicit structures from occurring in Dagbani, as a result, the quality or type of vowel inserted to repair illicit structures in Dagbani is not straightforward since different vowels could be selected for epenthesis. Below in (7) I show how illicit forms are repaired through vowel epenthesis:

(7)		Illicit	Licit	Gloss
	a.	/bʊk/	[buku]	‘book’
	a.	/kʌp/	[kɔpʊ̲]	‘cup’
	b.	/dɪɛs/	[di̲re:si̲]	‘dress’

7. Quality of the epenthetic vowel

It has been observed that three strategies help to determine the epenthetic vowel shape or quality in Dagbani loanwords, namely: vowel harmony, consonantal/local assimilation and default vowel epenthesis.

7.1 Vowel harmony

Vowel harmony or copy epenthesis has been observed to determine the epenthetic vowel quality in several studies, including the work of Uffmann (2006), Rose & Demuth (2006), Adomako (2008), and Bălan (2015). It is where the place feature has been specified for the neighboring vowel harmonize onto the epenthetic slot. The current study has discovered that the presence of a vowel feature plays a role in predicting the quality of the inserted vowel in Dagbani loanwords. The study also identified specific limitations in terms of positions and copying direction, as well as the influence of the neighboring vowel’s place feature. In the upcoming sections, I provide generalizations regarding the quality of the epenthetic vowel observed in Dagbani loanwords derived from English and Arabic.

7.1.1 Epenthesis of [u] or [ʊ] in word-initial clusters

When the intervening consonant is liquid followed by a rounded vowel, a round/labial vowel is copied from right onto the epenthetic vowel site at word-initial clusters.

(8)		English source word	Loan	Gloss
	a.	/bluː/	[bʊ̲luː]	‘blue’
	b.	/gluː/	[gu̲luː]	‘glue’
	c.	/drɔːɪŋ/	[dʊ̲rɔː ɪŋ]	‘drawing’
	d.	/kləʊs/	[kʊ̲loːsɨ]	‘close’

The results in (8) demonstrate that the place feature of the neighboring vowel is copied to the epenthetic site in word-initial positions. Consequently, the epenthetic vowel inherits the place feature specified for the neighbor. Notably, the neighboring vowel is rounded, and this place feature is copied across the intervening liquid. The process of copying occurs from right-to-left, which is also referred to as progressive assimilation.

7.1.2 Epenthesis of [ʊ] or [o] in word-medial clusters

When the intervening consonant is velar or liquid followed by a rounded vowel, a round/labial vowel is copied right into the epenthetic vowel site at word-medial clusters.

(9)		English source word	Loan	Gloss
	a.	/kəʊlpɔt/	[kurʊ̲foːtʊ]	‘coal pot’
	b.	/əkrɔs/	[akʊ̲roːsɨ]	‘across’

As can seen from (9), when the intervening consonant is velar or liquid followed by a labial vowel, a round vowel is copied from the right into the epenthetic vowel site in word-medial clusters.

7.1.3 Epenthesis of [u] or [ʊ] in word-final position

When the intervening consonant is velar or liquid or non-bearer of place feature preceded by a rounded vowel, a round/labial vowel is copied from left onto the epenthetic vowel site at word-final position.

(10)	English source word		Loan	Gloss
	a.	/bʊk/	[buku̲]	‘book’
	b.	/skuːl/	[ʃɪkʊrʊ̲]	‘school’
	c.	/kʊk/	[kuku̲]	‘cook
	d.	/stɔː/	[ʃɪtɔʔu̲]	‘store
	e.	/klɔk/	[kʊlɔkʊ̲]	‘clock’

The examples under (10) shows that, the epenthetic vowel quality is determined by the place feature of the neighboring (labial) vowel. The place feature that is associated with the neighbor spreads onto the epenthetic vowel site. The spreading occurs progressively across the intervening consonants onto the inserted vowel environment. The direction of the copying differs from what was seen earlier, in word-initial and word-medial positions, where the feature copying was invariably from the right.

7.1.4 Labial spreading with intervening coronal consonants

When the intervening consonant is coronal, preceded/followed by a round/labial vowel, place feature harmonizing of the labial feature is unpredictable.

(11)		English source word	Loan	Gloss
	a.	/juːz/	[juːsɨ] *[juːsu]	‘use’
	b.	/vɔt	[voːtɨ] *[voːtʊ]	‘vote’
	c.	/kəʊpɔt/	[kurʊfoːtʊ]	‘coal pot’
	d.	/kɔːt/	[koːtʊ]	‘court’

The quality of the epenthetic vowel is unpredictable based on the place feature of the neighbor. In (11a-d), the insertion of a labial place feature onto the epenthetic vowel site would render it ungrammatical. Conversely, (11c-d) opts for labial place feature insertion for unknown reasons. The coronals sometimes block feature spreading crossing it.

7.1.5 Epenthesis of a low vowel after [a] in word-medial clusters

When the intervening consonant is preceded by a low vowel [a], the low vowel is always copied either from left or right onto the epenthetic vowel site in word-initial and word-medial clusters in Arabic source words.

Left-to-right spreading of the central low vowel [a] is illustrated below:

(12)		Arabic source word	Loan	Gloss
	a.	/nasˀr/	[nasara]	‘victory’
	b.	/waqt/	[waʔatɨ]	‘time’
	c.	/maɣrib/	[magarɨbɨ]	‘4th daily prayer’

The following are examples of right-to-left spreading of the central low vowel [a]:

(13)		Arabic and Twi source word	Loan	Gloss
	a.	/swalaat/	[salaːtʊ]	‘prayer’
	b.	/sadaqah/	[sara]	‘charity’
	c.	/nkrakra/	[karakara]	‘light tomato soup’
	d.	/akra/	[akara]	‘Accra’

The data in (12) and (13) show that, the low vowel feature from the neighboring vowel is copied onto the epenthetic environment[2]. The feature spreading can either be progressive or regressive across the intervening consonant onto the epenthetic vowel slot in word-initial and word-medial clusters.

7.2 Local assimilation

Consonantal assimilation has been observed to determine the epenthetic vowel quality. It is where the adjacent consonant spreads its place feature onto the epenthetic vowel slot. The direction of the spreading could be progressive (left-right) or regressive (right-left) or even both occurring in a particular language. However, the place feature that is been copied may vary or be determined by a particular context as well as the frequency of the feature being copied, Adomako (2008) argues that labial place features are frequently copied followed by coronal place and the dorsal place in Akan loanwords. This means that, he dorsal place is the least marked place feature, followed by coronal and the labial being the most marked place features, as presented in Figure 9.

(14) Labial >> Coronal >> Dorsal

(Adomako 2008)

Next, I focus on how consonantal place feature spreading helps to predict the epenthetic vowel quality in Dagbani source words incorporated from English and Arabic.

7.2.1 Epenthesis of a rounded vowel after labial consonants

When the final illicit consonant is labial, a rounded/labial vowel is always inserted into the epenthetic vowel site at word-final positions in English sourced words.

(15)

	English source word	Loan	Gloss
a.	/kʌp/	[kɔpʊ]	‘cup’
b.	/bʌlb/	[bolɨfʊ]	‘bulb’
c.	/braɪb/	[bɨra:pʊ]	‘bribe’
d.	/tju:b/	[tupʊ]	‘tube’
e.	/sɪv/	[si:fʊ]	‘sieve’

As shown in (15), the quality of the epenthetic vowel is always determined by the place feature of the adjacent consonant. As can be seen, the place feature of the adjacent consonant is labial, which spreads progressively to prevent the ill forms from surfacing in the recipient language.

[2] This generalization is based on Dagbani loanwords from Arabic only. It has not been attested whether dorsal/low vowels do spread in English loanwords.

7.2.2 Epenthesis of a front vowel after palato-alveolar affricates

According to Mattingley et al. (2019), the palato-alveolar affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ] are often followed by the insertion of the front vowel [i]. They state that adding the front vowel [i], which shares an articulation point with these consonants, is phonetically natural. The same patterns can be seen in the repair of Dagbani nativized words, where the insertion of the front high vowel [i] occurs after [tʃ] and [dʒ], as exemplified in (16):

(16)		English source word	Loan	Gloss
	a.	/frɪdʒ	[firidʒi]	'fridge'
	b.	/tʃɑ:dʒ/	[ʧa:dʒi]	'fare'
	c.	/gæŋ/	[gandʒi]	'a gang'
	d.	/ʧeʧ/	[ʧe:ʧi]	'church'
	e.	/kɔlɪdʒ/	[kolɛdʒi]	'college'

From the above, the adjacent palatal-coronal consonants spread their place features onto the epenthetic vowel site. It should be borne out that, the plane coronal consonants [t, d, s, z, n etc.] do not involve such kind of feature spreading, it is only the palatal-coronal that spreads its place features. Additionally, evidence can be adduced from Arabic loanwords, where consonant place moves to palatal place before front vowels, resulting in palatalization, as shown below:

(17)		Arabic source word[3]	Loan	Gloss
	a.	/ma:lik	[maliʧi] *malik[i]	'king'
	b.	/mulk	[mʊlʧi] *mʊlk[i]	'subjects'
	c.	/muna:fiq/	[mʊna:fit[i] *mʊna:fik[i]	'hypocrite'
	d.	/ʔarrizq/	[arizɨtʃi] *arizɨtk[i]	'wealth'

7.3 Default epenthetic vowels

Optimality Theory postulates a unique representation of default vowel epenthesis. This process involves the insertion of new phonological material that is not present in the underlying form. However, Lombardi (2002) conducted a quantitative typological survey, examining the epenthetic vowel quality in numerous languages worldwide. According to her findings, if a language's vowel system includes an unmarked vowel, that unmarked vowel tends to be used as a general epenthetic strategy. In cases where the unmarked vowel is absent, the language will select the least marked vowel available. Based on her observations, Lombardi (2002) proposed a markedness hierarchy in which back vowels are less marked than front vowels, high vowels are less marked than low vowels, and unrounded vowels are less marked than rounded vowels:

[3] The Arabic word-final consonants are adapted as palatal-coronal before a front/coronal vowel. This shows that there is a place feature interaction between palatal consonants and front/coronal (see also Clements & Hume 1995).

(18) a. Back vowels are less marked than front vowels: *Front > *Back
b. Mid vowels are marked: *Mid
c. Round vowels are marked: *[+round] >> *[−round]
(Lombardi 2002)

It depends on the vowels that you have in your language vowel inventory that will show how it will be positioned. And, Dagbani has /ɨ/ unmarked, the unmarked vowels in phonology have been treated to be phonological placeless because they do not make any contrast with respect to the place feature spreading.

7.3.1 Epenthesis of [ɨ] after non-final labial consonants

When the preceding or the following vowel is unrounded/non-labial vowel, the central placeless vowel [ɨ] is always inserted as a default after labial consonants in non-word-final position in English source words.

(19)	English source word	Loan	Gloss
a.	/bleɪd/	[bɨle: dɨ]	‘blade’
b.	/braɪb/	[bɨra:pʊ]	‘bribe’
c.	/breɪk/	lbɨre:tʃ]	‘brake’
d.	/presɪŋaɪɔn/	[pɨrɛsa:jɔn]	‘pressing iron’
e.	/əsɛmblimæn/	[asambɨlimani]	‘assemblyman’

The epenthetic vowel that is inserted to repair illicit structure is the placeless vowel [ɨ] in English source words. The motivation behind the insertion of this vowel after labial consonants is determined when the preceding or the following vowel is unrounded or labial vowel in non-word final position only.

7.3.2 No epenthesis of [ɨ] after word-final labial consonants

The insertion of the default [ɨ]is prohibited after labial consonants in word-final position. In this environment, the epenthetic vowel is preferred to copy the place feature of the adjacent consonant.

(20)	English source word	Loan	Gloss
a.	/bʌlb/	[bolɨfʊ] *[bolɨfɨ]	‘bulb’
b.	/braɪb/	[bɨra:pʊ] *[bɨra:pɨ]	‘bribe
c.	/paɪp/	[pa:pʊ] *[pa:pɨ]	‘pipe’

7.3.3 Epenthesis of [ɨ] after coronal consonants

When the adjacent consonant is coronal (non-palatal), the default vowel [ɨ] ccupies the epenthetic slot.

(21)	English source word	Loan	Gloss
a.	/bleɪd/	[bɨle:dɨ]	‘blade’
b.	/dɹɛs/	[dɨre:sɨ]	‘dress’
c.	/fɔrɪst/	[fo:re:sɨ]	‘forest’
d.	/pɪstəl/	[pi:sɨlɨ]	“pistol’
e.	/mɪlk/	[mɨlɨtʃi]	“milk”

The epenthetic vowel to repair illicit structures is invariably the central high [ɨ] occurring after coronal consonants in both English and Arabic source words. The only exceptions observed so far is the English source words [sku:l] and [belt]:

(22)	English source word	Loan	Gloss
	/sku:l/	[ʃi]kʊrʊ] *[sɨkuru]	‘school’
	/belt/	[balatɨ] *[balɨtɨ]	‘belt’

7.3.4 Epenthesis of [ɨ] or [i] after dorsal consonants

When the adjacent consonant is dorsal, preceded or followed by an unrounded vowel, default [ɨ] or [i] occupies the epenthetic slot, as in (23) and (24), respectively:

(23)	English source word	Loan	Gloss
a.	/gɹi:s/	[gɨri:sɨ]	‘grease’
b.	/grævəl/	[gɨrabʊlɨ]	‘gravel’
c.	/pɑ:k/	[pa:kɨ]	‘park’

(24)	English source word	Loan	Gloss
a.	/bæg/	[ba:ʤi]	‘bag’
b.	/brɪks/	[bɨlɨʧisɨ	‘bricks’
c.	/gæŋ/	[gandʒi]	‘a gang’
d.	/mɪlk/	[mɨlɨtʃi]	‘milk’

The inserted vowel quality is default [ɨ] or [i] after a dorsal consonant. In (23) the central high placeless vowel [ɨ] is inserted after the dorsal, while in (24) the front high vowel /i/ is inserted after the dorsal.

8. Feature Geometry analysis

This section provides a theoretical analysis of the phenomena of vowel epenthesis in Dagbani loanwords. I attempt to make segmental representations of the Dagbani place feature as observed in the adaptation processes using the Feature Geometry model of Clements & Hume (1995).

8.1 Place features of consonants and vocoids

Clements & Hume (1995) suggested a natural class of both consonants and vowels with respect to oral track features.

(25) a. [labial]: labial consonants; rounded or labialized vocoids
b. [coronal]: coronal consonants; front vocoids
c. [dorsal]: dorsal consonants; back vocoids

Based on the place features in (25) above, I define Dagbani vowels and consonants in Tables (1) and (2):

Table1. Feature Geometry definition of Dagbani vowels

	Front			Central					Back/rounded
	i	e	ɛ	ɨ	a	u	ʊ	o	ɔ
[Coronal]	•	•	•						
[Labial]						•	•	•	•
[Dorsal]						•	•	•	•

The front vowels [i, e, ɛ] are specified for coronal place features, the rounded/back vowels [u,ʊ,o,ɔ] are specified for labial and dorsal place features while the central vowels [ɨ, a] are considered placeless.

Table2: Feature Geometry definition of Dagbani consonants

[Labial]		[Coronal]		[Dorsal]	
p b m f v	[tp] [db] [nm]	t d n ɲ s z [ʃ] [ʒ] ʧ ʤ l [ɾ]	kp gb ŋm w j	k g ŋ [x]	[ʔ] [h]

Given the above representation of the Dagbani consonants chart, I provide a segmental representation of the Dagbani place feature structure, focusing on three place dimensions; labiality, coronality and dorsality. Segments which do not fall into any of the place dimensions are considered not to be specified for place features; this is discussed in detail in upcoming sections.

8.2 Place feature representation of Dagbani vowels and consonants

According to Rice & Avery (1993, as cited in Rose & Demuth 2006) features must be integrated into segmental representations only if they serve to mark a contrast in the language. "In cases where multiple systems of underspecification might be available to the language learner, phonological or morpho-phonemic alternations will provide the evidence needed to posit the correct representations for the target language", (Rose & Demuth 2006: 1120). For the place features of Dagbani vowels, [i, e, ɛ] contrast with [u, ʊ, o, ɔ] with regards to their place feature dimension, i.e. frontness (coronality) and backness (labiality) contrast. While [ɨ,a] does not participate in place interaction, hence does not have a place contrast. Below, I posit a segmental representation of Dagbani place features of vowels and consonants, presented in (26) and (27), respectively.

(26) Place feature representation of Dagbani vowels

a. Front vowels [i, e, ɛ]

root
|
C-place
|
V-place
|
Cor

b. Back/round vowels [u, ʊ, o ɔ]

root
|
C-place
|
V-place
|
Lab

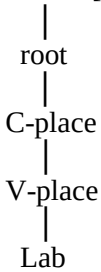
c. Central vowels [ɨ, a]

Root
|
C-place
|
V-place

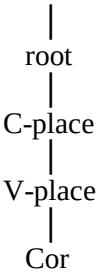
The segmental representation of Dagbani vowels in (26) shows exactly how the epenthetic vowel quality will be manifested through the strategies already discussed above. However, I specify the front vowel of Dagbani for the coronal place feature and the back/round vowels for the labial place features. The central vowels are treated as phonological placeless, as they do not make any contrast between frontness and backness features. The feature dorsal has not been specified for any, as it would result in redundancy since it is the mother node of backness and height features (Clements & Hume 1995, Halle 1995).

(27) Place feature representation of Dagbani consonants

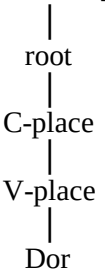
a. Labials [p, b, f, v, m]



b. Coronals (only palato-alveolar affricates)



c. Dorsals [k, g, ŋ]



The representation in (27) shows how to place features of Dagbani consonants can be incorporated into a segmental representation, the labial consonants could be grouped as possessors of place feature of labiality, and can inherently contribute to place feature spreading as observed in (27a). In (27b), the only coronal category that is attested in the data to contribute to place spreading is the palato-alveolar affricates [ʧ, ʤ]. For liquids, their phonetic coronality has been treated as phonologically placeless, and does not necessarily contribute to place spreading (Rose & Demuth 2006, Adomako 2008). The

dorsal place feature in (27c) is specified for velar consonants, though velars are been attributed not to spreads as observed in the data above, where both coronal (palato-alveolar affricates [ʧ, ʤ]) and labial mostly spread at the expense of velar, similar observations were made by Uffmann (2006), Rose & Demuth (2006) and Adamoko (2008), where other place features always spread except dorsal (velars).

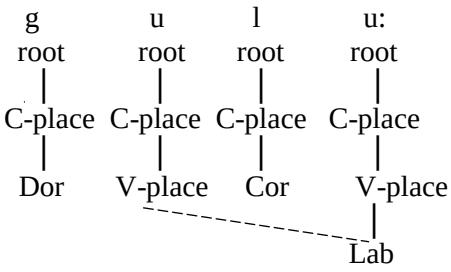
8.3 Vocalic place feature spreading

Vocalic place feature spreading occurs when the neighboring vowel harmonizes its place feature onto the epenthetic vowel environment. This type of spreading can be either progressive or regressive, linking the place feature from one V-place node to another V-place node across the intervening consonant. The data below illustrate feature spreading, where vowel harmony determines the quality of the epenthetic vowel.

8.3.1 Labial place feature spreading in word-initial clusters

The labial place feature of the neighboring vowel spreads across the intervening liquid onto the epenthetic vowel this kind of spreading is right-to-left spreading also known as regressive place assimilation.

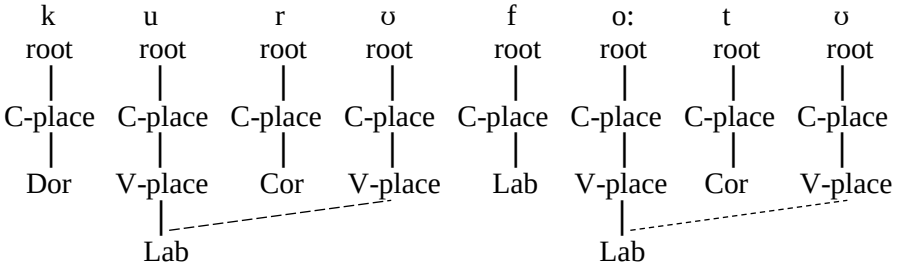
(28) /glu:/ →[gulu:] ‘glue’



8.3.2 Labial vowel spreading in word-medial clusters

The labial place feature specified for the neighboring vowel spreads regressively across the intervening liquid onto the epenthetic vowel.

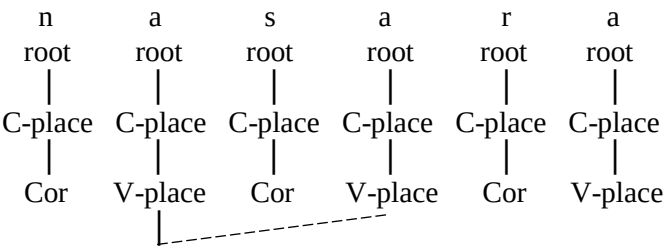
(29) /kəʊlpɔt/ → [kurʊfo:tʊ] ‘coal pot’



8.3.3 Low vowel [a] spreading in word-medial clusters

In the representation below the central low vowel [a][4] spreads progressively across the intervening coronal consonant **/s/** onto the epenthetic vowel site in the Arabic source word:

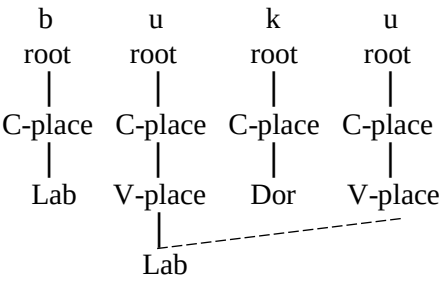
(30) /nasr/ → [nasara] 'victory'



8.3.4 Labial place feature spreading in word-final position

The labial place feature of the neighboring vowel spreads progressively across the intervening dorsal into the epenthetic vowel site in word-final position.

(31) /bʊk/ → [buku] 'book'



8.4 Consonant place feature spreading

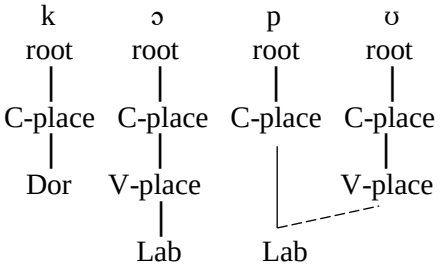
The epenthetic strategies observed in the analyzed Dagbani loanwords show that consonantal place features play a crucial role in determining the quality of the inserted vowel. This strategy involves the spreading of features from the consonantal place node of a neighboring to the vowel place node, as illustrated below.

8.4.1 Labial consonant spreading

The adjacent labial place feature spreads progressively its labial feature onto the epenthetic vowel slot in word-final positions.

[4] The central low [a] is considered not to be specified for any place feature, hence I presented it as bare.

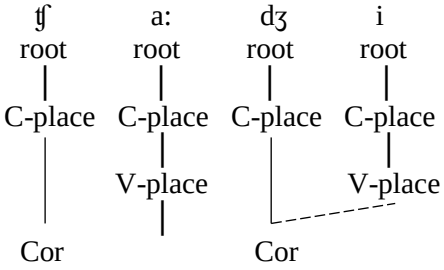
(32) /kʌp/ → [kɔpʊ] ‘cup’



8.4.2 Coronal (palato-alveolar affricate) [dʒ] place feature spreading

The palato-alveolar affricate (coronal) spreads progressively its coronal place feature onto the epenthetic environment.

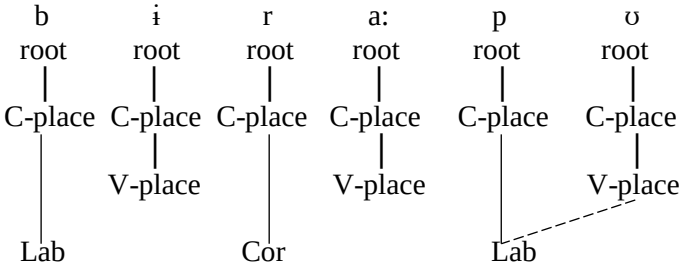
(33) /tʃɑ:dʒ/→[ʧ a:dʒi] ‘fare’



8.4.3 Default vowel epenthesis

The default vowel insertion involves adding a vowel that lacks the place feature of both the neighboring vowel and the adjacent consonant. This default vowel insertion prevents place feature spreading, as it requires the introduction of a distinctive place feature that is not already present. The placeless vowel [ɨ] serves as the primary default vowel in the language. In the Feature Geometry representation there are no linkage or association lines between the default vowel and the relevant segments since the default vowel is placeless. However, it should be noted that the placeless vowel [ɨ] is presented as a bare vowel, i.e it lacks a place feature.

(34) /braɪb/ → [bɨra:pʊ] ‘bribe’



As can be seen the placeless vowel **[ɨ]** is inserted within labial-liquid clusters to repair illicit structures in word-initial positions. The place feature linkage of the associate line is devoid as [ɨ] does not have a place feature.

9. Conclusions

The intended goal of this paper was to examine the quality of the epenthetic vowels in Dagbani loanwords. First, it looked at the strategies that determine the epenthetic vowel quality. It revealed that three strategies determine the epenthetic vowel quality in Dagbani loanwords; namely vowel harmony, local/consonantal assimilation and default vowel epenthesis. The vowel harmony strategy is possible when the neighboring vowel is a back/round vowel and the intervening consonant is dorsal or liquid – this occurs at the word-initial cluster, word-medial cluster and word-final positions. However, the consonantal strategy occurs at the word-final positions after labial and coronal consonants (only palato-alvealor) – i.e. [u] or [ʊ] is inserted after labial consonants while [i] is inserted after [tʃ], [dʒ]. The last strategy is the default vowel epenthesis – whereby the vowels [ɨ], [i], [u] are inserted.

For a formal analysis of the data derived from loanwords in Dagbani, a feature-geometrical representation was provided of the place feature in borrowed words. It was shown that the vowel's labial place feature always spreads across the intervening consonant and onto another V-place node, and that both progressive and regressive spreading are recognized. The local assimilation occurs from C-place node to V-place node. Feature spreading from a C-place node to a V-place node is unidirectional as observed from the representations, meaning that only the left-to-right (progressive) spreading is attested.

The default vowel epenthesis is seen as a general epenthetic strategy in Dagbani loanwords as it can occur after all the consonants in the inventory like that of Japanese, which opts for default epenthesis over vowel harmony and consonantal strategy as its dominant epenthetic strategy. Lombardi (2002) predicted that languages that possess unmarked vowels like [ɨ] or [ɯ] are going to insert them in most contexts, and Dagbani and Japanese have [ɨ] and [ɯ] respectively in their vowel inventory. However, other languages that lack such vowels either opt for vowel harmony or consonantal strategy as thier general strategy for epenthesis. For instance, in Shona, Sesotho and Akan utilize the consonantal assimilation strategy as a general strategy for epenthesis. Likewise, Sranan resorts to vowel harmony as its general strategy for epenthesis

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AUXILIARY VOWELS IN WORD-MEDIAL CONSONANT CLUSTERS IN THE HISTORY OF MALTESE

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Abstract: Borg (1978) notes that 15th and 16th-century transcriptions of Maltese place names display the auxiliary vowels [a] or [i] inserted into word-medial consonant clusters. According to Borg (1978) the quality of the auxiliary vowel is phonologically conditioned: it is [a] in a back environment, but [i] elsewhere. On this analysis the auxiliary vowels [a] and [i] exhibit complementary distribution. The examination of records of Maltese, however, yields a more complex picture. Auxiliary vowels continue to occur relatively frequently in the 17th-century, as evidenced by archival records of the Roman Inquisition (Cassar 2005), Thezan's (by 1647) dictionary, the place names in Abela (1647), and Skippon's (1732) word list collected in 1664. On the strength of the evidence provided by 17th-century records, it is shown that: (i) Maltese resorted to three auxiliary vowels – [a], [ɪ] and [o]; (ii) phonological conditioning is less strict than hitherto assumed, with [ɪ] occasionally occurring in a back environment as well; (iii) left-to-right vowel copying also plays a role in determining the quality of the auxiliary vowel, whereby an /o/ preceding a back consonant determines the selection of [o]. Also, it is shown that the findings are compatible with the hypothesis of a direct link between Sicilian Arabic and Maltese.

Keywords: Maltese, auxiliary vowels, back environment, vowel copying

1. Introduction

Modern Maltese exhibits three types of auxiliary vowels[1]: prothetic, as in ***i**rġiel* 'men', cf. Arabic *riğāl*; epenthetic, as in *naharbu* '[we] run', cf. **nahrbu* < Arabic *nahrubu*; segolate[2], as in *ħabel* 'rope', cf. Arabic *ḥabl*.

The history of the Maltese auxiliary vowels was discussed in great detail by Borg (1978). In this study, Borg illustrates among others the occurrence in 15th- and 16th-century Maltese of auxiliary vowels epenthesized into word-medial consonant clusters, which include reflexes of the Arabic patterns *aCCaC*, *maCCaC*, *maCCūC* and *CVCCa*. With respect to the quality of the auxiliary vowel, Borg (1978: 223-24) argues that it is phonologically conditioned: [a] in a back environment and [i] elsewhere. On this analysis, then, the auxiliary vowels are in complementary distribution.

The present paper revisits the diachrony of auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters in Maltese. It also looks at the quality of the auxiliary vowels inserted into word-medial consonant clusters. The findings are also discussed with reference to the hypothesis according to which Maltese might be an offshoot of Sicilian-Arabic.

The corpus of earlier Maltese examined covers a period ranging from early 15th century up to the second half of the 17th century. It consists of: (i) wordlists (Megiser 1606, Skippon 1732) and Thezan's (by 1647) dictionary edited by Cassola (1992);

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[1] Other terms used in the literature on Semitic languages are "secondary vowels" (Speiser 1926), "helping vowels" (Borg 1978).

[2] Defined as "anaptyctic vowels with two final consonants" (Speiser 1926: 149).

(ii) archival records of the Roman Inquisition in Malta (Cassar 2005); (iii) place names and personal names recorded in notarial documents (Wettinger 1968, 1971, 1972, 1980, 1983) and in Abela (1647).

All examples are reproduced in the transcription used in the sources. When known, the date of the attestation is mentioned. For all the early Maltese forms quoted the Arabic etymon or the Modern Maltese form is provided.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 focuses on 15th- and 16th-attestations of forms displaying auxiliary vowels inserted into word-medial consonant clusters. Section 3 is concerned with the survival of auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters into much of the 17th century. Section 4 discusses the accuracy of transcriptions as well as the occurrence of auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters in Sicilian Arabic and in Sicilian loanwords from Arabic. Section 5 summarizes the findings.

