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MICHAEL JURSA, YAVUZ KÖSE,
STEPHAN PROCHÁZKA

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What is Bedouin-type Arabic?
Fresh Perspectives and New Data

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Šāwi Arabic: Comparing features of Bedouin dialects in Harran-Urfa and north-eastern Syria[1]

By MIRIAM AL TAWIL and AOZAN HUSSIEN (University of Vienna)[2]

Abstract: This paper deals with the description and analysis of several phonological and morphosyntactic features in two *šāwi*-type varieties, the Bedouin Arabic spoken in Harran-Urfa and Bedouin Arabic spoken in north-eastern Syria. Contact with Turkish is taken into account to determine the extent of its influence on the variety spoken in south-eastern Anatolia, while the influence of the urban prestige variety of the Syrian capital is investigated in the Arabic spoken in the north-eastern Ǧazīra. The two *šāwi* varieties are compared with each other and with the other Bedouin dialects spoken in the region.

Keywords: Bedouin dialects, Arabic varieties, Syria, Turkey, language contact.

Contact: miriam.al.tawil@univie.ac.at; aozan.hussien@univie.ac.at

Introduction

This article focuses on *šāwi*-type Arabic dialects as spoken in South-eastern Anatolia and the Middle Euphrates region.

Until recently, the term *šāwi* referred to a collective categorization of several tribes[3]: a group of semi-nomadic populations characterised by shorter seasonal migrations who herded their small flocks at the fringes of the Syrian Steppe. They did not benefit from the same administrative privileges as the Bedouin during the mandate era (Lange 2005, 2015). Despite their ecological differences, in dialectological studies, the *šāwi* varieties have been classified under the Bedouin-type dialects. Cantineau, the first scholar to classify Bedouin varieties in the Greater Syrian region, referred to this dichotomy as *petits-nomades* (‘little

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[2] Both authors collaborated on the article. For academic purposes, Al Tawil is responsible for the following sections: Introduction, Morpho-syntactical elements, and Conclusions. Hussien is responsible for Phonology and Lexicon.

[3] We use this often-contested term here as a translation of the Arabic terms *qabīla* and *ʿašīra*, and not as analytical concepts. The notion of tribe we chose is the one from the International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences, in which the term is used “as an ethnographic tool and as equivalent to certain vernacular or national legal terms referring to local conceptions of collective socio-political identity” (Gingrich 2015).

nomads', the *šāwi*) and *grands-nomades* ('great nomads', the Bedouin) (Cantineau, 1936, 1937).

Nowadays, most of these *šāwi*-Arabic speakers are settled in villages or smaller towns in the Ǧazīra of north-eastern Syria and adjacent regions across the border in Turkey (particularly in the province of Şanlıurfa). Other *šāwi* communities live in western Syria, in the Turkish province of Antakya/Hatay, in Lebanon, northern Israel, and Jordan.[4]

Despite the gradual disappearance of the semi-nomadic way of life following the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and the independence of the Arab countries in the 1940s, tribal structures, values, and identity are still much in evidence. With the ongoing Syrian civil war, the old tribal ties have crucially been revisited, and the network re-established. The main actors in this have been Syrian *šawāya* refugees who moved to Turkey to seek refuge on the other side of the border. Nevertheless, the term *šāwi* is not to be understood as a term all those referred to as such will always identify with. On the contrary, it can sometimes be perceived as pejorative and offensive, depending on which etymology it is associated with and who defines them as such. This term is even completely unknown among the original Arabic-speaking population in Southern Turkey.

For this article, we use the term *šāwi* only as it is conceived in Arabic dialectology, for its linguistic typology, and as a tag referring to a bundle of closely related dialects spoken in various areas of the Fertile Crescent and the Syrian Steppe.

The term Bedouin, as has already been established (Rosenhouse 1984), does not make any reference to the nomadic way of living but only keeps the linguistic connotations as used in Arabic dialectology.

State of the art

Dialectological studies on the *šāwi* Arabic spoken in the aforementioned regions are not detailed or complete enough to provide a thorough documentation of these Bedouin varieties, especially when compared to the data provided by the studies on sedentary dialects. The publications have, until now, focused mostly on phonological and morphological features (see below), while the syntactical and lexical aspects have been under-investigated. The most comprehensive studies on these varieties remain the pioneering descriptions by Cantineau from 1936-1937 and the book by Rosenhouse from 1984.

More recently, Herin and Younes have published many studies on *šāwi* varieties (2013; 2016). Research on single varieties has also been conducted by Arnold 1998 in Antakya/Hatay (167-209) and Talay 2008 in Syria. The *šāwi* dialects of Turkey have been described by Procházka (2003, 2018b). Useful

[4] Cf. Herin & Younes 2016, Arnold 1998, Herin & Younes 2013, Younes 2014, Rosenhouse 1984.

research has also been done by Bettini in Syria (1989-90, 1995, 2002, 2012, 2013), and her publications have provided texts and analyses. A monograph by Bettini (2006) on the Syrian Ǧazīra and a significant text collection on Bedouin dialects by Behnstedt 2000, 424-458, 516-617) are of particular importance.

Texts of Harran-Urfa Arabic are found in Procházka 2010 and 2013 and Procházka & Batan 2022.

Aims and research questions

Linguistically speaking, we can state that the oldest strata of Bedouin dialects in the region are likely to be the dialects of the semi-nomadic sheep-breeders.

According to Oppenheim (1939: 226f.), the immigration of the *šāwi* tribes to this area might date back to the 11th century or even earlier. Conversely, the arrival of camel-breeding tribes is recent and only dates to two centuries ago; they also never remained there for long periods (at least in southern-Turkey).

According to Procházka (2018a: 262), the considerable potential for mobility allowed migrations to and from the Ǧazīra. These century-long mutual contacts over a very large area reaching from the Mediterranean to the Gulf also had an impact on the dialects of the tribes as in many respects they show striking similarities.

Since we lack official statistics, determining the number of *šāwi*-Arabic-speakers in Turkey is not possible, and we can only roughly estimate them to be between 350,000 and 500,000 people.[5].

Since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the Arab minority has long been rather isolated from other Arabic speakers due to the difficulties of crossing the border. The almost complete lack of any influence of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in Turkey during the last century, Turkish being the only language of education and the media, has been highly significant in terms of linguistic development. Moreover, no urban Arabic prestige dialects have had an impact on the local variety. Therefore, Harran-Urfa Arabic still preserves its idiosyncratic features today, as contact-induced phenomena are due to bilingualism with Turkish. Considering the great typological difference between the latter and Arabic, Turkish influences are usually easily discernible and more visible on the surface (i.e., in lexicon and syntax).

A change in the linguistic history of the *šāwi* variety spoken in Turkey came about in 2011, when Arabic speakers from the Turkish region came into contact with the numerous Syrian refugees and were able to engage in some conversations in "*šāmi* Arabic".

The *šāwi* dialects spoken in the Syrian Ǧazīra display two tendencies: on the one hand, despite being considered as spoken in a geographically remote area,

[5] According to the official website of the Turkish statistical administration https://www.nufusu.com/il/sanliurfa-nufusu.

they appear to be influenced by the Syrian prestige dialects (especially the one of the capital Damascus), not only on a lexical level but also on a morphological one. On the other hand, peculiar lexical, phonological, and syntactical features preserved in *šāwi* in Turkey tend to be reduced in the Syrian *šāwi*. In particular, in the last twenty years, levelling tendencies in the Syrian *šāwi* dialects have been stronger (El Khalaf 2011), and differences can be seen when modern *šāwi* is compared to the texts of Bettini and Behnstedt (collected 20 years ago).

As for the current situation, it is not even rudimentarily possible to assess the impact of the Syrian civil war on the dialects of the Ǧazīra, which was controlled by ISIS fighters for a long time and witnessed the immense loss of lives and significant internal and external migration.

In the present paper, we will focus on selected linguistic features (mainly phonological, morpho-syntactical, and syntactical) to explore which characteristics *šāwi* dialects share (or do not share) with other dialects of the region and whether they differ among themselves.

