Announcements

- I will post Homework 1 online later today. It is due Tuesday Feb 26 in class. You can also e-mail it if you want to submit an electronic copy.
- There is a linguistics talk this Thursday at RAJ @ 4:30pm by Gustavo Freire.

Questionnaire topics

- Linguistic differences based on gender.
- Phonetics and causes of variation between dialects.
- Relation between the Arabic and the fusha.
- The development of differences between various dialects.

Questionnaire topics

- Role of dialectal difference in nationalism.
- Linguistic behavior of Arabic speakers in the diaspora.
- Gender/ethnicity and language.
- Do differences between English and Arabic reflect societal/cultural differences?

Questionnaire topics

- History of Arabic. Why Fusha is still used. Diglossia.
- Impact of colonialism on a dialect.
- Difference in vocabulary among speakers, even within the same country.
- Impact of social class hierarchy on the language used.
- Code-switching.

A couple of suggestions

- Introduce basics of linguistics.
- Speaking in Arabic.
Transition from last class

• Arabic is a Semitic language, either in the South Semitic group or the Central Semitic group, depending on one's theory.
• Written texts of Arabic from different eras across 15 centuries look ‘Arabic’ to anyone who even has basic knowledge of the language.
• Spoken Arabic, however, underwent substantial changes, as shown by Abla’s experiment.

Today’s agenda

• What was the nature of CLA as a language?
• How did it spread to where it is spoken today?

Pre-Islam Arabs

• Nomads who probably arrived in the Arabian Peninsula 4000 years ago.
• Domesticated the camel.
• Mecca emerged as a cultural and religious center – as well as a trade center – for the nomadic tribes, and it dominated the caravan trade.
• The dominant tribe in Mecca was Banuu Quraysh, where Prophet Muhammad was born.

Pre-Islam Arabic

• Linguistically, Arabs spoke the same language, generally referred to as كلام العرب.
• But dialectal variation probably existed, particularly between the eastern نجد dialect and the western الحجاز dialect.
• Early Arab grammarians refer to the existence of different لهجات, i.e., dialects.

Two questions on the history of Arabic

• First, was the CLA of pre-Islamic poetry and the Qur’an, particularly with its case and mood marking الإعراب, also the spoken language of ordinary Arabs in daily life interactions?
• Second, whatever the form of CLA was that came to Egypt, Syria, Iraq, North Africa, and other places in today’s Arab world, how did it develop into Middle Arabic and the Arabic dialects of today?
Was CLA a spoken language?

• Two views:
  - Yes, it was.
  - No, it wasn’t.

CLA as a spoken language

• First view: CLA was indeed a spoken language.
• Evidence:
  - Use of informants by grammarians.
  - Early Arabs’ understanding of pre-Islamic poetry and the Qur’an.
  - Tanwiin التنوين still exists in some Bedouin dialects today.

CLA as an ‘elevated diction’ poetic register

• Second view: CLA was only a highly inflective ‘elevated diction’ language, based on Eastern and Central dialects of Arabia.
• Problems:
  - How did ordinary people understand poetry?
  - Highly inflective ≠ elevated diction in the world’s languages.
  - Is it a falsifiable claim?

So, …

• The evidence suggests that CLA was indeed spoken by early Arabs, even though it also seems clear that there was dialectal variation.

Arabic spread

• What was the linguistic situation like in these areas prior to the introduction of Arabic?
• How did Arabic spread to areas outside the Arabian Peninsula?
What factors led to Arabic spread?

- Contacts with Arabs before the Islamic conquests.
- Spread of Islam.
- Urbanization.
- Migration and assimilation.

How did modern Arabic dialects develop?

- A theory of the development of Arabic dialects needs to account for two things:
  - First, it should explain the similarities and differences between modern Arabic dialects on the one hand and CLA on the other.
  - Second, it should also explain the similarities and differences between modern Arabic dialects themselves.

How did modern Arabic dialects develop?

- There are three views, but we focus on two here.
- First view: Pidginization, followed by creolization, followed by decreolization (Versteegh 1984).
- Second view: Arabic was learned as a foreign language (Holes in the reading and other places).
- A third view is discussed on Homework #1, so I’ll let you explore that on your own.

