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The Morphophonemics of Loanwords in Arabic

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Abstract

Loanwords, which are ‘imported’ from English into Arabic, are regularly subject to morphophonological changes. In order to describe for these changes, the present study adopts a model called Prosodic Morphology Hypothesis (PMH) that emphasizes the role of prosodic units in describing the fixed canonical Arabic templatic morphology. These units are: the phonological word, the foot, the syllable and the mora. One of the major aspects of these units is the property that they can be motivated independently. For this, some of the data is analyzed by the use of the foot unit as in the case of the broken plural while others apply the syllable to explain for the repair processes at the templatic level in the donor and the host languages. Another aspect of the PMH is the use of the two extremes, namely, minimality and maximality which set the lower and the upper bound of the words. So during the analysis of loan items it is realized that a great number of them undergo vowel lengthening, vowel shortening, epenthesis and other phonological processes so as to meet these two extremes. Furthermore, it is realized that loan items which go beyond these two extremes are relevant in some ways to them.