Data and corpus

Our corpus for Harran-Urfa numbers more than 70,000 words; for its Syrian counterpart, we have more than 8,000 words, and we have also included Bettini's (2000) and Behnstedt's (2006) corpora for a total of 25,400 words. There are 13 Syrian speakers in our corpus and 35 speakers from Turkey.

The speakers interviewed and recorded cover both genders and were born between 1912 (the oldest speaker) and 2000 (the youngest). Stephan Procházka and our research partner, Ismail Batan have been conducting research fieldwork in the Turkish province of Şanlıurfa since 2001. This province numbers hundreds of villages, mainly belonging to the districts of Akçakale, Ceylanpınar, Harran, and Eyyübiye. The demographic composition of the aforementioned cities is characterized by a significant majority of Arabic-speaking populations living in the plain of Harran.

Our analysis of the data on *šāwi* in Turkey is based on recordings, which contain very diverse narratives: life stories, descriptions of the work of everyday life, and spontaneous conversations. For our data on Syrian *šāwi*, we have collected further recordings with similar content through interviews conducted between 2022 and 2023 in Vienna. These speakers live in Vienna but are originally from Mambiǧ, Rās al-ʕĒn, Dēr az-Zōr, ar-Raqqa, and Tell Abyaḍ.

Phonology

Affrication of /k/

Affrication of **k* is a well-known linguistic phenomenon in Arabic dialectology, typical of both Bedouin and non-Bedouin varieties of the Eastern Arabic dialects. Usually, as described by Rosenhouse (2006:260), the affrication of **k* is observed in front vowel environments (including *ā*).

This shift appears to be 'historically conditioned' and, apart from a few exceptions, is also regular in these *šāwi* varieties.

Nonetheless, in *šāwi* in Turkey and Syria, it can be observed that the affrication of **k* also occurs in a back-vowel environment.

Examples from our Syrian *šāwi* data are: *čibīr* 'big', *čiṯīr* 'much', *čān* 'he was', *čānit* 'she was', *čānaw* 'they were', *hīč, hīčiḏ,* 'this way', *čyās* 'bags', *siččīnt-u* 'his knife', *ḏič* 'that SF', *čalib* 'dog', *al-ḥači* 'the speech', *čatla* 'punch', *frīč* 'freekeh, roasted cereal', *ačil-na* 'our food', *yiḥčī-l-ak* 'he tells you', *tiḥči* 'she says', *tibči* 'she cries', *nčattif-ha* 'we tie her', *čam* 'how many'. Some words show both reflexes and alternate between the two forms, like in *činna* (13 occurrences) ~ *kinna* (1 occurrence) 'we were', *ačla* ~ *akla* 'food, dish', *čabiš* ~ *kabˀš* 'ram'. As for the affrication of **k* with back vowels (*ō, ū*), we observed: *tdūč* 'she grazes/she is put to pasture'.

The data also contains many cases in which the **k* is not affricated as in: *ḏakar* 'he remembered', *nirkab* 'we ride', *kaʕb* 'cube'.

Our data from the *šāwi* in Turkey from Harran-Urfa show affrication of **k* as in: *čam* 'how many', *kefen* ~ *čafan* 'shroud', *čalēna* 'we ate', *čalētu* 'you PL.M ate', *čalā-ni* 'he ate me', *čalēt* 'I ate', *čaʕab* 'cube/heel', *yčalliṭ* 'he locks', *mčalliṭ* 'locked', *tičallaṭ* 'she locks', *ḥāčaw* 'they talked to', *yḥaččūn* 'they talk to', *čalib* 'dog', *čaḏḏāb* 'liar', *mčassiʕ* AP 'to lean on a side', 'to sit comfortable', *čalinn-u* 'they (PL.F) ate him', *čattafit* 'I tied', *itičattaf* 'he is bound', *mčattaf* 'bound', *rčibit* 'I rode', *čibīre* 'big SG.F', *rāčib* 'rider AP', *mraččib* 'installed/fixed', *yraččbūn* 'they install/they fix', *marčūba* 'riden' (in these last examples we can observe the spread of the affrication from a single word, the perfect *rčib*, to the whole root).

Cases of no affrication shared by both dialects of *šāwi* in Syria and in Turkey include: *kišm* and *kišma* 'face/figure', *kilme* 'word', *šakle, šakil* ~ *šikil* 'shape', *inkisar* 'it got broken', *tinkasir* 'she got broken', *nkasrat* 'she broke up'.

ġ > *q* and *q* > *ġ*

ġ > *q* in Harran-Urfa

These two features are rather idiosyncratic of these varieties of *šāwi* Bedouin Arabic. While the shift **ġ* > *q* is strongly retained among the speakers from Harran-Urfa, it is less frequent among the Syrian ones, probably because of the contact-induced change among the *šāwi* native speakers influenced by Syrian

sedentary dialects. As for our data, apart from a few exceptions, **ġ* is reflected as *q* in all positions:

**ġanam > qanam*	'sheep'
**ġaym > qēm*	'clouds'
**baġl > baqal*	'mule'
**fāriġ > fāriq*	'empty'

According to Cantineau (1936: 39), we can observe the shift **ġ > q*, as in *qāli* ('expensive') and *qássäl* ('he washed') in his data from ar-Raqqa. The speech of the Mawāli tribe also displays the shift *ġ > q*, as in *qárbäl* 'to riddle', *qárbalo^{u}* 'they riddled it', *qanámhom* 'their sheep'. At the same time, however, it also displays the retention of *ġ* as in *ġarbâl* 'sieve', *ġnami* 'my sheep', *ġnamek* 'your sheep', and *qād* together with *ġād* 'over there' (Cantineau 1937: 144).

As for the synchronic data, in Eastern Turkey **ġ* is realised as a [x] in contact with a voiceless consonant due to the influence of the Turkish pronunciation (Fink 2017: 56). In Mardini Arabic, however, the reflexes of **ġ* are either [ġ] or [x], because of the Kurdish influence (in Kurdish, Arabic loanwords that originally have [ġ] are usually pronounced with [x], as *xezal* < *ġazal* 'gazelle') (Grigore 2007: 53-54).

ġ > q in Syria

The Syrian informants tend to pronounce **ġ* as *q* only when the former appears in certain positions, such as preceding *u* or *a*.

Behnstedt pointed out the isogloss of *ġ > q* in the area around ar-Raqqa, among other cities in the north up to the Turkish border including, Mambiǧ in his *Sprachatlas*. In contrast, in Tall Abyaḍ, Xirbet ərRizz, and Slūk, *ġ* is retained as such. In al-Bāb, the reflex of *ġ* is *x* in *xasal, yixsil*, as in other cities north of al-Ḥasakah (such as Tall Nabhān, Sēgər Fōqāni, Sēgər Wusṭāni, Sēgīr Taḥtāni, etc.) (Behnstedt, 1997: 15-17).

From the data gathered by Herin and Younes (2016: 2), it is noticeable that /ġ/ may appear east of the Euphrates as /q/, as in *burqul* ('bruised wheat') and *qēr-i* ('other than I'). Although it is generally thought to be an eastern Euphrates feature, we also found the reflex *ġ > q* in the western area, in the speech of informants from Maskaneh, Mambiǧ, and Al-Bāb. Here we provide some examples of a speaker (M, 22) from Mambiǧ (Syria):

(1) *huwwa yfūt b-qurfat at-tibin, qurfat al-bugar*
'He enters the hay room, the cow room (the stable)'.

(2) *qamīge, niṭluʕ ᵊb-qalib-ha āni w rbēʕ-i*
'A deep (pot), we board it, my friend and I'.

(3) *iḥna hnāk ʕid-na bī ġīra b-al-ḥēl yaʕni yqārūn ʕala ʕa-n-nāmūs*
'There, we have jealousy, a lot, I mean, they get jealous for the honour'.

