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This volume on Arabic linguistics edited by Yonatan Mendel and Abeer AlNajjar is a refreshing compendium consisting of eleven chapters of research, reaching from Morocco to the Sudan, to Israel and Palestine, with historic comparisons in some cases. The chapters celebrate the scholarship of Yasir Suleiman, a towering figure in Arabic linguistics with a career that spreads over more than three decades of research and mentoring. In his dedication to Arabic linguistics, Suleiman’s scholarship demonstrates a remarkable breadth and depth of approaches and methods (see e.g. Suleiman 1999, 2003, 2013). The contributors to the chapters are scholars who know

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Suleiman personally, either as former students or as peers. The foreword is written by Carole Hillenbrand, a former colleague of Suleiman at the University of Edinburgh.

As Mendel and AlNajjar state in the introduction, even the choice of a street sign as the book’s cover image is a tribute to Suleiman’s scholarship. The street is from an Israeli town, and as is the case with all street signs in Israel, Hebrew has to be first, then Arabic, and then English. The Hebrew reads ‘Batzra’, in reference to ‘Basra’ in Iraq, where some Jews fought during WWII, and as a tribute to the city, as pronounced in Ashkenazi Hebrew, which is what these military men were. The Arabic is a transliteration of the Hebrew (as is generally the case in Israel), and the English is ‘Bazra’, even though English also has the name of this Iraqi city as ‘Basra’ or ‘Al-Basra’. The editors intended to show the seen, but most of the time unnoticed, depth of the semiosis of the sign. This is done to remind the reader that Suleiman was one of the early Arabic linguists to analyze street signs, and that was long before investigating the linguistic landscape became common practice in linguistic analyses (see e.g. Gorter 2006). Further, the fact that the two editors are a Jewish Israeli (Mendel) and a dispossessed Palestinian (AlNajjar) is also a gesture to the career and life of Suleiman, a dispossessed Palestinian himself in constant pursuit of social justice regardless of color or creed (see e.g. Suleiman 2016).

The book is in two parts. Part one covers some general themes in Arabic sociolinguistics. The authors made a good choice by opening with John Joseph, who applies Derrida’s (1994) framework to the understanding of language and identity. Joseph highlights the centrality of Suleiman’s scholarship in the debate on Arabic sociolinguistics. Derrida’s term ‘hauntology’, loosely translated as the ghosts of history in the formation of identity, fits very well the framework in which Suleiman worked and through which he influenced Arabic debates. Karin Ryding’s is a US-focused study of the pedagogy of Arabic, its shortcomings, and how to move forward. Chaouqun Lian examines the discourse of language policy in two of the oldest Arabic language academies, Damascus and Cairo. The metaphors used in the rationalization of the academy’s work is indicative of the role of language in the collective imagination of the national identity of both academies. Eirlys Davies discusses language preferences on the internet in social media, emails, and text messages in Morocco. Users’ preference for Moroccan Arabic is a bottom-up change happening in Arabic writing; thus Davies is moving the debate about code-switching in Arabic to the internet and social media realm.

Lastly in part one, Ashraf Abdelhay and Sinfree Makoni discuss ideology toward Arabic in the Sudan by looking into the discourse of President Bashir, the journalist Hussein Khojali, and John Garang de Mabior (the late South Sudanese leader), and how Arabic acts as a proxy for national conflict. Abdelhay and Makoni’s chapter is a refreshing reminder that the contours of Arabic do include the Sudan (which, before its division, was the largest country in Africa, a fact that is sometimes forgotten). The short-sighted ideology of its leadership (exemplified by Bashir) has treated Arabic in this multilingualistic and multicultural country as if it were the only legitimate national language. Needless to say, this simplistic monolithic understanding of identity and language has caused the country a lot of strife. Bashir’s ideology, as well as that of Khojali, who is tied to the regime and its alliance with the Islamic movement in its view of the superiority of Arabic, is contrasted with the much more inclusive view of Garang de Mabior. The latter is happy to learn Arabic because of its historic presence as a national unifier, unlike the European languages. In other words, de Mabior’s recognition of Arabic stems from his avowal of the richness of the diversity of the Sudan and not from a disavowal, as in the case of Bashir and Khojali.

Part two consists of six chapters that are case studies of Arabic. Reem Bassiouney compares two Arabic novels, one from 1944 and one from 2001. The code-switching between standard and Egyptian Arabic is indexical of the stance the protagonist takes toward ‘self’, ‘others’, and ‘place’ (see e.g. Jaffe 2009). MARIAM ABOELEZZZ compares the government’s stance toward Standard and the Egyptian Arabic modes during the time of Mohammad Morsi, the Islamist president of Egypt, and the post-Morsi time from 2013 on, and finds that current government discourse is in favor of Egyptian Arabic, as an index of Egyptian nationalist leaning, rather than standard Arabic, which indexes Islamist leaning. Rana Issa takes us in time to the Arab Nahda (language and intellectual revivalism from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, taking place mainly in
the Levant, Egypt, and later Iraq). The article specifically discusses the debate between two prominent figures from Lebanon, who moved to Cairo (as did many authors of the Nahḍa): Al-Shidyāq and Al-Yāzijī. Both authors saw errors differently: the first saw innovations in language use as a negative phenomenon, while the second saw them as a creative method. It is interesting to see that these two contrasting views from more than a century ago are still debated in the Arabic media, thus proving that today, as in the past, the question of language is proxy for other unsettled issues of identity in Arabic-speaking societies. Sonia Shiri takes us to Tunisia's demonstrations of July 14, 2011, during the Arab Spring. The linguistic landscape of the signs in the demonstrations was indicative of Tunisian 'banal nationalism' (see Billig 1995), with a message of separating Tunisia from its tyrant regime. Maisalon Dallashi investigates three generations of Arab Jews in Israel and their conflicted attitudes toward Arabic—between the security of the state on the one hand, and the language of nostalgia on the other—in her ‘the Arab Jew and the Arabic language in Israel’. Lastly, Muhammad Amara discusses the names of different events in Arabic and in Hebrew. He looks at the names for the 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, and 2006 wars, as well as the two Palestinian uprisings in 1987 and in 2000, and lastly the Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2008, 2012, and 2014.

