

Proposing a Syllable-based Account of Phonological Processes: Epenthesis and Deletion in Mostaganem Spoken Arabic

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Abstract

The study at hand explores the crucial position that the syllable holds in phonological analysis and theorizing by highlighting the analytical issues that might follow the exclusion of the syllable from phonological study. Effectively, the present study attempts to answer three main research questions, namely 1. Can rule-based phonology provide a satisfactory account of non-assimilatory processes such as epenthesis and deletion in Mostaganem Spoken Arabic? 2. Can a syllable-devoid account of epenthesis and deletion in Mostaganem Spoken Arabic be satisfactory? 3. Is the syllable indispensable in accounting for epenthesis and deletion in Mostaganem Spoken Arabic? Indeed, the present study demonstrates that a syllable-devoid analysis provides unsatisfactory accounts of certain phonological epenthesis and deletion. In order to attain the aim of this study, instances of epenthesis and deletion in the Mostaganem spoken variety of Algerian Arabic are analysed. Such instances of epenthesis and deletion were obtained from the recorded speech of a randomly selected sample of fifty native speakers of Mostaganem Spoken Arabic. The findings of this study reveal the indispensability of the syllable in describing and explaining epenthesis and deletion in MTG by comparing a syllable-devoid account and a syllable-based account of such processes. Effectively, syllable-devoid account pertaining to *The Sound Pattern of English* (Chomsky&Halle, 1968) tradition proved short of explanations as to why epenthesis and deletion take place in Mostaganem spoken Arabic as contrasted to a syllable-based account which provides adequate and convincing explanations of those processes.

Keywords: Account, deletion, epenthesis, Mostaganem Spoken Arabic, phonological processes, syllable, The Sound Pattern of English

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