It is worth mentioning that in the last example, *ġ* in *ġīra* is reflected as *ġ* since it is directly borrowed from Modern Standard Arabic as a verbal noun. It is, nevertheless, pronounced *q* when conjugated as a verb (*yqārūn).*

Examining our data from the region east of the Euphrates, in particular from Rās al-ʕĒn (Kurdish: Serê kaniyê), it is noticeable that the shift **ġ* > *q* is not as common as in Urfa, even though it is just on the other side of the border. Behnstedt made this same observation, as his data show that, aside from two exceptions, the cities north of al-Ḥasakah retain *ġ* (Behnstedt, 1997: 15).

Conversely, most of our occurrences in Syrian *šāwi* show that the main reflex of *ġ among these communities is [ġ], as in the data below from a speaker from Manbiǧ (M, 22):

(4) *al-ḥubb w al-ġarām w al-gāḍa mamnūʕa*
'Love and falling in love and whatever are forbidden.'

(5) *hāy aš-šaġlāt, baʕd az-zawāǧ ygul-l-ak tṣīr*
'It is said that these things happen after marriage.

One exception to this that both Syrian and Turkish *šāwi* Arabic share is in the realization of all words deriving from the root *šġl* (which might represent a recent loanword in comparison to *qanam*), since the sound *ġ* does appear in *šuġul* "work" and *štíġal* "he worked".

q > *ġ* in Syria

OA **q* is sometimes realized as *ġ* even in lexical items borrowed from Modern Standard Arabic like *firġa mūsīġiyyä* 'music band' (Herin & Younes 2016: 2). The information that *q* is realized as *ġ* is found in Behnstedt, who also pointed out cases of hyper-corrections (such as *ġallak* for *qallak* and *ġayyūmāt* for *qayyūmāt*) (1997: 75-76).

This is also the case with many words we found in our data from speakers from Rās al-ʕĒn, where the shifting **q* > *ġ* can be heard in some positions, such as, according to our data, before a consonant, as in the examples below:

(6) *nwaddi aṣ-ṣubuḥ naġla*
'We transport a (water) cargo in the morning' (M, 25).

(7) *masāfit taġrīb-an šī arbaʕīn kilawmitᵊr*
'a distance of approximately forty kilometres' (M, 25).

Interestingly, we do not always find the same realization in the surrounding area. In Çukurova Arabic in South Turkey, the reflex of /q/ is usually [q] or [ķ]; in Hasankeyf, in East Turkey, we observe a similar reflex, since /q/ is realized as a nonvoiced allophone between [x] and [ɣ] when it is before a consonant or at the end of a word (Fink: 2017: 56). In Mardini Arabic, it is realized as either [q] or [x].

Morpho-syntactical elements

Existential structures

Existential structures in modern Arabic varieties are an innovative trait often expressed by either locative prepositions[6] (followed by the bound pronoun of the 3MS) or presentative particles. Among the former, the Levantine *fi* (Cowell 1964: 415, 416) is the most widespread in sedentary varieties, while *bi* and *bū* (Bettini, 2006: 41) are the most common in Bedouin eastern varieties.

Behnstedt and Woidich offer detailed descriptions of the other Arabic varieties, giving etymologies of the existential markers, such as the Moroccan *kāyn* (Caubet, 1993: 34,35), the Tunisian *ṯamma* (Ritt-Benmimoun, 2014: 114), the Maltese *hemm*, the Saudi *hna*, the Iraqi *aku* (Behnstedt & Woidich 2021: 425).

Classical and Syrian Arabic are described as languages that have a tendency for the locative phrase to precede the nominal in existential constructions (even though the opposite is not impossible, only less common), as in the following example from Syrian Arabic (Cowell, 1964: 415).

(8) *fī wāḥed xalaṣ w-wāḥed ʕam-yədros*

'There is one who is finished and one who is studying'.

The situation is reversed in Turkish, which is a SOV language, where the particle *var* is used to express existence and is always placed at the end.

(9) *Istanbul'da çok cami var.*

'There are many mosques in Istanbul'.

Existential markers

Šāwi Arabic in the Harran-Urfa region

Existential sentences in the *šāwi* variety of Harran-Urfa are characterised by three different markers: *šī*, *bī*, and the Turkish particle *var*.

Comparing the existential structures of *šāwi* with other Arabic dialects spoken in Turkey, we can observe that Çukurova Arabic in southern Turkey (Procházka 2002), and Anatolian Arabic (Jastrow 2005, Fink 2017) employ the existential marker *fi* and it is also the attested form for Bedouin in north-eastern Jordan, a form that is supplanting the traditional Bedouin existential marker *bi* (Bettini 2006: 41). The existential markers *bû* and *bô* as observed by Cantineau (Cantineau, 1937: 208) are not attested in our data.

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[6] Existence in natural language is, in some cases, expressed in locative terms, since the existence of an object normally implies that it is to be found somewhere in a space. Existential and locative constructions share the locative basis (Hintikka, 1968, 1968-1969 in Clark, 1978). Many existential constructions derive synchronically and diachronically from the locatives (Lyons, 1967: 390).

– šī

A quite rare existential marker, *šī*, is found in eastern varieties, in eastern Bedouin dialects, and also in Oman, Yemen, and the Gulf coast in the forms of *šē*, *šayy, šay,* and *šī* (Holes 2016: 24-26). As *šī*, it has been described as the existential marker of the dialect of the Šawāwī Community of northern Oman, widespread in both the sedentary and the Bedouin varieties (Eades 2009: 92), while *šay* has also been described as the existential marker of the Arabic variety spoken in Maṣīra (Oman) (Leitner and Bettega, 2023: 93). Interestingly, Holes describes and defines *šī* and *šay* as multi-functional particles not only covering the existential but also the negative, and interrogative uses. It is attested in southern Yemeni dialects and also in Bahrain, Oman, and the Gulf, again with the same functions. Nevertheless, in Bahrain, Oman, and the Gulf, *šay* is one of many particles used to express the existential construction (together with *fīh*, *hast*, and *aku*) (Holes, 2016: 24, 110-113).

It is also worth mentioning that Modern South Arabian languages also have an existential particle similar to the one described here, namely, *śi* (Weninger, 2011: 1108). Wilmsen put forward a hypothesis concerning this, suggesting that *ši* does not derive from Arabic *šay* but originated in south-west Arabia (Wilmsen, 2014: 120-126).

Nevertheless, these existential particles in the dialects of Bahrain and Gulf Arabic often carry a specific kind of existential meaning, that is, the distributive and partitive one (they are often translated as 'SOME…OTHERS') (Holes 2016, 113). Holes himself expresses the difficulty of differentiating between positive existential and distributive use and the interrogative sentences (often translated as 'any' or 'at all'). Holes' data offer a different perspective on the use of this particle, whose function as an existential marker is only one of its many uses. For example, it can also be used as an adverb (it is often translated as 'about', 'a bit', 'any'/ 'some') (Holes, 2016, 26).

In Urfa Arabic, we can observe that in most cases, it fulfils the existential function:

(10)

alḥaz	*ǧawwā=ne*	*al=mayye*	*hēne*	*šī*
now	inside=PRON.1PL	DEF=water	here	EXS

"Now there is water beneath us here".

(11)

alḥaz	*kull*	*ši*	*b=Turkīye*	*šī*
now	every	thing	in=Turkey	EXS

"Nowadays, there is everything in Turkey".

(12)

al=kīlo	*ač=čime*	*iḥna*	*b=urfa*	*huwwa*	*y-ṣīr*
DEF=kilo	DEF=truffles	PRON.1PL	in=Urfa	PRON.3S	PREF.3MS-become

šakl-ēn	*ṯalāṯa*	*n-gūl=u*	*zġār*	*šī*	*kbār*	*šī*
type-DUAL	three	PREF.1PL-say=PRON.3MS	little	EXS	big	EXS

"A kilo of truffles, here in Urfa, since there are two three types, we say, there are small (ones) and there are big (ones)".

