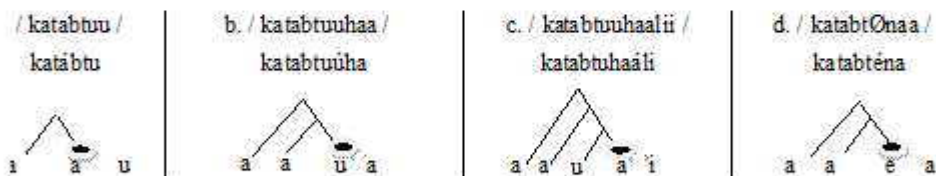


## Length, Duration and Some Other Prosodic Aspects of Colloquial Egyptian Arabic (CEA)

Perhaps one of the most interesting accentual phenomena of Arabic is found in the colloquial Egyptian dialect. This is due to the fact that stress assignment rules in CEA seem to handle every utterance, no matter how morphologically complex, as a single segmental chunk, hence the perception that stress 'shifts', much as with Level I affixes in English, as different affixes and clitics are added, e.g. *katābtu* 'you p wrote' > *katabtuuha* 'you p wrote it sf' > *katabtuhaali* 'you p wrote it sf to me'. Stress in CEA has often been described in terms of syllabic structure- a correlation that I shall put in question- and interpreted in the light of a variety of theoretical frameworks. I start by presenting an alternative view and a simplification of the underlying vowel system of CEA in which I reject that vowel length plays a contrastive role as well as the assumption that stress is the source of vowel length in CEA. I propose to put forth a fundamentally different view: there are but long underlying vowels; {i, uu, aa}. I claim that for a given vowel to maintain its surface quality it has to be associated to two underlying vocalic slots, otherwise, the vowel delinks and surfaces either as zero or as an epenthetic vowel according to the economy of the epenthetic system of the language. One problem that immediately results will be the definition of the role of stress which lets the {u} vowel of *katabtuuha* 'you p wrote her' perceived as a much longer one than those in *katābtu* 'you p wrote' and *katabtuhaali* 'you wrote her to me', although according to my claim, all the three are equally long since they maintained their surface melody. Another problem is that CEA presents cases where stress is assigned to epenthetic vowels which is very uncommon such as in *katabtēna* 'you sm wrote us'. I propose that the process of stress assignment seems to be about Vowel EXTRACTION; projection in earlier metrical terms and Construction of a right-headed accentual 'pitch' tree with stress targeting the penultimate VOWEL. Hence, the representation of the latter problematic examples and the case where stress is assigned to the epenthetic vowel would be reformulated as follows:



However, this hypothesis is challenged by forms where stress seems to be antepenultimate, such as *katābet* 'she wrote' as well as forms with final stress such as *katabtuū* 'you wrote it sm' and *katābt* 'I wrote'. Equipped with the Government phonology (KLV, 1990) and CVCV model (Lowenstamm, 1996) toolbox of theoretical resources, I shall re-examine the morphological processes constructing these utterances and highlight accordingly the phonological 'more particularly accentual' consequences.

### References:

- Kaye, J. (1990). Government in Phonology: The Case of Moroccan Arabic. *The Linguistic Review* 6, 131-159.
- Lowenstamm, J. (1996). CV as the Only Syllable Type, *Current Trends in Phonology, Models and Methods*. J. Durant and B. Laks (ed.), Salford, Manchester, ESR.