2. The 15th- and 16th-centuries

Borg (1978: 22) writes that "notarial documents from the 15th and 16th centuries containing transcriptions of Maltese place-names display the secondary vowels *a* or *i* in medial consonant clusters". The set of examples under (1) illustrates the occurrence of the auxiliary vowel [a] in a back environment:

(1) a. mah**a**nuc 'hoarse' 1419 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *maḫnūq*

b. mah**a**luju 'ginned (cotton)' 1473 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *maḥlūǧ*

c. zah**a**ra 'blossom' 1480s (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *zahra*

d. lach**a**mar 'the red one' 1495 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *aḥmar*

e. talmag**a**lac 'of the enclosure' 1500 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Mod. M. *tal-magħlaq*

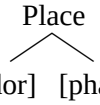
f. mac**a**had ilme 'the place where water collects' 1504 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *maqʕad*

g. tal mac**a**bar 'of the cemetery' 1517 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *maqbar*

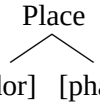
h. mach**a**lube 'overturned' 1547 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *maqlūba*

According to McCarthy (1994: 221), the Place node and its dependent features for the uvular stop /q/, the uvular gutturals /χ, ʁ/ and the low gutturals /h, ʔ, ħ, ʕ/ are represented as in (2a), (2b) and (2c), respectively:

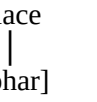
(2) a. uvular stop /q/



b. uvular gutturals /χ, ʁ/

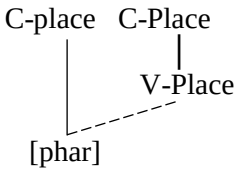


c. low gutturals /h, ʔ, ħ, ʕ/



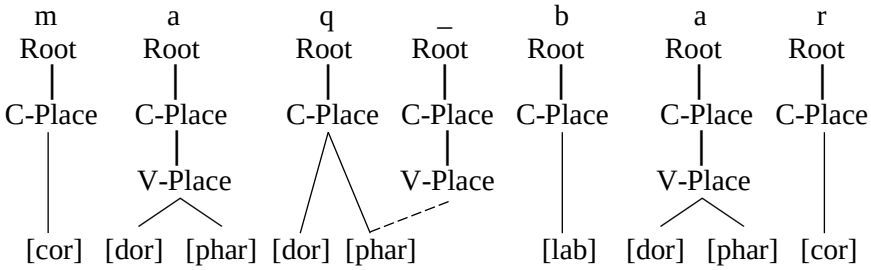
Assuming the feature-geometric representations above, the occurrence of auxiliary vowel is [a] can then be analyzed as the spreading of [pharyngeal] (McCarthy 1994, Rose 1996, Padgett 2011):

(3)

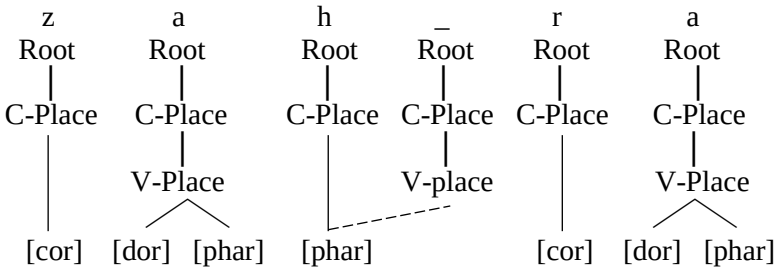


Below are the feature-geometric representations[3] for two of Borg's (1978: 22) examples, where the back consonant is a uvular stop (4a) and a low guttural (4b), respectively

(4) a. /maqbar/ > [maq**a**bar]



b. /zahra/ > [zah**a**ra]



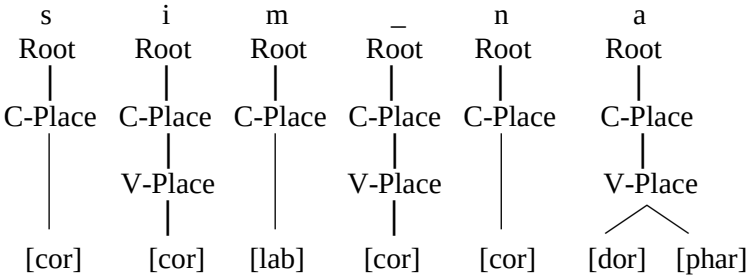
[3] Irrelevant structure has been omitted; "_" stands for the epenthetic slot.

In non-back environments, the auxiliary vowel selected is [i]. Consider the following examples:

(5) a. sim**i**ne ‘fatness’ 1420s (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *simna*
b. misirach ‘plain’ 1508 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *masraḥ*

Below is a feature geometric representation for one of the examples provided by Borg (1978: 22):

(6) /simna/ > [sim**i**na]



Two other examples given by Borg apparently contain the auxiliary vowel [i]. These are reproduced below:

(7) a. chag**i**ra ‘stone’ 1467 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *ḥağra*
b. mita bir il migilis ‘of the well at the council chamber’ 1503 (Borg 1978: 22)
cf. Ar. *mitāʕ bīr il mağlis*

It is not clear whether <gi> represents [ʤɪ] or [ʤ]. In other words, it is not clear whether <chagira> is to be interpreted as [ḥaʤira] or [ḥaʤra] and <migilis> as [miʤilis] or [miğlis]. Given this ambiguity, the forms in (7) are not taken into account.

However, auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters are more widely attested than assumed by Borg (1978). These are also found in 15th- and 16th-century surnames and nicknames (Avram 2016a, 2016b). Consider the examples below:

(8) a. mah**a**duf 1419 (Wettinger 1968: 41)
cf. Ar. *mahdūf*
b. kit**i**cuti 1419 (Wettinger 1968: 35)
cf. Ar. *katkūt*
c. geb**i**sa ‘plaster’ 1467 (Wettinger 1971: 43)
cf. Ar. *ğibsa*
d. ket**i**cuti 1480s (Wettinger 1968: 35)
cf. Ar. *katkūt*

e. ab**i**dun 1483 (Wettinger 1980: 182)
cf. Ar. *ʕabdun*
f. Ab**i**dilla 1495 (Avram 2016b: 171)
cf. Ar. *ʕabduḷḷāh*
g mif**i**sud 1534 (Wettinger 1972: 491)
cf. Mod. M. *Mifsud*
h. hab**i**d nur 1539 (Wettinger 1972: 492)
cf. Mod. M. *Għabid Nur*

Three forms in Megiser's (1606) wordlist also exhibit auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters. As seen in (9) and (10), respectively, [a] occurs in a back environment, whereas [i] is found elsewhere:

(9) Lach**a**nat 'we' 1588 (Megiser 1606: 12)
cf. Mod. M. *aḥna*

(10) a. Ass**i**rin 'twenty' 1588 (Megiser 1606: 13)
cf. Mod. M. *għoxrin*
b. Niss**i**top[4]'[I] drink' 1588 (Megiser 1606: 11)
cf. Mod. M. *nixrob*

However, *contra* Borg (1978), [i] occasionally occurs in a back environment, as in the following forms:

(11) a. diar mach**i**luf 1487 (Wettinger 1972: 1487)
cf. Mod. M. *Djar Maħluf*
b. il mah**i**sel 'the washing place' 1495 (Wettinger 1983: 33)
cf. Ar. *maġsal*/*maġsil*

3. The 17th-century

The occurrence of auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters is not limited to 15th and 16th-century Maltese. Two early 17th-century examples of forms displaying auxiliary vowels are found in archival records of the Roman Inquisition:

(12) a. chas**a**ra 'pity' 1601 (Cassar 2005: 75)
cf. Ar. *ḥasra* 'grief, sorrow'
b. mach**i**rugia 'brought out-F' 1602 (Cassar 2005: 77)
cf. Ar. *maḫrūğa*

Note that the forms in (12) are two other exceptions to the phonological conditioning assumed by Borg (1978). In (12a) the auxiliary vowel [a] occurs in a non-back

[4] Where <t> should read <r>; see also Cowan (1964: 220).

environment and (12b) illustrates the occurrence of the auxiliary vowel [i] in a back environment.

Ample evidence for the survival into the 17th century of auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters is provided by Thezan's (by 1647) dictionary[5], edited by Cassola (1992). Before illustrating the occurrence of auxiliary vowels in medial consonant clusters in entries in Thezan's dictionary, however, a remark is in order with respect to the quality of the vowel spelled <e>. As observed by Hull (1994: 394), "the Arabic short vowel i (tonic and atonic) is regularly noted /e/". More recently, van Putten (2020: 62, n. 3) also notes that "in the 17th century dictionary of Thezan, modern Maltese *i* is often spelled with <e>", presumably because "to the ears of the French knight Maltese *i* [ɪ] and e [ɛ] were not easily distinguishable (a contrast absent in French even today)".

Auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters are attested in a variety of forms[6]. These include nouns, cardinal numerals, adjectives, comparative forms of adjectives, past participles of the 1st form and imperatives.

Consider first some examples of nouns with an auxiliary vowel. As can be seen from the first two sets of examples under (13) and (14), respectively, the distribution of the auxiliary vowels [a] and [i] is in accordance with the phonological conditioning posited by Borg (1978):

(13) a. naʕ**a**la 'bee' -1647 (Cassola 1992: 167r)
cf. Ar. *naḥla*

b. zaʕ**a**ra 'blossom'[7] -1647 (Cassola 1992: 184v)
cf. Ar. *zahara*

(14) a. ʕaf**e**na 'handful' -1647 (Cassola 1992: 144v)
cf. Ar. *ḥafna*

b. keش**e**ra 'bark' -1647 (Cassola 1992: 153v)
cf. Ar. *qišra*

c. meseraه 'plain' -1647 (Cassola 1992: 163v)
cf. Ar. *masraḥ*

d. ram**e**la 'sand' -1647 (Cassola 1992: 171v)
cf. Mod M. *ramla* 'sandy beach'

e. sem**e**na ['obesity'][8] -1647 (Cassola 1992: 174v)
cf. Ar. *simna*

However, one form is an exception to the phonological conditioning. As seen below, the auxiliary vowel is [i] in a back environment:

(15) moه**e**reث[9] 'plough' -1647 (Cassola 1992: 165v)
cf. Ar. *miḥrāṯ*, Mod M. *moħriet*

[5] See also Avram (2023).
[6] The date of attestation -1647 reads 'by 1647'.
[7] Translated as 'flower of the orange tree' by Thezan (Cassola 1992: 184v).
[8] No translation is provided by Thezan, but see Cassola's (1992: 174v) comments on MS 2587 *semena*.
[9] Where <ه> is an error of transcription and should read <ح>.

The auxiliary vowel [i] in a non-back environment is attested in the cardinal numeral:

(16) oعش**e**rin ‘twenty’ -1647 (Cassola 1992: 5r)
cf. Mod. M. *għoxrin*

A few adjectives attest to the selection of [i] as the auxiliary vowel in a non-back environment:

(17) a. bek**e**ri ‘first-born’ -1647 (Cassola 1992: 122v)
cf. Ar. *bikrī*
b. nes**e**rani ‘Christian’ -1647 (Cassola 1992: 168r)
cf. Ar. *naṣrānī*

In comparative forms of adjectives the distribution of the auxiliary vowels conforms to the one suggested by Borg (1978), i.e. [a] in a back environment, as in (18), and [i] elsewhere, as in (19):

(18) a. aح**a**raش ‘coarse’ -1647 (Cassola 1992: 116v)
cf. Ar. *ʔaḥraš*
b. kaح**a**la ‘dark blue.F’ -1647 (Cassola 1992: 130v)
cf. Ar. *kaḥlāʔ*
(19) a. ح am**e**ra ‘red.F’ -1647 (Cassola 1992: 116r)
cf. Ar. *ḥamrāʔ*
b. ek**e**reح ‘uglier’ -1647 (Cassola 1992: 130v)
cf. Ar. *akrah*
c. خoش**i**na ‘thicker F’ -1647 (Cassola 1992: 169v)
cf. Mod. M. *ħoxna*

The auxiliary vowel exhibited by most of the past participles of the first forms is [a] in a back environment, as shown in the examples under (20), but [i] in a non-back environment, as illustrated by the examples under (21):

(20) a. maع**a**zuق ‘dug up’ (Cassola 1992: 158v)
cf. Ar. *maʕzūq*
b. maع**a**luf ‘pastured’ (Cassola 1992: 158v)
cf. Ar. *maʕlūf* ‘stall-fed, fattened (animal)
c. maع**a**ذur ‘compassionated’ (Cassola 1992: 158v)
cf. Ar. *maʕḏūr* ‘excused’
d. maح**a**ruق ‘burnt’ (Cassola 1992: 159r)
cf. Ar. *maḥrūq*
e. maع**a**zur[10] ‘wrung’ (Cassola 1992: 160v)
cf. Ar *maʕṣūr*

[10] Where <z> should read <s>.

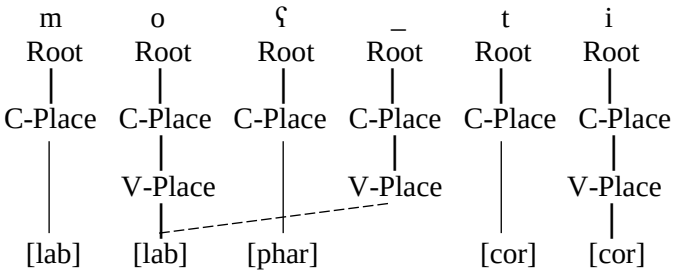
(21) a. meb**e**lul ‘wet’ (Cassola 1992: 160v)
cf. Ar. *mablūl*
b. med**e**rus ‘threshed’ (Cassola 1992: 161r)
cf. Ar. *madrūs*
c. mes**e**ruق ‘stolen’ (Cassola 1992: 163v)
cf. Ar. *masrūq*
d. meش**e**rub ‘drunk’ (Cassola 1992: 164v)
cf. Ar. *mašrūb*
e. met**e**lub ‘demanded’ (Cassola 1992: 164v)
cf. Ar. *maṭlūb*

The following past participle, however, displays the auxiliary vowel [o], in a back environment:

(22) moɛ**o**ti ‘given’ (Cassola 1992: 165v)
cf. Ar. *muʕṭ-*

The auxiliary vowel [o] in (22) can only be accounted for by assuming vowel harmony of the left-to-right (progressive) vowel copying type, whereby the first [o], the reflex of the Arabic stem vowel /u/, triggers the insertion of [o] into the word-medial consonant cluster:

(23) /muʕṭ-/ > [moʕ**o**ti]



Since consonants do not have a V-Place, spreading of [lab] does not violate the No Crossing Constraint “Association lines do not cross” (Goldsmith 1976, Hammond 1988).

Consider finally imperative forms of verbs. The first set of examples, under (24) below, illustrates the occurrence of the auxiliary vowel [a] in a back environment:

(24) a. aʗ**a**leb ‘milk!’ (Cassola 1992: 116r)
cf. Ar. *ʔiḥlib*
b. aʗ**a**leɟ ‘gin [cotton]!’ (Cassola 1992: 116r)
cf. Ar. *ʔiḥliğ*
c. aʗ**a**rab ‘run!’ (Cassola 1992: 116v)
cf. Ar. *ʔiḥrab*
d. aʗ**a**raق ‘burn!’ (Cassola 1992: 116v)
cf. Ar. *ʔiḥraq*
e. aʗ**a**raث ‘plough!’ (Cassola 1992: 116v)
cf. Ar. *ʔiḥraṯ*

A second set of forms exhibit the auxiliary vowel [i] in a non-back environment. Illustrative examples are given below:

(25) a. eb**e**zoq[11] ‘spit!’ (Cassola 1992: 129r)
cf. Ar. *ʔubzuq*
b. eż**e**rob ‘hurt!’ (Cassola 1992: 129v)
cf. Ar. *ʔuḍrub*
c. em**e**la ‘fill!’ (Cassola 1992: 132r)
cf. Ar. *ʔimlaʔ*
d. es**e**loż ‘excoriate!’ (Cassola 1992: 135v)
cf. Ar. *ʔusluḫ*
e. et**e**boż ‘cook!’ (Cassola 1992: 137v)
cf. Ar. *ʔuṭbuḫ*

While forms such as those in the first two sets of examples comply with the distributional pattern posited by Borg (1978), the auxiliary vowel in two other sets of forms is not the one predicted. For instance, in a third set of forms the vowel [i] which is inserted into a word-medial consonant cluster, in a back environment:

(26) a. aq**e**leb ‘turn!’ (Cassola 1992: 117v)
cf. Ar. *ʔiqlib*
b. aq**e**ra ‘read!’ (Cassola 1992: 117v)
cf. Ar. *ʔiqrā*
c. aż**e**les ‘hurry!’ (Cassola 1992: 118r)
cf. Ar. *ʔuḫluṣ*
d. aġ**e**laq ‘close!’ (Cassola 1992: 116r)
cf. Ar. *ʔiġliq*
e. eċ**e**da ‘cease!; calm down!’ (Cassola 1992: 130r)
cf. Ar *ʔihdaʔ*

Consider also the fourth set of forms, such as those under (27), some of which are reflexes of Ar. *uCCuC*. As shown below, the auxiliary vowel inserted in a back environment is [o]:

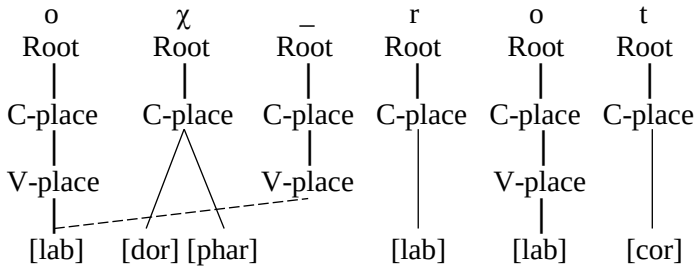
(27) a. oċ**o**lom ‘to dream’ (Cassola 1992: 169r)
cf. Ar. *ʔuḥlum*!
b. oż**o**rot ‘cut completely! (Cassola 1992: 169v)
cf. Ar. *ʔuḫrut*
c. oq**o**ros ‘pinch!’ (Cassola 1992: 169v)
cf. Ar. *ʔiqras*
d. om**o**ġoḍ ‘chew!’ (Cassola 1992: 170r)
cf. Ar. *ʔumġuḍ*[12]

[11] This is another surprising form. On phonological grounds, the expected form would have been **obozoq*, cf. Mod M. *obżoq*.
[12] Barbera (1940a: 676).

e. or**o**عoش ‘get angry!’[13] (Cassola 1992: 170r)
cf. Ar. *ʔurʕuš*[14]

Since the influence of the consonant preceding the auxiliary vowel can safely be ruled out, the occurrence of [o] can only be the outcome of vowel harmony. Forms such as those in (27) appear at first sight to be indeterminate with respect of the directionality of vowel harmony: the occurrence of the auxiliary vowel [o] could be triggered either by the /o/ of the imperative prefix or by the second stem vowel /o/. However, as shown by the forms in (26), the quality of the second stem vowel plays no part in the selection of the auxiliary vowel: regardless of the quality of the second stem vowel, in all these imperative forms the auxiliary vowel is [i], in a back environment. Therefore, the most plausible account seems to be in terms of vowel harmony of the left-to-right (progressive) vowel copying type, illustrated in (28) below, where spreading of [lab] does not violate the No Crossing Constraint since the intervening /χ/ does not have a V-Place:

(28) /ʔuχrut/ > [o**o**rot]



That left-to-right (progressive) vowel harmony can occasionally determine the quality of the auxiliary vowel is also shown by the past participle form in (23), discussed above.

To conclude, the evidence surveyed shows that auxiliary vowels inserted into word-medial consonant clusters do survive into the 17th century. Table 1 below summarizes the findings only about the comparative form of adjectives, past participles of the 1st form and imperative forms. As can be seen, forms containing an auxiliary vowel constitute a sizable minority in the relevant entries in Thezan’s (by 1647) dictionary:

Table 1. Forms with vs. without auxiliary V (Thezan by 1647)

Word class	With auxiliary vowel	Without auxiliary vowel
Adjectives COMPARATIVE	6	7
Past Participles 1st Form	36	85
Verbs IMP	67	100

[13] This is a surprising form, which presupposes /o/ as the second stem vowel of the imperfective; in Mod M. the verb is *raghax, jirgħax* and it means ‘to blush, to be ashamed’.
[14] Arabic *raʕaša*/*raʕiša* means ‘to tremble, to shiver’

Two other 17th-century sources provide evidence for the occurrence of auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters. Consider first the following forms occurring in place names recorded by Abela (1647), which display the auxiliary vowel [a] in word-medial consonant clusters, in a back environment:

(29) a. L'Ah**a**rasc/Lah**a**rasc 'the Rugged' (Abela 1647: 25, 61)
cf. Ar. *ʔaḥraš*
b. Mach**a**dar 'Assembly' (Abela 1647: 258)
cf. Ar. *maḥḍar*
c. Zah**a**ra 'Blossom' (Abela 1647: 408)
cf. Ar. *zahra*

Skippon's (1732) wordlist, collected in 1664, also contains several forms displaying auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters. In two of them [a] is the auxiliary vowel:

(30) a. chagi**a**ra 'stone' 1664 (Skippon 1732: 624)
cf. Ar. *ḥağra*
b. tach**a**ra 'to defecate' 1664 (Skippon 1732: 626)
cf. Ar. *taḫraʔ*

Note that [a] in (30a), in a non-back environment, violates Borg's (1978) conditions on the quality of the auxiliary vowel. Four other forms exhibit the auxiliary vowel [i], in non-back environments:

(31) a. asc**e**rin[15] 'twenty' 1664 (Skippon 1732: 625)
cf. Mod. M. *għoxrin*
b. isc**i**rob 'to drink' 1664 (Skippon 1732: 626)
cf. Mod M. *ixrob*
c. kisc**i**ra 'scale' 1664 (Skippon 1732: 625)
cf. Ar. *qišra*
d. tiz**i**ra 'plantare' 1664 (Skippon 1732: 626)
cf. Mod M. *tiżra'*

The forms in (30a)–(31c) have been included, since in Skippon's transcriptions <sc> consistently stands for [ʃ][16]; therefore, <sce> or <sci> renders the syllable [ʃɪ].

[15] Where <e> probably represents [i].
[16] As in *sceluk* 'left', cf. Mod. M. *xellug*, *tisctri* 'to buy', cf. Ar. *tištirī*, *achrasc* 'coarse', cf. Ar. *aḫraš* (Skippon 1732: 625).

4. Discussion

4.1 Accuracy of transcriptions

The data presented in sections 2 and 3 illustrate the occurrence of forms exhibiting auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters in Maltese, over a period ranging from the 15th century to (at least) the second half of the 17th century.

One issue which might be raised concerns the faithfulness of the transcriptions, given that most of the transcribers were not native speakers of Maltese. Indeed, notaries may have been native speakers of Sicilian, Megiser was a native speaker of German Thezan was a native speaker of Provensal[17], and Skippon was a native speaker of English. Moreover, Megiser and Skippon certainly spoke no Maltese. Under the circumstances, it is instructive to show, in Table 2 below[18], that a number of such forms are independently attested in two or three sources. This fact constitutes further confirmation of the accuracy of the transcriptions in the sources examined.

Table 2. Forms with auxiliary vowels found in more than one source

Notarial records 15th-16th c.	Megiser 1588	Thezan (-1647)	Abela (1647)	Skippon 1664
—	—	aح**a**raش	L'Ah**a**rasc/ Lah**a**rasc	no auxiliary vowel
—	ass**i**rin	oعش**e**rin	—	asc**e**rin
—	niss**i**top	eش**i**rob	—	isc**i**rob
		keش**e**ra		kisc**i**ra
—	—	aخ**a**ra	—	tah**a**ra
—	—	Ez**e**ra	—	tiz**i**ra
zah**a**ra		Zah**a**ra	Zah**a**ra	—
mis**i**rach		mes**e**raه	no auxiliary vowel	—
sim**i**ne	—	sem**e**na	—	—

4.2 Auxiliary vowels in Sicilian Arabic

As put by Isserlin (1977: 20), "that the Arabic of Sicily should have been related to the language spoken in Medieval Malta […] is a natural assumption". However, the exact nature of the historical-linguistic relationship holding between these two varieties of Arabic is a matter of dispute.

[17] Joseh Brincat, personal communication, 18 September 2023. See also Cassola (1992: xxx–xxxi).
[18] Where "—" indicates that no corresponding form is attested in the respective source.

The main controversial issues focus on the history of Malta in the wake of the Arab invasion. One view is found in Brincat's (1995), who analyzes an Arab historian's account of two key events. According to Al-Ḥimyarī, after the Arab invasion in 870 "the island of Malta remained an uninhabited ruin" at first, but later, "after the year 440 AH [= 1049–1049] the Muslims peopled [Malta]". Brincat (1995: 22) admits that "whether the community which settled in Malta came from Southern Italy (Apulia?) or Sicily is difficult to establish, due to the lack of written evidence" and states that one should therefore turn to linguistic evidence. Brincat (1995: 22) therefore calls for "a thorough comparative investigation" of Sicilian Arabic and Maltese, but explicitly mentions "the impression that Maltese has stronger contacts with Sicilian Arabic than with any other Arabic dialect". According to Brincat's (1995: 27) categorically formulated conclusion, "the historical and geographical factors now decidedly point to Sicilian Arabic as the basic source of the Maltese language".

A different view is put forth by Agius (1996: 432), according to whom "during the twelfth century Siculo-Christians from Sicily […] populated the Maltese islands as part of the Norman expansionist policy". Although assuming that an immigration flow took place at a later date and involved a different population group, Agius (1996: 432) reaches a similar conclusion with respect to the origin of the Maltese language: "Maltese […] is directly linked with the Siculo-Arabic and not with North African dialects".

In addition to historical and demographic arguments, the hypothesis that Maltese is a descendant of Sicilian Arabic certainly needs to be bolstered by linguistic arguments (Isserlin 1977, Avram 2017). In this context, one question which arises is whether there is any evidence for the occurrence of auxiliary vowels in Sicilian Arabic. Several lines of evidence suggest that the answer appears to be an affirmative one.

Illustrated in what follows are examples first from Siculo-Arabic, which was according to Agius (1996: 109), "the hybridization of Arabic and Romance (and to a lesser extent Greek)". The auxiliary vowel [a] in a back environment is found in Siculo-Arabic forms, such as those listed below:

(32) a. mac**a**lubbi 'small volcano of mud' (Agius 1981: 11)
cf. Ar. *maqlūb* 'overturned'

b. mac**a**luffo/mag**a**luffo 'retribution given to the auctioneer in an auction' (Agius 1981: 10)
cf. Ar. *maḥlūf*

c. mac**a**luggiu 'cotton cleaned from seeds' (Agius 1981: 10)
cf. Ar. *maḫlūǧ*

d. mac**a**ruqa/mac**a**ruca 'barren land' (Agius 1981: 10)
cf. Ar. *maḥrūqa* 'burnt-F'

e. mach**a**daru 'place where people are assembled' (Agius 1996: 391)
cf. Ar. *maḥḍar*

f. mah**a**bub[us] 'cotton seed' (Agius 1996: 391)
cf. Ar. *maḥbūb*

g. rah**a**ba 'court of a mosque or a house' (Agius 1996: 140)
cf. Ar. *raḥba*

h. zàg**a**ra 'flower or blossom of a plant' (Agius 1996: 283)
cf. Ar. *zahra*

The auxiliary vowel [a] occurs in a non-back environment as well, but in a single form, which can thus be viewed as an exception to the phonological conditioning:

(33) mar**a**bbutu ‘hypocrite scoundrel’ (Agius 1981: 11)
cf. Ar. *marbūṭ*[19]

The insertion of the auxiliary vowel [a] in a back environment is also attested in the following personal names:

(34) a. Mach**a**lub 1136 (Metcalfe 1999: 75)
cf. Ar. *Maḫlūf*[20]
b. Zàg**a**ra (Agius 1996: 283)
cf. Ar. *Zahra*

As for forms exhibiting auxiliary [i] in a non-back environment, these are harder to come by. One such example is attested in Siculo-Arabic:

(35) mich**i**chala ‘large support for a light’ (Agius 1996: 306)
cf. Ar. *mašʕala*

4.3 Auxiliary vowels in Sicilian loanwords from Arabic

The strong tendency to insert [a] in a historically back environment is also illustrated by the adaptation of Arabic loanwords in Sicilian:

(36) a. mac**a**daru ‘meeting place for conversation’ (Traina 1868: 548, De Gregorio & Seybold 1903: 239, Sottile 2013: 153)
cf. Mor. Ar. *meɛ̱ḍer*[21]
b. mac**a**lubba/mac**a**lubbu/mac**a**lupa ‘small mud volcano’ (Caracausi 1983: 272, Sottile 2013: 145)
cf. Ar. *maqlūb* ‘overturned’
c. mac**a**lucu ‘chicken’s milk’ (De Gregorio & Seybold 1903: 239)
cf. Ar. *maḫlūq*
d. mac**a**luggiu ‘cotton cleaned of seeds’ (Caracausi 1983: 274)
cf. Ar *maḫlūǧ*
e. zàg**a**ra ‘flower of orange tree’ (Traina 1868: 1112, De Gregorio & Seybold 1903: 248)
cf. Ar. *zahra*

[19] Kazimirski (1860: 807).
[20] That this is the Ar. name transcribed is demonstrated by its occurrence in a later, 1445 copy of the same document as well as by its transcription with Greek letters <μουχλούφ>.
[21] Harrell (1963: 95).

Rare exceptions can be found, such as:

(37) mar**a**bbutu ‘superstitious, hypocrite’ (Traina 1868: 568)
cf. Ar. *marbūṭ* ‘marabout, ascetic’

Auxiliary vowels are also attested in Sicilian surnames:

(38) Mac**a**luso (Agius 1981: 10)
cf. Ar. *maḫlūṣ*

Further evidence in support of this claim can be adduced from Arabic loanwords in the Sicilian dialect of Pantelleria[22]. Generally, [a] occurs in a historically back environment, as in (39), and [i] elsewhere, as in (40):

(39) a. macc**a**bisu ‘bread baked in a clay pot’ (Ruffino & Sottile 2015: 11)
cf. Ar. *maḫbaz* ‘bakery’
b. mac**a**lubbu ‘mud volcano almost at ground level’ (Caracausi 1983: 272, Agius 1996: 391)
cf. Ar. *maqlūb* ‘overturned’
c. makasènu ‘wine factory’ (Brincat 1977: 49)
cf. Ar. *maḫzan*
d. mah**a**luğğu ‘waste raw cotton’ (Staccioli 2015: 208)
cf. Ar. *maḫlūǧ*
e. zàg**a**ra ‘flower or blossom of a plant’ (Agius 1996: 283)
cf. Ar. *zahra*

(40) ššitirà ‘lack of squareness of the fabric because of defective weaving’ (Brincat 1977: 54)
cf. Ar. *šaṭr* ‘defect, slit’[23], *šaṭra* ‘partition, division’[24]

An exception is the exclamation reproduced below, in which the auxiliary vowel [a] occurs in a historically non-back environment:

(41) has**à**ra (Brincat 1977: 47), cas**à**ra! ‘[it’s a] pity’! (Staccioli 2015: 213)
cf. Ar. *ḥasra*

One last piece of evidence is provided by place names of Arabic origin in Pantelleria:

(42) a. Dakh**a**lè ‘entrance’ (Staccioli 2015: 197)
cf. Ar. *daḫla*
b. Triknakh**a**le ‘road of the palm tree’ (De Gregorio & Seybold 1901: 238)
cf. Ar. *ṭarīq al-naḫla*

[22] Which has an unusually high number of borrowings from Arabic.
[23] Aquilina (1990: 1550).
[24] Barbera (1940b: 1131).

5. Conclusions

The findings of the present paper can be summarized as follows.

Auxiliary vowels in word-medial consonant clusters are attested in earlier Maltese reflexes of a variety of reflexes of Arabic patterns, including *aCCaC*, *maCCaC*, *maCCūC*, various other noun patterns and imperatives. Such vowels are documented over a period ranging from the 15th century to (at least) the second half of the 17th century.