In the above sentences, we notice that the existential marker is at the end of the sentence after the noun it refers to. This is the typical structure of the Turkish existential sentence. In Turkish, the existential markers (both the simple *var* and the negative *yok*) always occupy the last position in the sentence, regardless of the type of sentence. For example:

I. *Türkiye'de deniz **var**, Avusturya'da deniz **yok**.*[7]

"In Turkey, there is the sea; in Austria, there is no sea".

II. *Bugün güneş **yok**.*

"Today there is no sun".

In the sentences below, however, the existential sentence is introduced by the existential marker placed at the beginning of the sentence:

(13)

ʕid=kum	*ḥaywānāt*	*ē*	*šī*	*qanam*
at=PRON.2MPL	animals	*yes*	EXS	sheep

bugaṛ	*maʕaz*	*faras*	*kidīš*	*ište*	*šī*
cows	goats	horses	workhorse	[tr]this[tr]	EXS

"Do you have animals? – Yes, there are sheep, cows, goats, horses, workhorses, that is how it is".

(14)

šī	*ǧarye*	*hēne*	*isim=he*	*al=Qazāni*
EXS	village	here	name=PRON.3FS	al=Qazāni

"There is a village here whose name is al-Qazāni".

(15)

šī	*zġār*	*šī*	*kbāṛ*	*šī*	*hīčiḏ*	*šī*	*hīčiḏ*	*huwwa*
EXS	small	EXS	big	EXS	like this	EXS	like this	PRON.3MS

škāl	*ʾškāl*
shapes	shapes

"There are small and big (ones), there are (ones) like this and like that, there are many types".

(16)

šī	*baʕaḏ*	*ʕašāyir*	*ǧa-w*	*m=al=ʕIrāg*
EXS	some	tribes	go-SUFF.3PL	from=DEF=Iraq

[7] Procházka-Eisl, 2005: 15.

m=al=ʕIrāg	*ʕala*	*dōr*	*Atatürk*
from=DEF=Iraq	on	turn	Atatürk

"There are some tribes that came from Iraq at the time of Atatürk".

(17)

mesela	*hēne*	*šī*	*aǧ=Ǧumayle*	*n-gūl=il=hum*
[tr]for example[tr]	here	EXS	DEF=Ǧumayle	1PL.PREF-say=to=PRON.3PL

ʕašīre	*Ǧumayle*	*ǧa-w*	*min*	*al=ʕIrāg*
tribe	Ǧumayle	come-SUFF.3PL	from	DEF=Iraq

"For example, here there are the Ǧumayle, we call them the Ǧumayle tribe, they came from Iraq".

(18)

al=midīne	*al=balad*	*ṯalṯ*	*aqsām*	*šī*
DEF=city	DEF=village	three	parts	EXS

al=balad	*šī*	*Yahūd*	*šī*	*Armaniyye*	*w*	*šī*	*Islām*
DEF=village	EXS	Jews	EXS	Armenian	and	EXS	Islam

"The city, the village was divided into three parts, there were Jews, Armenians, and Muslims".

(19)

ḥatta	*alḥaz*	*halḥīn*	*b=Isrāʔīl*	*šī*	*baʕaḍ*	*Yahūd*
even	now	now	in=Israel	EXS	some	Jews

y-gūl-ūn	*inte*	*aṣṣōb=u*	*blād=ak*
PREF.3M-say-PL	PRON.2MS	where=PRON.3MS	villages=PRON.2MS

y-gūl-ūn	*āni*	*Urfalli*
PREF.3M-say-PL	PRON.1S	person from Urfa

"Even now, now in Israel there are some Jews who say, 'Where are you from'? They reply, 'I am from Urfa'".

(20)

w	*šī*	*ǧarye*	*y-sōlf-ūn*	*b=al=ʕarab*
and	EXS	village	PREF.3-talk-M.PL	in=DEF=Arabic

lākin	*aṣəl=hum*	*ʾkrād*
but	origin=PRON.3MPL	Kurds

"There is a village in which they speak Arabic, but they have Kurdish origins".

(21)

alḥaz	*šī*	*baʕaḍ*	*xawāǧi*	*y-sōlf-ūn*	*aǧ=ǧnūn*
now	EXS	some	wise.men	3M.PREF-talk-PL	DEF=demons

"Now there are some wise men that can talk to the demons".

In contrast, in the following examples, we could interpret the particle *ši* as a distributive or partitive, since to be an existential phrase, it would need a subject. We have seen that, in some cases, *šī* is followed by *baʕaḍ*, making it easy to disambiguate an existential marker from a distributive (see above, sentences 16, 19, 21).

(22)

šī	*rāyḥ-īn*	*ʕala*	*Sūriyye*	*šī*	*ǧāy-īn*
DISTR	go.AP-PL.M	to	Syria	DISTR	come.AP-PL.M

ʕala	*Türkiye*	*šī*	*rāyḥ-īn*	*ʕa=l=ʕIrāg*
to	Turkey	DISTR	go.AP-MPL	to=DEF=Iraq

"Some went to Syria; some went to Turkey and others to Iraq".

(23)

šī	*rāḥ-Ø*	*ʕala*	*Sūriyye*	*šī*	*rāḥ-Ø*
DISTR	go.3SG.M-SUFF	to	Syria	DISTR	go.3MS-SUFF

ʕala	*Isrāʾīl*
to	Israel

"Some went to Syria, and some went to Israel".

(24)

šī	*sōlaf-aw*	*ʕala*	*šēx*	*mesela*
DISTR	talk-SUFF.3MPL	about	sheikh	[tr]example[tr]

ǧāyb-īn	*ʾbnayye*	*min*	*qēr*	*balad*
AP.bring-MPL	girl	from	other	village

"Some talked about a sheikh, for example, to whom they brought a girl from another village".

– bī

Another less widespread existential marker is *bī*, also typical of the Bedouin varieties of the Syrian Ǧazīra. Compared to the latter and to the Bedouin varieties of Jordan, it is much less widespread and occurs only occasionally and at the beginning of the existential sentence, as in the example below:

(25)

bī	*wāḥad*	*zād*
EXS	one	also

"There is also someone".

(26)

yi-ml-ūn	*bī-ʼ*	*mayye*	*alḥaz*	*fāḍi*
3PREF-fill-MPL	in-PRON.3MS	water	now	empty
mā	*bī*			
NEG	EXS			

"They (usually) fill it with water, but now it's empty, there is not [any water]".

– *var* (Turkish)

As it has been mentioned before, this Turkish existential marker is placed at the end of the sentence (with the exception of sentence 27), after the noun it refers to. It occurs with both Turkish and Arabic nouns. In some of the sentences below, we can observe instances of code-switching with Turkish (see 27, 28).

(27)

varmış	*bir*	*ḥikmet*	*šī*	*ḥikme*	*šī*
trEXStr	tronetr	wisdom	EXS	wisdom	EXS
ḥikme	*šī*				
wisdom	EXS				

"Maybe there is a wisdom behind it, there is a wisdom, there is a wisdom".

(28)

šakl-īn	*ši*	*as=saʕālwa*	*šī*	*islām*	*w=šī*	*mūhum*
type-DUAL	EXS	DEF=demons	EXS	Islam	and=EXS	NEG
islām	*raḥmāni*	*var*				
Islam	blessed	TREXSTR				

"There are two types of demons, there is a Muslim and a non-Muslim (type) – there is a blessed type".

Syrian *šāwi*:

As for the varieties spoken in the Syrian Ǧazīra, the only existential marker we identified is the idiosyncratic *bī*, as we would expect for the Bedouin varieties, and as described in previous works by Bettini (2006: 41). Cantineau described the use of the markers *bû*^{h} and *bô*^{h} (1936: 109), deriving from the preposition *bi* followed by the 3rd masculine suffix pronoun, which is also the case for *bī*. The marker that is absent from our corpus is *fî*, which is the one that Cowell described for Syrian Arabic (1964: 415, 416).

