ministère de l'éducation nationale, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche



en ligne en ligne

AnIsl 15 (1976), p. 349-357

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THE POSITION OF THE DEMONSTRATIVE $DA^{(1)}$, DI IN EGYPTIAN ARABIC: A DIACHRONIC INQUIRY

Madiha DOSS

1. When subjected to a first analysis a number of linguistic forms in the text of *Hazz al-Quḥūf* appear to be alternating in terms of free variation. One such case is the position of the demonstrative adjective series *da*, *di*, whether prepositive or postpositive to the noun.

The synchronic analysis of present Cairene, a close inquiry in the text of Hazz al- $Quh\bar{u}f$ and the comparison of the latter to other early sources of the dialect, will reveal more predictable rules for the positioning of the demonstrative.

2. The Present Situation. The forms of the demonstrative adjectives are the following:

For close reference:

masc. da

fem. di

plur. dōl

For distant reference (2):

masc. dokha

fem. dikha

plur. dokhom

Forms of the close reference series are also obtained by the suffixation of the pronoun to the demonstrative: dahó, dihé or dahówwa(t) and their shortened counterparts dáwwat, díyyat.

(1) By the demonstrative we mean the equivalent of α this α , in sentences such as : α this man α errāgil da. We are not concerned with other functions of α and α :

Pronominal: da rāgel « this is a man ». Exclamative sentence introducer: fēnak dana mašuftakš men senīn? « Where have you been? I haven't seen you since years ». In his grammar

Willmore (1905) translates this da by «see».

(2) Although it does not belong morphologically to the demonstrative series, the ordinal numeral tāni is often used in place of an element of the dokha series; howwa meš mawgūd fe-l'ōda di, yemken yekūn fi-l'ōda ttanya « he is not in this room, he might be in the other (room)».

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There exists a form dek representing the classical arabic dek, its use is strictly restricted to a few fixed forms such as $dekennah\bar{a}r$ « the other day ». We shall see in paragraph 4, that $d\bar{a}k$ (masc.) $d\bar{e}k$ (fem.) are attested in earlier texts in larger, non-restricted uses.

As for the question of positioning, elements of the da series normally follow the noun: šoft errāgel da? « did you see this man »; eṣṣūra di ʿagbāni « I like this picture »; teʿrafu nnās dōl? « Do you know these people » is the productive unmarked one.

There are cases where the enclitic demonstrative has been closely combined to the noun so as to produce a single and undivisible stress unit, these are counted among the few cases of compound words which Arabic knows, essanadi «this year», el-marradi «this time», ennahyadi «this side». Whereas in the case of erragel dá «this man» an adjective can be inserted between the noun and the demonstrative erragel el-magnan dá «this crazy man», no insertion is possible between the elements of the compound essanadi. Moreover di in essanadi behaves like a suffix as is shown by the lengthening of the final vowel of sana «year». (The final vowel of a form is lengthened when a suffix is added to it: šāfu «they saw», šafūni «they saw me»). There are other situations where da or di is suffixed to the noun so as to form a single stress unit elwaladda «this boy» instead of el walad dá. We agree with Mitchell (1962, p. 57) that the former construction is endowed by an emphatic intention. However it does not seem that this procedure constitutes a productive means of adding emphasis to an utterance.

We have described the word order *Noun-Dem*. which is the productive and unmarked one. However we find cases in which the demonstrative precedes the noun. This word order *Dem.-Noun* is dependent upon its occurrence in a limited set of constructions in the language, namely in:

— noun phrases following the vocative ya: ya de-lheba « what a nuisance! »; ya de-lmoṣība ssōda « what a somber catastrophe! »; yeḥreb bētak ya de-rrāgel (1) « may God ruin your house, man! ».

« oh poor skull » and *Dofār jā dē lḥoruma* « o, woman ».

⁽¹⁾ Compare these constructions to the cases brought forward by Fisher (1959, p. 57) from Yemenite Jew fagrič jā dā lǧumǧumäh

- strongly worded commands (most often negative ones): hallaṣūna men di ššoġlāna « rid us from this job! », this utterance can come either with the noun being defined by the definite article as above, or with an indefinite noun: hallaṣūna men di šoġlāna; sebna men di ssīra « let us get over this question! » or sebna men di sīra (as above with an indefinite noun).
- curses and invocations: yel an 'abu di iša « Damn this life! ».