Earlier Maltese resorted to three auxiliary vowels to break up word-medial consonant clusters – [ɪ], [a], and [o], *contra* Borg (1978: 21), who only mentions the first two. The auxiliary vowel [a] is preferred in back environments, whereas [ɪ] occurs mostly in non-back environments. Phonological conditioning is therefore less strict than assumed by Borg (1978). Attested in several forms, [o] is the outcome of vowel harmony of the left-to-right (progressive) vowel copying type, i.e. the /o/ in the preceding syllable determines the selection of [o] as the auxiliary vowel. Therefore, in addition to the type of word-medial consonant cluster (Borg 1978: 21), vowel harmony of the vowel copying type also plays a role in determining the quality of the auxiliary vowel.

The epenthesis of auxiliary vowels into word-medial consonant clusters is also attested in Sicilian Arabic as also evidenced by Arabic loanwords in Sicilian. This finding is therefore compatible with the view that Maltese might be a descendant of Sicilian-Arabic.

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ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN EGYPTIAN EFL CLASSROOMS: ATTITUDES, CHALLENGES, AND EXPECTATIONS

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Abstract: This paper is an effort to explore issues pertaining to pronunciation instruction in Egypt, from the perspective of Egyptian EFL learners and teachers, with an emphasis placed on: views on pronunciation performances, expectations from their lecturers/students and study programmes, challenges faced in learning/teaching English pronunciation, desired proficiency standards and attitudes towards English and the specific items taught, the influence of mother tongue, as well as views on what participants would like to see applied in textbooks and classrooms (e.g. organised activities, behaviour, approaches, methods, etc.). Recommendations based on questionnaire responses by both learners and teachers can be summarised as follows: (i) ensuring the qualifiedness of teachers, lecturers and educators in general (e.g. by seeking a TEFL-related qualification alongside a relevant university degree as position requirements), (ii) teaching English in English for more exposure to the target language content, (iii) minimising teacher-centered classroom performance and allocating most of the class time for student participation and involvement, (iv) directing efforts towards creating an engaging and motivating environment for both teachers and learners by refraining from employing traditional outdated teaching methods that may lead to eliminating chances of effective communicative interaction, (v) applying assessment methods that prioritise development over scores to enhance students' creativity and critical thinking skills, (vi) integrating the element of pronunciation in the teaching of other language skills, (vii) ensuring the cultural appropriacy and appeal of the study materials to meet the expectations of learners, address the actual teaching/learning objectives and suit the particular EFL context in question.

Keywords: Egyptian EFL classrooms, pronunciation learning, pronunciation teaching

1. Introduction

While proper EFL pronunciation instruction cannot be detached from possessing speaking proficiency or "raising students' levels of intelligibility and comprehensibility" (Hucke 2021: 2), pronunciation tends to be overlooked in EFL classrooms among the other elements of the four skills in a language system (Fraser 2000, Macdonald 2002, Gilbert 2008), especially in monolingual exam-oriented classes where mastering written accuracy is prioritised over accuracy in pronunciation, and is considered to be one of the most challenging aspects of ELT by both teachers and learners (Robin 2022: 26). Moreover, as noted by Hucke (2021: 2), "given that pronunciation tends to be overlooked and undervalued as part of a general ESL curriculum, ... there is little incentive for researchers to spend much time exploring it". For instance, the findings of a study by Foote et al. (2013) depicted that time allotted for pronunciation instruction constituted only 10% of all language classes (cited in Robin 2022: 27). Besides, ESL pronunciation instruction is generally perceived as "lacking in development, quality resources, and emphasis" (Hucke 2021: 8). It is also an aspect where teaching methods/approaches, timing and focus are greatly affected by a number of factors (Hucke 2021: 15). According to Fraser (2006: 80), teachers may choose to avoid pronunciation instruction for a number

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of reasons: (1) it would be pointless to teach pronunciation to adults as the concept of "critical period" (Lenneberg 1967) was generally understood by some as adults being unable to learn pronunciation; (2) assessment and feedback on the learners' pronunciation were believed to be forms of criticism, which was considered inappropriate; (3) pronunciation instruction needed certain expertise that educators tended to lack. Teachers, as a result, may drift away from the teaching of pronunciation or any instruction beyond the surface level, due to lack of time (Hucke 2021, Gilbert 2008), qualification or preparation (Hucke 2021, Fraser 2000).

According to Robin (2022) and Gilakjani (2017), ESL pronunciation instruction, and other related topics it entails (e.g. attitudes towards ESL pronunciation; the effectiveness of various instructional methods, materials and curricula) is an area that is under-investigated. Despite the notion that exploring the Egyptian EFL learners' views on pronunciation learning/instruction and the underlying sources of any challenges would aid drawing pedagogical implications that address the problematic aspects with the aim of improving the existing and future teaching and learning practice in Egypt, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the topic of pronunciation learning in this linguistic context is under-researched compared to other aspects like grammar, vocabulary, and written production, and even to, according to Robin (2022: 33), aspects like pronunciation teaching techniques and teachers' views on pronunciation instruction.

Besides, despite the empirical research emphasising the significance of pronunciation instruction in EFL/ESL classrooms, and the knowledge of which aspects to prioritise, more research is needed to investigate the most effective methods and materials to apply and to draw conclusions that would act as the basis for relevant pedagogic decisions (Baker & Murphy 2011, Hucke 2021, Fraser 2000). According to Derwing & Rossiter (2002), L2 learners' needs, perceptions of their own pronunciations and beliefs pertaining to obstacles to effective communication have not received sufficient attention in Second Language research. As stated in Al-Issa et al. (2017: 5), such information has to be taken into consideration when designing syllabi and study materials to achieve more effective EFL programmes that address the learners' needs and are relevant to their sociolinguistic and sociocultural learning/teaching contexts as a step towards improving the existing practice.

In the researcher's experience as a teacher in an Egyptian higher education institution, teaching English as a foreign language to Egyptians ranging in their proficiency levels from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate, she has noticed that Egyptian students face problems with some aspects of English pronunciation. Arabic and English are two distinctive languages that differ in terms of: their language families (Semitic and Indo-European, respectively), internal phonological, morphological and syntactic systems (Na'ama, 2011), as well as speech characteristics and the representation of their phonetic systems (Al-Ani 1970, as cited in Abdelaal 2017: 8). Furthermore, many consonants and vowels, Arabic or English encompasses, differ in nature from their counterparts in the other language, rendering the process of Arabic or English language acquisition as challenging for learners with the other as L1 and leading to mispronunciations and issues in respect to intelligibility. Therefore, a significant impact of L1 transfer on the participants' pronunciation of English was expected to be the main source of errors. Generally speaking, in the researcher's experience as an EFL teacher, the influence of

Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) on the learning of English in Egypt is too evident to pass unnoticed. Egyptian EFL learners tend to transfer the linguistic norms of ECA (and sometimes literally translate idiomatic expressions) to the system of English as their target language yielding productions that follow ECA patterns (in terms of vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, morphology, phonology, etc.), but rendered in a different language (English).

Another factor behind the phonological problems Egyptian EFL learners face could be the inadequacy of some study programmes in the Arab region. Despite the drawbacks underlying English Language Teaching (ELT) policies of the public educational institutions in the Arab world countries and the criticism directed at the graduates of some inadequate study programmes in these institutions, the amount of literature tackling these aspects is still insufficient (Al-Issa et al. 2017).

2. First language transfer

An accent (of any degree of foreignness/deviation from the standard) is viewed as a form of transfer from the phonology of a learner's native language to that of the target language where a learner "subconsciously" transfers to L2 the phonological norms and concepts of L1 or any other foreign language (that are not necessarily completely applicable to the target language) rather than its concrete items and/or rules (Fraser 2006: 86). The process of L2 pronunciation acquisition is aided by a change of existing L1 concepts, the application of those concepts and the recognition of their role through the analysis and reproduction of sounds, which are all essential to effective practice of L2 (Fraser 2006: 82, 86 and 87). In this sense, according to the cognitive approach in L2 acquisition/ learning, pronunciation learning after the critical period is more complicated than in childhood as changing concepts is more challenging than forming new ones (as in the case of a learner's L1) (Fraser 2006: 87). As stated by Fraser (2000: 20), "if we learn a second language in childhood, we generally learn to speak it fluently and without a 'foreign accent'; if we learn it in adulthood, though we may attain considerable fluency and versatility, it is very unlikely that we will ever attain a native accent". Pronunciation is argued to be "one area in which to find strong support for a critical period: after all, children often seem to have an easier time with the sound system of a new language" (Odlin 2003: 468).

On the other hand, errors that do not originate from the interference of a learner's L1 are referred to in the literature as "developmental errors" or "intralingual errors" as opposed to the "interlingual errors" caused by the transfer of the rules of a learner's L1 to the target language. Developmental errors reflect lacking/inadequate knowledge of the second language rules and can be represented in instances of overgeneralisation (Richards 1971) and simplification (cited in Thao 2020: 106). Fraser (2000: 22) states that:

> Though there is some validity to the 'transfer' idea, it is only useful in an elaborated form which requires a good understanding of its limitations and ramifications. A simplistic idea that learners are transferring sounds from their native language to the new language is a hindrance rather than a help. It is

> unfortunate that so many teachers, as well as the general public, still hold so strongly to a simple notion of transfer.

Additionally, "language transfer affects all linguistic subsystems including pragmatics and rhetoric, semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, phonetics, and orthography" (Odlin 2003: 437). However, transfer was believed, by many linguists, to be more evident in some subsystems of a language than in others; transfer is less noticed in areas like morphology and syntax than in phonetics and phonology (e.g. Krashen 1982, as cited in Odlin 2003: 439). In addition, as mentioned by Odlin (2003: 445), "the difficulty of noticing cross-linguistic differences may be especially acute in the area of pronunciation".

3. Problems with the current teaching practices, methods, and materials

As stated in Morley (1991), pronunciation teaching methods being time-consuming, with no adequate gains, made instructors question the worthiness of teaching it and made linguists consider the need to reassess the current traditional methods employed in pronunciation instruction in general. Morley (1991), therefore, called for the necessity of using quality classroom resources (as an unbiased means to assess competence and comprehensibility), as well as more observation-based classroom research that would aid designing/choosing the teaching materials and techniques that are most effective within a given context.

Similarly, the unavailability/lack of teaching/learning resources is one of the leading causes of inadequate pronunciation instruction in the Egyptian EFL context. Evaluating English textbook series used in Egyptian primary schools, Abdallah (2016) states that both textbooks and teachers devote limited to no time to the "elaboration and practice" of the pronunciation activities presented. Besides, the books fail to comprise the necessary phonological and communicative aspects of English. In comparison with literacy skills, teaching pronunciation with its elements (e.g. sound production, rhythm, stress, intonation, etc.) is significantly de-emphasised in the Arab world (Huwari & Mehawesh 2015) and many teachers choose to disregard the aspects of pronunciation in today's ESL classroom due to the lack of time, qualification or preparation or the belief that students will naturally acquire correct pronunciation on their own through the environment rather than any form of explicit classroom pronunciation instruction (Hucke 2021: 13).

One of the principal criticisms directed at most language courses/materials is that they involve activities and practices that could be employed in numerous foreign language learning/teaching contexts without taking into consideration the uniqueness of each context. Educators, curricula designers, as well as instructors being aware of the linguistic context facilitate the anticipation of problems pertaining to language transfer and, consequently, addressing them beforehand.

In an effort to evaluate EFL textbooks used in the Arab region, Fareh (2010: 3603) highlighted a number of key factors that are thought to inhibit effective learning/ acquisition. First, despite claims of native English-speaking authors of EFL textbooks and other teaching materials used that their works are designed to suit learners of all EFL

contexts, those textbooks tend to be "culturally inappropriate", which may cause students to develop a sense of exclusion; hence, take a negative stance on the whole process of learning/acquisition of the target language (Fareh 2010: 3603). Cultural irrelevance of activities students are expected to fulfil to reach the sought-after course objectives, especially when not "encouraged by the educational system of the country", could be a major cause why such activities are less likely to be selected by teachers and/or to be pursued by learners (Fareh 2010: 3603). When textbooks and other study materials are designed by authors with other language background(s), especially those with no sufficient linguistic, cultural or educational background on some particular EFL context, those materials fail to address the learners' needs to achieve the desired outcomes. Moreover, irrelevance of the topics, through which the language skills or items are taught/learnt, can lower the level of the students' motivation and interest in the foreign language classes.

Another crucial factor pointed out by Fareh (2010: 3603) is the gap between the level of the study materials and the level of learners' proficiency. If the materials utilised are challengingly higher than the learners' proficiency level, and/or too large to be covered in the time allotted for them by curriculum/lesson planners, it can frustrate the students' learning efforts, lead to loss of learner interest in the target language, and even discredit teachers by their institutions and/or learners' parents for failing to reach the desired outcomes.

Fareh (2010: 3603) also directed criticisms in relation to the study materials designed by Arabic native-speaking authors. According to him, teaching is made pointless in some Arab countries where the process of teaching goes with no prior vision of curriculum, set objectives or target learning results being established before textbooks are actually designed, which is the case with books written by "local authors".

Pronunciation assessment is also an issue raised in the teacher survey of this study. Fareh (2010: 3603) emphasises that assessment policies are one of the major causes of the failure of EFL school programmes in the Arab world:

> Emphasis is often on testing explicitly stated information, predicting the meaning of certain lexical items form the context and one or two test items on the cohesive device of reference. The ability to infer implicitly stated information, the ability to evaluate things, the ability to distinguish opinions from facts, the skill of identifying cohesive devices, in addition to problem solving and critical thinking are just examples of the neglected reading skills in both teaching and testing.

Unqualified teachers are found to be another challenge hindering the success of EFL learning in Egypt. In the findings of Fareh (2010: 3602) who investigated EFL practice at Arab schools, he found out that, apart from a university degree in a relevant major (e.g. degree in English Language and/or Literature, Education or Translation), many teachers had no training courses that qualified them for teaching English as a foreign language. Lack of/Insufficient teacher training leads to unnecessarily excess use of Arabic as the medium of language instruction/learning (employing traditional teaching methods such as Grammar Translation) and classroom interaction; hence, minimal exposure to English and inadequate learning outcomes and domination of the non-communicative

activities (Fareh 2010: 3602). This can lead to students thinking in their native languages when trying to express their thoughts in the target language; thus, producing language items that tend to be L1-like and make no sense in English. This holds for the case of Egyptian EFL learners, as well, especially the less proficient users of English, whose teachers may not be aware of many phonological phenomena or the means of applying the appropriate techniques of pronunciation teaching and evaluation. Those teachers may, as a result, end up ignoring focusing on speaking and pronunciation skills and/or fail to set meaningful goals when teaching pronunciation.

4. Teaching implications

Pronunciation instructors have been applying various approaches to pronunciation teaching including: the Direct Method, Total Physical Response (Asher 2012), Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell 1988), Intuitive-Imitative Approach, Analytic-Linguistic Approach (Celce-Murcia 1991), Integrative Approach (Fraser 2000), traditional activities (e.g. reading aloud) (Adita et al. 2014), Communicative Language Teaching (Tikkakoski 2015), Audiolingualism, and Oral Approach (cited in Robin 2022: 27). Abdallah (2016) suggests that an efficient way to teach pronunciation features to Egyptian EFL learners could be through presenting subsequent authentic activities as an attempt to simulate the use of English in real communication. Students should be introduced to various activities where they can be exposed to sufficient audio and video input to practice uncommon sounds, unreleased consonants in phrases like *what time* and *big cake*, reduced auxiliaries and other functional words, and consonant clusters to learn how to facilitate their pronunciation in natural speech. This could be achieved by introducing pair or group work following the pure pronunciation tasks aiming to contextualise them and integrate other linguistic and interpersonal skills. Other helpful practice activities for more advanced learners can include training on word stress and stress with compound nouns. Learning about contrastive stress would also help to notice how a change in stress can change the meaning and elicit a different response. Intonation in different types of sentences (questions, simple statements, complex sentences, etc.) may be introduced in later stages when learners are already familiar with the segmental aspects.

Al-Ahdal et al. (2015) listed a set of recommendations that seem adequate for the case of Arabic speakers generally. Curriculum designers and educators are encouraged to employ teaching methods such as: discrimination practice, imitation, concrete rules, giving immediate feedback in form of modification rather than error spotting, and to provide more room for integrating the prosodics in the syllabus: by incorporating activities like role play, poem recitation and voice over, even when dealing with other aspects of the language (e.g. grammar, discourse or lexis). Differences between pronunciation problems that might cause misunderstandings and those that only sound non-English without challenging intelligibility and effective communication also need to be made clear when raised at any point in the teaching process. This can help further motivate the learners including those who are “unintelligible” and/or shy (Al-Ahdal et al. 2015: 104).

Similarly, according to Hucke (2021: 12), the necessity to address certain student mispronunciations (either through recasts or thorough descriptions of the pronunciation element in question) should be determined by the comprehensibility level of the mispronounced item. In case of producing mispronunciations that are challenging to learners being intelligible, negotiation of meaning could be an effective strategy to be employed by teachers to boost the learners' sense of motivation, eliminate chances of incomprehensibility and/or maximise the ability to overcome shyness or embarrassment (Hucke 2021: 13&14).

For effective pronunciation teaching, Derwing et al. (2012) point out the need to distribute focus rather equally between segmentals and suprasegmentals. Other productive elements of pronunciation instruction, according to them, should comprise varied activities beyond drills, explicit delivery of rules governing pronunciation in addition to instructing students to observe their own pronunciation with the purpose of noticing their own pronunciation against the target production aiming for improvement of their own performance beyond classroom (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

Nasr (1997: 67) suggests that in teaching English pronunciation to speakers of other languages, it is significant to teach contrasting segments together to highlight the difference(s) between the one which is phonetically closest to the learner (as it exists in his or her native language) and the other which the learner substitutes for the problem sound. The pronunciation of consonant clusters is problematic for speakers whose first languages do not allow many consonants in a cluster. Therefore, Egyptian learners should be familiar with the possible consonant combinations in an English cluster, with a special focus on initial clusters and on three-segment and four-segment medial and final clusters. Egyptian EFL learners should also be familiar with the different pronunciations of inflectional *-ed* and the rules which govern them.

Special attention should also be given to other unfamiliar segments which do not exist in Arabic as the mother tongue (Ahmad 2011: 34-35) such as the vowels /e/, /ə/, /ɜ:/, /əʊ/, /eɪ/, /eə/, /ɪə/, /ʊə/ and the consonant /r/ as a rhotic retroflex approximant [ɻ]. On word, phrase and sentence levels, teachers should also highlight the concept of "silent letters" and stress the notion that, unlike in Arabic, there is no one to one relationship between the spelling of a word and its pronunciation in English (e.g. *Tom**'s*** [tɒm**z**], *miss**ed** thing**s*** **[**mɪs**t** θɪŋ**z**], etc.). Due to the notion that the language alphabetic knowledge shapes one's pronunciation "metalanguage" (Linell 1988 as cited in Fraser 2006: 85), believing that letters in words have to correspond to the actual sounds is also something that is more likely to occur with individuals with no sufficient background in linguistics (Fraser 2006: 85).

Similarly, Morley (1991: 509-510) proposed the "Modes of Practice" that include: "(1) 'Imitative Speaking Practice' with advanced or intermediate students to focus on "controlled production of selected pronunciation/speech features" (2) 'Rehearsed Speaking Practice' to promote the "stabilization of modified pronunciation/speech patterns". The speaking practice can include activities such as: oral reading scripts selected and/or composed by teachers and/or students, preplanned oral presentations (with self-selected topics and feedback critique sessions either immediately or later), out-of-class self-study rehearsals, paired/small-group rehearsal study sessions (with audio and/or videotaping), one-on-one individual speech (with speaking teachers/speech coaches).

Despite this growing recognition of the importance of pronunciation instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, there remains a notable gap in research focused specifically on Egyptian EFL learners' and teachers' perspectives, particularly in relation to pronunciation challenges and instructional needs. While studies have addressed the broader issue of pronunciation teaching in ESL/EFL contexts (Hucke 2021, Robin 2022), the unique socio-linguistic context of Egypt, marked by the influence of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA), has not been sufficiently explored in relation to pronunciation errors and their impact on intelligibility and communicative effectiveness. Additionally, existing research on pronunciation instruction in the region has largely concentrated on general issues such as teaching methods and materials, leaving a gap in understanding the specific pronunciation-related obstacles faced by Egyptian learners and how these can be effectively mitigated in the classroom. Furthermore, while there is considerable literature on the need for more practical, communicative approaches to teaching pronunciation (Derwing & Rossiter 2002, Baker & Murphy 2011), there is no sufficient research that directly investigates the effectiveness of these approaches in the Egyptian EFL context, particularly in terms of teacher qualifications, curriculum design, and student attitudes. This research gap highlights the necessity for more context-specific studies that consider not only the linguistic challenges posed by L1 transfer but also the pedagogical implications of these challenges in improving pronunciation teaching and learning outcomes in Egyptian classrooms.

5. Methodology: Sampling, data collection and participants

The data are a collection of online questionnaire responses provided by 74 Egyptian male and female university students (two of whom said they are EFL teachers as well). 73% of the participating students had their basic education in Arabic-medium schools while 27% went to English-medium schools (or what is known in Egypt as English language schools), in addition to the teachers of the participating students (5 Egyptian male and female teachers, two of whom said they are also EFL learners). Four teachers reported they received their school education in Arabic-medium schools while only one received their basic education in an English-medium school; none of either students or teachers were graduates of other foreign-language-based schools. Students varied in their English proficiency levels (pre-intermediate to advanced, with a range of test scores of 20–50/50 on the Cambridge English Placement Test on reading, writing & listening, taken as a prerequisite for joining their study programmes). Questionnaire data were collected within a time span of one semester (fall semester of the academic year 2022–2023) using convenience sampling; participants are students of the researcher’s colleague teachers. Instructions to answer the survey questions were given in English alongside Modern Standard Arabic to enable respondents (especially students with lower proficiency levels) to select the language through which they would be able to fully understand the survey questions and/or clearly express themselves.

The students participating in the study belonged to four different faculties: Engineering, Logistics, Computer Science, and Business, where English was the language of the study programmes, i.e. instruction, examination, textbooks and study materials. In their programmes, students were required to take English for Specific Purposes as well as

English as a Foreign Language classes for three semesters (consecutive or separate) during their study years at the university. The study involved student participants from different educational backgrounds (foreign-language medium schools and Arabic-medium schools), as well as social/geographical backgrounds to ensure that members of as many sectors of the target population (Egyptian EFL learners) as possible are represented in the sample.

Teacher questionnaire comprised more items than student questionnaire (thirty/six compared to twenty-seven items, respectively). Teachers had to answer the same items designed for students alongside nine additional items. Items of both questionnaires can be found in Appendix 1 (students') and Appendix 2 (teachers'). Questionnaires were constructed in the forms of Likert-scale-based questions, multiple choice questions (some of which allowed selecting as many options as applicable), in addition to open-ended questions. The questionnaires were designed by the researcher as Google forms (where all question fields were required, not allowing respondents to skip any of the questionnaire sections as they answered the questions). Before sent out to the respective respondents, the questionnaires were forwarded to the research advisor of the researcher for review, suggestions for improvement, and approval of the questionnaire final versions.

To overcome any problems that might have been encountered during the research project, and to avoid the absence of any safety or ethical issues in such a study the data were stored and used only for the purposes of this research anonymously, with no indicative details of a person, a place, etc. The questionnaires were forwarded for completion as Google form links via email and Whatsapp study groups to the participating students and teachers by the Head of the English Department, who was himself one of the teacher participants assigned to one of the student groups. He was also the programme coordinator in charge of the selection of classroom activities and compiling classroom materials. Both teachers and students were also thoroughly informed about this research and its objectives, and were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to refuse participation for any reason(s). Such procedures were thought to help avoid threats to internal validity and other threats including face threats and trust issues to the study participants and pave the way for the research objectives and outcomes to tap into the participants' needs.

The following are the research hypotheses:

Hypothesis (i): Egyptian EFL learners face significant pronunciation challenges due to the influence of their mother tongue (ECA) on their English pronunciation, which negatively impacts their intelligibility and comprehensibility.

Hypothesis (ii): There is a gap between the learners' expectations and the actual pronunciation instruction they receive in Egyptian EFL classrooms, particularly in terms of teaching methods, materials, and teacher qualifications.

The research questions are listed below:

Research question (i): How do Egyptian EFL learners and teachers perceive the role of pronunciation in language learning?

Research question (ii): What are the main pronunciation challenges faced by Egyptian EFL learners, and how do these challenges relate to mother tongue influence on their English pronunciation?

Research question (iii): How do Egyptian EFL learners perceive the effectiveness of the current pronunciation instruction in terms of teaching methods, materials, and teacher qualifications?

Research question (iv): What are the expectations of Egyptian EFL learners and teachers regarding pronunciation instruction, and how do these expectations align with the actual pronunciation teaching practices in Egyptian classrooms?
Research question (v): What improvements in pronunciation instruction do Egyptian EFL learners and teachers suggest for textbooks, teaching materials, and classroom practices to enhance pronunciation teaching and learning outcomes?

6. Results and discussion

This section displays a thorough description of both students' and teachers' responses to the pronunciation issues raised in the questionnaires. Responses to the question asking the learners to determine the level of importance of learning English highlighted their view of English as a must-have skill for a successful present and future, not just a mere advantage. There was no great difference in the degree to which the learners viewed learning English (75.7% of the respondents regarded studying English as "very important", 18.9% reported it was "important"; see Figure 1).

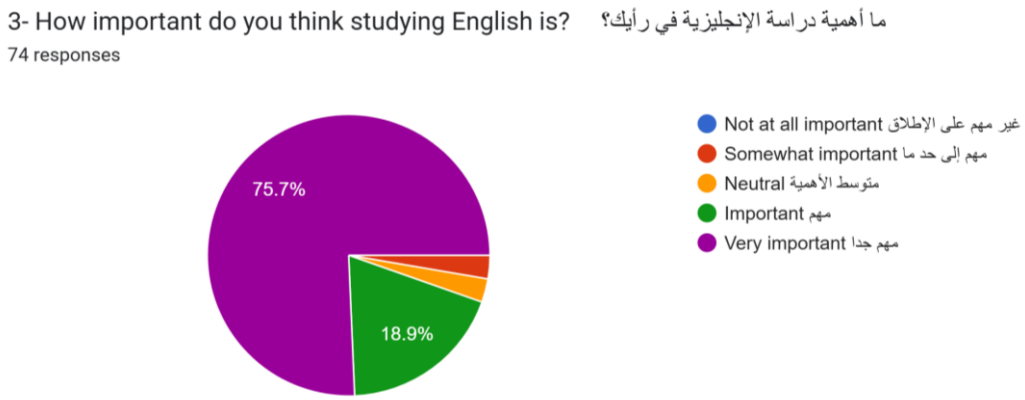

Figure 1: The importance of studying English (learners)

Elaborations on the importance of learning English as a foreign language included:
(i) Students mentioned that English is the international language of communication among people from various nations and geographical areas. For some learners, such communication requires knowledge of good English, higher competence or fluency levels, and mastering a "correct" accent.
(ii) According to some respondents, one's view of the world is shaped by the number of languages they know; one's world is as vast as their dictionary. English was regarded as the common-ground tongue that facilitates relocation, builds relationships, and opens a window to different cultures. Additionally, taking into consideration the number of resources available in English to global citizens, knowing English offers one many sources of learning.
(iii) English was described as the language of present and future business. It is viewed as a skill needed for the labor market, especially in international/multinational environments.

Even national workplaces in Egypt hold interviews in English, focusing on English skills (including pronunciation, fluency, and listening skills). Hence, there are no sufficient employability skills without appropriate knowledge of English. English may also expand career horizons, and more attention should be directed at including TOEFL and IELTS skills in the Egyptian study curricula.

(iv) Some students added that English is the language of today's science (introduced and studied in English) and the medium language of most study majors taught at Egyptian universities and other higher education institutions. English is seen as essential to keep track of the progress of modern scientific research.

(v) Other learners argued that studying English facilitates the learning of several typologically similar languages, while others believed English serves a social function in addition to academic and practical purposes, particularly for young people due to its extensive use in many aspects of Egyptian daily life.

Teachers' reactions on the importance of English learning aligned with those of the students. All five teachers believed learning English is crucial for a better future (e.g. travel, immigration opportunities, labor market needs, career development), knowledge of skills and international sciences available in English (e.g. computer skills), global communication, and a deeper understanding of other cultures. It is also vital as the language of the web and modern technologies.

Students deemed listening and speaking to be the most problematic skills in English (44.6% and 43.2%, respectively), compared to writing (21.6%), reading (10.8%), and none, of the skills mentioned, (24.3%) (see Figure 2). Teachers also identified pronunciation/speaking as the most problematic (60%), followed by listening (40%) and writing (20%) (see Figure 4). No votes were recorded for reading, comprehension, or "none." These results reflect the written-oriented study programs in Egypt, which overlook conversation skills. Despite being overlooked in Egyptian EFL classrooms, English pronunciation was viewed as highly required by both learners and teachers. Commenting on the importance of studying English pronunciation, 58.1% of the respondents voted "very important," 28.4% reported it was important, 9.5% voted "somewhat important," and 4.1% were neutral (Figure 3). None voted for "not at all important". Regarding teachers, four of them voted "very important," while one voted "important" (Figure 5).