– bī

(29)

w	*iḥna*	*ʾn-rūḥ*	*wēn*	*bī*	*mayya*
and	PRON.1PL	PREF.1PL-go	where	EXS	water

"And we go where there is water".

(30)

w	*bī*	*ʕan=na*	*zirāʕa*	*w*	*bī*	*ʕan=na*	*ġanam*
and	EXS	at=PRON.1PL	agriculture	and	EXS	at=PRON.1PL	sheep

"And we have plantations, and we have sheep".

(31)

b=aš=šita	*mā*	*bī*	*liban*
in=DEF=winter	NEG	EXS	yogurt

"In winter, there is no yogurt".

(32)

awwal	*aš=šita*	*ni-ṭluʕ*	*w*	*bī*	*arāḏi*	*bōr*
first	DEF=winter	PREF.1PL-go out	and	EXS	lands	empty

ġādi	*ya-ʕni*	*mawǧūda*
there	PREF.3MS-mean	present

"At the beginning of the winter, we go out and there are uncultivated fields there, I mean, they are there".

(33)

w	*ḏ-ḏaḷḷ*	*sahrāna*	*mzān*	*hal lēl*	*bī*
and	PREF.3FS-stay	awake	during	DEF night	EXS

miṭar	*w*	*hawa*	*w*	*ši*	*ḏ-ḏaḷḷ*	*sahrāna*
rain	and	wind	and	thing	PREF.3FS-stay	awake

"And she stays awake the whole night, there is rain, wind, and the like, and she stays awake".

Here, *ši* 'thing' is intended, in our interpretation, to indicate the logical continuation of a sequence of words that are omitted but understood from the context (in this case, weather phenomena). It is a kind of elliptical construction, in which the omitted words are replaced by '*ši'* and whose meaning is comparable to '*et cetera*'.

(34)

bī	*ʕid=na*	*laʕbit*	*aẓ=ẓagṭa*
EXS	at=PRON.1PL	game	DEF=*ẓagṭa*

"We have the game *zagta*".

Negation of existential phrases in *šāwi* in Urfa

Negative existential sentences are characterized by different negative markers, such as *māmin,* and *māmiš* (28 occurrences altogether). These two are considered to be derived from the negative particle *mā* + the preposition *min* (as for *māmin*) or + *mā* + *min* + *šī* 'thing', leading to the assimilation and the dropping of *-n* and *-ī* (as for *māmiš*).

The third option for negating the existential marker is simply the negation particle *mā* followed by the existential marker *bī*. This is, though, the least common way of creating a negative existential phrase (it appears only twice in the corpus).

– māmin

(35)

al	*yi-truk*	*at=titin*	*šif-t*	*al*	*miṯil*
REL	PREF.3MS-leave	DEF=tobacco	see-SUFF.1S	REL	like

šǧaṛt-in	*yābse*	*māmin*
tree-TNW	dry	NEG

"Who quits smoking is like a dry tree, there is nothing."

(36)

hāḏa	*ʕa=d=darib*	*qēr*	*an=naṣīḥa*	*māmin*	*šī*
this	to=DEF=road	different	DEF=advice	NEG	thing

"Isn't there anything else on this road but advice?"

(37)

yā	*bint-i*	*gāyil*	*ʾghawa*	*māmin*
o	daughter-PRON.1S	AP.MS.say	coffee	NEG

He said, "My daughter, is there no coffee?"

– māmiš

(38)

halḥīn	*mayye*	*māmiš*	*magṭūʕa*
now	water	NEG	cut

"Now there is no water, it's shut off".

(39)

aš=šuġul	*yōmin*	*šuġul*	*kaṯīr*	*w*	*māmiš*	*ḥade*
DEF=work	when	work	much	and	NEG	one

al=yōmiyye	*qālye*
DEF=daily.FS	high.FS

"And if there is a lot of work and no people then the daily wage is high".

(40)

hīčiḏ	*āni*	*mā*	*(a)-gdar*	*a-ḏbaḥ-ak*
like this	PRON.1S	NEG	(PREF.1S)-can	PREF.1S-slaughter-PRON.2MS

hīčiḏ	*māmiš*	*ḏabiḥ*
like this	NEG	slaughter

"I cannot kill you like that, there is no killing like that".

– *mā bī*

(41)

sāw-ēt	*basabōrt*	*ḥagg*	*ʾrkūb*	*mā*	*bī*
do-SUFF.1S	passport	GENPRT	transportation'	NEG	EXS

"I made a passport, (but) I did not have the money for the transportation".

– *yok* (Turkish)

(42)

al=bidīle	*maḥḥad*	*y-ḥayyir*	*ʕalē=he*	*hıyar*
DEF=bidīle	no one	3MS.PREF-object	to=PRON.3FS	objection

olmuyor	*yok*	*hıyar*	*yok*
[tr].it is not.[tr]	[tr]NEG EXS[tr]	objection	[tr]NEG EXS[tr]

"Nobody can object to the *bidīle*, there is no objection".

Negation of existential phrases in Syrian *šāwi*

bī being the only existential marker in Syrian *šāwi*, the negation marker in the existential clause is *mā*:

(43)

mā	*bī*	*miškila*
NEG	EXS	problem

"There is no problem".

(44)

awwali	*mā*	*bī*	*lā*	*barrādāt*	*wala*	*bī*	*šī*
first	NEG	EXS	NEG	fridges	and-NEG	EXS	thing

"In the past there were no fridges or anything".

Genitive structures

Semitic languages generally make use of different forms of genitive constructions: juxtaposition of two nouns[8] (i.e., synthetic constructions), and analytical markers (Weninger, 2011: 307). Some Semitic languages also make use of periphrastic constructions through the relative particle (e.g., Mandaic) (Weninger, 2011: 681).

Semitic languages use both a logical genitive (conveying a possessive meaning) and a formal genitive, used to describe or qualify the *nomen regens* (Lipiński, 1997: 497, Weninger, 2011: 570).

OA and MSA, being partially inflectional, exhibit the synthetic genitive (or construct chain) in which a subjoined substantive (*nomen rectum*) is added to the head of the nominal phrase (*nomen regens*) (Lipiński, 1997: 497).

The functions covered by the genitive encompass possessive, affiliation, rule, aim (*genetivus obiectivus*), expression of a part to a whole or quantity (partitive genitive), but also the material of the prepositional phrase and content. It is also possible for the *nomen rectum* to be defined as the author, source, origin, and the like (*genitivus subiectivus*) (*ibid*. 498-499).

Analytic and synthetic genitive

Despite juxtaposition being the most common genitive construction in most dialects, there are also analytical constructions using different particles.
The use of words deriving from *bitāʕ* 'property' as a genitive particle is common in modern Arabic dialects (Lipiński, 1997: 500).

Another type of indirect annexation is the epexegetic genitive, widespread in eastern dialects (but also found in Algeria and Morocco), which is marked by the preposition *l-* and characterized by the absence of the article for the item possessed, to which a cataphoric pronoun representing the possessor is suffixed (Weninger, 2011: 931). It is used to specify the use, location, or type of the head of the nominal phrase or even its quality (instead of adjectives).

Although it remains a subject of debate among experts, some scholars have identified it as a local feature, justified by the influence of the Aramaic substrate (Feghali, 1928; Procházka 2020, 98-99). Other scholars, though, are either sceptical of this origin (Diem 1979 and Lentin 2018) or accept it while also attributing it to internal developments within the Arabic language (Souag, 2017). Apart from a few exceptions, Arabic dialects are known to have analytical genitive structures (Çukurova Arabic is one of the very few dialects that does not have analytic constructions). Nevertheless, traditional classifications stress the low frequency of analytical genitives in Bedouin dialects in contrast with the sedentary dialects in which the use of analytical genitive structures is registered

[8] Which in Arabic actually reflects more complex structures, involving the dropping of the article of the first item, if it is determinative.

as common (Palva, 2006: 606). In the present varieties, it is necessary to consider the existence of Bedouin retentions and innovations in the same variety, which developed from the former Bedouin type but then became mixed. In Arabic-based pidgins and creoles, the tendency for the genitive is widely analytic (Weninger, 2011: 993).

