

Kongress 2014

Horizonte der Islamischen Theologie

Abstract – Sektion 5, Panel 1/2

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Thema *Phonation and glottal states in Modern South Arabian and southern Arabic:
Shedding light on the phonological categories of the early Arab grammarians*

[This paper examines phonation categories and glottal states in Modern South Arabian Languages (MSAL) and San’ani Arabic, and the extent to which southern Arabian informs research on the phonological categories of the early Arab grammarians. Key concepts are phonation, hams and jahr.

The innovation in this paper lies in the relationship between phonological patterning, phonetics, and distinctive features. Scholars have long recognised that emphatics pattern with true voiced consonants in MSAL (e.g. Johnstone 1975), but while they have voiced allophones the canonical realisations of the emphatics are not voiced and in certain positions ejective. In place of ‘natural class’, we adopt Mielke’s (2008) term ‘phonologically active class’ to describe a group of sounds that undergo at least one of the following:

- a. Undergo a phonological process
- b. Trigger a phonological process
- c. Exemplify a static distributional restriction

Once phonological patterning has been determined, the features that distinguish one group of segments from a contrasting group can be established. In section 2, we examine aspects of the verb morphology, definiteness marking and pre-pausal phenomena to establish the phonological patterning of MSAL consonants; in phonation terms, consonants pattern in two distinct groups, termed here group A and group B; in section 3, we establish the acoustics,

and show a three-way phonetic distinction: emphatic–voiced–voiceless intersecting with two-way phonological patterning:

3-way: emphatic–voiced–voiceless

2-way: { group B } group A

We relate our findings to the Arab grammarians' concepts of *hams* and *jahr*, and suggest a phonological model to express the reality of phonation in these varieties.

References

Johnstone, T.M. 1975. 'The Modern South Arabian languages'. *Afroasiatic Linguistics* 1/5, 93–121

Mielke, J. 2008. *The Emergence of Distinctive Features*. (Cambridge)]