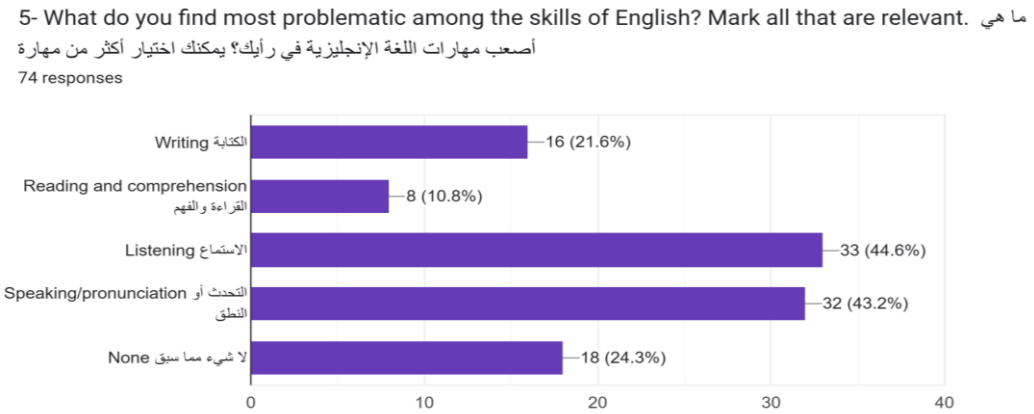

Figure 2: The most problematic among the skills of English (learners)

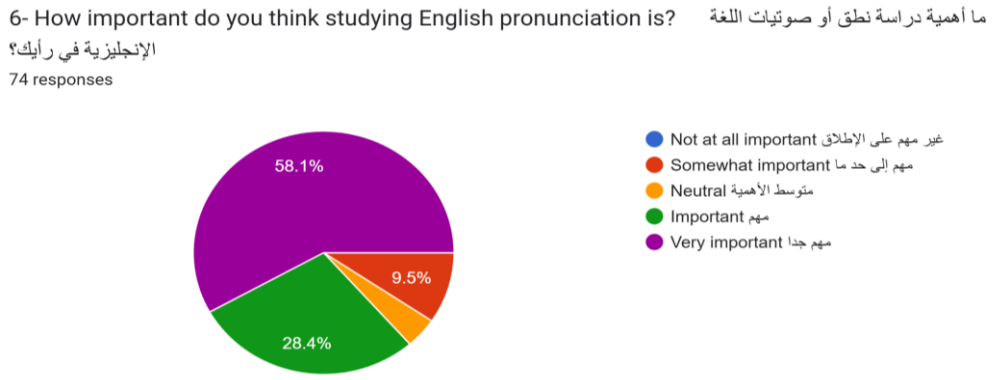

Figure 3: The importance of studying English pronunciation (learners)

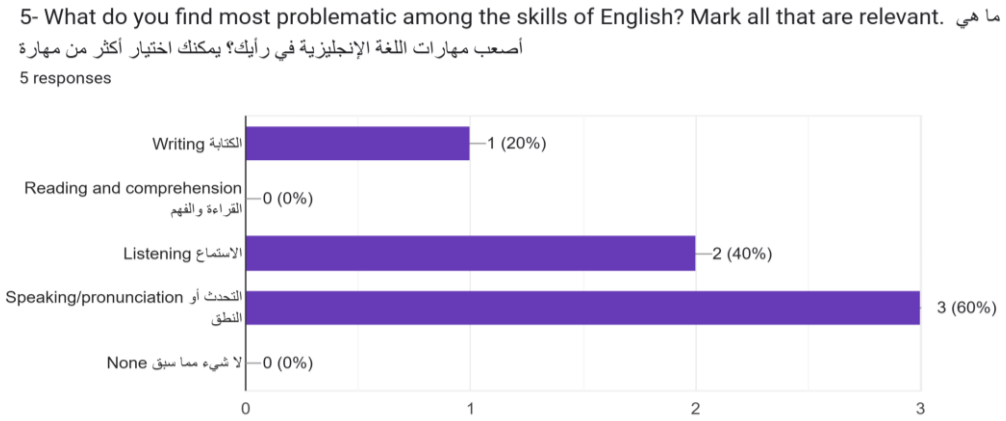

Figure 4: The most problematic among the skills of English (teachers)

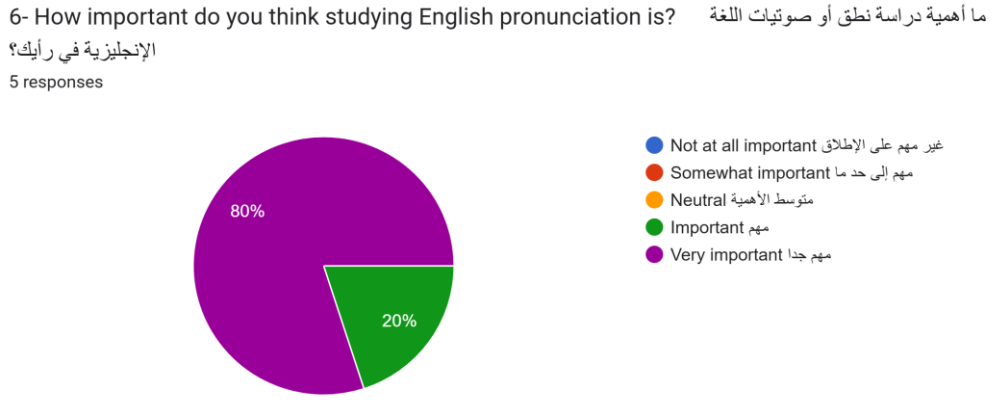

Figure 5: The importance of studying English pronunciation (teachers)

Despite their view of English pronunciation as moderately difficult (51.4% of students and 60% of teachers), 31.1% of students and one teacher reported they had not learned any pronunciation skills in school (Figure 6). When asked to specify the pronunciation aspects learned in school, 50% of student respondents voted for "pronunciation of individual sounds", followed by "word and/or sentence stress" (25.7%) and "rhythm" (20.3%), with considerable weight given to the teaching of these skills (41.9% and 40.5%, respectively) (Figure 7). Teacher ratings highlighted inconsistencies in the time and effort dedicated to these elements (ranging from much focus by three raters, to moderate focus by one rater and no focus by one rater; Figure 9). Teachers prioritised "pronunciation of individual sounds" (60%), followed by "word and/or sentence stress" and "features of connected speech" (40% each). Other options (rhythm, intonation, and other) were rated equally by teachers (one vote/20% each) (Figure 8). This aligns with the survey by Burns (2006), where segmental instruction was emphasised over suprasegmental instruction (cited in Robin 2022: 27).

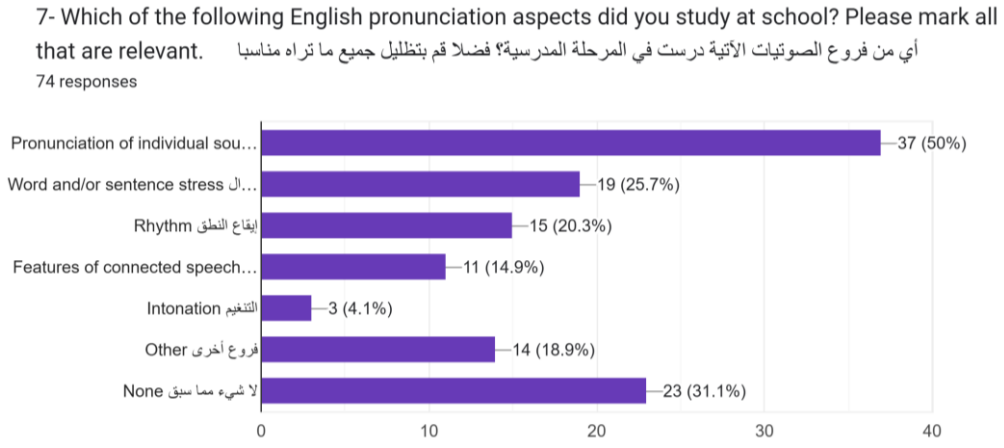

Figure 6: English pronunciation aspects studied at school (learners)

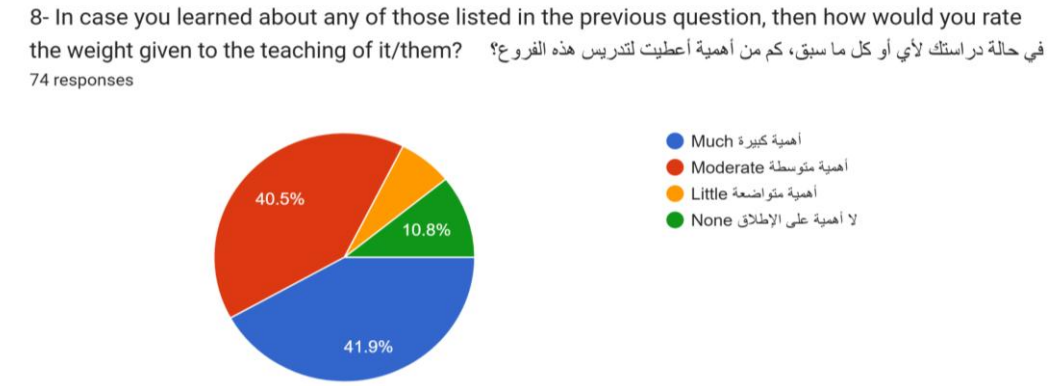

Figure 7: Weight given to the teaching of the pronunciation skills (learners)

Figure 8: English pronunciation aspects studied at school (teachers)

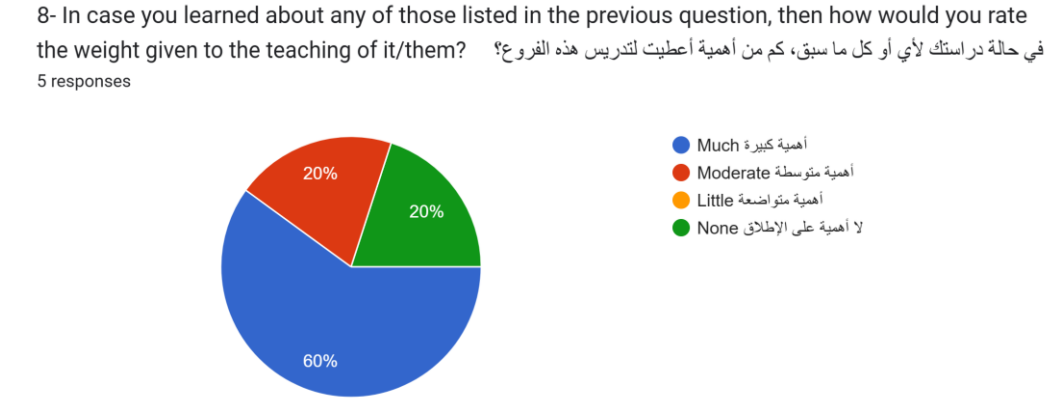

Figure 9: Weight given to the teaching of the pronunciation skills (teachers)

Since the pronunciation of individual sounds as well as word and/or sentence stress are the main aspects tackled in Egyptian EFL classrooms, they were reported to be less problematic (13.5%, 20.3% respectively) compared to features of connected speech, rhythm, and intonation that were considered the most problematic (47.3%, 37.8%, 28.4% respectively) (Figure 10). Responses suggest a need to prioritise teaching suprasegmentals such as tone, rhythm, and features of connected speech in Egyptian EFL classrooms. Suprasegmental instruction aids in increasing oral fluency levels and is crucial to speech comprehensibility (Derwing et al. 1998, as cited in Robin 2022: 27). However, teacher participants viewed segmentals and suprasegmentals as equally challenging (two votes each for pronunciation of individual sounds, word and/or sentence stress, and intonation), highlighting the need to integrate both in the Egyptian EFL classrooms (Figure 11).

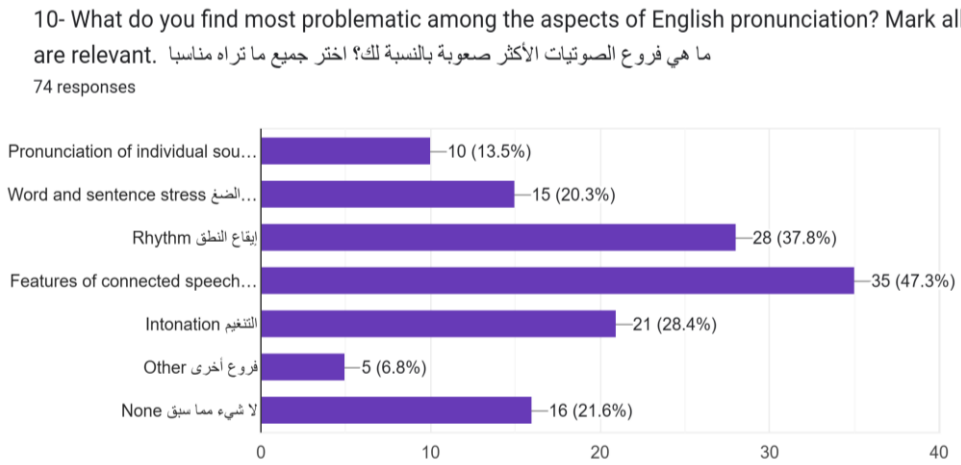

Figure 10: The most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation (learners)

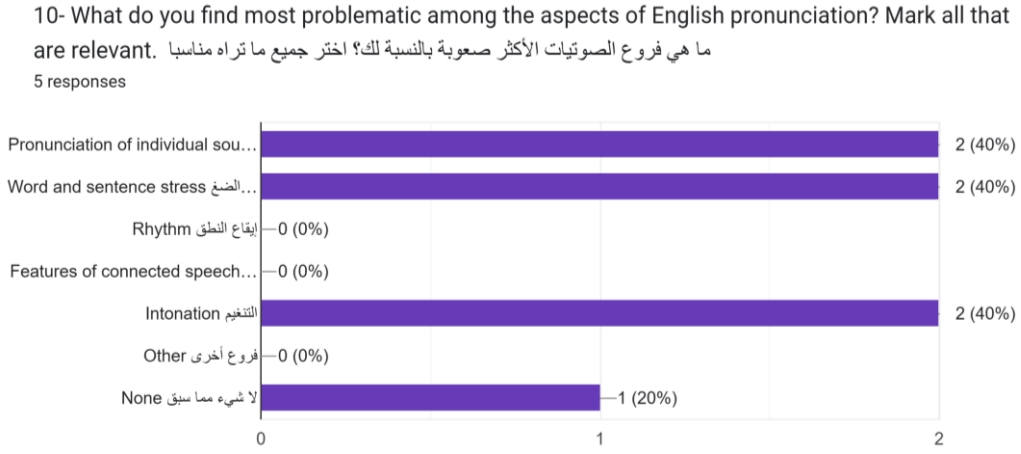

Figure 11: The most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation (teachers)

Learners and teachers were asked to determine the most and least favourable accent(s) of English (native and/or non-native, regardless of the variety: English as a native language, English as a second language, and English as a foreign language) (Figure 12), and clearly state their attitudes towards the accents they would be referring to in their responses to the relevant questions. British and American accents were both found to be favoured by students, each for its own reasons. 37.8% reported they prefer the American accent while 31.1% voted for the preference of the British accent. Both accents were found to be equally favoured by 23% of participants, with a tendency to practise both accents and a desire to master them. On the other hand, 8.1% had no specific preferences. The British accent was viewed as the more familiar accent learnt since childhood and taught in schools, being favoured for its clarity; it was commented that the British accent is not as “fast” or “complicated” as other accents, making it easy to produce and understand, especially among speakers of other languages, with sound starts and pauses and words “less

swallowed". Some reported the British accent was admired for aesthetic reasons, described as purely "pleasant", "attractive", "luxurious" and "catchy". The American accent was prioritised by some participants for pragmatic reasons. Due to the dominance of American movies and music, the American accent was regarded to be the "popular"/"common" choice, even to some who went to British schools. It was also seen to be the "easier" accent compared with the "classic", "emphatic", "more professional" and "more formal" ones.

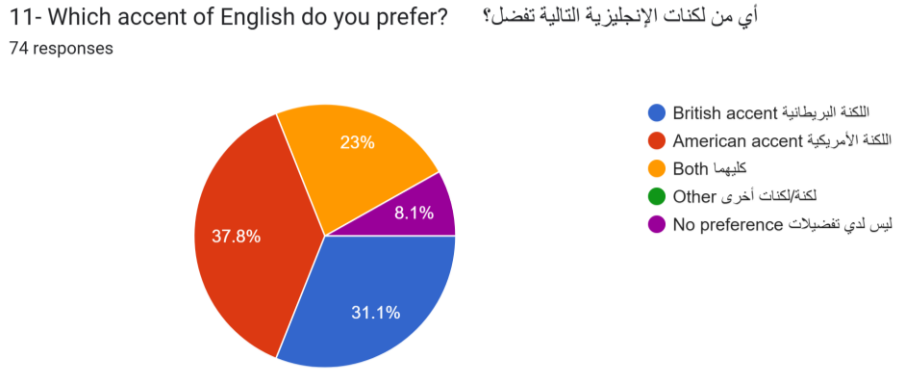

Figure 12: The most favoured English accent(s) (learners)

Teachers' views were inconsistent (Figure 13). Two teachers (40%) preferred the British accent for its aesthetics and clarity. One reported equal preference for both British and American accents as the two well-known accents used interchangeably in Egyptian EFL curricula. Another suggested "a more neutral accent" would be a better option for global communication. The last response marked no preference for any specific accents over others.

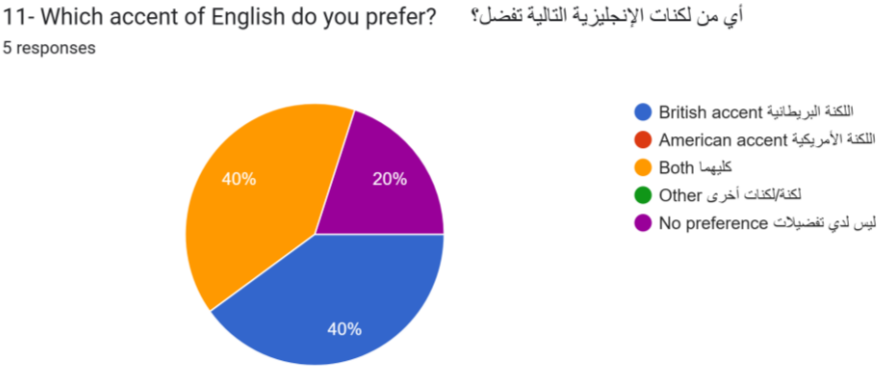

Figure 13: The most favoured English accent(s) (teachers)

Regarding the least favourite accent(s) for students (Figure 14), 37.8% selected the British accent, followed by the American (25.7%). 23% reported having no least favourite accent(s), with some commenting that all accents are "fun to learn and speak" and "equally unique". Students who voted against the British accent found it "fake"/"unreal",

"unfamiliar", "less popular" or "hard to understand and/or pronounce" if not a native speaker of the British English tongue. Others regarded the American accent as "complicated" and "difficult to follow" due to its speed and sound alterations. Native and non-native accents were among the least favoured by 13.5% of respondents. For example, the Irish, Scottish, Indian and Japanese accents were referred to as less approved of for the unclarity and/or the confusion listening to them could cause. The Indian accent is thought to be less "musical"/"harmonious" while the Japanese one is characterised by mispronunciations that would hinder communication (e.g. adding paragogic vowels to consonant-ending English words). The Australian accent was also less favoured, but for aesthetic reasons (unpleasantness to the ears). A student added East Asian accents to the list of the least intelligible accents.

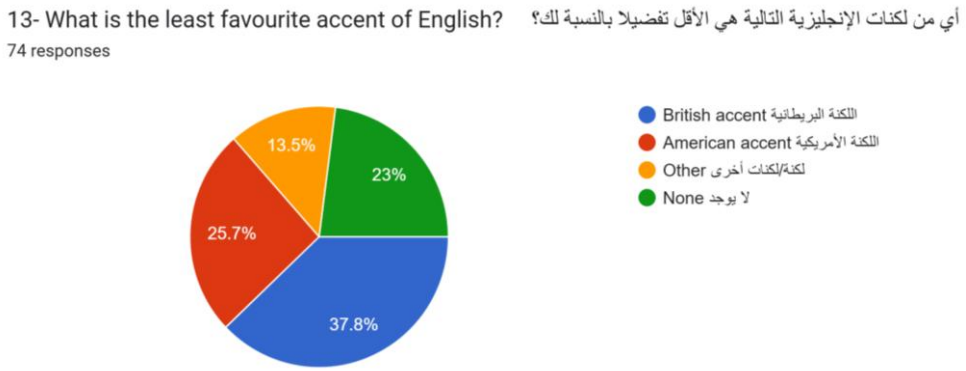

Figure 14: The least favoured English accent(s) (learners)

Concerning teachers' least favoured accent(s) (Figure 15), the American accent was selected by one teacher for its pace, lack of clarity and aesthetics. Another teacher pointed out there is no single "British accent"; the range of traditional and modern British accents reflects differences in speakers' backgrounds. One teacher believed any accent not commonly used (e.g. Irish and Australian) should be less favoured. Another suggested shifting the focus from "accents" to "correct English" in L2 oral communication.

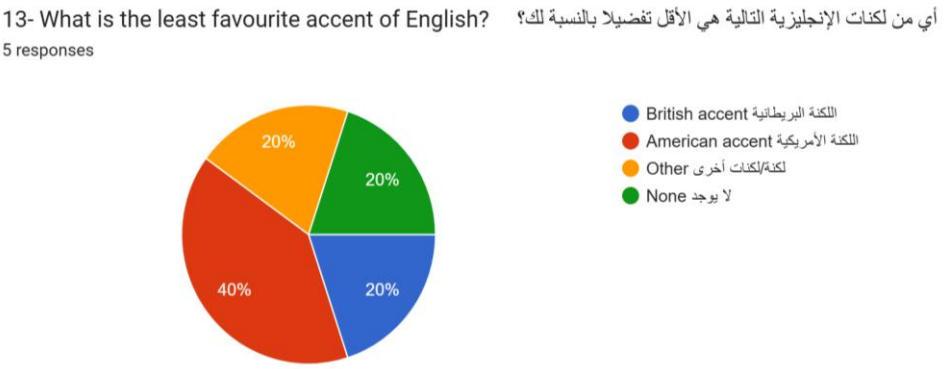

Figure 15: The least favoured English accent(s) (teachers)

Students were asked which accents should be adopted in Egyptian curricula (Figure 16). 50% voted for the American accent for its popularity and ease of acquisition, while 39.2% voted for the British accent, thought to be the "standard", "elegant", "more formal/official", and "clearer" accent of English. Participants who voted "not sure" commented they lacked sufficient expertise to determine which accents should be adopted. Most teachers (three out of five) believed the British accent should be adopted for its clarity and relatively slower pace facilitating EFL pronunciation acquisition. Another teacher believed both accents should be adopted; being familiarised with them both is thought to foster communication and reduce misunderstandings. The fifth teacher preferred a "neutral" accent that is not restricted to geographical or cultural influences. Figure 17 below shows teachers' votes for the accent(s) to be adopted:

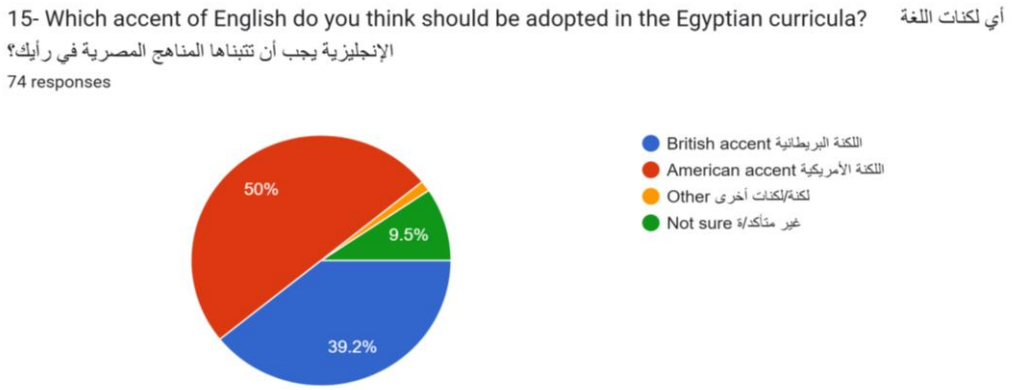

Figure 16: English accent(s) to be adopted in the Egyptian curricula (learners)

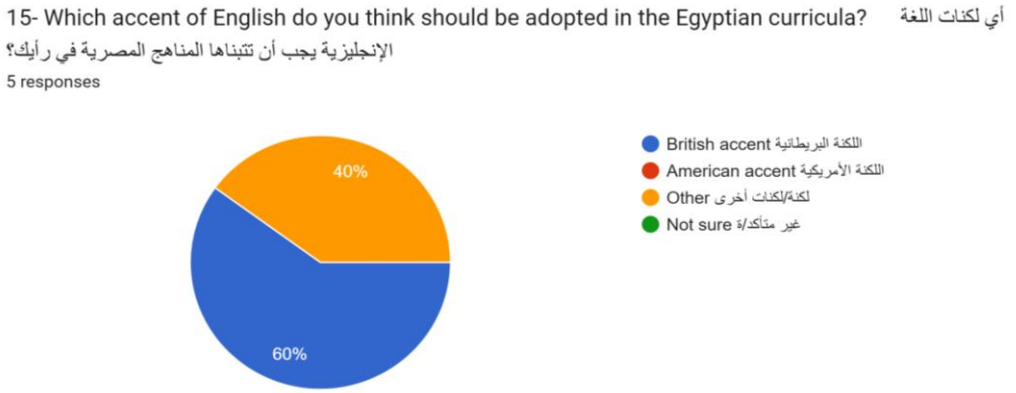

Figure 17: English accent(s) to be adopted in the Egyptian curricula (teachers)

Attitudes towards the Egyptian pronunciation of English varied across respondents. Many students labelled it as "not unsatisfactory", "tolerable", "passable" or "generally good", noting that: (1) no better could be expected since English is not the Egyptians' mother tongue, (2) having an accent is acceptable for speakers of other languages, and (3)

it is at least intelligible (for them, Egyptian speakers of English) compared to other non-native accents. Two teachers commented that the Egyptian pronunciation is "good in general", but with some mispronunciations pertaining, particularly, to the production of individual sounds. They noted a tendency to approximate the "American accent" and characterised the speech as "enthusiastic" and "cheering". Other participants disapproved of the Egyptian pronunciation, describing it as "not good enough", "incorrect", "one of the most disturbing/irritating", not adhering to any standard accent of English, "needs improvement", "mediocre for ESL learners" or even "funny" due to overadaptation/ oversimplification. A teacher commented, with some efforts directed towards mastering the production of unfamiliar sounds, an improved practice (especially of the pronunciation of segmentals) should not be a challenge for a speaker whose mother tongue is ECA since it encompasses most of the individual sounds in the system of English, and other students believed accurate pronunciation would depend on proficiency level regardless of the learner's mother tongue.

When students were asked about the Egyptian pronunciation of English, interpretations varied. Some believed it reflects identity construction in EFL, indicating it is influenced by the mother tongue, making it unique and recognisable. Similar to the findings by Rubdy & Saraceni (2006: 11, cited in Jenkins 2009: 205), many learners viewed the Egyptian accent as an ELF variant to embrace as part of L2 acquisition process, and a representation of the Egyptian non-native identity. Others felt that, if practiced well, the Egyptian accent is comprehensible compared to those of other native languages. Conversely, some respondents criticised the Egyptian accent for overlapping phonemes (e.g. /p/ and /b/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/) and rhythm issues. Others found that the Egyptian accent is one that evokes laughter or embarrassment, sometimes causing miscommunication, while many presented neutral stands on the Egyptian pronunciation of English.

Students evaluated their pronunciation of English, with many expressing general satisfaction through various ratings like "passable," "good," or "amazing." Some felt their pronunciation needed improvement, while a few rated their accent as native-like. Negative descriptions included "weak" and "not (very) good," with some finding the question irrelevant being addressed to members of an Arabic-speaking community. Regarding teachers, two expressed confidence in their accents, rating them highly, while another believed that an intelligible accent is satisfactory. However, two teachers felt they needed more practice despite rating their accents positively.

Seventy percent of student respondents believed their English pronunciation reflects characteristics of Egyptian Arabic. They considered having an L1-based accent common among EFL speakers, noting that L1 affects L2 acquisition, particularly in a linguistically homogeneous environment. In contrast, 30% of students who had a solid foreign language background or viewed Arabic and English as two separate constructions (thus, non-interactive) reported no mother language influence on their English pronunciation.

In an educational system that does not prioritise oral accuracy, the distinction between intelligibility and nativeness in teaching English pronunciation to speakers of other languages is crucial. Intelligibility refers to a learner's ability to effectively communicate with both native and non-native speakers despite the influence of their L1, while nativeness is the traditional goal of pronunciation instruction aimed at approximating a standard model of pronunciation within the learner's linguistic context

(Jindapitak 2015: 260). In the nativeness concept, native speakers are viewed as the standard bearers of the language and the definers of "pedagogic norms" (Jindapitak 2015: 260). Conversely, intelligibility is context-dependent and more aligned with the contemporary global status of English (Jenkins 2000: 5). Therefore, the primary focus of pronunciation instruction should be on improving learners' comprehensibility, self-correction, and confidence while communicating in L2 (Morley 1991).

In regard to whether or not students think a foreign language learner should aim for native pronunciation of English, participants varied in their interpretations of the concept, revealing irregular patterns (votes are in Figure 18 below). Many respondents voted "not necessarily", giving a variety of reasons such as: (i) English is a tool for communication after all; (ii) one does not have to attain native proficiency of pronunciation as long as English serves its purpose (study, living in an English-speaking country, mutual intelligibility); (iii) it requires years of hard work and dedicated practice, which may further complicate the process of learning; (iv) in line with Kenworthy (1987), Munro (2008), and Munro & Derwing (1995), there is no harm in a certain degree of accentedness or, in Fraser's (2000: 20) terms "noticeability of an accent", as long as a learner speaks generally correct English without inhibiting mutual comprehensibility; (v) it would depend on who one speaks to; communicating in any level of English proficiency with a fellow Egyptian, sharing their L1 and/or belonging to the same linguistic community, would not require native speaking proficiency and would suggest relatively lower threats to mutual intelligibility. On the contrary, non-native pronunciation is more likely to pose threats to comprehension of native listeners (Derwing & Rossiter 2002). Responses by this group of students support McKay's (2002) argument that not all non-native learners/users of English would aspire to the acquisition of native-like proficiency in pronunciation (as cited in Jindapitak 2015: 261); instead, they would rather focus on communicating their messages and establishing linguistic identities marked by the varieties used in the context of ELF (Widdowson 1994, cited in Jindapitak 2015: 261).

A group of students expressed a desire to attain a native or near-native accent in English, citing reasons such as preventing miscommunication and avoiding embarrassment due to mispronunciations. This aligns with Hucke (2021: 5), who highlights that many English learners prioritise native-like pronunciation even outside English-speaking communities. Meanwhile, 51.4% of respondents felt that mutual intelligibility is sufficient for effective communication in Egyptian EFL classes, emphasising speech comprehensibility and fluency as main aims. They believed that while a foreign accent is inevitable, a near-native accent requires early exposure to the target language (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991: 158). On the other hand, 39.2% supported the idea that both native-like pronunciation and mutual intelligibility are essential for communication.

Students identified several factors hindering proper English pronunciation, including ignoring language details, inadequate training, and the influence of Arabic phonological rules (negative transfer). Others added the educational systems that place the heaviest orientation towards content knowledge and accuracy for reading and writing. In this respect, speaking is different from writing where there is room for error/mistake correction without affecting the accuracy or effectiveness of the final product.

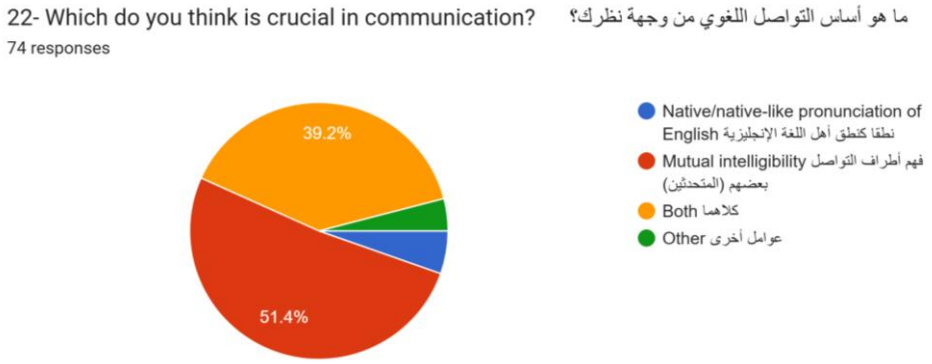

Figure 18: Nativeness versus intelligibility (learners)

A significant 95.9% reported that pronunciation instruction in Egypt tends to be unsatisfactory and needs improvement (Figure 19), advocating for English to be taught in English rather than through Arabic. According to one of the respondents, "if students grew up pronouncing English incorrectly, it would be hard for them to learn the correct L2 patterns when they are older". Students emphasised the importance of the availability of more room for sufficient practice inside and outside the classroom on a daily basis. Practice activities could include surrounding oneself with an English-speaking community, native or non-native, virtually (via online media/platforms) or in real life, so that the only choice the learners would have left is interacting and expressing oneself in English. Some students added that without independent self-learning, they would not have been good in speaking English.