Recent studies show that the choice of the analytical genitive over the synthetic one enables the speaker to avoid the latter's complex structures or ambiguities (Eksell Harning, 1980: 78-79; Bettega, 2019: 234).

The genitive exponents can have different lexical sources (Eksell Harning 1980: 19). They generally result from semantic bleaching or phonological reduction of words related to property, possession, wealth, work, object, or state. They can also originate from relative or demonstrative items (Weninger, 2011: 865).

In the Bedouin variety of Arabic spoken in Turkey, two strategies are employed to build the genitive construction: the analytical *hnīt* and the synthetic structure; the latter is by far the more frequent.

As for other dialects spoken in Turkey, such as the Alawite Arabic variety of the Çukurova, there is no analytic genitive, but rather the construction with a proleptic possessive suffix and the preposition is used: *bitt-u la-š-šayx* 'the daughter of the Sheikh' (especially when the item possessed is a person). This clitic doubling has been described by Procházka (2020) as a pattern replication of an Aramaic model.

Mardini Arabic does not show any analytical constructions but only the construct state. An Arabic variety that uses the analytical genitive structure is the one spoken in Hasankeyf, where the genitive markers *hūl* (MS), *hūlt* (FS), and *hūlayn* (PL) are used (Fink, 2017: 83; Behnstedt & Woidich 2021, 413). Tillo Arabic makes use of the relative pronoun *lay* that indicates belonging (Lahdo, 2010: 82). The same has been highlighted for the Mesopotamian dialects described by Jastrow (1978: 124-125).

Interestingly, in Syrian *šāwi* Arabic, we found two occurrences of *tabaʕ,* typical of the sedentary or sedentarised varieties of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine, while no attestation of the Bedouin idiosyncratic genitive marker *giyy* was found (which still survives and appears occasionally in some Bedouin varieties of Jordan).

Analytical genitive exponent in Urfa: *hnīt*

It is worth mentioning here that the exponent *hnīt* is not common in this area, and exponents with other lexical origins are preferred, as well as other syntactic structures. Nevertheless, this form is attested in northern Syria together with *šī* ~ *šīt* ('thing') and is also mentioned as a typical form of *šāwi* varieties. Talay, also pointed out the presence of *hnīt* (as well as *šīt*) in the *qəltu* dialect of the Khawētna, a rural dialect of Syria, showing that it is supplanting the idiosyncratic

form *gī* (Talay, 1999: 65). As for eastern Syria and the Ḥōrān region, the genitive exponent *hnayyi* (a diminutive of *hniyye*) is considered rarer than the common *gayy*, while in Deir ez-Zōr and the Euphrates dialects, *gī* is the attested form (Behnstedt 1994, 122). Although the etymology for *šī* and *hnīt* (both meaning 'thing') is clear, the origins of *gī* remain unclear.

It is interesting to notice that the lexical origin of *hnīt* is *hana (~ hnīn*, *han),* PL *hanawāt* ('thing') (Behnstedt & Woidich, 2021: 410). Its use, in diverse variants, as the genitive exponent is also found in Yemen (*hanī*) (Weninger 2011: 867), Upper Egypt, Baggāra (*hān*, *hint*, pl. *hinē*), Sudan (*hana*, *hint*), Sahel (Behnstedt and Woidich) and in African Arabic spoken in Chad (Carbou, 1913: 68-71; Kaye 1976: 102; Eksell Harning, 1980: 154), Nigeria (*hana*, *hanā*) (Owens, 1993: 64-65), and Cameroon (*hanā*) (Hillelson 1925 in Behnstedt and Woidich 2021: 410), again offers evidence which could point to a polygenetic explanation of some coincidental connections between different far-flung regions of the Arabic world. In Chad, it denotes both qualifications (such as the material or the nature of the object - qualifying genitive - or the component) and possession. It can also be followed by bound pronouns (Kaye *ibid*.). In Nigerian Arabic, possessor-possessed relation can alternatively be expressed through the genitive morpheme *hana*; it varies in gender and number with the item possessed. Below are some sentences with the analytical genitive *hnīt* in Urfa:

(45)

al=mīğant	*ač=čibīre*	*hnīt*	*al=burqul*
DEF=wooden hammer.FS	DEF=big.FS	GENPRT	DEF=bulgur

"The big wooden hammer for the bulgur".

(46)

t-inḥaṭṭ	*xāšūgit*	*ʾhnīt*	*ʕadas*
PREF.3FS-be put	spoon	GENPRT	lentils

"A small spoon of lentils should be added".

Here, the first element of the genitive construction (*xašūgit*) is not in its isolated form as in other contexts, such as the former and latter examples. Since this is the only such instance, we believe that this might be because the speaker had a construct state in mind (*xašūgit ʕadas*) and, after hesitating about the second element of the construct state, opted for an analytical construction to save time. This also explains the moment of hesitant silence between *xašūgit* and *hnīt*. To corroborate this hypothesis, the next phrase the speaker says is '*šōrabit ʕadas-in ḥāṛṛa*' (we understand that what they originally wanted to say was not a spoon of lentils, but rather a spoon of hot lentil soup').

(47)

al=minārāye	*hnīt*	*aǧ=ǧāmiʕ*	*fōg=hin*[9]	*ʾnkasr-at*
DEF=minarets	GENPRT	DEF=mosque	above=PRON.3FPL	break down-3FS

"Just the upper parts of the minaret of the mosque broke".

In sentence number (45) both items are definite, and the genitive introduces the formal genitive which represents the aim of the item in question; in sentence number (46) the items are indefinite, and it is another example of the formal genitive, which, in this case, introduces the content of the item it is linked to.

(48)

iḥna	*əhnīt*	*as=sūg*	*mā*	*n-āxuḏ=he*[10]
PRON.1PL	GENPRT	DEF=market	NEG	PREF.1PL-take=PRON.3FS

"As for us, (the one) from the market, we do not get it".

(49)

mn=al=lēl	*yi-gḏ-ūn*	*ʾb=nōba*	*ʾhnīt*
from=DEF=night	PREF.3M-start-PL	at=once	GENPRT
al=laḥam	*daʕūt*	*al=laḥam*	
DEF=meat	matter	DEF=meat	

"From the night before they get done at once, with the meat, the meat's matter".

(50)

hāḏi	*zād*	*ʾhnīt*	*al=bəṭāṭa*	*haḏanne*	*ač=čīge*
this	also	GENPRT	DEF=potato	these	DEF=*čīge*
arbaʕ	*aškāl*				
four	types				

"This is basically (the *čīge*) with potatoes. These are the *čīge* dishes; there are four types".

(51)

ʕašāyir	*al=ʾkrād*	*w=al=ʕarabiyye*	*ʾltamm-aw*
tribes	DEF=kurds	and=DEF=Arabic.FS	gather-SUFF.3MPL
gāl-aw	*iḥne*	*mā*	*ni-gbal*	*ʾhnīt*
say-SUFF.3MPL	PRON.1PL	NEG	PREF.1PL-accept	GENPRT
al=franṣəz	*ʾn-rīd*	*ʾn-ḥārib=hum*	
DEF=French	PREF.1PL-want	PREF.1PL-fight=PRON3MPL	

"The Kurdish and the Arab tribes gathered and said, 'we do not accept (the occupation) of the French, we want to fight them'".

---

[9] Here it is to be intended as a partitive, and *fōg* is to be understood as a noun translating 'upper parts'. Nevertheless, the sentence is perceived by some of the speakers as ungrammatical.

[10] Viz. the *mayyt as-sūs* 'liquorice'.

(52)

y-gūm-in	*ʕād*	*al=ḥarīm*	*ʕād*	*y-xušš-un*
PREF.3-stand up-FPL	DM	DEF=women	DM	PREF.3-enter-PL.F
b=ʾhnīt	*al=ʕiris*			
in=GENPRT	DEF=wedding			

"The women started with (the preparation) for the wedding".

