Catherine Miller, Alexandrine Barontini, Marie-Aimée Germanos, Jairo Guerrero and Christophe Pereira (dir.)

Studies on Arabic Dialectology and Sociolinguistics
Proceedings of the 12th International Conference of AIDA held in Marseille from May 30th to June 2nd 2017

Institut de recherches et d'études sur les mondes arabes et musulmans

Vowel Harmony in Old and Central Asian Arabic Dialects

Zviadi Tskhvediani

OpenEdition books

http://books.openedition.org

This text was automatically generated on 12 January 2021.

Vowel Harmony in Old and Central Asian Arabic Dialects

Zviadi Tskhvediani

Introduction

1   In the works of medieval Arab grammarians vowel harmony, interpreted as a sequence of identical vowels in successive syllables, is denoted by the term *al-ʾitbāʿ* and viewed as a result of assimilation. The term *al-ʾitbāʿ* occurs in the works by al-Farrāʾ. Ibn Ǧinnī uses it to describe vowel harmony. In Ibn Ǧinni's treatise vowel harmony is associated with *al-ʾidġām al-ʾaṣġar*, the latter being explained as follows: "وأما الإدغام الأصغر، فهو ; تقريب الحرف من الحرف *waʾammā l-ʾidġāmu l-ʾaṣġaru, fahūa taqrību l-ḥarfi mina l-ḥarfi*" (Ibn Ǧinnī undated: 2/141).

2   Cases of vowel harmony are attested in a limited number of words and therefore medieval Arabic grammatical treatises do not pay much attention to them. Nevertheless, a number of sources contain valuable information regarding this phenomenon both at isolated and syntagmatic levels of the word-forms and most of the cases discussed are confirmed by evidence in classical Arabic; for instance, in some cases prosthetic *ʾalif* of the imperative mood (az-Zamaḫšarīy argues that pronouncing hamzat al-waṣl (syntagmatic position) is not a specifically Arabic phenomenon and it can be qualified as *laḥn* (solecism) (az-Zamaḫšarīy 1323 AH: 137)), in the imperative mood of the geminated verb stem and pronoun suffix are vocalized identically: *ruddu-hu, ruddi-hi, rudda-hā* - 'Return it'; in the name stems, doublets of one-syllable roots and pausal forms as well as in *-āt* plural anaptyctic vowels are harmonized with stem vowels (Lekiashvili 1977: 55; Rabin 1951: 97). Thus, in classical Arabic we have stem parallelism and doublets that, according to the medieval Arabic grammatical treatises, can be identified in the tribal dialects and explained by the areal distribution.

3   The significant sources of *al-ʾitbāʿ* are: 1) *al-Kitāb* by Sībawayhi, 2) *Kitābu š-šiʿr* by ʿAbū ʿAliyy al-Fārisīy, 3) *al-Ḫaṣāʾiṣ* by Ibn Ǧinnī, 4) *Maʿānī l-qurʾān* by al-Farrāʾ, 5) *al-Mufaṣṣal fī*

ʿilmi l-ʿArabiyya by az-Zamaẖšarīy, 6) *Tāǧ al-ʿarūs* by az-Zabīdīy, 7) *aṣ-Ṣāḥibīy* by Ibn Fāris, etc.

4 Generally speaking, cases of vowel changes in the word-forms are discussed in terms of *al-ʾimāla*[1] and *al-ʾitbāʿ* in medieval Arabic grammatical texts.

5 Some cases of vowel harmony in old dialects are still preserved in modern ones reflecting tribal rather than areal dialectic phenomena. In this respect the data of peripheral Arabic dialects, having been separated from the Arabic continuum for centuries and having evolved in an alien linguistic environment, are particularly interesting. For instance, Central Asian Arabic dialects (Qashqadarian and Bukharian Arabic dialects) provide ample material for the study of old form preservation and various changes caused by linguistic as well extra-linguistic factors. In this paper I will concentrate on the attested cases of vowel harmony in old and Central Asian peripheral Arabic dialects (regions of Qashqadaria and Bukhara, Republic of Uzbekistan) that are at the same time common in Arabic dialects. Vowel harmony in classical Arabic is investigated in A. I. Alfozan's dissertation[2]. Vowel systems and vowel changes in the Central Asian Arabic dialects have been studied from different angles by Acad. G. Tsereteli, Prof. V. Akhvlediani[3] and Prof. G. Chikovani. In the present paper the data of the Central Asian Arabic dialects are taken from the dialectological materials recorded by Prof. Chikovani in 1980, 1986, 2000 and published in 2002, 2007 and 2009[4].

