

The Non-arbitrariness of the Emotive Hijazi Non-Lexical Expressions

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The Hijazi Non-lexical Expressions



Introduction

In everyday speech, Hijazi Arabic is full of emotive non-lexical expressions (NLEs) that constitute utterances by themselves. They convey the speaker's emotional states, and reactions with unusual vocalizations depending on specific situational and socio-cultural contexts. For example: **ʔfa!** realises disappointment, **wah!** realises surprise, **jɪʕ!** realises disgust, etc.

NLEs are considered as semiotic signs that communicate and signal emotional states
In semiotics, a sign is anything which refers to something else to communicate meanings.



The Aim

This study aims to investigate the non-arbitrary relationship between Hijazi NLEs (HNLEs) and their emotive, or expressive, meanings.



The Data

This study examines 34 Hijazi NLEs whose meanings have been checked through an open questionnaire. A small video for every non-lexical item has been recorded, and then these videos have been accompanied with the following question:

“ Kindly, watch the following videos ,then chose one from the three choices:

1. I haven’t heard this NLE before.
2. I know the sound, but I don't know its meaning.
3. I know the meaning of the NLE.”

The final choice accompanied with a text box to write the meaning/s of the non-lexical expressions.

The questionnaire elicited responses from Hijazi speakers of different ages, genders and educational backgrounds.



Methodology

The participants’ answers have been classified to explore the non-arbitrariness of those HNLEs. They have been mapped with Shaver et al.’s (2001) basic emotions: love, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, fear.

Every emotive NLE has been described phonetically in details by providing its different articulatory parameters to show how the vocal organs work and are dependent upon one another.

In this way, I discussed the similar vocalisations between every group of Hijazi NLEs that realise the same emotional meanings to examine the non-arbitrary relationship between the contents and expressions that they shared.



Findings

1. The emotive Hijazi NLEs are “spontaneous expressions of reality dictated ...by natural forces” (cf. Saussure 1916: 69).
2. The emotive Hijazi NLEs show interaction between the socio-cultural and intrapersonal aspects of language (Wharton 2003; cf. Wierzbicka 1992).
3. The emotive Hijazi NLEs are internal expressive speech with unusual vocalizations depending on specific situational and socio-cultural contexts (Darwin 1872; Wierzbicka 1992).
4. The emotive Hijazi NLEs as semiotic signs that contain an internal dynamic system of stratification between two orders of the Hijazi NLEs’ abstractions: the content plane of the Hijazi NLEs (i.e. the emotional meanings of love, joy, surprise, anger, sadness, and fear) and expression plane of the Hijazi NLEs (i.e. vocal expressions that accompanied those basic emotions and correspond with the phonological form of the NLE).
5. The content of a specific emotional meaning has a meta-redundant relationship with the expression of the Hijazi NLEs that realise that specific emotion. They share some common vocal actions that correspond with their vocalisations show iconic representations, which in themselves are indexes for that specific emotion. Lemke (2015: 121) argues that meta-redundancy of the sign-meanings relationship has a contingent probability relationship, as it depends on the context.



Example

- Hijazi NLEs ʔɪf, ʔuf, ʔuffu, ʔiffi, ʔixxi,kix, and jɪʕ signify the feeling of disgust in different ways.
- The phonological vocalizations of those different Hijazi NLEs convey the disgust in various ways.

ʔuf ʔɪf ʔuffu ʔiffi	Vowel /u/- /i/- Produced with Protruded or contracted downwards lips (c.f. Darwin 1872:92, 258; Wierzbicka 1992:178).	
	Consonant /f/-produced with vocal gestures similar of spitting or blowing out of the mouth (c.f. Darwin 1872:92; Wierzbicki 1992:178).	
ʔixxi Kix, jɪʕ	Vowel /i/- Produced with contracted downwards lips (Darwin 1872:258)	
	Consonants /k/,/x/, /ʕ/- Produced with some guttural sounds , which are produced with vocal gestures that are similar to clearing the throat, pretending vomiting or retching (cf. Wierzbicka 1992; Darwin 1872: 258; Goddard 2009:14).	



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