(53)

y-ǧīb-ūn	*yi-rm-ūn=hum*	*yamm*
PREF.3M-bring-PL	PREF.3M-throw-PL=PRON.3MPL	close.to
ʾhnīt	*al=ʕaskar*	*yamm*	*al=qaraqōl*
GENPRT	DEF=soldiers	close.to	DEF=station

"They took them and left them close to (the station) of the soldiers, next to the police station".

(54)

fukk-Ø=ha	*ʾhnīt*	*al=ʕaǧī*
open-SUFF.3MS=PRON.3.FS	GENPRT	DEF=child
zuhmālt	*al=ʕaǧī*	
nappy	DEF=child	

"He opened it, (the nappy) of the child, the child's nappy".

(55)

miṯil	*hawa*	*waktin*	*hīčiḏ*	*yu-ḏrub*	*al=ʾhniyye*
like	air	when	so	PREF.3MS-hit	DEF=thingy
yu-ḏrub	*ʾhnīt*	*at=tēl*	*al=ǧēyrān*
PREF.3MS-hit	GENPRT	DEF=[tr]wire[tr]	DEF=[tr]electricity[tr]

"Like the wind, when it hits the thingy, it hits that of the electric wires".

The structure of the sentences above (numbers 48-55) is peculiar but not unknown to the Arabic dialects. We can observe the omission of the first item (*nomen regens*) of the genitive phrase, which is implied (and when reconstructed, it is written in brackets). This kind of omission has been described by Bettega, who regarded it "as a means of speeding up the flux of words in dialogical interactions, since the genitive marker would not be there should the omitted noun be restored in its place" (2019: 231).

Synthetic genitive in Urfa

We observe that in Urfa Arabic, the synthetic genitive is widespread as seen in the next example:

(56)

y-daššin	*ḥōš*	*al=guṭun*
PREF.3MS-start	picking	DEF=cotton

"The cotton picking begins".

(57)

ar=rūs	*ʾčār*	*ar=rūs*	*ar=rūs*	*čār=e*
DEF=Russians	tsar	DEF=Russians	DEF=Russians	tsar=^{tr}PRON.3S^{tr}
gāyil=l=u		*mdizz*	*ill=u*	*xabar*
AP.say=to=PRON.3MS		AP.send	to=PRON.3MS	message

"The Russians, the Tsar of the Russians, has sent him a message, telling him […]".

Another way of building the genitive phrase is to shift the second item to the left, followed by the first item with a bound pronoun referring to the second item (as in sentences 57 to 61). The topic is referred to later in the sentence by an anaphoric pronoun and must be definite. This also reproduces the Turkish genitive structure (perfectly calqued in sentence number 58), but we need further investigations to determine if this is a generalized influence of Turkish on *šāwi* Arabic or an isolated case.

(58)

al=ʕadas	*vērm=u*	*y-ṣīr*	*zēn*
DEF=lentils	yield=PRON.3MS	PREF.3MS-become	good

"The yield of the lentils is good".

(59)

y-ḥuṭṭ-ūn	*al=mayyit*	*rās=u*	*hēne*	*w*
PREF.3M-put-PL	DEF=deceased	head=PRON.3MS	here	and
riǧl-ēn=u	*min*	*hināk*		
feet-DUAL=PRON.3MS	from	there		

"They put the head of the deceased, his head here and his feet there".

(60)

al=ʕadas	*al=ʕadas*	*čēl=u*	*mīt-ēn*	*kīlo^{w}*
DEF=lentils	DEF=lentils	čēl=PRON.3MS	hundred-DUAL	kilo

"The lentils, one *čēl* of lentils is 200 kilos".

(61)

al=ḥunṭa	*miyye*	*w*	*arbaʕa*	*w*	*ṯimānīn*	*kīlow*
DEF=wheat	hundred	and	four	and	eighty	kilo
čēl=he						
čēl=PRON.3FS						

"The wheat, 184 kilos (is) its *čēl*".

Analytical genitive exponent in Syrian *šāwi*: *tabaʕ*

In the Syrian data, we find the genitive exponent *tabaʕ* ~ *tabʕ*, which is the most widespread genitive marker in the Levantine sedentary varieties (Naim in Weninger, 2011: 931). It is not always invariable since it does have at least a

feminine form (*tabʕa*). These sedentary varieties, considered prestigious, influence the Bedouin varieties, which usually have a synthetic genitive construction. This is the case for the Syrian Bedouin variety investigated but also for other Bedouin and sedentary varieties in Jordan, whose genitive marker *giyy* has nowadays been supplanted by *tabaʕ*, as also attested in descriptive works (Herin, 2010: 74).

(62)

ar=rāʕi	*wēn*	*y-nām*	*y-nām*
DEF=shepherd	where	PREF.3MS-sleep	PREF.3MS-sleep

ʾb=faruwt=u	*w*	*al=ʕabā*	*tabaʕt=u*
with=woollen tunic=PRON.3MS	and	DEF=coat	GENPRT.FS=PRON.3MS

"The shepherd, where does he sleep? He sleeps with his woollen tunic and his coat".

(63)

hāḏi	*aṣ=ṣamġa*	*tabʕ-at*	*al=xārūf*
this	DEF=fat	GENPRT-FS	DEF=lamb

"This is the fat of the lamb".

(64)

ya-ʕni	*ač=čīs*	*y-āxuḏ*	*maṯalan*
PREF.3MS-mean	DEF=sack	PREF.3MS-take	for example

tā=n-gūl	*xamsīn*	*kilo*	*tabʕ*	*aṭ=ṭiḥīn*	*aw*
HORT=PREF.1PL-say	fifty	kilo	GENPRT	DEF=flour	or

tabʕ	*as=sukkar*	*maṯalan*
GENPRT	DEF=sugar	for example

"I mean the sack takes, let's say for example fifty kilograms of flour or sugar for example".

(65)

w	*gām-ø*	*iš*	*sawwa-ø*	*gām-ø*
and	stand up-SUFF.3MS	what	make-SUFF.3MS	stand up-SUFF.3MS

w	*ǧāb-u*	*šafra*	*tabʕ-it*	*ḥlāqa*
and	bring-SUFF.3MPL	blade	GENPRT-FS	shaving

"And what did he do? He suddenly[11] brought out a shaving blade".

[11] Here we chose to translate the auxiliary *gām,* interpreted as pointing to suddenness, with the adverb 'suddenly'. We thank the reviewers for the suggested interpretation.

Lexicon

Many lexical items of the *šāwi* dialects are described as archaic lexical retentions by Arabic dialectologists because of their 'classical' flavour. (Herin & Younes 2015: 12). However, some Turkish and Kurdish loanwords are present to varying degrees, depending on the level of linguistic contact with Turkish and Kurdish (mostly Kurmancî) native speakers.

When the dialects of Harran-Urfa are compared to the ones in Syria, we can discern the retention of typical *šāwi* lexical elements that seem to be absent in the Syrian counterparts and vice versa. According to Procházka (2020: 23), the Arabic dialects in Turkey have incorporated numerous Turkish words during the last century. The vocabulary of everyday life that consists of these incorporated loanwords from Turkish (and Kurdish) and builds structural words like adverbs and discourse markers can be considered one of the main differences between these dialects and the *šāwi* dialects in Syria. Procházka (2020: 105) also explains that in both Cilician and Harran–Urfa Arabic, we find cases of semantic extension of an Arabic word resulting from the wider semantic range of its Turkish equivalent. For example, the verb *sāg/ysūg* 'to drive' also occurs with the meaning of 'to last' since the Turkish verb *sürmek* has the double meaning of 'to drive' and 'to last'.

The focus of this lexical highlight will be limited to verbs. We chose those we consider limited to the variety of Harran-Urfa that cannot be found in other dialects and are archaic (except the word for 'bag', which can also be found in Iraqi dialects). Some of these have already been mentioned by Herin & Younes (2016: 12-13).