Vowel harmony in $C_1aC_2\bar{\imath}C_3$ and $C_1aC_2iC_3$ type word-forms

6 Discussing regressive assimilation, Sībawayhi remarks that in $C_1aC_2\bar{\imath}C_3$ / *faʿīl* type names in which C_2 is represented by a guttural consonant, we encounter two forms *faʿīl* and *fiʿīl*: "wafī faʿīl luġatāni: faʿīl wa fiʿīl ʾiḏā kāna t-tānī mina l-ḥurūfi s-sitta", for instance, *liʿīm* 'ignoble, vile', *šihīd* 'martyr', *siʿīd* 'happy', *niḥīf* 'slender', *riġīf* 'loaf - portion of baked bread, usually of a standard size or shape', *biẖīl* 'miserly', *biʾīs* 'overwhelmed with sorrow or grief' (Sībawayhi 1982: 107-108). Ibn Ǧinnī also suggests examples of such forms in faʿīl type with C_2 guttural consonant: *šiʿīr* 'barley', *biʾīr* 'camel - long-necked animal', *ziʾīr* 'roaring, growl', *wiʿīd* 'menacing', 'threat' (Ibn Ǧinnī undated: 143).

7 The same can be said of the perfective forms of verbs. Sībawayhi notes: "ʾiḏā kāna ṣifatan ʾaw fiʿlan ʾawisman" (Sībawayhi 1982: 107-108). Thus, C_2 guttural always occurs in fiʿil type: liʿib 'played' (III. Masc. Sing.).

8 The same holds true for $C_1VC_2VC_3$ structure names, for instance: *laʿib > liʿib* 'kidder, unserious', *waʿik > wiʿik* 'indisposed', *maḥik > miḥik* 'standard; norm', *waẖim > wiẖim* 'adverse, hostile, harmful', etc. (Sībawayhi 1982: 108).

9 Sībawayhi attributes Word-forms of $C_1iC_2\bar{\imath}C_3$ and $C_1iC_2iC_3$ structure (with vowel harmony *-i-ī/i*) to the speech of Tamīm tribal confederation and Huḏayl tribe (Sībawayhi 1982: 440), Ibn Fāris to that of ʾAsad (Ibn Fāris 1997: 34) and az-Zabīdīy to the speech of Rabīʿa tribal confederation (az-Zabīdiyy 1965: 52).

10 In modern Arabic dialects *fiʿīl* form is not confined to C_2 guttural type. *Kibīr* 'big', *kirīm* 'noble', *ǧilīl* 'grand, splendid, majestic, lordly' forms could have developed at an early

stage what is confirmed by Ibn Ǧinnī's comments on harmony that occurs in the derivative form *mufʿi/īl* due to regressive assimilation (u > i): *mufʿi/īl > mifʿi/īl*:

<div dir="rtl">فأما مغيرة فليس إتباعه لأجل حرف الحلق، إنما هو من باب مِثْين ؛</div>

faʾammā miġīra-t⁻ᵘⁿ falaysa ʾitbāʿuhu liʾaǧli ḥarfi l-ḥalqi, ʾinnamā hūa min bābi mintin" (Ibn Ǧinnī undated: 143). Also, *ʿuṣīy > ʿiṣīy* 'sticks', *ṯudīy > ṯidīy* 'breasts', etc. (Sībawayhi 1982: 374-375). az-Zabīdīy confirms the same in "tāǧ al-ʿarūs": "*waḥakā š-šayḫu (n-nawawiyy) fī taḥrīrihi ʿani l-layṯi ʾanna qawman mina l-ʿarabi yaqūlūna ḏālika waʾin lam takun ʾaynuhu ḥarfa ḥalqin ka(kibīr) wa(kirīm) wa(ǧilīl)*" (az-Zabīdiyy 1965: 391; ʾĀl Ġunaym 1985: 72).

