

## Loanword adaptation in Makkan Arabic

This study addresses the site and quality of vowels inserted into foreign onset clusters in Makkan loanwords. This dialect of Arabic does not allow complex clusters in onset position. In existing loanwords, the site and quality of the inserted vowel is determined by the cluster type and the roundness of the vowel following the clusters.

[s]-stop (ST) clusters trigger external epenthesis of a default vowel [ɪ].

- (1) a. ʔɪs.kaib            ‘Skype’  
      b. ʔɪs.kul            ‘school’

Stop-sonorant (TR) clusters trigger internal epenthesis of a context sensitive vowel. Vowel harmony occurs when clusters are followed by round vowels.

- (2) a. tɪ.ri            ‘tree’  
      b. tʊ.ru            ‘true’

The strategies used to fix the offending clusters are not employed in Makkan phonology, in which vowels inserted in native words are always [ɪ], but the pattern of insertion of a default vowel before ST clusters and a harmonic vowel within TR clusters is consistent with the loanword patterns found in a large number of languages (Broselow, to appear).

In order to verify that the two generalizations given above are representative of native speaker behavior, an online experiment was conducted. 63 native speakers of Makkan Arabic listened to a native speaker of English pronounce either real English words or nonce words beginning in onset clusters. They then listened to four different ways of pronouncing the given word (for example, ‘school’ was pronounced in four different ways: ʔɪs.kul, ʔʊs.kul, sɪ.kul and sʊ.kul). Next, participants were asked to choose the pronunciation that sounded more natural to them. The results of the study confirm the preference for an external default vowel before ST and an internal harmonic vowel before TR when the following vowel is round. Two linear mixed effect models were developed to assess the interaction between the site and quality of epenthetic vowel and the two cluster types when followed by round and non-round vowels. The models show a significant correlation between the location and quality of the epenthetic vowel and the two cluster types under investigation. I present an analysis of these patterns using the auditory similarity approach developed by Fleischhacker (2001; 2005) and Zuraw (2007) to account for epenthesis site and Uffmann’s (2014) constraints accounting for vowel quality in loanword adaptation.

## References

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