In the spirit of Suleiman's wide-reaching scholarship, the chapters cover Morocco (Joseph, Davies), Tunisia (Shiri), Egypt (Bassiouney, Aboelezz), the Sudan (Abdelhay & Makoni), Lebanon and Egypt during the Nahḍa (Lian), and Israel and Palestine (Amara, Dallashi). As for the theoretical scope, the volume uses a wide array of analytical tools: Derrida's hauntology (Joseph), linguistic landscape and banal nationalism (Shiri), stance (Bassiouney), and Appadurai’s (1996) technoscope (Issa). As for the textual analysis, it includes signs during the Arab Spring (Shiri), novels (Bassiouney), a historic look at the language academy in Syria and Egypt (Lian), and textual analysis from the Arabic Nahḍa (Issa, Bassiouney). Further, some of the analyses are prescriptive, advising on future directions for scholarship (Ryding), while others rely on ethnography (Dallashi, Amara) and data collection (Abdelhay & Makoni). Thus, the collection is indicative of Suleiman’s flexibility of method and approach. Any linguistic observation is handled as being the tip of the iceberg, in a larger political and social context. In that spirit, Suleiman (as well as the participants in this collection) has managed to broaden the scope of how Arabic can be and is studied, without adhering to the narrow confines of one paradigm or another.

Lastly, linguistics as we know it today in general had its roots in the European colonial project (Heller & McElhinny 2017), and Arabic was not an exception, seen as a window to the minds of the Oriental ‘Other’ (see C. Suleiman 2010, 2017, and see also Lockman 2004 for a critique of Middle East comparative studies). The Orientalist tradition has cast its heavy shadow on how Arabic is perceived to this day. Suleiman’s legacy lies in challenging this heritage, while paying tribute to some of its achievements in Arabic studies. Relatedly, the Palestinian injustice is highly visible in Suleiman’s career, as well as the quest for a humanistic resolution. To Suleiman (and hopefully his students and peers), politics is life, and academics is part of life. I highly recommend this book.

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Linguists have long asked whether one finds in bilinguals, in addition to lexical transfer, crosslinguistic influences in morphosyntax. The familiar answer given in most places is: yes (see e.g. Thomason & Kaufman 1988). But in this book the answer, in a revealing dissent, is pursued by Rena Torres Cacoullos and Catherine E. Travis (TC&T) with such seriousness and rigor as to make this substantial volume indispensable. Their answer to the question is that there is no morphosyntactic convergence in bilinguals. Not, at least, in this painstakingly carried out case study of the use of subject personal pronouns by fluent English-Spanish bilinguals in the state of New Mexico in the United States.

Subject personal pronouns in Spanish (yo, tú, ella, él, etc. ‘I, you, she, he’, etc.) and especially the difference between expressed versus unexpressed pronominal subjects in finite clauses (ella camina ~ camina, both ‘she walks’) represent a mature research topic (Carvalho et al. 2015). Most studies, like the authors’, have been conducted on the basis of speech data under the quantitative variationist paradigm first established by William Labov (1966). Also comprising a large variationist literature is the related matter of the possible influence of English on the use of these pronouns in the Spanish of bilinguals. But scholars plowing this field have mostly concentrated on the presumed target of contact influence, Spanish, and not enough on the presumed source, English. This is because while the expression of subjects is obviously variable in Spanish, it is typically assumed to be essentially categorical in English. Yet TC&T make a point that is no less crucial for its being obvious: unexpressed subjects are also found in English (e.g. He .. took off for .. Big Bear: // You’re kidding. // 0 Had no idea where he was going (112); the ‘0’ indicates an unexpressed pronoun).

There are other important differences between this book and most work on English-Spanish bilingualism in the US. First, the speakers here are almost all US-born and belong to a 150-year-old bilingual community, thus differing from those of the relatively recent immigrant settings studied in most US bilingual research. This speaker profile facilitates conclusions about long-term linguistic change that are harder to reach when a time depth of only two or three generations is considered. Second, the very frequent code-switching that marks the normal speech mode of many bilingual settings is especially noticeable in the corpus utilized here. This allows TC&T to analyze pronominal use in stretches of both languages produced by the same speakers. In this way the authors take into account more directly than other investigators the familiar dictum that the true locus of crosslinguistic influence is the bilingual individual. And since, more than in