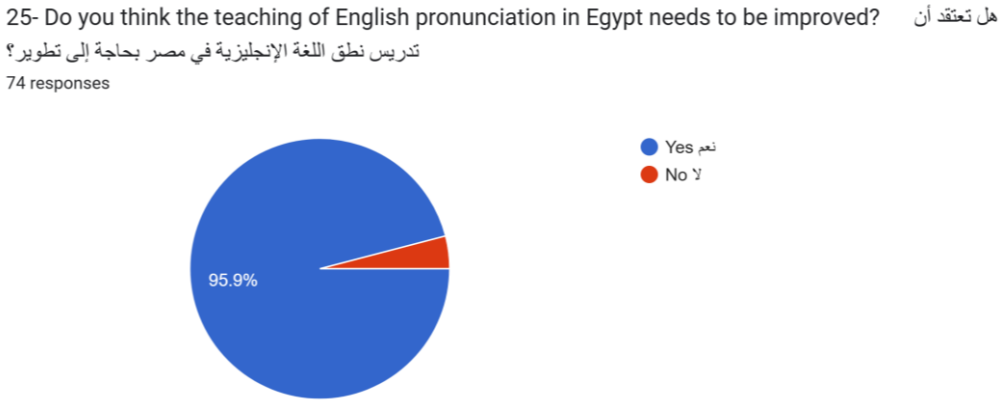

Figure 19: Adequacy of the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt (learners)

Qualified language teachers are viewed as crucial for EFL learning, with a need for more creative teaching techniques that motivate students to pursue higher pronunciation proficiency. Many students feel they struggle with pronunciation due to lack of efficient training. The participants of the current study called for enhanced professional development for teachers, particularly those whose accents are influenced by Egyptian

Arabic. This recommendation is in line with the findings of many previous surveys on pronunciation instruction attributing the inadequate training to the lack of recommended-pedagogy-based quality resources available to both teachers and learners (often with a minor focus on production activities) alongside the limited teacher professional development programmes (Derwing et al. 2012, Hucke 2021: 6). These are two major reasons why many teachers may solely rely on their own intuition in pronunciation instruction (Morley 1991). This also aligns with Robin's (2022: 33) suggestion that effective teacher training is essential for successful language instruction. Students believe that attracting qualified individuals to teaching will improve pronunciation instruction, as confident teachers can better facilitate learning and address students' needs (Fraser 2006: 81-82). The role of a well-trained language teacher is believed to be vital for effective L2 acquisition, as they are responsible for creating a supportive and meaningful learning environment (Fareh 2010: 3601).

Students concluded their survey answers providing suggestions for efficient methods/styles of learning and teaching pronunciation in Egyptian EFL classrooms and textbooks. Understanding learners' preferred styles would help educators design and review programmes to meet students' needs (Robin 2022: 33). Generally, students expressed a desire for increased emphasis on pronunciation teaching, as current approaches are seen as superficial. Many supported the use of communicative tasks, such as presentations and group conversations, and advocated for shifting focus from grades to genuine learning. This aligns with Morley's (1991) recommendations for controlled practice guided by interactive instructional methods. This, according to the learners, would add fun to the process of learning and make it more entertaining as well as beneficial. Communicative tasks could be carried over to outside the classroom by the students alternatively being given a common problem (e.g. population increase) and being asked to conduct some sort of off-classroom research on aspects related to the problem (e.g. the nature of the problem, causes, proposed solutions, etc.), then present it orally in a following class session, and completely in English. This way, students, for a more effective learning experience, can develop research skills (e.g. data gathering), presentation, communication, brainstorming, discussion and problem solving skills (e.g. presenting information and related views in English, receiving comments and questions from their peers on the topic and feedback on their performance), as well as improve their spoken English by being provided with individual constructive feedback from their teachers. This recommendation appears to be in line with Ur's (2009: 55) view that "deliberate correction and training does improve pronunciation and if this is so it seems a pity to neglect it". Some student participants also suggested inviting native English-speaking educators for workshops so that students can have the opportunity to listen to native English speakers and interact with them more often and, consequently, improve their own pronunciation and gain more confidence, knowing that they are not only able to communicate with fellow Egyptians who are already familiar with their accent. This supports Arcaya's (2020: 33) view of native English teachers as the most valued in non-native communities and "the most reliable English language source ... for their accent-free pronunciation".

Students also emphasised the importance of teacher-student interaction and a student-centric approach to learning. Activities outside the classroom the learners

mentioned included listening to English music, watching English films, reading aloud, and practicing in front of a mirror to improve pronunciation and communication (by increasing the learners' level of self-confidence speaking in English, helping them pay attention to how the language comes out of their mouths and giving them a chance of self-review). This student-focused approach is backed by Fareh (2010: 3602), who advocates for learner-centered activities that cater to individual needs. Fareh notes that a successful educational process must prioritise each learner, allowing more opportunities for the participation of learners below or above "the level of the average student" on which teaching is often based, so that the less proficient learners can keep pace and the more proficient can find something novel/beneficial to learn. Teacher-centered classes often create "less motivated" learners and changes their role as active participants in the learning process to becoming "passive listeners". Nevertheless, it is not an easy task for a public school teacher in Egypt to involve every single learner in classroom interactions due to the larger class size.

Regarding effective pronunciation instruction methods, teachers suggested three approaches: the Intuitive-imitative Approach, the Analytic-linguistic Approach, and the Integrative Approach. (1) The intuitive-imitative approach posits that ESL learners can acquire pronunciation naturally by listening and imitating models without prior formal instruction (Kacem & Sayah 2020: 18). (2) The Analytic-linguistic Approach, viewed by Kelly (1969) as an extension of the Intuitive-imitative Approach, emphasises explicit teaching and the use of tools like phonemic charts and phonetic symbols to enhance learners' analytical skills (Kacem & Sayah 2020: 18). (3) The Integrative Approach combines both methods, emphasising communication skills and speaking proficiency through "meaningful task-based activities" (Kacem & Sayah 2020: 19). The participating teachers stressed the importance of exposing learners to different English accents through audio and video content. This aligns with Ur's (2009: 55) findings that were in support of the availability of various accents, even if a certain accent is chosen over others for its relevance to the teaching/learning context: "In any case, even assuming that you are teaching one 'standard' variety as a model, it is a good idea to give learners at least some exposure to others, through the use of 'live' speakers or recordings, in order to raise awareness of other possible accents – and, of course, for listening practice". This recommendation also reflects Wandel's (2003:72) view that "taking the reality of English as a 'world language' seriously, EFL-teaching must enhance its geographical scope and include non-mainstream cultures". In addition, according to Wandel (2003: 72), raising learners' awareness of the importance of using English as a lingua franca "also means to accustom them to being interculturally sensitive".

As evident in the teacher responses, the Communicative Approach to the teaching/learning of English pronunciation was regarded as a central approach to pronunciation instruction, focusing on communicative competence, both fluency and accuracy, as essential for language learning and the integration of other language skills (Richards 2003: 21). Teachers noted the need for professional training and regular evaluations to improve their spoken English and enhance the level of reliability of educators involved in the Egyptian scene of teaching practice. Teachers also highlighted the necessity for affordable language resources and early exposure to pronunciation in school curricula.

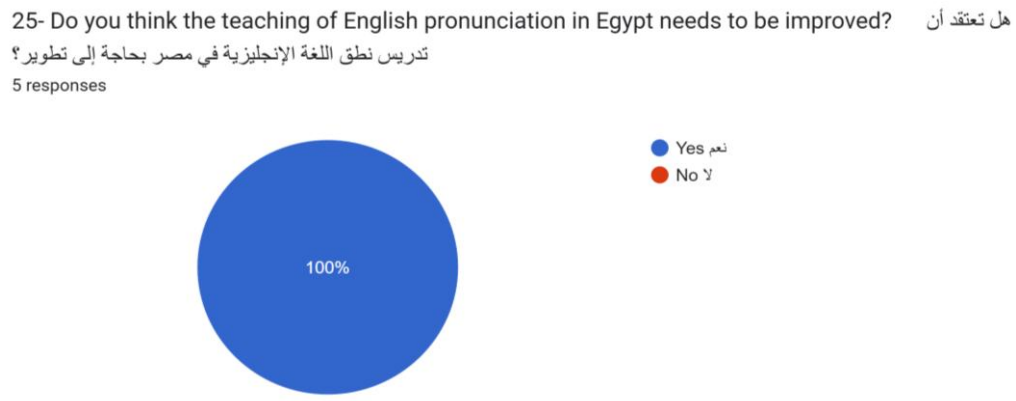

Figure 20: Adequacy of the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt (teachers)

The following set of questions were addressed to the teacher respondents only. The first two questions aimed to explore classroom techniques and activities employed while teaching the pronunciation component and the frequency of teaching it. Three of the five teachers reported they teach pronunciation in class through varied pronunciation activities such as: interactive phonemic chart, gamification, imitative exercises (e.g. listen and repeat), playing audio and video content (e.g. English songs, short movies, videos for educational and entertainment purposes) three to four times a month. Aligning with Fareh (2010), teachers of the current research stressed the necessity of integrating the element of pronunciation with the other skills of English. Teaching/learning the language components separably, the concept referred to by Fareh (2010: 3603) as "compartmentalization" or "fragmented approach", as opposed to "the whole language /approach" (where skills of the language are taught/learnt together and interrelate), is believed to pose threats to the learners' "communicative competence". Where teaching is built upon the mastery of EFL literacy skills independently while both the oral and aural skills are excluded/neglected, it becomes challenging for the learners to contextualise their knowledge of the learnt elements (for instance, new vocabulary items or grammatical rules) in real-life situations that require communication in the target language.

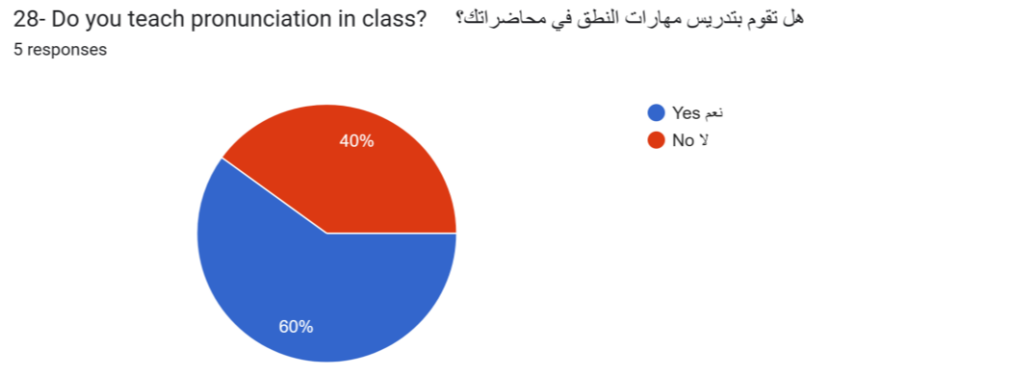

Figure 21: Teachers' focus on the teaching of English pronunciation

As far as the assessment and correction of student pronunciation are concerned, all teachers noted they assess their students' pronunciation (Figure 22) during the speaking activities and correct their pronunciation inaccuracies (Figure 23) through immediate corrective feedback (during activities) or delayed corrective feedback (after a completed task). Those teachers who reported they favoured immediate feedback mentioned they give the correct item(s)/form(s), repeat them before students then ask students to repeat the correct form(s). For error correction, other teachers stated they could highlight the mispronounced content for students explicitly by pointing out the problematic item(s), or implicitly by indicating the presence of an error through some gesture or by implying the mispronounced content in a context with the purpose of making errors observable to the learners, after which students are expected to notice the errors on their own and produce the correct form(s) upon realising the problems. A teacher mentioned they would prioritise delayed corrective feedback to avoid interrupting the fluency/the task or the flow of ideas and any situations that would pose face threats to the students.

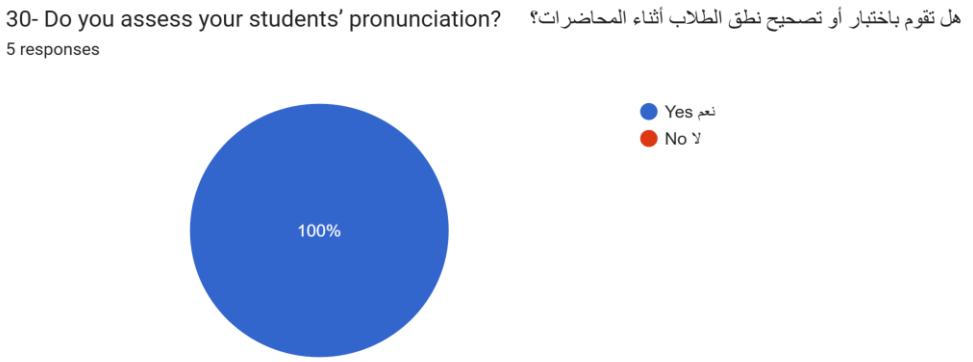

Figure 22: Teachers' assessment of their students' pronunciation

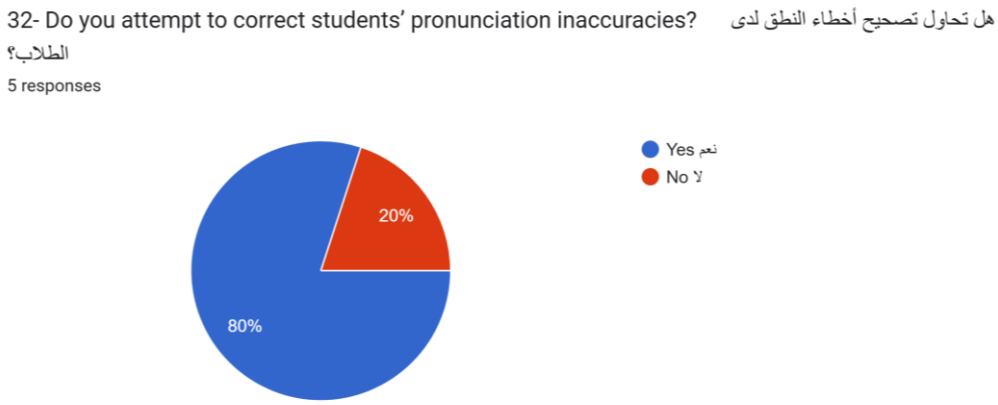

Figure 23: Teachers' correction of their students' pronunciation inaccuracies

As detailed above, all teachers reported they correct students' mispronunciations through direct and indirect feedback presenting some audio and video resources for the students to learn and practice the target form(s) or element(s). However, teachers varied in their responses pertaining to the pronunciation aspects they tend to focus on. Two of the teachers mentioned they give priority to the instruction of individual sounds, two other teachers reported focusing on suprasegmental elements such as stress, intonation, and/or features of connected speech, while only one teacher stated they believed it was essential to correct all inaccuracies regarding every element of pronunciation (both segmentals and suprasegmentals).

Teachers believed positive personalities of both learners and educators, along with motivation and up-to-date resources, play a vital role in improving pronunciation. They identified several drawbacks in available pronunciation resources, including a lack of authentic materials, insufficient practice activities, and outdated courses that fail to engage students. This is in line with the recommendations by Brown (2001) who proposes the use of attractive study materials and strategies that meet the learners' needs and expectations. This recommendation, by both students and teachers, is a call for ensuring the learners are thoroughly educated about the teachers' and/or educational institutions' expectations from them in terms of practice and learning outcomes. Students of the present study also asserted that teachers need to exhibit enthusiasm towards their students, classroom environment and the whole process of teaching.

Teachers reported several challenges while teaching English pronunciation. Three teachers identified mother tongue interference as a significant issue, noting that learners often rely on their L1, which hinders their ability to learn "the correct pronunciation" of English. This interference complicates the teaching process, requires teachers to spend additional time and effort on foundational pronunciation skills, regardless of the proficiency level(s) of their students. Additionally, teachers mentioned students' lack of learning readiness and aptitude as obstacles in the EFL context in study. According to Fareh (2010: 3602), these complaints do not fall in place when teachers overlook their role in creating motivating learning environments. Teachers cannot expect sufficient student motivation when they do not actively foster a positive classroom atmosphere or, as emphasised by Race (1998), do not participate in "creating a thirst for learning" that could be fulfilled through some techniques such as: raising awareness of learning outcomes, ensuring purposeful teaching, using diverse materials, involving students in planning, and considering their feedback when setting curricula, planning sessions and making modifications to the existing learning resources, activities and teaching approaches (Race 1998: 47-57, as cited in Fareh 2010: 3602). Even when it comes to learners with poor ethics and/or learning performances, teachers can seek collaboration with the parents of the learners, relevant educational institutions and ministries of education in a series of strategic attempts to improve the levels of learner motivation (Brown 2001). Similar to the recommendation by Race (1998), Brown (2001) emphasises the role of the learner as a decision maker in the learning process rather than a receiver of decisions passed by their programme/curricula designers, educators, institutions, and/or teachers. Fareh (2010: 3603) notes that instances where students express their thoughts and concerns, or even complain in an effort to make changes pertaining to their educational situations, do exist and are not unusual in the ELT context of the Arab region.

However, they are overlooked and taken lightly by their teachers and/or educational institutions.

Teachers also highlighted the educational system's focus on memorisation over critical thinking and problem-solving skills as one of the obstacles encountered in their Egyptian EFL teaching experience. In this EFL context, students often prioritise exam scores over genuine learning due to a system that assesses knowledge of memorised language rules instead of the ability to apply them in real-life situations. The Egyptian assessment methods are predominantly end-of-term examinations that train students on the exam format, exam-answering skills, and types of questions included (which can occur in relatively short training sessions) rather than on their actual knowledge and ability to use acquired skills. These exams are not designed to assess speaking or listening competence, indicating a need to shift the focus from grades to real learning. According to Fareh (2010: 3603), this situation "may explain the poor quality of the students' oral and aural skills", which is a common issue in Arab educational practices.

7. Conclusions, significance, and recommendations for future research

This paper aimed to contribute to the initiatives of prior scholars on ESL pronunciation, providing insights into the views on pronunciation learning and teaching practice in the Egyptian EFL context and allowed room for the analysis of the variation pertaining to the perspectives on existing and desired practices.

Future research could consider the study of variables such as: gender, age, educational backgrounds, teaching/learning contexts, dialectal regions, study majors, English proficiency levels, and formality of context. In addition, further research attempts may seek wider-scale surveys, especially from teachers, (for more comprehensive conclusions and implications) supported by feedback from focus groups of both learners and teachers (e.g. through administering interviews) to gain insights to the participants' perceptions of the interpretations of the research results (e.g. the extent to which they agree or disagree with what the research endeavours will have yielded).

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Appendix 1

For Students: English Pronunciation Teaching and Learning in Egypt صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر

Answer the open-ended questions in English or Arabic يمكنك الإجابة على الأسئلة ذات الإجابات المفتوحة بالإنجليزية أو العربية

1- Mark one of the following: *اختر واحدا من الآتي
I am a learner of English أقوم بدراسة اللغة الإنجليزية
I am both a learner and a teacher of English أقوم بدراسة اللغة الإنجليزية وتدريسها أيضا

2- What school did you go to? *بأي لغة درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟
Arabic-medium درست باللغة العربية
English-medium درست باللغة الإنجليزية
Other foreign-language-medium (French, German, etc.) درست بلغة أخرى (كالفرنسية، الألمانية، إلخ)

3- How important do you think studying English is? *ما أهمية دراسة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟
Not at all important غير مهم على الإطلاق
Somewhat important مهم إلى حد ما
Neutral متوسط الأهمية
Important مهم
Very important مهم جدا

4- Why or why not? Please answer in detail. *فضلا اذكر بعض أسباب وتفاصيل ذلك من وجهة نظرك
Your answer

5- What do you find most problematic among the skills of English? Mark all that are relevant. ما هي أصعب مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟ يمكنك اختيار أكثر من مهارة
*
Writing الكتابة
Reading and comprehension القراءة والفهم
Listening الاستماع
Speaking/pronunciation التحدث أو النطق
None لا شيء مما سبق

6- How important do you think studying English pronunciation is? ما أهمية دراسة نطق أو صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟
*
Not at all important غير مهم على الإطلاق
Somewhat important مهم إلى حد ما
Neutral متوسط الأهمية
Important مهم
Very important مهم جدا

7- Which of the following English pronunciation aspects did you study at school? Please mark all that are relevant. أي من فروع الصوتيات الآتية درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟ فضلا قم بتظليل جميع ما تراه مناسبا
*
Pronunciation of individual sounds نطق الأصوات منفردة
Word and/or sentence stress الضغط الصوتي (على مقطع في كلمة أو كلمة في جملة)
Rhythm إيقاع النطق
Features of connected speech خصائص وسمات الحديث المتصل
Intonation التنغيم
Other فروع أخرى
None لا شيء مما سبق

8- In case you learned about any of those listed in the previous question, then how would you rate the weight given to the teaching of it/them? في حالة دراستك لأي أو كل ما سبق، كم من أهمية أعطيت لتدريس هذه الفروع؟
*
Much أهمية كبيرة
Moderate أهمية متوسطة
Little أهمية متواضعة
None لا أهمية على الإطلاق

9- How difficult do you think English pronunciation is? ما هو تقييمك لمدى صعوبة نطق/صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Very easy سهل جدا
Easy سهل
Moderate متوسط الصعوبة
Difficult صعب
Very difficult صعب جدا

10- What do you find most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation? Mark all that are relevant.
ما هي فروع الصوتيات الأكثر صعوبة بالنسبة لك؟ اختر جميع ما تراه مناسبا
*
Pronunciation of individual sounds نطق الأصوات منفردة
Word and sentence stress الضغط الصوتي (على مقطع في كلمة أو كلمة في جملة)
Rhythm إيقاع النطق
Features of connected speech خصائص وسمات الحديث المتصل
Intonation التنغيم
Other فروع أخرى
None لا شيء مما سبق

11- Which accent of English do you prefer? أي من لكنات الإنجليزية التالية تفضل؟
*
British accent اللكنة البريطانية
American accent اللكنة الأمريكية
Both كليهما
Other لكنة/لكنات أخرى
No preference ليس لدي تفضيلات

12- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

13- What is the least favourite accent of English? أي من لكنات الإنجليزية التالية هي الأقل تفضيلا بالنسبة لك؟
*
British accent اللكنة البريطانية
American accent اللكنة الأمريكية
Other لكنة/لكنات أخرى
None لا يوجد

14- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

15- Which accent of English do you think should be adopted in the Egyptian curricula? أي لكنات اللغة الإنجليزية يجب أن تتبناها المناهج المصرية في رأيك؟
*
British accent اللكنة البريطانية
American accent اللكنة الأمريكية
Other لكنة/لكنات أخرى
Not sure غير متأكد/ة

16- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

17- How do you feel about the Egyptian pronunciation/accent of English? ما هو انطباعك عن نطق المصريين للغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Your answer

18- What do you think is remarkable in the Egyptian pronunciation of English? ما الذي تراه مميزا في نطق المصريين للغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Your answer

19- What do you think about your own pronunciation of English?
Do you like your own pronunciation of English?
How would you rate your own pronunciation of English?
ما هو انطباعك عن نطقك الشخصي للغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Your answer

20- Do you think your native tongue (Egyptian Arabic) has an influence on your pronunciation of English? هل تعتقد أن للغتك الأم (العامية المصرية) تأثيرا على نطقك للإنجليزية؟
Please give a detailed answer. فضلا أجب تفصيلا
*
Your answer

21- Do you think a foreign language learner should aim for native pronunciation of English? Why/Why not? في رأيك، هل تعتقد بأنه ينبغي على الدارسين اتقان نطق اللغة الإنجليزية درجة اتقان أهل اللغة؟
*
Your answer

22- Which do you think is crucial in communication? ما هو أساس التواصل اللغوي من وجهة نظرك؟
*
Native/native-like pronunciation of English نطقا كنطق أهل اللغة الإنجليزية
Mutual intelligibility فهم أطراف التواصل (المتحدثين) بعضهم
Both كلاهما
Other عوامل أخرى

23- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

24- What do you think can hinder the acquisition of proper English pronunciation? من وجهة نظرك، ما الذي يمكن أن يعيق الاكتساب السليم لقواعد نطق اللغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Your answer

25- Do you think the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt needs to be improved? هل تعتقد أن تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر بحاجة إلى تطوير؟
*
Yes نعم
No لا

26- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

27- In your viewpoint, what is/are the most efficient method(s)/style(s)/technique(s) of learning/teaching pronunciation? ما هي أكثر أساليب/استراتيجيات تعلم/تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية الأكثر فاعلية من وجهة نظرك؟
What approaches/activities would you like to see applied in classrooms and textbooks? ما هي المداخل والأنشطة التي تتمنى تطبيقها في المحاضرات والمناهج؟
*
Your answer

Appendix 2

For Teachers: English Pronunciation Teaching and Learning in Egypt صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر

1- Mark one of the following: *اختر واحدا من الآتي
I am a teacher of English أقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية
I am both a teacher and a learner of English أقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ودراستها أيضا
1- Mark one of the following: *اختر واحدا من الآتي
I am a teacher of English أقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية
I am both a teacher and a learner of English أقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ودراستها أيضا

2- What school did you go to? *بأي لغة درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟
Arabic-medium درست باللغة العربية
English-medium درست باللغة الإنجليزية
Other foreign-language-medium (French, German, etc.) درست بلغة أخرى (كالفرنسية، الألمانية، إلخ)

3- How important do you think studying English is? *ما أهمية دراسة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟
Not at all important غير مهم على الإطلاق
Somewhat important مهم إلى حد ما
Neutral متوسط الأهمية
Important مهم
Very important مهم جدا

4- Why or why not? Please answer in detail. *فضلا اذكر بعض أسباب وتفاصيل ذلك من وجهة نظرك
Your answer

5- What do you find most problematic among the skills of English? Mark all that are relevant. ما هي أصعب مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟ يمكنك اختيار أكثر من مهارة
*
Writing الكتابة
Reading and comprehension القراءة والفهم
Listening الاستماع
Speaking/pronunciation التحدث أو النطق
None لا شيء مما سبق

6- How important do you think studying English pronunciation is? ما أهمية دراسة نطق أو صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟
*
Not at all important غير مهم على الإطلاق
Somewhat important مهم إلى حد ما
Neutral متوسط الأهمية
Important مهم
Very important مهم جدا

7- Which of the following English pronunciation aspects did you study at school? Please mark all that are relevant. أي من فروع الصوتيات الآتية درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟ فضلا قم بتظليل جميع ما تراه مناسبا
*
Pronunciation of individual sounds نطق الأصوات منفردة
Word and/or sentence stress الضغط الصوتي (على مقطع في كلمة أو كلمة في جملة)
Rhythm إيقاع النطق
Features of connected speech خصائص وسمات الحديث المتصل
Intonation التنغيم
Other فروع أخرى
None لا شيء مما سبق

8- In case you learned about any of those listed in the previous question, then how would you rate the weight given to the teaching of it/them? في حالة دراستك لأي أو كل ما سبق، كم من أهمية أعطيت لتدريس هذه الفروع؟

*
Much أهمية كبيرة
Moderate أهمية متوسطة
Little أهمية متواضعة
None لا أهمية على الإطلاق

9- How difficult do you think English pronunciation is? ما هو تقييمك لمدى صعوبة نطق/صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Very easy سهل جدا
Easy سهل
Moderate متوسط الصعوبة
Difficult صعب
Very difficult صعب جدا

10- What do you find most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation? Mark all that are relevant.
ما هي فروع الصوتيات الأكثر صعوبة بالنسبة لك؟ اختر جميع ما تراه مناسبا
*
Pronunciation of individual sounds نطق الأصوات منفردة
Word and sentence stress الضغط الصوتي (على مقطع في كلمة أو كلمة في جملة)
Rhythm إيقاع النطق
Features of connected speech خصائص وسمات الحديث المتصل
Intonation التنغيم
Other فروع أخرى
None لا شيء مما سبق

11- Which accent of English do you prefer? أي من لكنات الإنجليزية التالية تفضل؟
*
British accent اللكنة البريطانية
American accent اللكنة الأمريكية
Both كليهما
Other لكنة/لكنات أخرى
No preference ليس لدي تفضيلات
12- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

13- What is the least favourite accent of English? أي من لكنات الإنجليزية التالية هي الأقل تفضيلا بالنسبة لك؟
*
British accent اللكنة البريطانية
American accent اللكنة الأمريكية
Other لكنة/لكنات أخرى
None لا يوجد

14- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

15- Which accent of English do you think should be adopted in the Egyptian curricula? أي لكنات اللغة الإنجليزية يجب أن تتبناها المناهج المصرية في رأيك؟
*
British accent اللكنة البريطانية
American accent اللكنة الأمريكية
Other لكنة/لكنات أخرى
Not sure غير متأكد/ة

16- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

17- How do you feel about the Egyptian pronunciation/accent of English? ما هو انطباعك عن نطق المصريين للغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Your answer

18- What do you think is remarkable in the Egyptian pronunciation of English? ما الذي تراه مميزا في نطق المصريين للغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Your answer

19- What do you think about your own pronunciation of English?
Do you like your own pronunciation of English?
How would you rate your own pronunciation of English?
ما هو انطباعك عن نطقك الشخصي للغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Your answer

20- Do you think your native tongue (Egyptian Arabic) has an influence on your pronunciation of English? هل تعتقد أن للغتك الأم (العامية المصرية) تأثيرا على نطقك للإنجليزية؟
Please give a detailed answer. فضلا أجب تفصيلا
*
Your answer

21- Do you think a foreign language learner should aim for native pronunciation of English? Why/Why not? في رأيك، هل تعتقد بأنه ينبغي على الدارسين اتقان نطق اللغة الإنجليزية درجة اتقان أهل اللغة؟
*
Your answer

22- Which do you think is crucial in communication? ما هو أساس التواصل اللغوي من وجهة نظرك؟
*
Native/native-like pronunciation of English نطقا كنطق أهل اللغة الإنجليزية
Mutual intelligibility فهم أطراف التواصل (المتحدثين) بعضهم
Both كلاهما
Other عوامل أخرى

23- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

24- What do you think can hinder the acquisition of proper English pronunciation? من وجهة نظرك، ما الذي يمكن أن يعيق الاكتساب السليم لقواعد نطق اللغة الإنجليزية؟
*
Your answer

25- Do you think the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt needs to be improved? هل تعتقد أن تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر بحاجة إلى تطوير؟
*
Yes نعم
No لا

26- Please elaborate on your choice. *اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق
Your answer

27- In your viewpoint, what is/are the most efficient method(s)/style(s)/technique(s) of learning/teaching pronunciation? ما هي أكثر أساليب/استراتيجيات تعلم/تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية الأكثر فاعلية من وجهة نظرك؟
What approaches/activities would you like to see applied in classrooms and textbooks? ما هي المداخل والأنشطة التي تتمنى تطبيقها في المحاضرات والمناهج؟
*
Your answer

28- Do you teach pronunciation in class? هل تقوم بتدريس مهارات النطق في محاضراتك؟
*
Yes نعم
No لا

29- If yes, what aspects, how do you teach them, which materials do you use and how often do you teach them? Please answer in detail. إذا كنت قد أجبت عن السؤال السابق بنعم، ما هي الأساليب والمادة العلمية التي تستخدمها؟ كم مرة بالأسبوع/الشهر/الفصل الدراسي/السنة الدراسية؟ فضلا أجب تفصيلا
*

Your answer

30- Do you assess your students' pronunciation? هل تقوم باختبار أو تصحيح نطق الطلاب أثناء المحاضرات؟
*

Yes نعم
No لا

31- If yes, how? إذا كانت إجابتك السابقة "نعم"، كيف يتم ذلك؟
*

Your answer

32- Do you attempt to correct students' pronunciation inaccuracies? هل تحاول تصحيح أخطاء النطق لدى الطلاب؟
*

Yes نعم
No لا

33- If yes, what aspects do you tend to focus on and how do you correct them? إذا كانت إجابتك السابقة "نعم"، ما هي فروع النطق التي تفضل التركيز عليها؟ وكيف تقوم بتصحيحها؟
*

Your answer

34- Do you think there is a relationship between teacher and learner personalities and L2 pronunciation teaching and acquisition? Please answer in detail. هل تعتقد بأن شخصيات المعلم والمتعلم تلعب دورا في تدريس واكتساب النطق السليم للغة الأجنبية الثانية؟ فضلا اعط إجابة مفصلة بقدر الإمكان
*

Your answer

35- What do you think are the drawbacks of the pronunciation courses/materials provided for your students (if there are any)? من وجهة نظرك، ما هي عيوب/مساوىء المناهج/المواد التعليمية الخاصة بالنطق (إن وجدت) والمتاحة لطلابك؟
*

Your answer

36- Do you face any challenges while teaching English pronunciation? Please give a detailed answer. هل تواجه أية تحديات بالنسبة لتدريس أيا من قواعد صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية؟ فضلا أجب بالتفصيل
*

Your answer

NEGATIVE *BI* IN ROMANI. INDIC AND IRANIAN CONNECTIONS

Alin-Gabriel Bucă*

Abstract: Negative *bi-* is the primary indicator of caritivity in Romani and has been invariably recognized as belonging to the pre-European component of the language. Most lexicographic sources and related studies trace it back to OIA वि *vi-* 'un-', but also acknowledge that an Iranian origin is plausible. In Romani, *bi-* can function as a preposition, non-verbal privative prefix, conjunction, and verbal prefix. This paper argues that these various constructions can be ascribed to different stages in the development of the language and to different contact scenarios. The limited set of verbs containing a reflex of OIA preverbal वि- *vi-* and the prototypical circumpositional *bi…qo* template correspond to an early proto-Romani stage (perhaps late MIA or *apabhraṃśa*), most certainly prior to the departure from the Indian subcontinent. Strongly adjectival compounds (prefixal *bi…qo*, *bi-* + adjectives, *bi-* + adjectival participles) are more likely to have arisen in a post-Indian context, as a result of contact with Persian or other Iranian languages. Finally, the use of *bi* as a conjunction with subjunctive verbs must be the result of a later, localized convergence within the Balkan *Sprachbund*. Drawing on the existing literature and the analysis of various Romani texts, the paper also attempts to disambiguate the morphological status of *bi-* in genitive nominal formations. The lexical-semantic approach proposed by Lieber (2004) and the picture of overlapping and competing negative prefixes in IE languages outlined by Wackernagel (2009) help explain the functional flexibility and diversity of this lone productive negative prefix as the result of subsequent semantic and functional reconfigurations in various contact scenarios.

