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Quadriliteral Verbs in Arabic: Morphological Diversity and Phonological Coherence

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The term ‘quadriliteral verb’ refers to verbs whose output contains four consonants forming the template CVCCVC. Such verbs may be derived from a four- three- or two-consonant root. Semantically, quadriliteral verbs denote causality, intensity, frequency and repetitiveness. This paper examines the variety of morphological processes that derive the quadriliteral verbs for the goal of establishing a unified account highlighting the role of phonology in regulating these diverse processes. These processes include gemination or lengthening of the medial consonant similar to the causative form, *kannas* ‘sweep’, which now replaces the basic Measure I *kanas*, and its corresponding resultative *tkannas* ‘, copying the initial stem consonant *faraH* > *farfaH* ‘be happy’, syllable reduplication as in *laflaf* ‘wrap repeatedly’ from *laff* ‘wrap’ and the resultative *taflaf*. After discussing these typical cases of consonant and syllable reduplication, I will survey more interesting cases of sonorant/approximant infixation or overwriting: *kabkab* > *karkab* ‘strew about’; *daHHaf* > *dalHaf* ‘push hard’ (Yemeni Watson 2006), *daHHak* > *DaHwak* ‘laugh hard’. *ʔalab* > *šaʔlab* ‘turn upside down’. Within the analytical frame of Realizational Morphology (Samek-Lodovici (1993), Kurisu (2001), Walker (1998)), and Optimality Theory (McCarthy & Prince 1993 and following works) I explain the choice of strategy to ensure template satisfaction as the result of the interaction of prosodic and segmental faithfulness constraints with markedness constraints particularly the Syllable Contact Law (Murray & Venneman 1983) which favors sonorants and pharyngeals in coda position to ensure the proper sonority profile across syllable boundaries.

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