11 The same can be said of $C_1VC_2V{:}C_3$ *fiʿīl* type word-forms in the Arabic dialects of Qashqadaria *kisīr // kisir* 'a lot', *kivīr > // kbīr: kisīr ġania kisīr pūlqizil kēyin ʿinda* 'owned a great fortune' (Chikovani 2007: 20); *ǧūdó kivīr // kivīr mínu* (rarely) 'larger, greater' (Chikovani 2002: 87-88). Cf. *kasīr* and *kabīr* in Bukharian Arabic, for instance *baʿda: kabīr beytin ahāni ḥarr ṣōr, ḥarr i̠ wahad bēt – qāl. -aṭrofu kasīr, hatabāt miği bin.* 'then [next condition]: a big house is on fire, [flaming/blazing fire] in one house - said [Pasha]. - Extinguish [the fire as soon as possible so that] you escape (from the house) unharmed (Chikovani 2009: 60). Or, *bintin kabīra usma barfei...* 'The elder daughter's name was Barfey...' And, *diklōya mara i-zōǧ šuġlun kasīr sawō* 'This wife did a lot of things for his husband [This wife proved useful to her husband]' (Chikovani 2009: 62).

Vowel harmony in $C_1VC_2C_3$ and $C_1VC_2C_3{}^{-at}$ type word-forms

12 Vowel harmony in old Arabic dialects are attested in $C_1VC_2VC_3$ structure word-forms and in some cases anaptyctic vowel form $C_1VC_2VC_3$ structures in $C_1VC_2VC_3$, $C_1VC_2VC_3$-at type one-syllable words. The same is the case with -āt formant plural; for instance, *ʿunq // ʿunuq* 'neck', *ḥusn // ḥusun* 'beauty', *yawm-u l-ǧumʿa-ti* (Tamīm speech) // ~ l-ǧumaʿa-ti ('Uqayl tribe speech) // ~ l-ǧumuʿa-ti 'friday' (al-Farrāʾ 1983: 186). In Ch. Rabin's opinion, "It cannot always be said that the Hijazi form is older and the Eastern is produced by elision." (Rabin 1951: 97).

13 Sībawayhi refers to *ḥalaq* 'earring' and *ḥalq-at* 'circle' as $C_1VC_2C_3$ / $C_1VC_2C_3{}^{-at}$ structure word-forms. Cf. *ḥalaq-at* used by ʾAbū ʿAmr (Sībawayhi 1982: 583-584; ʾĀl Ġunaym 1985: 85). ʾĀl Ġunaym points out that muwaffaq ad-Dīn al-Baġdādīy confirms the existence of *ḥalaq-at* variant in Bagdad speech and describes ʿUqayl speech in which under the influence of C_2 guttural (/ḥ/) vowel a (*al-fatḥa*) appears: *ḥalaq-at* (ʾĀl Ġunaym 1985: 86).

14 Concerning *fuʿul-āt* type, for instance, *rukub-āt* 'knee', *ġuruf-āt* 'rooms' *Ḫuṭuw-āt* 'steps', etc., Sībawayhi notes: "*wamina l-ʿarabi man yaftaḥu l-ʿayn ʾiḏā ǧamaʿa bit-tāʾ, fayaqūlu rukabāt waġurafāt... wamina l-ʿarabi man yadaʿu l-ʿayn mina ḍ-ḍammati fī fuʿlatin, fayaqūlu: ʿurwāt waḫuṭwāt*" (Sībawayhi 1982: 579-580). This case of vowel harmony is attributed to Hijaz dialects. (ʾĀl Ġunaym 1985: 84).