Keywords: Romani, *bi-*, negative, privative, caritive

1. Introduction

This paper aims to provide a more comprehensive account of negative *bi-* in Romani, tied-in with an exploration of its diachronic background and functional evolution from a lexical-semantic perspective.

In Romani, *bi* can function as a preposition, non-verbal privative prefix, conjunction, and verbal prefix. I outline, discuss, and exemplify each type, drawing on the existing literature and our own research of various Romani texts. Most of the examples are taken from Uhlik (2020), whose extensive collection of stories is an invaluable resource for analyzing negative *bi* within the confines of a well-established Romani variety (Gurbeti).

2. *Bi* as preposition

A basic description of prepositional *bi* 'without' would be that it is the only preposition that governs the genitive (Bortezky 1994: 116), and it can be used both with nouns (1) and pronouns (2):

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(1) Vov sar sah bižaj, gurudah o tover thaj gaja **bi**[1] **e toverehko** djelo.
PRIV PREP DEF axe-M.SG.GEN
'As he was wise, he hid the ax and so he left **without the axe**.'
(Uhlik 2020: 206)

(2) Gaja vov ačhilo but brš sasto thaj džuvdo **bi lako**.
PRIV PREP POSS.3F.SG
'Thus, he stayed healthy and alive for many years **without her**.'
(Uhlik 2020: 487)

Kozhanov (2019) describes *bi* as the primary indicator of caritivity in Romani[2] and points out that its morphosyntactic status is a matter of debate, as it is considered either a prefix or a preposition. Varying approaches to the treatment of *bi* are indeed found in the literature, set apart by particular priorities and areas of focus, as well as by different theoretical and taxonomic frames. For instance, Matras (2004) focuses mainly on the prefixation and derivational function of *bi*, while Kozhanov (2019) distinguishes between the "original" form and use of the caritive group (*bi* + genitive nouns/possessive pronouns) and "borrowed" or contact-induced occurrences (*bi* + verbal groups). Taxonomically, it is a matter of convenience to use a general descriptor such as "particle" – Sampson (1926), Gjerdman & Ljungberg (1963) or "marker" – Kozhanov (2019) which allows for further refining of morphosyntactic subclasses.

2.1 Use of prepositional *bi* with pronouns

Prepositional *bi* is typically used with the possessive forms: *bi miro* (lit. 'without my') 'without me', *bi tiro* (lit. 'without your') 'without you', etc.

(3) Gaja o Rrom xoxadah la, [...], the pale xalah e šošojeh **bi lako**
PRIV PREP POSS.3SG.F
guglivareh.

'So, the man cheated her, [...], and again ate a rabbit **without her** as a treat.'
(Uhlik 2020: 377)

[1] Throughout the texts in Uhlik (2020), *bi* is found either written separately or joined in a single word. These spelling variants seem to indicate a conscious choice made by the editor, Hedina Tahirović-Sijerčić, with regard to the morphosyntactic status of *bi* – preposition if separate, prefix if bound. Our glosses do not always coincide with the spelling choice, for instance in (22)-(24).

[2] Hancock (1995b: 71) also mentions the "stressed prefix" ***nà-*** as being common in eastern Vlax dialects, and notes that "it has a more restricted use than *bi*", meaning 'un-': *nàvučo* 'low', *nàšukar* 'plain', *nàlačho* 'bad'. However, lexicographic records of *na-* negative/privative formations are rather rare. In Courthiade (2009) we find *nasig* 'slowly' and *nalaćho* ('bad'). In Mānušs et al. (1997: 89) *na* is entered as a particle, and the same dictionary lists *naaizbistirdo* adj. 'unforgettable', *nabaxtalo* adj. 'unfortunate, luckless, unhappy', *nabut* adj. 'some, few, a little' (< OIA na + bahutā), *nadžinipen* m. 'ignorance', *nahalakiro* adv. 'imperceptibly', *naiedikhav* vt 'to hate, to dislike', *nalačho* adj. 'bad, devil', *nalini* 'unmarried (woman)', *nalino* 'unmarried (man)', *napačaibnangiro* subst. gen. 'unbeliever, infidel, atheist', *naresel* vi, 'to lack, to be short of smth., to be missing', *narobime* p. p. inv. 'undeserved', *naviginibnaskiro* adj. gen. 'innumerable', and *nazavidno* adj. 'unenviable'. At first glance, negative derivation using *na-* seems to be confined to peripheral Romani varieties, but a more thorough analysis would be needed for further clarification.

Rare, atypical genitive forms, e.g. *bi manqo*, *bi tuqo* are mentioned in Gjerdman & Ljungberg (1963: 139) and Courthiade (2016: 17). The latter also points to the examples in Sampson (1926: 221): *bi mança* (instrumental-comitative), *bi lesθe* (locative) and notes that while the former has been documented, the latter has not. The putative use of the locative with *bi* could be seen as tendency toward prepositional case leveling, as most prepositions in Romani govern the locative. The use of the comitative in pronominal and nominal *bi* constructions is not a rare occurrence, and Kozhanov (2019) observes that in some dialects the caritive construction is reinterpreted as a negation of the comitative. Vekerdi (2000) states that *bi* is used with pronouns in the ablative case, e.g. *bi manθar*, without referencing any specific dialect. In rare instances, prepositional *bi* can also be used with the reflexive pronoun *pes*. Gjerdman & Ljungberg (1963: 139) reference *bi pesa* (+ comitative). However, the form given in the index (Gjerdman & Ljungberg 1963: 212) is *bipesqo*, glossed as a genitive adjective (in which case *bi* would function as a prefix) meaning 'not being able to take care of himself', as in *bipesqo phirel* 'he is wandering about and is not able to take care of himself'. Gjerde (1994: 50) records *bipesko* 'unconscious of himself, senseless'. Instances of *bi* used with indefinite pronouns can also be found, as shown below in section 2.4, examples (19) and (31).

2.2 Use of prepositional *bi* with nouns

When used with proper nouns, *bi* is undoubtedly prepositional, as in *bi la Zagasa* [+ comitative] 'without Zaga' (Gjerdman & Ljungberg, 1963: 139).

Typical *bi* constructions with common nouns are in the genitive:

(4) Me som rromni ćorrori, […]/**Bi** **baxtaqro** me ʒivav, /kaj na ʒänav
PRIV PREP luck-F.SG.GEN
te drabavav.
'Je suis une pauvre tsigane,…/Je vis **dans l'infortune**, /Car je ne sais pas lire'
[= 'I am a poor Gypsy/I live in misfortune, /Because I cannot read']
(Papùśa 2010: 41)

(5) Taj trajinas ži ka l'šel berš **bi** **doktorosko**. Taj von či žanenas so si
PRIV PREP doctor-M.SG.GEN
ekh doktori.
'And they lived to one hundred years **without a doctor**. And they did not know what a doctor was.'
(Gjerde 1994: 164)

(6) Me tromam te raćarav **bi** **jagljako** thaj **bi** **čhujrako**.
PRIV PREP gun-F.SD.GEN PRIV PREP knife-F.SG.GEN
'I can spend the night **without a gun** and **without a knife**.'
(Uhlik 2020: 1969)

Courthiade (2016: 17-18) interprets the *bi…qo* template as a circumposition consisting of "two particles, one before and one after the noun in the B-form" (oblique) and finds striking similarities with the Hindi inverted compound postposition (which he

also interprets as a circumposition expressing the caritive relationship) बिना *binā...* के *ke* 'without'[3]. In later works (Courthiade 2019: 66), *bi…qo* is labeled a "pre-postposition", and the same comparison with NIA languages is drawn (Hindi and also Punjabi *bina…te*/*de*). A more detailed analysis of these similarities will be provided further on. Sarău (2009: 82) also considers that, when not affixed directly to a nominative base, *bi* acts as a preposition (typically with the genitive).

2.3 Preposition or prefix?

The morphological status of *bi* in genitive nominal formations is not clear cut, since such forms themselves have an ambiguous status. Kozhanov (2019) observes that there are arguments for considering these forms either nouns, in which case *bi* would function as a preposition, or adjectives, in which case *bi* would function as a prefix. Gjerdman & Ljungberg (1963) consider that in such constructions, termed "genitive adjectives", *bi* is a prefix:

(7) **Bi- panžengo** deš si.
PRIV PREP five-GEN
'It's five [minutes] to ten.' [lit. 'It's ten **without five**.'].
(Gjerdmann & Ljungberg 1963: 37)

(8) kasavi **bi- porăqi** mica si.
PRIV PREF tail-F.SG.GEN
'It's one of these **tailless** cats (cat-breeds).'
(Gjerdmann & Ljungberg 1963: 139)

A similar approach is found in Sampson (1926), who states that *bi* has the function of a prefix with the force of 'un-' or '-less' when used with genitive nouns.

First, it should be noted that any discussion of the morphological status of *bi* in genitive nominal constructions must take into account the general status of genitive attributives in Romani. In her analysis of genitive adnominals (GAs), Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2000) identifies a subclass of non-anchoring GAs, whose primary function is that of qualifying or classifying the head nominal, rather than identifying their referents (*forosqo grast* 'market horse' *vs. dadesqo grast* 'father's horse'). Even though Koptjevskaja-Tamm does not include *bi* forms in her discussion, "true" privative GAs function similarly, as seen in the examples below:

(9) Kaj säs pesqe rromnŏrri, /**bi baxtaqri**, ćorrori
PRIV PREF luck-F.SG.GEN
'Qu'il était une fois une tsigane, /**Infortunée** et pauvrette' [= 'That there once was a Gypsy woman/Unfortunate and poor']
(Papùśa 2010: 41)

[3] Courthiade mentions the form बिना *binā...* का *kā*, which is not quite correct.

(10) O čhavorro kam bijandol **bi vastengo** thaj **bi prnengo**.
PRIV PREF hand-M.PL.GEN PRIV PREF leg-M.PL.GEN
'The baby will be born **without arms** and **without legs**.'
(Uhlik 2020: 268)

(11) Me če khejni! Loli rasa! Loli šej taj **bibalengo** – bal ma' na i aba
PRIV PREF hair-M.PL.GEN
p'o dumo
'But what a chicken! Red race [breed]. A red girl **without hair** [featherless] – there is no more hair on her back.'
(Gjerde 1994: 178)

Pobozniak (1964) includes such forms in the larger category of *bahuvrīhi* compounds, e.g. *kaleśeresqo* 'dark-haired' (lit. black-headed), *bibutăqo* 'without work, unemployed'. The term *bahuvrīhi* is used by Sanskrit grammarians to denote a certain type of attributive compounds, typically consisting of two nouns in apposition to each other. Kale (1995: 151) observes that a *bahuvrīhi* compound "generally attributes that which is expressed by its second member, determined or modified by what is denoted by its first member, to something denoted by neither of the two; e.g. महाबाहु *mahābāhu* 'one whose arm is great'." Furthermore, a *bahuvrīhi* compound "partakes of the nature of an adjective and assumes the gender of the substantive it qualifies". In Romani such compounds are by no means rare and often serve as metonymical descriptors:

(12) varesavi gadžikani rakli, **thulebuljaći** thaj **barečučendji**
'some gadji [non-Roma] girl, **fat-bottomed** and **big-breasted**'
(Uhlik 2020: 313)

(13) vo majanglal sah barvalo, bižaj thaj **barebuljako**.
'before he used to be rich, smart, and **big-bottomed**'
(Uhlik 2020: 772)

Consider a further set of examples, also from Uhlik (2020), exhibiting *bi*:

(14) Sar tu šaj aveh gasavo **bi- mohko** te me dikhav, a tu te avera deh
PRIV PREF face-M.SG.GEN
bule.
'How can you be so rude [lit. '**without face**'][4] that I'm watching and you're having your way with another?'
(Uhlik 2020: 313)

(15) E phuri ačhili i **bi- mindžko** i **bikarehko**, kaj voj seha
PRIV PREF/PREP twat-F.SG.GEN rooster-M.SG.GEN
vi džungali vi bilačhi pala piro čorro rrom.
'The old woman remained both **twatless** and **roosterless**, because she was both mean and unkind towards her poor husband.'
(Uhlik 2020: 450)

[4] This could also be a calque, see Serbian *bezobrazan* 'cheeky', 'rude'.

(16) mora te lel la te na kamel te ačhel **bi šoreko**.
PRIV PREF/PREP head-M.SG.GEN
'he must take her if he doesn't want to be left **without a head**.'
(Uhlilk 2020: 468)

(17) *Sar tu ka leh mrne čheja, kana hi voj bangi, korri thaj **bi- čhibaki***?
PRIV PREF tongue-F.SG.GEN
'How are you going to take my daughter when she is lame, blind and mute [lit. '**tongueless**]?
(Uhlik 2020: 776)

(18) thaj kam avel **bi- vastengo**, **bi- jakhengo** thaj
PRIV PREF hand-M.PL.GEN PRIV PREF eye-F.PL.GEN
bi- prnengo.
PRIV PREF leg-M.PL.GEN
'He will be born not whole and will be **without arms, eyes, and legs**.'
(Uhlik 2020: 274)

(19) Kana bijaneha gasave čhavorreh **bi- vastendjireh** thaj
PRIV PREF hand-M.PL.ACC
bi- nisohćireh
PRIV PREF INDEF-ACC
'If you give birth to such a child **without arms** and **without anything'**
(Uhlik 2020: 274)

(20) Tu san **bi- mustakengo** sar khaj rromni.
PRIV PREf moustache-F.PL.GEN
'You have no lip hair [lit. **without a moustache**], just like some woman.'
(Uhlik 2020: 767)

(21) jekh čhavorro savo saha čorrorro, **bi dadeko**,.
PRIV PREF father-M.SG.GEN
bi dako
PRIV PREF mother-F.SG.GEN
'a little boy who was poor, **fatherless**, **motherless**'
(Uhlik 2020: 466)

(22) Angolehte vov djelo-tar vošeha **bi dromehko** thaj avilo ke jekhe
PRIV PREF road-M.SG.GEN
phurjako ćher.
'Then he went through a forest **without roads** and reached the house of an old woman.'
(Uhlik 2020: 494)

(23) Me sem **bi brigako**, **bi pharimahko** nakhav.
PRIV PREF care-F.SG.GEN PRIV PREF difficulty-M.SG.GEN
'I am **carefree**, I live without **hurdles**.'
(Uhlik 2020: 797)

(24) Ni mangav ćuće niso, me kam ćuće **bi- poćinimahko**[5] gova lačharav.
PRIV PREP pay-M.SG.GEN
'I'm not asking you for anything, I'll fix it for you for free.'
(Uhlik 2020: 268)

[5] Li. 'without pay'.

(25) Ćerdah paćiv thaj svakoneh muklah te xal thaj te pijel **bi-** **poćinimahko**.
PRIV PREP pay-M.SG.GEN
'[He] made a feast and let everyone eat and drink **for free**.'
(Uhlik 2020: 793)

Examples (14) through (21) illustrate a subset of adjectival compounds prefixed with *bi* which share several common traits: they function as categorial or qualifying descriptors, which fits the definition of non-anchoring GAs mentioned above; at the same time, they can be construed as negative metonymical descriptors, which would support their inclusion in the *bahuvrīhi* category; semantically, they express the absence of inalienable possessums (body parts and appendages, family members). Interestingly, the forms in (19) are fully lexicalized and behave like common adjectives in *-o* taking the oblique form to establish concord with the head noun in the accusative (*čhavorreh*). When only the qualifying trait is present, as in (22) and (23), the degree of adjectivization seems to be weaker, and *bi* could be parsed as a preposition as well. In (24) and (25), *bipoćinimahko* is used adverbially and could as well be a calque from Serbo-Croation (*besplatno*), thus making a prepositional function of *bi* more likely.

An interesting phenomenon is that of extended *bi…qo* compounds, which exhibit the insertion of the definite article or of additional attributive modifiers:

(26) teljardja **bi** le **djivotinjengo**
PRIV PREF DEF.OBL animal-F.PL.GEN
'[he/she] left **without** the **animals**
(Boretzky 1994: 116)

(27) a. **bi** me **loveqo**
PRIV PREF POSS1SG money-M.PL.GEN
'**without** my **money**'
b. **bi** sa akale purine **gadenqo**
PRIV PREF INDEF DEM.PL old-PL garment-M.PL.GEN
'**without** all these old **garments**'
(Courthiade 2016: 17)

(28) Te lau tu manghe eftino/**Bi** do **paralengoro**[6]
PRIV PREF two dime-F.PL.GEN
'I'll get you for cheap/For less than [lit. '**without**'] two **dimes** (translation mine)
(Constantinescu 2016: 57)

(29) A vov ačhilo **bi** nisave **baxtako** thaj xarne bajengo[7].
PRIV PREF INDEF luck-F.SG.GEN
'And he was left **without** any **luck** and empty-handed.'
(Uhlik 2020: 101)

[6] Most likely a calque from Romanian *două parale*, used in typical idiomatic expressions, as also indicated by the use of *do* instead of *duj*.
[7] Lit. 'short-sleeved'.

In such constructions, *bi* acts exclusively as a preposition. Unlike the subset discussed previously, these forms display opposing traits: they have a specifying, not categorial or qualifying function; they are not metonymical descriptors; they express the absence of alienable possessums. Boretzky (1994: 116) also observes that "the article (or a pronoun) can certainly intervene if reference is to be made to very specific entities", and goes on to remark that "it remains questionable whether the extended construction is old or whether it came about under the influence of other languages (Boretzky 1994: 116). This may as well be an internal development, and a parallel can be drawn with other NIA languages. In Hindi, the inverted compound postposition बिना *binā...* के *ke* 'without' allows for similar insertions:

(30) **Bina** aisi **family ke**, kaise hogi Diwali aur kaisa hoga New Year?
'**Without** such **family**, how will Diwali be, and how will New Year be?'
(https://x.com/iamsrk/status/1722962499669045539?s=20)

Besides the semantic aspects detailed above, a brief discussion of the syntactic role of *bi* compounds is in order. I agree with the assertion in Boretzky (1994: 16): "This form can be seen as a very loose addition to a verb and as an apposition". As *bi…qo* compounds have been already covered, in what follows I turn briefly to instances of adverbial use. Two main adverbial roles can be distinguished: complement of manner, as in (5), (6), (24), (25), (26), (28), (32), (33); resultative complement, as in (10), (15), (16), (19), and (31), often after medio-passive or stative verbs (*bijandol* 'to be born', *aćhel* 'to remain').

(31) Thaj gaja litrin phral ačhile **bi** **nisohko**.
PRIV PREF nothing-GEN
'Thus, all three brothers were left with nothing' [lit. 'without anything].
(Uhlik 2020: 380)

(32) nisavo Rrom niči tromala te del rra angla o šingalo **bi** **darako**, a tu
PRIV PREF fear-F.SG.GEN
tromajan.
'No Roma man dared to fart in front of the cop **without fear**, but you did dare.'
(Uhlik 2020: 454)

(33) Sar ka xas **bi** **marnesko**?
PRIV PREF bread-M.SG.GEN
'How are we going to eat it **without bread**?'
(Uhlik 2020: 330)

It is quite evident that in all instances where privative compounds function as complements of manner, *bi* is prepositional. An analysis of the second category, that of resultative complements, yields less definitive results. One could indeed argue that in (16) *bi šoreko* does not express an intrinsic state or quality or inclusion in a generic category, but I believe that the arguments set forth in the discussion of genitive adnominals support more convincingly a prefix status for *bi*.

Lastly, one more aspect that needs to be investigated, as it might provide clues on whether *bi* is a preposition or a prefix in certain *bi...qo* compounds, is that of concord. Boretzky (1994: 16) considers that the typical use of the masculine form in *–o* and the lack of concord either in gender or number, even though "perfectly conceivable in terms of formal syntax", show that the connection of such compounds to the NP is rather loose. One could argue, also based on diachronic and comparative grounds which are going to be detailed further on, that the *bi…qo* template with prepositional *bi* is prototypical and precludes concord of the genitive ending, as is the case with compound postpositions in other NIA languages as well. Stronger adjectivization and lexicalization would in turn entail a prefix function of *bi* and a more pronounced tendency to apply concord rules. This dynamic can be observed if we compare *bi baxtaqro* in (4) (adverbial use, complement of manner) and *bi baxtaqri* in (9) (adjectival use), both examples being excerpted from the same poem by Papùśa (2010). In (9), the application of gender concord could also be prompted by the fact that *bi baxtaqri* is inserted within a series of feminine epithets, so we should not assume full adjectivization, especially since elsewhere the same author uses the more common adjectival form *bibaxtalo, -i, -e*, which is fully lexicalized:

(34) **Bi-** **baxtali** baxt miri!
PRIV PREF lucky-F.SG
'E toi, ma fortune **infortunée**!' [= 'And you, my unfortunate fortune!']
(Papùśa 2010: 79)

A similarly clear distinction between the prepositional and prefixal use can be drawn if we compare *bi darako* in (32) and *bidarano* in *o bidarano raklo* 'the fearless boy' (Uhlik 2020: 177)

3. *Bi* as non-verbal privative prefix

According to Matras (2004: 78), "of Proto-Romani origin is also the productive derivation of negative adjectives through prefixation of *bi-* 'without', the only Common Romani productive derivational prefix, [...] providing potentially a means of lexical derivation of adjectives". *Bi* can be prefixed to various parts of speech, as detailed below.

3.1 *Bi* + genitive adnominals

This type of compound is covered extensively in the previous section, so I will not discuss it any further here.

3.2 *Bi* + nominal genitives

Kozhanov (2019) writes that "nominal formations with the prefix *bi-* are generally unproductive and usually do not exceed ten examples in one dialect". This is indeed a very small subset and for instance, besides *bibaxt* 'misfortune', 'bad luck', which is

quasi-ubiquitous across most dialects, our search of the available Uhlik corpus revealed only one other nominal compound, *bilaćhipe* ‘unkindness’. Lexicographic resources and descriptive grammars also contain only a small number of examples: Sarău (2009: 82) lists *biamal* ‘enemy’, *biamalipen* ‘enmity’, *bibaxt*, and *bićaćipen* ‘untruthfulness’; the entries in Boretzky & Igla (1994) are more numerous: *biagoripe* ‘ infinity, eternity’, *biamalipe* ‘enmity, hostility’, *bibaxt*, *bikeripe* ‘idleness, loafing, boredom’, *bilindripe*/*bisovipe* ‘sleeplessness’, *bimatipe* ‘sobriety’, *bimeripe* ‘immortality, eternity’, *bireslipe* ‘immaturity’.

3.3 *Bi* + adjectives

Bi can be prefixed both to “true” adjectives and derived adjectives. In the former category we find a small number of examples, the most common being *bilaćho* ‘bad, worthless’ and *biuźo* ‘unclean, dirty’, both of which can be nominalized to denote the devil, Satan – compare (35) and (36) below. Other cases found in various sources include: *bikuć* ‘inexpensive, cheap’, *bićaćo* ‘untrue, false’ in Sarău (2009: 82); *bibango* ‘innocent, harmless, naive’, *bibaro* ‘rather small, not big’, *bisasto* ‘unhealthy, not whole’ in Boretzky & Igla (1994); *bipharo* ‘light’ (lit. ‘not heavy’) in Lee (2010). The latter category is substantially more numerous. Matras (2004: 78) noted that “like most nominal genitive derivations, those in adjectival function are usually local in-coinings that are particular to individual dialects”. Here are some selected examples which are rather interesting: *bijakhalo* ‘one-eyed’, *bikherutno* (= *bikheresqo*) ‘homeless person, nomad’, *bimanušvalo* ‘inhuman’ in Boretzky & Igla (1994); *biamaluno* ‘unfriendly’ in Lee (2010); *bipaćavno* ‘dishonest’ in Uhlik (2020: 268, 810).

(35) Ejke, phralale, te saha vi **bi- laćho** čhavo, pale o sunal del dija le
PRIV PREF good-M.SG
lačhi bax.
‘Well, brother, if he was a **bad** child, the holy God would give him good luck again.’
(Uhlik 2020: 84)

(36) Te našti o livarno mudardah leh, pale o **bi- lačho** ka avel ande la.
PRIV PREF good-M.SG
‘If the priest had not been able to kill him, **the Devil** would possess her again.’
(Uhlik 2020: 290)

3.4 *Bi* + adjectival participles

This is by far the most productive combination, which can be found in abundance across all varieties:

(37) Me ni halem khanć aghes/Dor sok ţîra bokoli/**Bi- peki** ai
PRIV PREF cooked-F.SG
bi- londi.
PRIV PREF salted-F.SG
‘I didn’t eat anything today/Only a bit of cake/**Uncooked** and **unsalted**.’
(Constantinescu 2016: 31)

(38) E șei le bulibașaski/Voi kărdea ma **bi- halo**[8].
PRIV PREF eaten-M.SG
'Bulibasha's daughter/She made me **starve**.'
(Constantinescu 2016: 169)

(39) Gîndi-ma kou șaoro/So kărela korkoro/**Bi- halo** thai bokhalo/
PRIV PREF eaten-M.SG
bi- thodo bi- ureado.
PRIV PREF washed-m.sg PRIV PREF dressed-m.sg
'I think of the little boy/What does he do alone/**Without food** and hungry/**Unwashed** and with nothing on' [lit. '**undressed**'].
(Constantinescu 2016: 231)

(40) Lehki jekh čham saha rranglini, a e aver aćhili **bi- rrangli**.
PRIV PREF shaven-F.SG
One of her cheeks was shaven the other remained **unshaven**.
(Uhlik 2020: 222)

(41) vov akana so šaj majsig pejekhvarate uštela thaj sa e rovljaha marela pire **bi- kandine** bilače[9] džuvlja.
PRIV PREF listened-PL
And he got up as fast as he could and beat his **disobedient** hag of a wife with a stick.
(Uhlik 2020: 810)

(42) Mande hi jekh šukar manuš **bi- pindžardo**, andar aver them.
PRIV PREF known-M.SG
There's a beautiful stranger from another country at my place.
(Uhlik 2020: 145)

Here is a brief selection of interesting examples found in the literature: *biboldo* 'unchristened, Jewish person', *bipućhlo* 'unasked' in Gjerdman & Ljungberg (1963: 212); *bidino muj* (lit. 'unspoken') = *biakhardo* (lit. 'uncalled') 'uninvited', *bilačhardo* 'incorrigible, unprepared, dishevelled', *bidini* (lit. 'not given') = *bipharadi* 'virgin woman', *bigindo* 'countless' (lit. 'uncounted'), *bikhoslo* 'dirty, unclean', *bimuklo/ bimuklino/ bimeklo* 'prohibited, forbidden', *biresado* 'unreachable, unattainable', *bireslo* 'inaccessible, unripe, immature', *bisastardo* 'incurable', *bisuto* 'sleepless, awake' (lit. 'un-slept'[10]), *bizumado* 'inexperienced, untried' in Bortezky & Igla (1994); *biashundo* 'unheard of, unknown', *biphanglo* 'loose, untangled' in Lee (2010).

3.5 *Bi* + adverbs

Adverbial *bi-* compounds are extremely rare, with *bibaxtales* 'unfortunately' being more common. Interestingly, I found a form that could be interpreted as an adverbial derivation of a genitive nominal:

[8] Cf. Romanian *nemâncat*.
[9] To be noted, both adjectives are in the oblique form, as they are followed by an animate head noun in the accusative.
[10] Cf. Romanian *nedormit*.

(43) **Bi- baxtaće** ke goj leći rromni sićilo aver Rrom te avel.
PRIV PREF fortunately
'**Unfortunately**, his wife is used to another Roma coming over.'
(Uhlik 2020: 200)

A few other scattered examples are quoted in the literature: *bixarnes* 'at length' in Sarău (2009: 82), *bidiindes* 'without counting' in Gjerdman & Ljungberg (1963: 37), *biphares* 'easily, lightly', *bi-worta* 'crookedly, unevenly' in Lee (2010), *biromanes* 'in a non-Gipsy way' in Boretzky & Igla (1994).