Before discussing the distinctive verbs of the Harran-Urfa dialect, here are some elements that are found in recently collected data in both the Harran-Urfa and the Syrian varieties:

– *bāg - yibūg* 'to betray, to steal'

(66) *yirūḥ ybūg al-bēḍāt min ǧīrān-u*

"He goes and steals the eggs from his neighbours".

– *kāwan - yikāwin* 'to fight each other, to quarrel with each other'

(67) *maḥḥad yikāwin ḥade*

"No one fights/quarrels with anyone else".

– *daḥḥag - y(i)daḥḥiǧ* 'to look'

(68) *ygūm yqabbi ʕēn-u hīčiḏ ma-ydaḥḥiǧ ʕa-t-tapsiyye*

"So, he covers his eye like this, so he does not look at the tray".

– *fiṭan - yifṭan* 'to remember', (even though in Harran, when followed by the preposition *ʕala-*, it means 'to understand', like in: *fiṭanit ʕala-y mu?* 'You understood me, right?').

(69) *afṭan ʕalē-k*

"I remember you".

– *giḍab - yugḍub* 'to seize, to catch'

(70) *gəḍabne ʕād w-tərakne š-šuġul ḏa*

"So, we left that business".

Some typical *šāwi* verbs can be found exclusively in Harran-Urfa and are absent in other Syrian *šāwi* dialects. We observed:

– *txaṭṭam yiṭxaṭṭam* 'to come across' or 'to come towards someone'.

(71) *flān falantān yitxaṭṭam-ak*

"Someone might come across you (come in your way)".

– *yihni* 'to do something' is usually used conjugated in the present. It mostly has a pragmatic function, and it is employed as a discourse marker to manage the flow of the discourse (cfr. Turkish: *şey yapıyor* 'He is doing… sth; and in Kurdish *ew dikê* 'He is doing... the thing).

(72) *w-ᵊtxallī hīčiḍi inn-u yihni ta-yḍall ᵊtbarrd-u*

"You keep it like this, so it... so, you cool it down".

– *yištihi* 'to love/like' it is usually used in the present[12]

(73) *gāyil "banāt-i šgadd ᵊtḥibbin-ni?" yaʕni yisʕal banāt-u "šgadd tištahin-ni?"*

"He says, 'My daughters, how much do you love me?' I mean, he asks his daughters 'How much do you like/love me?'".

– čallat yičallit [13] 'to lock'

(74) *qafaṣ w bāb w čilīt w-ᵊmčallit ʕalē-he w yḥuṭṭ-ha b-al… aš-šubbāk*

"He had made a cage for her with a door and a lock. He put her inside the fence and locked her in".

– *dazz yidizz* 'to rob/ steal' (and not only to send)[14]

(75) *flān falantān yitxaṭṭam-ak yidizz-ak*

"Someone might come across you and rob you".

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[12] Not with the meaning of 'to desire' here.

[13] Probably related to the Turkish *kilitlemek* "to lock' (Behnstedt 2014: 291).

[14] Either related to the Kurdish *dizzîn* 'to steal/ to rob' or to Syrian Arabic *dass* 'bring in (an intruder) *fī* (into a house, a job)', Classical Arabic: 'hide', 'spy on' (Barthélemy, 1954).

Conclusions

Peripheral dialects are generally defined as vernaculars spoken by bilingual speakers in a non-Arabic environment (Owens 2001). Other criteria have been added to this definition to determine the peripherality of a dialect, such as acculturation, geographic position, cultural isolation, and the lack of mutual intelligibility with speakers of other Arabic varieties (Borg 2004).

Geographical isolation and bilingualism (where the second language is non-Semitic) have also been remarked on and peripherality indices calculated (Procházka 2006). Lentin also added the idea of the disappearance of other links and contacts with other Arabic communities (Lentin 2006).

Considering the geographical area where Harran-Urfa Arabic is spoken and the lack of contact with other Arabic speakers, one might have expected to find a peripheral variety. Nevertheless, we have observed only a few linguistic phenomena resulting from the convergence with a non-Semitic *adstratum* language. We found existential markers placed in a sentence that reproduces the Turkish syntactical structure (*calque*) and Turkish particles. The other analytical markers, such as the genitive *hnīt* or the existential marker *šī*, which coexist with typically Bedouin features, could be ascribed to internal developments of that Arabic variety.

Throughout this article, we have shown how both *šāwi* varieties share features and developments intrinsic to the Arabic language and shared with the Bedouin dialects of the region (such as *q* > *ġ*, *ġ* > *q*, the affrication of **k*, the *gahawa* syndrome, and the *tanwīn*)[15]. The *šāwi* dialects of Southern Anatolia and the Syro-Mesopotamian region are relatively consistent due to their past mobility and frequent migrations throughout the Syrian Steppe.

This is also why they have been considered 'non-peripheral' in comparison with other varieties that show a higher 'peripherality index' (such as Cilician Arabic or Hasköy Arabic) (Procházka 2006: 115). Moreover, the contact with Turkish is not as strong as in other peripheral varieties.

As far as the internal comparison between the *šāwi* dialects spoken in Syria and Turkey is concerned, we have observed throughout the article that nowadays they diverge, despite their geographical proximity and their shared tribal affiliations. We assume that the differences may be ascribed to the recent history that led to the Turkish counterpart being, on one hand, more isolated from the other Arabic varieties, and, on the other hand, more influenced by Turkish, the official language and, therefore, the language of education and the media. Despite this, when compared to other peripheral varieties[16], it can be seen that Turkish did

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[15] As for the *gahawa* syndrome see Procházka 2003 (77, 78); 2013 (204, 205); as for the *tanwīn* see Procházka 2003: 81; 2013: 204, 205.

[16] Such as Cypriot Arabic, cf. Walter, Mary Ann. 2020. Cypriot Maronite Arabic. In Christopher Lucas & Stefano Manfredi (eds.), *Arabic and contact-induced change*,

not exert a pervasive influence on the phonology (apart from the integration of *p* and *v* into the dialect). Even the Arabic phonemes that do not exist in Turkish are retained and not adapted.

The two varieties show even more differences when it comes to the syntax: Harran-Urfa Arabic shows some "innovations" such as the existential marker *šī*, while the Syrian variety only displays the typical Bedouin *bī*.

As for the genitive, the influence of the prestigious variety of Damascus has affected the Syrian *šāwi* that displays the standard, supra-regional genitive marker *taba*ʕ. In contrast, the variety of Harran-Urfa shows either the retention of the synthetic structure or an innovative trait, namely, the genitive marker *hnīt*.

As for other idiosyncratic features of Harran-Urfa *šāwi*, such as the dialectal *tanwīn* (previously discussed in Procházka 2003: 81; 2013: 204, 205) or the narrative imperative[17], the disappearance of the former in the Syrian variety (and its retention in the Harran-Urfa) mirrors the general tendencies of other Bedouin varieties that, influenced by sedentary dialects, are progressively dropping this feature.

As for the narrative imperative, its progressive disappearance in the Syrian *šāwi* region can be ascribed to the influence that the dialect of the capital exerts on Syrian *šāwi*. This is also visible in the phonetics, since shifts like *q* > *ġ and ġ* > *q* are less frequent in Syria than they are in Harran-Urfa, where no influence of a prestigious urban variety can be traced (but rather the influence of another official language).[18]

Furthermore, this reflects the general tendency in Arabic dialects for a shift towards the supra-local varieties (urban) that are considered more prestigious (Gibson, 2002). We find that the linguistic variation observed in Syrian *šāwi* reflects the interplay between local varieties and emerging regional standards (Al Wer, 1997).

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159–174. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.3744513; and Khuzestan Arabic (Leitner, 2022).

[17] The narrative imperative is a linguistic phenomenon that implies the use of imperatives to convey the meaning of past actions and not necessarily actual demands. (Palva, 1977, 2015; Henkin, 1994; Hussien 2025, this volume).

[18] When discussing the disappearance of features, it is acknowledged that such phenomena should be approached with a degree of caution, given the marked differences in size between the two corpora

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