15 In Qashqadaria Arabic Dialect $C_1iC_2iC_3$ // $C_1iC_2īC_3$ structure nouns are to be found, for instance: *gidir // gidīr* 'saucepan' (cf. *ǧədər // ǧədrəyya* in Baghdad Arabic (Abu-Haidar 2006: 223)), *dihin // dihīn* 'oil, fat', *tibin* 'hay', *ḥilim* 'dream' (Tsereteli 1956: 79, 164; Vinnikov 1969: 164). $C_1VC_2V{:}C_3$ model unites the following subclasses: $C_1aC_2āC_3$: *baḥār* 'sea'; $C_1uC_2u/ūC_3$: *gutun* 'cotton', *ǧufūr* 'well' (cf. Arab. *ǧufra-t* and Bukharian Arabic *ǧifra* (sing.) and *ǧifr-āt* (pl.), e.g.: *snēna aqaīnin mui ǧarrū min ǧifrāt.* 'The two brothers took

water from the well.' (Chikovani 2009: 35, 56)). However, in Qashqadaria Arabic Dialect we find: *ḫubz* 'bread', *kezb* 'lie', and in Bukharian Arabic *šuġl* and *šuġul* 'job, occupation' (Chikovani 2002: 82-83, 166; Chikovani 2009: 62). Cf. in Bahraini Arabic as well: C_3 is /l, n, r/: $C_1VC_2VC_3$ is normal, with vowel harmony, e.g. *šuġul*, *ḍuhur* 'noon', *dihin*, *kufur* 'amount' (Holes 2006: 244).

16   As for the verb forms, $C_1iC_2iC_3$ type occurs: *liḥig* 'caught up with, reached...', *liʕib*, *šibik* (Chikovani 2002: 102). In Bukharian Arabic the dominant type in the perfective is $C_1aC_2aC_3$, e. g.: *lahag* 'reached', while $C_1iC_2iC_3$ occurs relatively rarely (Chikovani 2009:17, 35) In Qashqadaria Arabic Dialect $C_1uC_2u/\bar{u}C_3$ type of $C_1VC_2V{:}C_3$ structure has been identified: *ugu/ūb // ogūb* > Arab. ʿaqba // ʿaqiba 'then', e.g.: *morā ḫubz, muya anṭat, ugūb min pōšō sayalt* 'The woman gave him some bread and water, then she asked Pasha...'(Chikovani 2007: 20; Chikovani 2002: 156, 160). Cf. Kuwaiti Arabic: ʿugub, ḍuhur (Holes 2007: 611).

17   Basic stems of what is $C_1VC_2VC_3$ structure in the isolated position form $C_1VC_2C_3$ structure in the contextual position or in -V(C) type affixal derived forms, e. g.: *ğisim* 'body' and *ğism-a* 'her body', *raġul* 'man, husband' *raġl-ič* 'your husband' (Belova 2000: 115). Consequently, vowel harmony does not occur at $C_1VC_2VC_3$ + -V(C) contextual/ syntagmatic level.

Vowel harmony in verbal domain

18   Vowel harmony occurs if we have a high-pitched /u/ vowel in the root of the imperfective verb in Central Asian Arabic dialects.

19   In Qashqadaria Arabic Dialect: *yu-ktub* 'he writes'(masc. sing.), *tu-ktub* (III, fem. sing; II, masc. sing.), *tu-ktubīn* (II, fem. sing.), *yu-ktubūn* (III, masc. pl.) (Chikovani 2002: 104). In Bukharian Arabic: *mu-tḫul* 'he enters' (masc. sing.), *tu-tḫul* (III, fem. sing; II, masc. sing.), *tu-tḫulīn* (II, fem. sing.), *nu-tḫul* (I, pl.) etc. (Chikovani 2009: 40). Cf. ya-$C_1C_2aC_3$, yu-$C_1C_2uC_3$ and yi- $C_1C_2iC_3$ forms in modern dialects (Monaham 2009: 677).

Conclusion

20   Being of limited usage in old Arabic dialects, vowel harmony occurs in a much wider range of word-forms in modern dialects. As a rule, the quality of anaptyctic vowel is determined by its harmonization with stem vowel (vowel harmony achieved through assimilation).

