Liaison in Jordanian Arabic: Syntax-Prosody Interface

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ABSTRACT

Liaison in Arabic applies to words that end with the feminine marker /t/ even in masculine nouns and adjectives when they happen to have the feminine ending. In this paper, we study liaison in Jordanian Arabic (JA) from the standpoint of syntax-prosody interface. We study the mapping of syntactic phrases onto phonological ones when this process takes place. We argue that liaison in JA is syntactically governed; it occurs only in construct state nominals (CSNs). We compare our finding in JA to those of Standard Arabic (SA). We also present evidence that JA marks right edges of phonological phrase in this phrase-level phonological process. We account for the differences between CSNs, where liaison applies, and other noun phrases where it does not. Finally, we discuss liaison with enchainêment which occurs when the second word of the construct state begins with the definite article ʔal.

Keywords: Arabic, syntax-prosody interface, edge marking, construct state nominals, liaison

1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic is characterized by a number of distinctive phonological phenomena that enable speakers to pronounce sounds easily and move across words smoothly. Sandhi, which involves various phonological mechanisms of deletion, insertion, assimilation, liaison and deglottalization (Anderson 1986), is one of the most commonly-used phonological processes in Arabic that makes the