Word Stress of Najdi Arabic: An Optimality-Theoretic Analysis

By

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Abstract


In this piece of research, the universal constraints that can determine the location of stress are uniquely ranked in order to account for the word stress patterns of Najdi Arabic. As for the methodology, the researcher conducted interviews with ten native speakers of Najdi Arabic who were asked twenty personal questions. The interviewees' responses were recorded, and the words collected were classified into four categories: monosyllabic, disyllabic, trisyllabic, and polysyllabic. Stress was examined on each category separately; the result of the observation is what is called in this study the stress patterns of Najdi Arabic; the authenticity of these stress patterns was checked by consulting previous studies concerned with stress in Najdi Arabic.

After holding interaction between the universal constraints, the following hierarchy is resulted:

"{Lx= Pr, SYLLABLE-INTEGRITY, PARSE-σμμμ, *MONOMORAIC, TROCHAIC}>> {NONFINAL, MAIN-RIGHT}>> {ALL-FEET-RIGHT, PARSE-σμ(μ), Fμμ,}>> {ALL-FEET-LEFT}."
It turned out that this hierarchy is able to predict the word stress of Najdi Arabic accurately.

**Key Words:** Optimality Theory, Najdi Arabic, word stress, universal constraints, interaction