21   Vowel harmony is one of the major distinctive elements between old western and eastern Arabic dialects (Veersteegh 2014: 47-48). The phonetic quality of /i/ is harmonized in the Eastern dialects but not the Western dialects (Monaham 2009: 676). Vowel harmony was typical to the speech of Bedouins and, therefore, when attributing it to Huḏayl speech, they supposedly had in mind the nomadic clan that had residing in Naǧd of this tribe and the territories adjacent to its borders. The same also applies to other Bedouin clans in the Hijaz and Yemen (al-Sharkawi 2008: 697).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abu-Haidar, Farida. 2006. "Baghdad Arabic", Verteegh, Kees (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and Linguistics, volume I.* Leiden-Boston: Brill. 222-231.

Akhvlediani, Vladimir. 1985. *Bukharski Arabski Dialekt: Fonologia I morphologia.* "Bukhara Dialect of Arabic". Tbilisi: "Metsniereba".

Alfozan, Abdulrahman Ibrahim. 1986. *Assimilation in Classical Arabic – A phonological study.* A thesis submitted to the faculty of Arts of the University of Glasgow in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Belova, Anna. 2000. Vokalicheskaia sturktura slova v vostochnoarabskikh dialektakh. "The Vocalic Structure of the Word in the Eastern Arabian Dialects", *Typological Researchers.* Tbilisi: G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies. 114-125.

Chikovani, Guram. 2009. *Arabuli enis bukharuli dialeqt'i.* "Bukhara Dialect of Arabic Language". Tbilisi: "Mtsignobari".

Chikovani, Guram. 2007. *Tsentraluri aziis arabuli dialqt'ebi - K'ašk'adariuli dialeqt'i (t'eqsti, targmani, ganmart'ebebi).* "Central Asian Arabic Dialects - Qashqa-darya Dialect (Text, Translation, Comment)". Tbilisi: "khironi".

Chikovani, Guram. 2002. *Šua aziis arabuli dialeqt'ebi – K'ašk'adariuli dialeqt'i (fonologia, gramat'ik'a, leqsik'a).* "Central Asian Arabic Dialects – Qashqa-darya Dialect (Phonology, Grammar, Vocabulary)". Tbilisi: Ena da K'ultura.

Ibn Fāris, ʼAbū l-Ḥusayn ʼAḥmad. 1997. *aṣ-Ṣāḥibīy fī fiqhi l-luġati l-ʿarabīyati wamasāʼilihā wasunani l-ʿarabi fī kalāmihā.* Bayrūtu: Dāru l-kutubi l-ʿilmiyyati.

al-Farrāʼ, ʼAbū Zakariyyā Yaḥya bnu Ziād. 1983. *Maʿānī l-qurʼān.* al-ğuzʼu ṯ-ṯānī. Bayrūtu: ʿālamu l-kutubi.

Ibn Ğinnī, ʼAbū l-Fatḥ ʿuṯmān. Undated. *al-Ḫaṣāʼiṣ.* al-Qāhiratu: dāru l-kutubi l-miṣriyyatu.

ʼĀl Ġunaym, Sāliha Rāšid Ġunaym. 1985. *al-Lahağātu fī l-kitābi liSībawayhi.* Ğidda: Dāru l-madanīy.

Holes, Clive. 2007. "Kuwaiti Arabic", Verteegh, Kees (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and Linguistics, volume II.* Leiden-Boston: Brill. 608-620.

Holes, Clive. 2006. "Bahraini Arabic", Verteegh, Kees (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and Linguistics, volume I.* Leiden-Boston: Brill. 241-255.

Lekiashvili, Alexi. 1977. *Arabuli ena I.* "The Arabic Language I". Tbilisi: Tbilisi University Press.

Levin, Arieh. 2012. *A new contribution to the history of the modern Arabic dialects of Iraq.* Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam. *Volume 39.* Jerusalem. 411-422.

Levin, Arieh. 2007. *ʼImāla.* Verteegh, Kees (general ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and Linguistics, volume II.* Leiden-Boston: Brill. 311-315.

Monaham, Philip J. 2009. "Vowel harmony", Verteegh, Kees (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and Linguistics, volume IV.* Leiden-Boston: Brill. 676-677.

Rabin, Chaim. 1951. Ancient West Arabian. London: Tailor's Foreign Press.

al-Sharkawi, Muhammad. 2008. "Pre-Islamic Arabic". Verteegh, Kees (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and Linguistics, volume III.* Leiden-Boston: Brill. 686-699.