3.6 *Bi* + gerunds

I only found this type of *bi* construction in the Uhlik corpus, and I assume it is a rare, local development:

(44) **Bi džanglindo** vov malada sa po kaš, kaj o Rrom učharda le e kapaha.
PRIV PREF knowing
'**Unknowingly**, he was hitting everyone with his wooden stick, and the man covered him with a blanket.'
(Uhlik 2020: 568)

(45) Kana o Rrom iklisto avri, **bi džanindo** kaj o bršind perel, vov klizaja thaj
PRIV PREF knowing
pelo pe zeja.
'When the man went outside, **not knowing** that it was raining, he slipped and fell on his back.'
(Uhlik 2020: 628)

4. *Bi* as conjunction

Matras (2004: 187) considers *bi te* (followed by the present or subjunctive) an adverbial subordinator expressing negative circumstance ('without doing X'):

(46) bi te trebul pes
'without it being necessary, needlessly'
(Matras 2004: 187)

(47) taj von kin'as les kade lestar **bi te mudarel** les, taj žanas maj angle taj pale bikin'as les.
'and they bought it [the horse] from him in that way **without having to kill** it, and they they went further on and sold it again.'
(Gjerde 1994: 47)

Kozhanov (2019), in his analysis of the questionnaires from the RMS Database, observes that the use of the caritive marker *bi* in combination with a verbal group occurs only in Romani dialects in Southeastern Europe. This is considered to be a more recent

innovation occurring most likely under the influence of contact languages such as Macedonian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Romanian, Greek: *bez* 'without' + subjunctive in Macedonian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian; *fără* 'without' + subjunctive in Romanian; *χωρίς* 'without' + subjunctive in Greek. Kozhanov rightly concludes that overall "this can be considered a feature of languages within the Balkan Sprachbund".

5. *Bi* as verbal prefix

Sampson (1926) notes that *bi* may also occur as an 'ancient prefix' (< OIA वि- *vi-*) in the verbs *bian-* 'to bear a child' (< OIA विजन् *vijan* 'to be born'), *biav-* 'to wed' (< OIA विवह् *vivah* 'to marry, to give in marriage'), *bičav-* 'to send' (< OIA विक्षिप् *vikṣip* 'to throw away, to scatter'), *bikin-* 'to sell' (< OIA विक्री *vikrī* 'to sell), *bilav-* 'to melt' (< OIA विली *vilī* 'to be dissolved, to melt away'), *biser-* 'to forget' (< OIA विस्मृ *vismṛ* 'to forget'). To be noted, Sarău (2009: 82) proposes a straightforward prefixal derivation: *bistrel* 'to forget' < *bi* + *starel* 'to catch', *bikinel* 'to sell' < *bi* + *kinel* 'to buy'.

OIA वि- *vi-* and its Romani filiation will be discussed in more detail further on. However, it should be pointed out that verbal *bi-* is more likely to be a vestigial, non-productive reflex that does not express a privative or generally negative meaning and instances where it is used actively for negative verbal derivation are extremely rare and not representative. It is worth noting a few rare forms recorded in Boretzky & Igla (1994). For example, *bibistardo* 'unforgettable' (*bi* + *bistardo*$_{\text{ADJ. PART.}}$ 'forgotten') (Boretzky & Igla 1994: 26), which does not have a verbal counterpart, so it falls in the common category of negative adjectives. The only cases of productive verb to verb derivation using *bi* are *bibaxtarel* 'to make unhappy, to ruin, to head for ruin' (Boretzky & Igla 1994: 26), *bilačhardol* 'to spoil, to become corrupted' (Boretzky & Igla 1994: 28), *bilačharel* 'to spoil, to corrupt' (Boretzky & Igla 1994: 28) and *bilačhol* 'to get worse, to grow weak, to become mischievous (of a child)' (Boretzky & Igla 1994: 29). These must be local coinages and I have not found similar constructions recorded in other lexicographic works.

6. Borrowing and contamination

Kozhanov (2019) shows that in a number of dialects where the caritive marker used with nominal groups differs from the one used with verbal groups, the latter tends to be borrowed from contact languages. Another phenomenon encountered in Slavic-speaking areas in the Balkans is the contamination with Slavic forms. Boretzky (1996: 11) believes that the form *bizo* (*bizi*) 'without' in Arli is the result of contamination between the native *bi* and the Slavic *bez*. However, Calvet (1982: 19) also records the form *bes/bez* 'without' in Arli[11], < Bulg. *bez*, while Kajtazi (2008: 45) only has the form *bizo*. A form *bizo* 'without' is also recorded in Gurbeti (Uhlik 1983: 29). A similar type of convergence grounded in semantic similarity and quasi-homophony is observed by Kozhanov (2019),

[11] The example given in Calvet (1982: 19) reads *bez ten a dikhek niko* 'sans que personne ne le voie' (without anyone seeing him).

who considers that *bir* (found in one RMS questionnaire from Bulgaria) and *bri* (found in one RMS questionnaire from Slovenia) emerged under the influence of South Slavic forms containing the consonant *r*, e.g. *brez* 'without' in Slovenian[12]. In the same vein, Courthiade (2016: 17) observes that the preposition *biz* found in some dialects of Southern Yugoslavia could be a reflex of the Indo-Iranian *bi/be*, "namely it could be materially the same as the first element of *bi…qo* crossed with the Slavic preposition *bez* 'without'".

A homophonous and completely unrelated *bi* is found in Gurbeti:

(48) Kana **bi** o somlal Del dela amen jek peko puj, but **bi** ćerela jek lačhipe.
'If the holy God gave us a roasted chicken, it would make us much good.'
(Uhlik 2020: 330)

(49) Kana **bi** dela o somlal Del zala mol, ne **bi** rodasa khanči majbut.
'If the holy God gave us a little wine, we would not ask for anything more.'
(Uhlik 2020: 330)

This is obviously a Slavic borrowing. In Serbian, *bi* is the aorist form of the verb *biti* 'to be' and is equivalent to the English 'would' (Hammond 2005: 76), and one of several ways to construct conditional sentences in Serbian is to add the auxiliary short form of the aorist tense of *biti*, both in the main and subordinate clause (Hammond 2005: 83).

Conditional *bi* also occurs in Sofia Arli, in pre- and post-verbal position, as documented in Calvet (1982: 19). Etymologically this *bi* is derived from Bulgarian *bi*.

(50) So **bi** kérsas leske
'Qu'est-ce que tu lui ferais' [= 'what would you do to him']
(Calvet 1982: 19)

(51) Te arakhas **bi**
'Si nous le trouvons' [= 'if we found [it]']
(Calvet 1982: 19)

Finally, *bi* in conditional sentences is not restricted to South Slavic-influenced varieties of Romani. It is also found in Krimean Romani, in which it is a borrowing from Russian (< Rus. *by*). Consider the following examples from Toropov (2009):

(52) Davas bi tut love
'I would give you money.'
(Toropov 2009: 46)

(53) Na anesas bi
'You shouldn't have brought.'
(Toropov 2009: 47)

[12] Slovenian Romani also has the borrowed *brèzu* 'without' < Slovenian *brez* (Brezar & Brezar 2008: 20).

7. How to conceptualize and contextualize negative prefixes?

Before embarking on a tentative exploration of possible Indic and Iranian connections to Romani *bi-*, it would be helpful to offer some brief remarks on how negative prefixes can be viewed within a more general conceptual framework.

7.1 Lieber's lexical-semantic approach

In her seminal work, Lieber (2004) introduces the feature [Loc] to analyze affixes. For instance, the semantic skeleton of *-less* is [−dynamic, −Loc ([ ], <base>)] (Lieber 2004: 109). According to Lieber, [−Loc] is the only feature needed for affixal negation, and it gives rise to four slightly different nuances of meaning, depending on the type of base to which it attaches: privation, contrary negation, contradictory negation, and reversativity (verbs).

When combining with nouns, negative prefixes generally yield a negative or privative reading. Also, in the case of such compounds, we can notice an alternation between the contradictory (CD) and contrary (CR) (scalar or gradable) readings. This type of nuanced reading can be applied to all adjectival *bi-* compounds in Romani, e.g. *bimanuśikano* CR; *biworta* CR; *biagor* CD; *bikerdo* CD; *bimulo/bimulano* CD. Lieber also states that when negative prefixes are used with verbs, a reversative meaning is yielded. In Romani, verbs such as *bibaxtarel* or *bilačharel*, though rare and not a uniform feature of the language, would certainly allow for such a reading.

Lieber goes on to state that there is no need to distinguish between privativity from other types of negativity. The polysemy of compounds with negative prefixes would thus be constructional, and their meaning would be result of interactions between the semantics of the affix and that of the base. Furthermore, within this framework, competing affixes fill the same semantic slot, e.g. *un-* vs. *in-* in English.

In light of this approach, the functional flexibility and diversity of Romani *bi-* can be easily explained by the lack of "competitors". *Bi-* has free range, as it were, and the variety of local in-coinings mentioned above makes full sense in this context.

7.2 Overlapping and competing negative prefixes in IE languages

Wackernagel (2009) provides a very interesting comparative and conceptual analysis of negative prefixes in IE languages. Wackernagel (2009: 712-713) posits the existence of a prototypic set of negatives, part of the original inventory of IE languages: a proper particle for negative statements, **ně*, and a privative prefix ('sonant nasal'). Wackernagel (2009: 732) then goes on to state that "from its frequent combination with nouns and adjectives, the sentence negative eventually developed into a proper prefix negating the meaning of the noun/ adjective, competing with the prefix in practically all its contexts of use, though often with a slight difference of meaning." Furthermore, widespread bilingualism would lead to "the use side by side of divergent forms assumed by the prefix in different languages – various shades of meaning" (Wackernagel 2009: 770), e.g. *unreligious* (i.e. 'not religious), which uses a prefix of Germanic origin and yields a contradictory meaning if we apply Lieber's (2004) framework, vs. *irreligious* (i.e. 'godless, frivolous'), which uses a prefix of Latin/French origin, and supports a contrary reading.

8. Indic connections

In this section, I provide a brief account of negative/privative affixes in OIA (Sanskrit), MIA (Pāli), and NIA (Hindi a.o.) that may be connected to Romani *bi*.

8.1 Negative/privative affixes in OIA

According to Ruppel (2017: 101), OIA has a small number of postpositions. Among the most frequently used, we find विना *vinā* 'without' (+ instrumental, accusative, or ablative) and प्रति *prati* 'towards' (+ accusative): 'towards', as in नगरम प्रति *nagaram prati* 'towards the city', with the latter being able to function both as preposition and as preverb (Ruppel 2017: 103).

On the other hand, preverbs are far more frequent. Of interest to our discussion are the preverbs अप- *apa-* 'away, off', a cognate of Greek ἀπό- *apó-* 'away from, from') and of Middle Persian *abē/apē* 'without, un-, in-, -less', and वि- *vi-* 'apart, asunder, away, out'. Whitney (1924: 500) writes that *vi-* is "third in order of frequency among the verbal prefixes which have value as such throughout the whole history of the language", and includes *apa* in this category as well. Whitney (1924: 511) adds that such verbal prefixes can also be used in a general adverbial way, qualifying a following adjective or noun, and that *vi-* in particular can be found in prepositional compounds with nouns, which, "though few in number as compared with other classes of compounds, are not rare, either in the earlier language or in the latter".

The following entry in Apte (1957-1959) maps out the full functional and semantic breadth of *vi-* in OIA:

> वि vi ind. 1 As a prefix to verbs and nouns it expresses:-- (a) separation, disjunction (apart, asunder, away, off &c.), as वियुज्, विह्, विचल् &c.; (b) the reverse of an action; as क्री 'to buy'; विक्री, 'to sell'; स्मृ 'to remember'; विस्मृ 'to forget'; (c) division; as विभज्, विभाग; (d) distinction; as विशिष्, विशेष, विविच्, विवेक; (e) discrimination; व्यवच्छेद (f) order, arrangement; as विधा, विरच्; (g) opposition; as विरुध्, विरोध; (h) privation; as विनी, विनयन; (i) deliberation, as विचर्, विचार; (j) intensity; विध्वंस. 2 As a prefix to nouns or adjectives not immediately connected with roots, वि expresses (a) negation or privation, in which case it is used much in the same way as अ or निर्, i. e. it forms Bah. comp.[13]; विधवा, व्यसुः &c.; (b) intensity, greatness; as विकराल; (c) variety, as विचित्र; (d) difference; as विलक्षण; (e) manifoldness, as विविध; (f) contrariety, opposition, as विलोम; (g) change, as विकार; (h) impropriety, as विजन्मन्.

As we can see from its use as a preverb expressing a reversative meaning, the Indic etymology initially proposed by Sampson (1926) for the verbs discussed in 5 is hard to refute and is furthermore supported by the documented initial /v/ > /b/ sound change

[13] *Bahuvrīhi* compounds.

pattern (Sampson 1926, Matras 2004), which is quite regular in the development of Romani, e.g. विस्मरति *vismarati* 'to forget' > *bistrel*, विक्रिणाति *vikriṇāti* 'to sell' > *bikinel*.

The negative and privative meaning expressed by *vi-* when used in combination with nouns (2a) seems to have been carried on in *beng* 'the Devil', which is considered by Sampson (1926) to be a reflex of OIA व्यङ्ग *vyaṅga* 'having limbs away or gone, limbless', the latter being also mentioned in Whitney (1924: 509) as an example of *vi-* used with true prepositional value.

8.2 *Vi-* and *vinā* in MIA

Both *vi-* and *vinā* were continued in MIA. Frankfurter (1883: 73) notes that *vi-* 'apart, asunder' is included by the native grammarians in the list of *upasagga* (prepositions), which can be prefixed to verbs or nouns and modify their meaning. *Vinā* 'without' belongs to a slightly different class, which comprises words that "are used like modern preposition and adverbs and only comparatively seldom in combination with verbs and nouns." (Frankfurter 1883: 74). Duroiselle (2007: 84) considers that *upasagga*, which are prefixed to verbs and their derivatives, are in fact verbal prefixes. It is noted that *vi-* 'asunder, apart, away, without' implies "separation, distinctness, dispersion", e.g. √*jā* 'to know > *vijānāti* 'to know distinctly, to discern' (Duroiselle 2007: 85).

8.3 Negative/privative affixes in NIA (Hindi)

8.3.1 Negative prefixes

Srivastava (1995: 165-169) distinguishes three sets of negative prefixes in Hindi:
(i) OIA prefixes generally used in *tatsama*[14] words, including वि- *vi-* 'apart, away, out', e.g. वियोग *viyog* 'separation', विवाद *vivād* 'dispute', विभाग *vibhāg* 'department'; अप- *apa-* 'away, forth, off', e.g. अपभ्रंश *apabhraṃśa* (lit. 'corrupt language') denoting the transition stage between late MIA and NIA, अपशब्द *apśabd* 'abuse'; निर- *nir-* 'absence' निराकार *nirākār* 'shapeless, formless'; न- *na-* 'absence, negative sense' नास्तिक *nāstik* 'miscreant, infidel'.
(ii) Hindi prefixes (or rather inherited OIA prefixes), which can be added to pure Hindi and *tadbhava*[15] words, including अ/अन- *a/an-* (before vowel-initial bases) 'absence; -less', e.g. अपार *apār* 'vast', अनन्त *anant* 'endless' (it is also included in the first category, albeit used with *tatsama* words); नि 'absence, without'.
(iii) Urdu prefixes (of Persian origin), including बे *be* 'without', e.g. बेवकूफ़ *bevkūf* 'nonsense, stupid, foolish'; ना *nā* 'absence, without', e.g. नापसंद *nāpasand* 'dislike'.

Chaturvedi (1997), however, considers वि- *vi-* a *tadbhava* prefix which conveys 'absence, otherness', as well as 'separation', e.g. विदेश *videś* 'abroad', sometimes acting as an intensifier, e.g. विचार *vicār* 'idea, conception, feeling'.

[14] तत्सम *tatsama* = learned borrowings from Sanskrit.
[15] तदभव *tadbhava* = native inherited vocabulary from MIA.

The entry in McGregor (1997) reads:

> वि- vi- [S.], pref. 1. apart; away, off (e.g. विलग, adj. disconnected; विस्तार, m. extent). 2. different, opposite (e.g. विक्रय, m. selling, sale; विविध, adj. of different kinds; विदेश, m. foreign lands). 3. division, distinction (e.g. विभाषा, f. dialect).

As can be seen, compared with OIA, *vi-* has lost its previous preverbal function, which remains somewhat visible in deverbal forms such as विक्रय or in verbs such as बिकना *biknā* 'to be sold', an intransitive reflex of विक्रीयते *vikrīyate* 'be sold', an inflected form (middle voice 3rd person pl.) of root क्री *krī* 'buy' with prefix वि- *vi-*. Its semantic field is narrower in NIA, and its negative/ privative function has been taken over by other competing prefixes, both inherited and borrowed (*a-*, *nir-*, *be-*, *nā-*). A similar process of functional and semantic reconfiguration must have taken place in proto-Romani, which would explain why the archaic verbal prefix became unproductive and is only vestigial in verbs such as *bikinel*, *bistrel*, etc.

Chaturvedi (1997) identifies an *apabhraṃśa* reflex of the Sanskrit *vinā-*, namely बिन *bin*, which has preserved its initial negative and privative meaning in expressions such as बिन जाने *bin jāne* 'not knowing, unknowingly' (to be noted, the verb is treated as a masculine noun and placed in the oblique form).

8.3.2 Postpositions in Hindi. Privative *ke binā*

Hindi is characterized by the presence of a large number of postposition, most of them compound: के *ke* (the great majority) / की *ki* + …, e.g. के बिना *ke binā* 'without', के मारे *ke māre* 'because of', के सिवा(य) *ke sivā(y)* 'except for', के अलावा *ke alāvā* 'apart from' (< Pers. علاوه *alāve*), etc. The preceding noun is placed in the oblique form. Note that के *ke* is also the marker for the plural genitive. बिना *binā* can also be attached directly to the noun, mainly in the literary register:

(54) इश्क बिना क्या मरना यारों/ इश्क बिना क्या जीना
Iśk binā kyā marnā yārõ/ **Iśk binā** kyā jinā
'What is dying, **without love**/What is life, **without love**'
(in *Ishq bina*, song from the movie *Taal*).

Oftentimes, especially in the colloquial language, compound postpositions are inverted:

(55) बिना आपकी सहायता के हम सफल न हो सकें।
Binā āpkī sahāytā **ke** ham saphal nā ho sakẽ.
'**Without** your help we couldn't have been successful.'
(McGregor 1987: 149)

It is important to note that the template $N_{OBL.}$ + Compound postp. [*ke*$_{GEN.\ MARK}$ + POSTP] is quite prevalent in NIA languages. Beames (1875: 299) notes that "many of the

postpositions are derived from the Skr. locative and ablative cases, necessitating the placing of the noun to which they are attached in the oblique genitive".

(56) **घरों के पास** बह रहा है बाढ़ का पानी।
Gharõ ke pās bah rahā hai bāṛh kā pānī.
house-M.PL.OBL PL.GEN near
'Floodwater is flowing by the houses.'
(https://youtube.com/shorts/3xOLcRlzorU?si=_M5Z6BL2pcXKGKr4)

Pronouns used with compound postpositions also take an "oblique genitive" (genitive plural) form: **मेरे** लिए *mere liye* 'for **me**', whereas their proper oblique forms are used when followed by simple preposition. Interestingly, in the case of the first-person singular pronoun, its oblique form itself (मुझ *mujh*) seems to be an old Prakrit genitive (Beames 1875: 306). According to Beames (1875: 307), "there are confusions arising from the consciousness that the oblique was really an old genitive; so that, when they got a new genitive, they used it also as an oblique. One hears in Hindi also, colloquially, such expressions as मेरे से[16]".

This prototypical "oblique genitive" before postpositions, mostly likely developed in the *apabhraṃśa* stage, along with the prevalence of inverted compound postpositions in NIA languages, lends substantially more credence to the parallel drawn by Courthiade (2016) with regard to the *bi…qo* discontinuous morpheme ("circumposition"/ "pre-postposition") in Romani. This would also help explain the general lack of concord of *bi…qo* genitive adnominals with prepositional *bi*. To wit, *qo* would function in a similar manner as *ke* in Hindi compound postpositions, where it has lost its function as a genitive marker and acts rather like a "neutral", semantically void particle connecting the noun in the oblique form to the second part of the postpositional compound.

9. Iranian connections

In this section I provide a brief account of negative/privative affixes in Middle Persian (MP), Early and Classical New Persian (NP), and Modern Persian (ModP)[17], and explore possible connections to Romani *bi*.

9.1 Middle Persian *BE* and its NP reflexes

Jügel (2013) argues that a series of Old Persian/PIE inputs yielded MP forms *abē, bē, be* which, due to their semantic and phonetic coalescence, are analyzed under the umbrella term *BE*: PIE adverb/preposition **b^{h}e* > **ba-id* > *bē* 'outside, without'; PIE

[16] *Mere se* 'from me', instead of मुझसे *mujhse*.
[17] Conventional historical stages: Middle Persian (4th century BC – 7th century AD); Early New Persian (7th century – 13th century); Classical New Persian (13th century – 18th century); Modern and Contemporary Persian (18th century – present) (Maggi & Orsatti 2018).

emphatic particle *b^he/b^ho > *ba-id > *bē*; OP adverbial compound **apa-id* > *abē* ‘without, -less, away’. According to Jügel, MP *BE* would comprise several incarnations:
(i) Preposition and prefix ‘without, -less’, given as *abē/apē* ‘without, un-, in-, -less’ in Abramyan (1965), seemingly a cognate of OIA अप *apa* ‘away, forth, off’ (Whitney 1924);
(ii) Conjunction ‘but’;
(iii) Adverb ‘outside’, mostly in combinations, e.g. *bērōn* ‘outside’ > NP بیرون *birun* ‘outside’;
(iv) Preverb ‘away, forth’;
(v) Verbal particle: terminative meaning; grammaticalized prefix marking tense and/or aspect-perfective, and then also mood, i.e. the subjunctive. The subjunctive specialization is generally considered a later development (Maggi & Orsatti 2018: 67).

Arising from MP *BE*, the following reflexes are attested in NP/ModP:
(i) BE_4 (most likely) > preposition به *be* ‘to, at, in’ (indicating direction and location, as well as indirect objects); ‘with’ (combining with abstract nouns to form adverbs of manner), e.g. به سرعت *be-sor’at* ‘with speed, quickly’ (Yousef 2018: 133)
(ii) BE_5 > verbal prefix به *be*, used to express the subjunctive in ModP
(iii) BE_1 > privative preposition بی *bi* ‘without’, synonymous with بدونِ *bedun-e*:

(57) بی هیچ توضیحی نامه را داد و رفت
Bi hich **towzihi** name rā dād va raft.
‘**Without** any **explanation**, he gave the letter and left.’
(Yousef 2018: 134)

(iv) BE_1 > negative/ privative prefix -بی *bi-* ‘un-; -less’, e.g. بی‌پایان *bi-pāyān* ‘endless’ (compare with Romani *biagoresqo* and Hindi अनंत *anant* ‘endless, infinite’)

9.2 Negative بی *bi* in Modern Persian

Hajri (1998: 106) describes prefixal *bi-* as a negative prefix that is generally attached to nouns to form negative or privative adjectives, e.g. بی دانش *bidāneš* ‘ignorant, without knowledge’. In addition, it can be used to form compound adverbs with nouns, as in بی شک *bišak* ‘certainly, undoubtedly’. Khormaee et al. (2019) argue that the primary privative meaning accrues secondary meanings through metonymic extension: ‘not to do’, e.g. بی‌خواب *bixāb* ‘awake, sleepless’, i.e. ‘who does not sleep’ (compare with *bilindraqo* ‘sleepless’); ‘not to do properly’, e.g. بی مسئولیت *bimas'uliy[y]at* ‘irresponsible’ (compare with *bilaćhardo* ‘incorrigible, unprepared’; ‘not to do/occur at the right moment’, e.g. بی‌وقت *bivaqt* ‘at the wrong time’.

A comparative study of negative prefixes نا *nā* and بی *bi* by Rahimian et al. (2022) based on the Hamsahri corpus and using Lieber’s (2004) lexical semantic approach showed that نا *nā* is less frequent (535 entries), is non-anchoring (the co-indexing principle cannot be applied) and can only be used with nouns, never with adjectives; on the other hand, بی *bi* is substantially more frequent (1139 entries), is anchoring (the co-indexing principle can be applied), expresses more often a contradictory meaning

(76.27%) than a contrary meaning (23.73%), and can be used both with nouns and adjectives.

From a semantic and functional perspective, strongly adjectival *bi-* compounds in Romani (prefixal *bi…qo, bi* + adjectives or adjectival participles) are quite similar to Persian words formed with negative نا *nā* or بی *bi*. Even in the absence of direct wholesale borrowings, it is not farfetched to imagine that following the contact of proto-Romani with New Persian or other Iranian languages in the area, a reconfiguration and extension of the inherited Indic template (prepositional *bi…qo*) could have occurred, especially on account of homophony and semantic congruence. As noted above, similar coalescence processes are likely to have taken place within the Balkan *Sprachbund* as well.

10. Conclusions

Most lexicographic sources and related studies trace Romani *bi* back to to OIA वि *vi-*, but also acknowledge that a Middle/ New Persian origin is plausible (Boretzky & Igla 1994, Mānušs et al. 1997, Vekerdi 2000). Mānušs et al. (1997: 32) give both etymologies (OIA *vi-*, and MP preposition *be, bē*), while Vekerdi (2000: 35) only mentions the Persian etyma (Pers. بی /bi/). Hancock (1995a: 41) mentions that it could be related to Persian, NIA (Hindi), or OIA.

As stated by Matras (2004: 23), it is difficult to distinguish Iranian items in Romani from cognates shared by Indo-Iranian as whole, and "precise etymologies are further obscured by the similarities among the Iranian languages". Indeed, one cannot argue for an exclusive Persian etymology for *bi-*. However, if one takes into account its functional and semantic profile (described in sections 2-5), the general insights and principles laid out by Lieber and Wackernagel (summarized in section 7), as well as the diachronic dynamic of negative affixes in Indo-Aryan (section 8) and Persian (section 9), a more nuanced picture emerges.

I would argue that the various *bi* constructions detailed in section 1 can be ascribed, at least roughly, to different stages in the development of the language and different contact scenarios. The limited set of verbs containing a reflex of OIA preverbal वि- *vi-* and prototypical prepositional *bi…qo* template can be safely ascribed to an early proto-Romani stage (perhaps late MIA or *apabhraṃśa*), most certainly prior to departure from the Indian subcontinent. Strongly adjectival compounds (prefixal *bi…qo*, *bi-* + adjectives, *bi* + adjectival participles) are more likely to have arisen in a post-Indian context, as a result of contact with Persian or other Iranian languages. Finally, the use of *bi* as a conjunction with subjunctive verbs must be the result of a later, localized convergence within the Balkan *Sprachbund*.

Being a lone inherited productive prefix and lacking competitors, *bi-* can be seen as an affixal "jack of all trades", enriching and reconfiguring its semantic and functional range in various contact scenarios, which would account for its substantial multifunctional and polysemic profile.

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AN OVERVIEW OF GENERATIVE THIRD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH

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Abstract: The goal of this paper is to provide a short state-of-the-art review of third language (L3) acquisition research from a generative point of view. I present some of the most important theoretical models of morphosyntactic transfer along with the results of exemplar studies that test them. Research in this field of study is most interested in tracing transfer, identifying its source(s) – first language (L1) and/or second language (L2) – and determining its nature – facilitative or non-facilitative in the process of attaining proficiency in L3 (see Rothman et al. 2019). Experimental results indicate that both previously acquired languages (L1 and L2) can be transferred in a facilitative and non-facilitative manner, approving or contradicting some of the proposed models of transfer. I conclude that there is a need for more research, testing the models across different language combinations and thus providing answers to the questions raised by the field.

Keywords: third language acquisition, transfer, (non-)facilitation, multilingualism

1. Introduction

This article[1] is a review of third language (L3) acquisition research where I discuss some of the most important theoretical models and the results of a number of experiments conducted to test them. My approach to the subject is non-exhaustive and centers on the generative framework prevalent in this particular domain of study. In the context of additional language assimilation and development, the interaction of linguistic knowledge between previously and newly acquired languages has been the area of investigation. Previous linguistic experience is determining in multilingualism; however, further research is required to show exactly how. Whether the acquisition of subsequent languages is the same as the acquisition of the first language (L1) or not, has long been discussed by linguists. Also, an expanding collection of studies appears to show that learning a third or further languages (Ln) differs from learning a second language (L2) (see Flynn et al. 2004, Rothman et al. 2019).

L3 acquisition studies are focused on several key questions. Firstly, which previously learned language(s) serves as the source of transfer? Secondly, at what moment does transfer take place? Is its occurrence confined to the early phases of language acquisition, or does it extend to intermediate and even advanced levels of proficiency? Thirdly, how do learners manage to eventually overcome non-facilitative transfer? Furthermore, does proficiency level in the learner's L2 and L3 matter in the process of setting the parameters of the target L3 grammar?

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Diverse theories attempt to model how transfer occurs, sustaining their claims with a large number of studies conducted with different language combinations (typologically dissimilar or related such as Romance: Spanish, Italian, French, and Germanic languages: English, German, Norwegian, or Russian, Chinese, Hungarian). The early and preliminary stages of the L3 as well as numerous variables such as acquisition age, linguistic dominance, level of proficiency, etc. are being considered. The examined linguistic properties include domains of differential object marking, null objects/subjects, relative clauses, object placement, pronominal possessors, word order, coordination of subject pronouns, negations, etc. The data give insight into the complex mental process of language acquisition, without being able to answer all important questions about L3 learning.

The following constitutes the paper's structure: In section 2, I address several particular aspects of L3 acquisition research from a generative linguistic perspective. In section 3, I present seven of the most significant models of linguistic transfer up to date and I describe exemplary studies conducted to test them. Next, in section 4, I examine the findings of transfer research spanning the last two decades. Finally, in section 5, I give an overview of the potential advancements in the field of study, and I provide a tentative conclusion.

2. From generative SLA to TLA[2]

Within the theoretical framework of the generative approach, the formal linguistic study of L3/Ln is a fairly new undertaking. However, generative methods (initially used in SLA) to L3 or Ln learning are well into their third decade and have played a significant role in the recent increase of interest in this topic (as discussed by González Alonso, 2023).

Universal Grammar (UG), the theoretical and methodological frameworks it employs to study language acquisition, and the emphasis on inherent linguistic knowledge are the distinguishing features of the generative approach. It is one of numerous approaches in SLA (e.g. Structuralism, Functionalism, Cognitive Linguistics, Behaviourism, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, etc.), each of which contributes to the field by concentrating on distinct variables and aspects that affect language acquisition. Some key distinctions between the generative approach and other approaches in linguistics are the focus on: UG (perceived as an innate language faculty), language acquisition device (which acts as a helping tool for children when they acquire their L1), syntax (emphasis on the acquisition of rule, process and principle sets as governing factors of sentence structure), parameter setting (options within UG possible to be set based on the linguistic input received), interplay with native language (interaction between L1 and the target language). In contrast, other linguistic approaches may emphasize the importance of cognitive processes, experience, and the environment in the acquisition of language.