Pidgins

- A *pidgin* is a system of communication used by people who do not know each other’s languages but need to communicate with one another for trading or other purposes.
- By definition, then, a pidgin is not a natural language. It’s a made-up “makeshift” language. Notice, crucially, that it does not have native speakers.

Pidginization areas

- While a pidgin is used by speakers of different languages, it is typically based on the lexicon of what is called a “dominant” language in the area where it is spoken.
- In modern times, dominant languages were typically those of the European colonialists, e.g., French, English, Dutch, etc.
- The dominant language is called the *lexifier* language.
Pidgins are linguistically simplified systems

- As you should expect, pidgins are very simple in their linguistic properties.
- Lexicon:
  - Words from lexifier languages;
  - Words belong to open classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives);
  - No or few closed class words (prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, etc.)

Creole: The birth of a language

- Children born in a community where a pidgin is spoken end up imposing a 'linguistic system' on the pidgin, thereby creating a language that has prepositions, articles, tense marking, specific word order, complex sentences, etc.
- When a pidgin is acquired as a first language by a generation of children, it becomes a creole.
- Creoles are typically classified based on their lexifier language, e.g., English-based, French-based, etc.

HPE vs. HCE

- Pidgin:
  No, the men, ah-pau [finished] work-they go, make
garden. Plant this, ah, cabbage, like that. Plant potato,
like that. And then—all that one—all right, sit down.
Make lilly bit story.

- Creole:
  When work pau [is finished] da guys they stay go
make [are going to make] garden for plant potato an’
cabbage an’ after little while they go sit down talk
story [‘shoot the breeze’].

The post-creolization situation

- Creoles tend to co-exist with their lexifier languages in the same speech community. Since they are based on these languages, at least in vocabulary, they come to be viewed as “nonstandard” varieties of the lexifier language.
- Under desires for ‘prestige’ in language usage, some speakers start to move away from their own creole to the standard lexifier language, in what is often called decreolization.

The post-creole continuum

- As a result of decreolization, a range of creole varieties exist in a continuum. The variety closest to the standard language is called the acrolect, the one least like the standard is called the basilect, and in between these two is a range of creole varieties that are called mesolects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acrolect</th>
<th>Mesolects</th>
<th>Basilect</th>
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What does that mean?

Mɪ bɪn gi: æm wan.

The post-creole continuum

The sentence 'I gave him one' in Guyanese

Spread of Arabic as pidginization

• Arabs came into Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and North Africa with their own Arabic language.
• The native population in these areas did not speak Arabic, but they had to communicate with the Arabs for several daily life reasons.
• They created an ‘Arabic-based pidgin’ for communication with Arabs.
• Children of these pidgin speakers created an Arabic-based creole.

Spread of Arabic as pidginization

• Standardization of Arabic took place: an orthography was developed, grammar books were written, and dictionaries were created.
• Under pressure to speak 'standard' Arabic, creole speakers shifted away gradually from the creole to move closer to CLA.
• Thus, the modern Arabic dialects developed, and hence their clear similarities to CLA, as well as to each other.
Discussion of pidginization

• There are some questions that can be raised against the pidginization hypothesis, however.
• Any historical or linguistic evidence for the one-time existence of a pidgin system?
• Shouldn’t there have been a continuum of Arabic-based creoles?
• There are arguably Arabic-based pidgins/creoles in certain parts of Africa. But they are not close to the Arabic spoken in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and North Africa. Why? Decroization failed?

Arabic spread as a foreign language

• The second hypothesis, the one advocated by Holes, is that Arabic spread because it was learned as a foreign language by the native populations of the countries the Arabs conquered.
• In essence, Arabic spread like English and French did during the European colonialist era, creating linguistic systems that are similar, but by no means identical, to the English and French of the colonialists themselves.
• Similarities among Arabic dialects can then be viewed as reflecting general trends in second language acquisition.

Next class agenda

• Wrap-up of history of Arabic: Modern Arabic.
• Introducing phonetics: Follow the link on the class website for the reading on this.
• Introduction to diglossia and modern Arabic variation. Start reading Chapter 1 of the textbook.