Sībawayhi, ʾAbū Bišr ʿAmru bnu ʿUämān.1982. *al-kitāb*, al-ǧuzʿu r-rābiʿu. al-Qāhiratu: Maktabatu l-H̱āniǧī.

Tsereteli, George. 1970. *The influence of the Tajic language on the vocalism of Central Asian Arabic Dialect.* BSOAS, *volume XXXIII, 1.*

Tsereteli, George. 1956. *Arabckie dialekti srednei azii. T. I.* "Central Asian Arabic Dialects. V. I". Tbilisi: Georgian Acadamy of Sciences.

Versteegh, Kees. 2014. *The Arabic Language.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Vinnikov, Isaac N. *Yazik I folklore Bukharskikh Arabov.* "The Language and folklore of Bukharian Arabs". Moscow: "Nauka".

az-Zabīdīy, Muḥammad Murtaḍā l-Ḥusaynīy. 1965. *Tāǧu l-ʿarūs min ǧawāhiri l-qāmūs.* al-ǧuzʿu t̲āli t̲u. al-Kuwaytu: Matbaʿatu ḥukūmati l-Kuwayt.

az-ZamaH̱šarīy, ʾAbū l-Qāsim Maḥmūdu bnu ʿUmar. 2004. *Al-Mufaṣṣalu fī ʿilmi l-ʿarabīyati.* ʿAmmān: Dāru ʿAmmār lin-našri wat-tawzīʿ.

NOTES

1. See Levin 2007 and Levin 2012.
2. Alfozan 1986.
3. Tsereteli 1970; Ahvlediani 1985.
4. Chikovani 2002; Chikovani 2007; Chikovani 2009.

ABSTRACTS

Vowel harmony in the word-forms of old Arabic dialects is discussed in the works of medieval Arab grammarians. Valuable information regarding vowel harmony is provided by Sibawayhi, Ibn Jinni and others. In the medieval Arabic grammatical tradition the vowel harmony is denoted by the term *al-ʾitbāʿ* and is viewed as assimilation both at isolated and syntagmatic levels of the word-forms. For example, in the basic $C_1VC_2V{:}C_3$, $C_1VC_2C_3{>}C_1VC_2VC_3$ and $C_1VC_2VC_3$ structures: *faʿi/īl>fiʿi/īl* as well as in the derived forms with -$C_1C_2VC_3$, -$C_1V{:}C_3$: *mu-fʿi/īl>mifʿi/īl* and $C_1VC_2Y_3$ stems: for instance, *ʿaṣīy>ʿiṣīy* formant vowel change (a>i) in isolated and syntagmatic position. In addition to the above-mentioned cases vowel harmony is analyzed in: the stem words and affixes, prosthetic ʾalif of the imperative mood, doublets of one-syllable roots and pausal forms, *-āt* plural of *fu/iʿl-at* type names in which anaptyctic vowels are combined with root vowels, for instance, *rukb-at* (sing.) and *rukub-āt* (pl.), *sidr-at* (sing.) and *sidir-āt*, etc. In the Arabic dialects of central Asia the vocal structure of derived roots is relatively inconsistent. For example, $C_1VC_2VC_3$ structure in the isolated position is subject to changes on the syntagmatic level due to vowel harmony (*šuġul* and *šuġl-ak*). C1VC2VC3 structure can be identified in verb stems + through vowel harmony (cf. *tu-ktub* in the imperfect). Some stem structures are characterized by synharmonism peculiar to old Arabic dialects; for instance, *kivīr, gilīl*. Anaptyctic vowels are combined with stem vowels in one-syllable forms: *gidir<qidr, gutun<qutn* etc. Vowel harmony in a number of word-

forms reflects the general situation in old Arabic dialects of central Asia and conforms to the common Arabic dialectical forms.

INDEX

Keywords: Old Arabic Dialects, Central Asian Arabic, vowel harmony

AUTHOR

ZVIADI TSKHVEDIANI

Akaki Tsereteli State University, 9 Giorgi Shavgulidze St., Kutaisi 4600, Georgia, zviadi_2008@yahoo.com