In order to comprehend Chomsky's (1986) generative approach to linguistics, it is imperative to grasp the concepts of I-language and E-language. I-language is an acronym

[2] Third Language Acquisition.

for “internal language”. It denotes the internalized language system that is present in the mind of an individual. Chomsky's linguistic theory is primarily concerned with this system. It incorporates the mental representation of linguistic knowledge, which includes the rules and principles that regulate the generation of grammatical sentences. E-language, in contrast, is an acronym for “external language”. Chomsky regards E-language as the aggregate of all external manifestations of I-language, which encompasses every instance of linguistic performance. E-language is perceived as more abstract and disconnected from the psychological mechanisms that generate linguistic proficiency.

Preoccupation with aspects of the learning process, initial state transfer, ultimate attainment (popular topics in SLA) characterizes early generative L3 studies. Transfer source selectivity was an additional significantly generative inquiry that emerged as the primary focus of L3 research. Yan-Kit Ingrid Leung’s dissertation (Leung 2002) and early postdoctoral work (e.g. Leung 2003, 2005a, 2005b) are the first generative research programs to successively approach the L3 context as a distinct scenario to what is initially reported about SLA. At the same time, Flynn and colleagues publish their seminal study, which becomes the first model of transfer in multilingual morphosyntax (Flynn et al. 2004). Leung (2007) provides substantial evidence that L3 acquisition has been pertinent to the issues that generative acquisitionists were examining at the time. Her argument centres on the untapped potential of multilingualism as a testing ground for the two contradictory but complementary approaches to language acquisition: the one concerned with sameness, where natural languages are an expression of a universal language faculty, and the one concerned with difference, where misalignments between the grammars of those natural languages are essential to model the learning trajectories of bi-/multilingual speakers.

3. Models of transfer

Models of morphosyntactic transfer are divided into two categories by Rothman et al. (2019) based on the source of transfer: (i) Default L1/L2 (L1 scenario, L2 Status Factor); (ii) Non-default L1/L2 (Cumulative Enhancement Model, Typological Proximity Model, Linguistic Primacy Model, Scalpel Model). Additionally, the Cumulative Input Threshold Hypothesis (CITH) is introduced as a seventh model, which emphasizes the development of L3 and establishes a new direction in the field. In the following subsections, a brief description of each model is provided.

3.1 L1 scenario

The L1 scenario is a plausible hypothesis, indicating that the L3 learner’s native language is the default source of transfer (see e.g. Na Ranong & Leung 2009, Hermas 2010, 2015). This design conforms to the Full Transfer/Full Access Hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse 1994). The initial logical possibility when examining the selectivity of transfer sources in L3/Ln acquisition is that the transfer will originate exclusively from L1. There is disagreement in the literature concerning the factors that determine L1 transfer source selection (e.g. order of acquisition, language dominance in the case of adults as pointed

out by Lloyd-Smith et al. 2017). For a more comprehensive understanding of the potential testing of this hypothesis, the reader is invited to look at a few exemplary studies. In his doctoral dissertation Lozano (2003) suggests that traces of the L1 Greek could be detected in the advanced L3 Spanish of his participants. Na Ranong & Leung (2009) conducted research on null objects, examining 20 L1-Thai L2-English L3-Chinese learners, 7 L1-English L2-Chinese and 20 native controls. Null objects are licensed in Chinese and Thai but they are not allowed in English. In order to test the learners' knowledge of null objects, they used an offline interpretation task. The results indicate that L3 learners interpreted null objects similarly in their L1 and L2. Comparing the responses of the L2 and L3 groups, however, reveals no statistically significant differences. Individual analyses of the responses suggest that L1 might have a facilitative effect in the L3 group. According to their findings, the L1 is preferred for morphosyntactic transfer in L3/Ln acquisition. This is consistent with the conclusions of Hermas (2010).

3.2 L2 Status Factor (L2SF)

The L2 Status Factor is a hypothesis that claims a second language to be the preferred source of transfer because of its recency and psychological and cognitive importance (Bardel & Falk 2007, Falk & Bardel 2011). It was proposed in the mid-2000s as an extension into morphosyntax of notions that had been significant in non-native vocabulary acquisition. In a nutshell, the model asserts that distinct memory systems support various forms of linguistic knowledge. While procedural memory serves the native grammar, declarative memory serves the lexicons of the first and subsequent languages. Newer instantiations of the L2SF cover L3 scenarios beyond the one for which the model was first designed — adult sequential bilinguals (L2 learners) learning a third language in formal instruction settings. In situations where the "L2 status" factor is minimized or effectively neutralized (e.g. the presence of at least some L1 knowledge in declarative memory or the existence of two native languages, as in simultaneous bilingualism), transfer source selectivity will be determined by individual differences in cognitive variables, according to Bardel & Sanchez (2017). As a result of the significant increase in research on L3/Ln morphosyntactic acquisition over the past decade, the L2SF was adjusted and upgraded and the new formulation of the model (Bardel & Sánchez, 2017, Falk et al. 2015) accommodates L3 contexts, too.

The reader might want to look into the exemplary study conducted by Falk & Bardel (2011), which investigated the acquisition of object placement in English-French bilinguals who were learning L3-German. In their study they use mirror-image groups (22 L1-English L2-French and 22 L1-French-L2 English learners acquiring L3-German). They look at the acceptability of object pronouns in pre-verbal and post-verbal position. In English object-pronouns must be placed post-verbally and in French pre-verbally, whereas German allows both positions in different contexts. The researchers devise a grammaticality judgement task (GJT), which was coded for accuracy and they compared the results of the two groups. In fact, the data demonstrate that the group with English as their L2 chooses post-verbal object pronouns, while the group with French as their L2 prefers preverbal object pronouns. Bardel & Falk (2011) interpret these data as indicating that the L2 has a preferred status regardless of language combination.

3.3 Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM)

The CEM represents a shift in formal linguistic strategies for L3/Ln acquisition, particularly in recognizing the importance of prior linguistic impact. The CEM's claim that "further language learning has a cumulative effect" implies that prior linguistic experience in the form of grammatical knowledge is significant, thereby distinguishing between L2 and L3 acquisition (see Rothman et al. 2019: 88). Before the CEM revealed this distinction, and possibly even now, researchers did not always take into account potential differences between L2 and L3/Ln learners. Proponents of the CEM argue that L3 syntactic transfer obtains from either the L1 or the L2 (Flynn et al. 2004). According to the CEM, the process of learning a language is sequential and builds upon itself, and prior knowledge of any language can either be beneficial to learning a new language or be irrelevant to the process. Proof of non-facilitative transfer (meaning transfer from a previously acquired language that hinders grammar development in the target L3) is, in principle, evidence against the model. Two studies that assess the predictions of the CEM are presented in the subsequent two paragraphs.

Flynn et al. (2004) examine the production of relative clauses by 33 L1-Kazakh L2-Russian L3-English learners. Lacking a mirror-image control group, they compare this group to L2-Japanese and L2-Spanish groups. Russian and English are head-initial languages, and Kazakh is head-final. According to their findings, both groups (regardless of age or proficiency) produce target-like restrictive relative clauses in L3 English. Their results showed that both groups (irrespective of age and proficiency) had target-like production of restrictive relative clauses in English. The authors interpret these results as proof that transfer selection in adult sequential multilingualism occurs if it is fully facilitative.

Berkes and Flynn (2012) examine the structural understanding of relative clauses in the case of L1-Hungarian L2-German L3-English learners. German, like English and Hungarian, is a head-initial language, although it is essentially SOV, as seen by its mandatory verb-final word order in embedded clauses. They look at word order in relative clauses in a language combination where this property manifests itself differently. The authors of the study test 42 L1-German L2-English and 36 L1-Hungarian L2 German L3-English learners. Test instruments consist of an elicited imitation task with three types of relative clauses. They assume that transfer is only facilitative. Their findings reveal significant differences between the production of free relative clauses and lexically-headed relative clauses in the L1-German, L2-English group. They ascribe these results to German influence. When examining the production of relative sentences by the L3 group, various performances can be observed and no significant difference can be seen. They interpret their findings as evidence for the facilitation of L3 acquisition in comparison to the possible non-facilitation from L2 German to L3 English.

3.4 Typological Primacy Model (TPM)

Rothman (2011, 2013, 2015) presents the Typological Primacy Model (TPM), which entails a complete initial transfer from the language that is typologically nearest. TPM thinks that the first stages should be accorded a special status. The TPM does not

provide projections for later L3A phases. Experiments are typically carried out in the initial stages of training, often involving English and Romance language speakers learning a different Romance language as a third language (e.g. Rothman & Cabrelli Amaro 2010). This theory asserts that previous language transfer is not defined a priori by order of acquisition, that is, by whether a given language is the L1 or the L2, but rather by the implicitly observed structural resemblance between each previous language and the L3. Once the grammar of the L1 or L2 has been copied as a first-pass L3 grammar, the remaining acquisition process consists of reconfiguring those areas where the transferred grammar and L3 target grammar do not match.

Rothman (2013) assumes that the comparison process leads to transfer source selection. The process consists of hierarchical linguistic domains (e.g. Lexicon, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax) used by the learner's internal linguistic parser in order to gather sufficient information about linguistic similarities. This process is assumed to take place in the initial stages of acquisition and its role is to help the learner form a first grammar to parse the new L3 input (see González Alonso 2023). Depending on the similarities of L1-L3, or L2-L3, the process would take longer or shorter. The TPM receives support from a number of studies, though with restricted language combinations, mainly Spanish-English-Brazilian Portuguese (for a review of studies see Puig-Mayenco et al. 2020). The TPM's predictions are tested in the subsequent exemplary study with bilingual learner groups that are acquiring their L3.

Rothman & Cabrelli Amaro (2010) examine L2 and L3 acquisition of French and Italian as target languages by four groups of learners: L1-English L2-French, L1-English L2-Italian, L1-English L2-Spanish L3-Italian, L1-English L2-Spanish L3 French and a group of English natives as controls. The domain of grammar they look at are properties related to null-subject licensing. In the language combinations implied, Spanish would be the source of non-facilitation for L3-French learners and the source of facilitation for Italian. The authors design a context/sentence matching task (for the knowledge of the Overt Pronoun Constraint) and a grammaticality judgement task with correction (GJT) – to examine properties of the Null Subject Parameter. The results of the OPC task showed that both L2 groups behave similarly and they transfer their L1-English. L3 groups also behave similarly to each other but differently from L2 groups: L2-Spanish is the transferred language in the case of learning Italian and French. The results of the GJT task align with the OPC task, L2 learners transfer English and reject null subjects in Italian and L3 learners transfer Spanish. The authors' goal is to show whether non-facilitative transfer could be obtained (contradicting the CEM) and they indeed find it in the case of L3-French. The authors find that typological proximity between Spanish, French and Italian could explain the results and thus the TPM was born in that project.

3.5 Linguistic Proximity Model (LPM)

The Linguistic Proximity Model is proposed by Westergaard et al. (2017). Acquisition entails obtaining properties one by one and allows input from one or both languages previously acquired, whether facilitative or non-facilitative. Crosslinguistic effect happens when a linguistic feature of a language being taught is comparable in structure to features of languages previously acquired. In the early stages of L3, LPM does not allow

for the possibility of a complete transfer of one of the previously acquired grammars. The LPM agrees essentially with the consensus among models that L3 acquisition is a "nonredundant process" (see González Alonso, 2023: 35). Specifically, it accepts the CEM's view that transfer can and does originate alternately from L1 and L2 throughout. The LPM is, in fact, a model for L3 acquisition that places emphasis on transfer/CLI as an integral component of the acquisition process. In contrast to the TPM, the LPM is intended to model the mechanisms that give rise to CLI/transfer (of individual properties) during L3 acquisition.

The predictions of the LPM are tested by Westergaard et al. (2017), who analyse Norwegian-Russian bilinguals who speak English as their third language to determine the origin of transfer/CLE in two different word order scenarios: verb-second (V2) in Norwegian and subject-auxiliary inversion in English. Their aim is to show facilitative and non-facilitative transfer from either Norwegian or Russian into L3 English. They collect data from three groups: Norwegian-Russian bilingual learners of L3 English, L1-Norwegian L2-English learners, and L1-Russian L2 English learners. The participants are early child bilinguals acquiring yet another language in adolescence. A grammaticality judgement task (GJT) is used with two conditions focusing on declarative sentences with and without verb movement and subject-auxiliary inversion sentences. The results of the declarative condition indicate that the bilingual group rejects significantly more sentences containing V2 in English than the monolingual Norwegian learners of L2 English. The fact that the group of bilinguals performs better under these conditions is interpreted as evidence of a Russian effect. In contrast, all students perform equally well in the subject-auxiliary inversion condition, contrary to the hypothesis that bilinguals would perform better. It is argued that the fact that they perceive influence from both languages in L3 English is evidence in favour of a model of L3 acquisition that predicts transfer to occur property-by-property, based on structural similarity.

3.6 Scalpel Model (SM)

The Scalpel Model (Slabakova, 2017), which is best described as a collection of observations on the empirical and theoretical limitations of wholesale transfer and in favour of property-by-property transfer, has been conceptually combined with additional work on the LPM by the original authors of both theories (González Alonso 2023: 34). Slabakova (2017) argues explicitly that complete transfer of a previously learnt language does not occur during the initial period of language acquisition. It further specifies that transfer can occur from L1 or L2, or both, depending on which language learning is assisted by the transfer of parameter settings from the previously acquired language, but this can be done both facilitatively and non-facilitatively. In accordance with the CEM and LPM, it asserts that transfer is from one property to another. According to Slabakova's Scalpel Model, language interactions might be detrimental if, for instance, a grammatical feature is insufficiently frequent in the target language input. Flynn et al. (2004) contend that transfer is only proactive if it supports language learning.

Slabakova provides evidence for property-by-property transfer by referring to a study by Bruhn de Gavarito & Perpiñán (2014). They test a group of English-French bilinguals following 3 weeks of L3 Spanish learning. In order to test wholesale transfer,

they look at coordination of subject pronouns, focus constructions, adverb placement, clefts, and object clitics. French differs in most of the properties tested from English and Spanish. The authors design a written and aural acceptability judgement task (AJT) and a production task. The results of the AJT show transfer from French across the properties. In the elicited production task, the data shows mixed results which Slabakova interprets as L3 transfer from various sources.

Another study conducted to test the predictions of the SM is done by Clements & Domínguez (2018) in the L3-Chinese acquisition of null (NS) and overt subjects (OS). They use two goups: 15 L1-English L2-Spanish L3-Chinese, and 10 L1-English L2-French/German L3-Chinese learners and two control groups: 20 L1-Chinese and 20 L1-Spanish native speakers. The authors design a written production task (WPT) in order to investigate L3-Chinese learners' use of NS and OS, and a pronoun interpretation task (PIT) to investigate L3 learners' interpretation of embedded NS and OS in Chinese. Their results support the SM's (and LPM's) claim (transfer in not wholesale but partial), referring to the L2-Spanish group's transfer from Spanish for NS and from their L1 English for OS.

3.7 Cumulative Input Threshold Hypothesis (CITH)

Cabrelli & Iverson (2023) propose the CITH as the first customized L3 developmental theory. Literature on L1 and L2 acquisition has revealed that when it comes to rule learning, less is more (see Yang 2018). CITH shares a connection with Yang's Tolerance Principle (Yang 2005, 2016 and 2018) which is "a method by which the learner evaluates potentially productive hypotheses about language" (Yang 2018: 694). According to the Tolerance Principle "[distributional] rule learning [from input data] is easier, and more tolerant of exceptions, when the learner has a smaller set of items in their vocabulary… a larger value of N has the inadvertent consequence of raising the threshold for [rule] productivity, thereby making rule learning much more difficult" (Yang 2018: 692).

With this principle in mind, Cabrelli & Iverson (2023) develop the CITH for L3 acquisition. They contend that the larger the quantity of input the learner received in the language transferred during the initial stages of L3 acquisition, the greater the amount of input the learner will require to recover from non-facilitative transfer. In other words, in the case of proven non-facilitative transfer learners of L3 can overcome it and set the parameters of L3 easier when they receive less input of an L2. The learner needs to isolate input amounts by testing properties in L3 that do not exist in L1 or L2. Cabrelli & Iverson's study (2023) reveals that an L2 transfer advantage exists even without explicit knowledge. Therefore, the cumulative input of a structure in the transferred language impacts the time and ease of recovery from non-facilitative transfer in L3.

This theory provides the flexibility necessary to make testable predictions for bilingual types whose order of acquisition and cumulative exposure may not coincide, such as heritage bilinguals – for whom, in strict chronological terms, the L2 typically presents higher cumulative exposure – and simultaneous bilinguals – for whom it is frequently extremely difficult, if not impossible, to determine which language has dominated their linguistic experience (González Alonso 2023).

The theoretical models of morphosyntactic transfer discussed above make well-grounded predictions about the source of transfer. The two models included in the default L1/L2 category (L1 scenario, L2SF) suggest that one of the previously acquired languages stays prominent and readily available as preferred source of transfer. Whether the L1 or the L2 acts as a preselected option in the learner's mind proved not to be the most relevant question, because research has shown that transfer occurs from all and any of the learner's languages therefore these two models have lost from their explanatory power. The non-default L1/L2 category includes models that proved to have larger explanatory power (CEM, TPM, LPM, SM), showing that prior linguistic experience builds upon itself, it is cumulative, and factors like typological closeness, language dominance in case of bilingual learners, age of acquisition all have important roles in L3 acquisition. Whether wholesale initial transfer or property-by-property transfer takes place in the learner's mind is a question subject to future research as studies conducted so far provide evidence for both predictions. The nature of transfer appears to be essentially of two types: facilitative and non-facilitative; the predictions that suggest only one of these should no longer be tested. The next section presents a short summary of the results of L3 transfer studies, shedding more light upon the challenges and questions of the field.

4. Review of transfer studies' results

The findings of a comprehensive analysis of 85 L3 studies (Rothman et al. 2019) are presented below with the goal of achieving a deeper understanding of the nature and origin of linguistic transfer. Rothman et al. (2019) used the following macro-variables to predict the source selection of transfer: (i) L1 or L2 transfer; (ii) Typological transfer; (iii) Hybrid transfer; (iv) Non-facilitative transfer. 15 out of 85 investigated studies showed L1 transfer, conforming to the L1 scenario (see e.g. Na Ranong & Leung 2009, Hermas 2010, 2015), TPM (Rothman 2011, 2013, 2015), and CEM (see e.g. Flynn et al. 2004). L2 transfer is observed in 21 studies, adhering to the L2 Status Factor hypothesis (as stated by Bardel & Falk 2007, Falk & Bardel 2011), and the TPM. Typological transfer is reported in 53 studies, compatible with the TPM, LPM, and SM (Slabakova 2017). Hybrid transfer (essentially, transfer from both L1 and L2) is found in 13 studies (compatible with the LPM, and SM) and non-facilitative transfer (compatible with all models previously mentioned except for CEM) is shown in 78 studies (Rothman et al. 2019: 138).

The authors conclude that studies with production data (where learners are administered production tasks) are significantly associated with L2 transfer only, while hybrid transfer and the majority of studies demonstrating L1 transfer are comprehension studies (in instances where comprehension tasks are used). Order of acquisition cannot explain the vast majority of the data on its own, and the L2SF cannot account for most of the data. Typological transfer has significant explanatory power, and it can account for the majority of the data. In a minority of the studies, hybrid transfer is observed, and the nature of production data might explain these results. Also, there is conclusive evidence that non-facilitative transfer exists. The CEM cannot explain most of the data sets, and it

should no longer be tested. The LPM and SM may be able to account for the variation in results, therefore, they must be tested.

It is now time to revisit the questions from the introduction and endeavour to provide answers based on the knowledge that has been presented thus far. In the pursuit of the source of morphosyntactic transfer, the literature indicates that it can originate from either the L1 or the L2, or from both of the earlier acquired languages. The researcher's work is made harder by this response, as they must disentangle the sources of transfer and determine whether it is the case of full initial transfer (as predicted by the TPM) or property-by-property transfer (supported by the SP and LPM). Regarding the question of whether transfer is restricted to the initial phases, the response is negative. Research has demonstrated that the transfer process continues into the later stages of learning. For example, non-facilitative transfer is observed in the case of proficient L3 learners, too. The proficiency level of the learners' L2 and L3 is crucial and plays a significant role in overcoming non-facilitation. This has been shown to be achievable; however, the rate of progress may vary depending on the volume of input from the L2 (as evidenced by the CITH).

Overall, it would be highly advantageous to establish a standardized methodology that could be employed to conduct research in the field of L3 research, with a view toward the future. This would result in a more thorough ability to compare research and disprove or support the proposed L3 models. In addition, the models should be more capable of accommodating typologically distant language combinations, as the language pairs that have been observed so far are primarily Romance and Germanic. Also, a potential limitation of the models might be that there is too much emphasis on simultaneous bilinguals acquiring their L3. Such populations are often very difficult to find. In contrast, sequential bilinguals are generally more prevalent and more accessible for testing, such as students in public schools. Additionally, it is exceedingly challenging to control the variables of age and the languages acquired. In the case of children, the researcher is aided by the fact that the school curriculum determines the languages they are taught and the appropriate time to acquire them. However, the situation is more complex for adults. Often, adults are able to communicate in more than three languages at varying levels of proficiency. The reader can grasp from this how challenging it can be to conduct L3 research with an adult population. Consequently, in the future, models of L3 morphosyntactic transfer should more explicitly distinguish between acquisition models designed for young learners and adult populations and provide specific and differential testing tools for researchers.

5. Conclusions

In this paper I have presented a non-exhaustive review of generative L3 acquisition research, which includes a discussion of several of the most significant theoretical models and the outcomes of numerous experiments that were conducted to test them. Conclusions are numerous, and readers are encouraged to contemplate them. As linguistic transfer takes central stage in L3 acquisition, the generative approach continues to guide inquiries, offering a theoretical framework that considers both the sameness and difference

perspectives in language learning trajectories having enriched our comprehension of the process of acquiring multiple languages, providing a robust foundation for ongoing investigations into the nuances of linguistic transfer. Furthermore, the exploration of linguistic transfer, crosslinguistic influence, and parameter setting within the generative framework has unfolded a rich tapestry of theoretical landscapes. The distinctions between linguistic transfer and crosslinguistic influence, coupled with the examination of the initial state of SLA, have contributed to the understanding of the factors influencing language learning outcomes. The controversies surrounding critical periods, parameter setting, and the dynamic interplay of variables like linguistic experience, age of acquisition, proficiency level, and language similarity highlight the depth of inquiry within the generative approach.

Both theoretical and experimental researchers attempt to answer emerging questions, such as whether transfer in L3 acquisition is the same for all bilingual types, and does age of acquisition matter. Understanding the potential differences that may exist between the various types of bilinguals should become an increasingly central focus in the near future, and being aware of these differences can help cognitive research contribute to the development of purposeful educational resources. According to Rothman et al. (2019: 170), non-adult L2 and L3 language acquisition is understudied from a formal linguistic and experimental perspective that should be in accordance with the various models of language acquisition that have been proposed. Therefore, more studies are needed that look into L3/Ln acquisition in childhood.

In conclusion, the ultimate objective of language acquisition models in the multilingual world in which we live should potentially be to aid the learning of languages by both children and adults. In order to develop more effective and targeted learning materials, it is necessary that theoretical findings in the field be tested on learners. In the future, developmental L3 studies should be conducted with a variety of language triads to determine what is easy and difficult for diverse learner populations. The researcher would gain valuable insight by monitoring the learners' progress throughout all phases of proficiency in longitudinal studies, and their findings may be applicable to the practice of language teaching and learning. A potential direction for future generative L3/Ln research is to further explore the nature of morphosyntactic transfer that learners experience and the developmental route that they undergo in setting the parameters of the target language.

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Laura Aull. 2024. *You Can't Write That. 8 Myths About Correct English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 227 + x pp.

Reviewed by Costin-Valentin Oancea*

Laura Aull's book contains a list of figures, list of tables, acknowledgements, an introduction, followed by eight chapters, conclusion, afterword, notes, references and an index.

Chapter 1, "Myth 1 You can't write that. Or, only one kind of writing is correct" (pp. 12-28), deals with the standardization process in English and presents early usage guides on what is considered to be "correct writing". Several defenders of the purity of language (also referred to as prescriptivists) and their ideas regarding correct writing are mentioned (e.g. Lidley Murray, Bishop Robert Lowth, etc.). The author argues that writing across the continuum shares five purposes that facilitate communication: (i) writing has cohesion; (ii) writing makes connection; (iii) writing shows focus; (iv) writing shows stance; (v) writing follows usage norms.

Chapter 2, "Myth 2 You can't write that in school. Or, schools must regulate writing" (pp. 29-47), stresses the idea that English, which used to be taught at home, shifts to schools and schools shift to English, abandoning the classical languages (i.e. Latin and Greek) that were taught in schools and were part of the entrance exams to prestigious universities like Cambridge and Oxford. In this myth, correct writing in English becomes more important than other languages in school, and more than literacy outside of school. The author argues that schools turn into places for hunting down errors in students' written English. Language variation becomes a national threat. The author concludes by stating that language diversity and language knowledge are human rights.

Chapter 3, "Myth 3 You can't write that and be smart. Or, writing indicates natural intelligence" (pp. 48-66), tackles correct writing as it becomes testable, connected to innate ability and used to decide who is intelligent and who is not. The consequences of this view, as enunciated by the author, include: the way in which intelligence is understood becomes limited and people place their trust in tests and not teachers. One important view at the time was that of Charles Eliot, Harvard president, who implemented English writing exams for college admission based on the idea that *correct writing* usage, punctuation, and spelling indicated general aptitude and students' abilities were judged based on the scores obtained in the tests.

In Chapter 4, "Myth 4 You can't write that on the test. Or, tests must regulate writing" (pp. 67-85), the author argues that tests become standardized on a large scale, and spoken and interactive exams are replaced by English written exams. It is further noted (p. 69) that every exam turns into an English exam, as even in a history exam (where students were asked to write an essay about the queens and children of Henry VIII, for instance), examiners would look for "correct punctuation, arrangement, spelling, precision, elegance and completeness" to the detriment of historical accuracy. By the mid-twentieth century standardized tests were very common. In the UK, for instance, they had the General Certificate of Education (GCE) exam in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, while in the United States of America, by the 1960s, they had the SAT, the American College Test and other state exams for students graduating secondary school and applying to college. The last part of the chapter focuses on the fact that exam culture overshadows learning culture, as well as on the fact that standardized test scores measure socioeconomic status and test preparation. The author contends (p. 77) that authentic writing supports student learning, because this is "what students will encounter and produce in the real world".

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Chapter 5, “Myth 5 Chances are, you can’t write. Or, most students can’t write” (pp. 86-104), begins by presenting complaints made by different examiners regarding students’ written English exams. Examiners lamented that students writing did not follow correct writing usage preferences (e.g. punctuation, capitalization, spelling). One of the ideas emphasized in this chapter is that this myth reinforces several earlier themes, among which correct writing usage preferences, vague test criteria, and more focus on test results instead of test details. Some of the consequences of this myth include: (i) test results define writing failure; (ii) we accept vague criteria; (iii) we don’t question whether tests are the problem; (iv) writing means control versus practice; (v) limited standards are excellent standards, and failure is individual; (vi) we expect cycles of test results and alarm. Another claim that the author makes is that errors are not increasing but are actually changing.

Chapter 6, “Myth 6 You can’t write if you didn’t write well in high school. Or, writing should be mastered in secondary school” (pp. 105-125), starts with a lament, namely that student writers come to college unprepared and the culprit is secondary schooling. The author convincingly argues that new college students encounter a few important differences between secondary and postsecondary writing. Secondary writing usually concentrates on timed and argumentative essays, whereas postsecondary writing requires sustained enquiry (i.e. research) and major revision over days or even weeks. This leads to the obvious conclusion that secondary and postsecondary tasks are different, meaning that their writing patters are also different. Another important issue tackled in this chapter is that according to this myth (that writing should be mastered in secondary school) writing development is linear and finite, instead of a spiral. Furthermore, concepts such as “spelling”, “grammar” and “writing” are used interchangeably in different newspaper headlines. It seems that the use of “grammar” to refer to conventions and usage preferences, rather than what is grammatically possible and meaningful in English is a common practice.

Chapter 7, “Myth 7 You can’t get a aob if you didn’t write well in college. Or, college writing ensures professional success” (pp. 126-144), presents several passages, from university and professional sources, which imply that correct writing will guarantee professional opportunity and success. However, such claims that link college and employment, were not always common. They grew within a more general literacy myth with roots in the nineteenth century. The author mentions that for many instructors and students, college writing only takes place in college, whereas workplace writing occurs in the “real world.” Academic writing and workplace writing are two different and completely unrelated things. Nevertheless, we can build metacognitive bridges across writing worlds. This can be achieved by exploring writing patterns within and across them, as the author concludes.

Chapter 8, “Myth 8 You can’t write that because internet. Or, new technology threatens writing” (pp. 145-160), focuses on digital writing, which, according to the author, “varies according to platforms, writers, purposes, and relationships” (p. 146). Furthermore, informal digital writing can be defined as writing that is usually used in informal social media and text messaging. Emphasis is also placed on the fact that nowadays people are concerned about texting and the internet in the sense that they ruin the language. The idea is that every time a new communicative technology is developed, people express concerns about literacy. Another aspect tackled in this chapter is that informal writing and careless writing are two different things, and informal digital writing is quite often perceived as a threat.

The last section, “Conclusion: Writing continuum, language exploration. Acknowledging the myth Glasses” (pp. 161-167), looks back at all the eight myths discussed and attempts to offer an alternative to the mythical view that language regulation mode is the only viable way to approach English.

Laura Aull's book offers a fresh and insightful approach to the notion of *correct writing* in English. She successfully manages to debunk well-established views on how language works, and provides modern approaches to antiquated perspectives on ways to approach writing. She advocates for language exploration, namely that we should explore what people can and do write rather than limiting ourselves to what they can't or shouldn't write. The well-chosen examples that the author provides, and the sophisticated analysis add considerable value to the book.

The book has little one can find fault with, given the author's cautionary tone and straightforwardness. The author makes the following claim (p. 75) "still today, many English instructors are trained in literary studies rather than (also) English linguistics, rhetoric, or composition. Many writing instructors are trained in literary studies, a discipline that favours particular genres (such as essays), evidence (e.g. literary forms), and other specific writing choices", that "the instructors are rarely trained in language development or how writing in literary studies does and does not apply to other kinds of writing" and that "in turn, many secondary and early college students end up practicing responses to literature, rather than studying a range of written English". This statement is not completely accurate. In many countries where English is taught as a second language (i.e. non-native) English teachers need to have graduated a BA program in English Language and Literature as a Major or as a Minor. In the syllabus there is an equal number of subjects on English literature and English linguistics, as well as courses on Text Typology and Writing, and English Practical Courses. So, students are exposed to a wide range of examples of written English. Even in England, there are BA programs that focus on both English Literature and English Linguistics. At Queen Mary's College, University of London, for instance, the undergraduate programs offered include: English Literature and Linguistics, English with Creative Writing, English and Drama, Drama with Creative Writing, English Language, Comparative Literature, etc. Among the MA programs available, we mention: Linguistics, Linguistics in Society, English Literature, Creative Writing. So, the range of BA and MA programs is quite diverse, depending on the student's interest. This example is, however, truly insignificant in the bigger picture of a remarkable journey, which has definitely enriched our understanding of the concept of correct writing in English.

To sum up, Laura Aull's book *You Can't Write That. 8 Myths About Correct English* represents a remarkable achievement, and like a true detective, she guides us through the intricacies of correct writing, what correct writing in English should look like and how it should be approached.

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