

Phonetic Pause Unites Phonology and Semantics Against Morphology and Syntax

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the phonological effect triggered by the different types of phonetic pause used in Quran on morphology, syntax, and semantics. It argues that Quranic pause provides interesting evidence about the close relation between phonology and semantics, from one side, and semantics, morphology, and syntax, from the other side. It shows that the orthographic symbols used in Quranic texts in final positions of certain words to express and distinguish different types of pause are bare phonetics tools. Such tools represent a helpful narrow transcription for professional and ordinary reciters to know when to pause or continue as a way to preserve meaning.

The study finds that the application of phonetic pause is phonological in nature, as it triggers the deletion of a final syllable. Such a phonological process is semantically driven, since the final syllable may contain important morphological and syntactic markers that contribute to the meaning of the word or the whole phrase in which it is contained. It also shows that semantics allows the deletion of final morphological and syntactic markers through initiating the application of phonological deletion of a final syllable in certain types of phonetic pause, but it blocks this phonological process in other types of such pause. That is, while in certain cases phonetic pause unites phonology and semantics against morphology and syntax, it brings all of them together in other cases. Further, phonetic pause respects the main lines of certain current linguistic theories, but it poses a big challenge for other ones.

Keywords: Phonetic pause, phonology, phonology and semantics, Arabic phonology, Quranic texts, linguistic interaction.