The possibility of using *Dem.-Noun* is limited to these constructions. We can say that this word order is a restricted and non-productive one, it constitutes the marked counterpart of *Noun-Dem*.

In all of the constructions described above the slot reserved for the noun can receive a wide range of words depending on the context: ya de-lḥekāya « what a story! », ya de-l'araf « what a disgusting thing! » etc...

We posit that the limited occurrences of *Dem.-Noun*, in the present state, constitute residuals from a previous stage during which the variation of word-order was a freer one. According to our hypothesis the order *Dem.-Noun* had at an earlier stage a wider range of use since it would appear:

- 1) in a larger variety of fixed expressions (of a subjective nature) similar to the ones described above.
- 2) in normal noun phrases not included in 1); Dem.-Noun could then be a means used by the speaker in order to express his mood toward the object referred to.

Fischer (1959, p. 64) states that forms of demonstrative preceding the noun still exist in the *Fellāḥ* (Lower Egypt) dialect. Our investigation with informants from the Delta area showed no evidence for such a word order. We asked informants from the regions of Beḥayra, Manṣūra, and Manūfīyya; it appears to be the case that *Dem.-Noun* in these dialect areas is governed by the same constraints described above for Cairene. *Dem.-Noun* is a marked output appearing in fixed expressions such as in the *ya*-sentences.

Examples drawn from poetic texts are no evidence for the existence of demonstrative preceding the noun, since as we show in paragraph 3, poetry shows a high incidence of this word-order. Moreover the examples drawn from Schäfer

and Maspero quoted by Fischer also reflect verse. Indeed Fischer himself notes the fact that cases of prepositive demonstrative are frequent in poetry.

Spitta (1880, p. 308 b) mentions the preposition of the demonstrative adjective and attributes it to regional particularities. *Da*, and *di*, (not *dōl*) preceding the noun would occur in the speech of the *Fellāḥ*'s and of other provincial areas. However the examples drawn by Spitta to substantiate his statement are quotations from Širbīnī's *Hazz al-quḥūf* and do not describe the actual situation of any area of the Egyptian dialect in the late nineteenth century. Compare Spitta's examples with *Širbīnī* (1274 A.H. p. 15:29 and p. 14:10).

The result of the study of *Hazz al-quhūf* of *Bāsem al-Ḥaddād* and of other early sources which we study in the coming paragraph seems to justify this hypothesis.

3. Before proceeding to the study of earlier sources let us note the following: Dem.-Noun is of a high incidence in poetry, this fact has been noted by Fischer (1959, p. 64). The observation applies to poetry composed in the early Mamluke period (see Jammāl, 1966 in his quotations), but remains relevant to poetry written today. The reason for the frequent occurrence of this word order in poetry is beyond our study. Poetry in the vernacular has its traditions both in the form and in the content. The construction we are concerned with could be one among other forms transmitted through the tradition of the genre. Here are a few examples drawn from contemporary vernacular poetry; from Bayram al-Tūnisī (1976-IV, p. 143); yekūn fī onkom ya qoḍā rabb essama | law toḥkomu bel adl ma di llaḥbaṭa « may God help you judges, to be able to judge fairly in the midst of this confusion »; and from the same volume (p. 30): el 'akl dāyer w-ennofūs 'arfāna | men de-lḥalīl elle malāna fāna (1) « They were eating dinner, and disgust was growing from this halīl (name of child) who made the air stink ». These are only two examples among a large number appearing in Tūnisī's poetry (I to V).

Taking another collection of poetry in the vernacular Sayf (1977, p. 61): men yōm ma hāger 'abūya m-elġarb elba^eīd wo-geh le di-lmadīna | la ḥaṭawātu 'edrit teġayyar ḥatwāha l^eanīd wala ṣawab^eu baddelet soḥnetha di-lmagnūna « Since the

(1) The occurrence of the demonstrative before a proper noun is particularly striking, and should be compared to the example from Dhofār; min dhē gefgēf etta dhī l-ugēl « from jefjēf to al-Ujēl » (Rhodokanakis, quoted by Rabin, 1951).

day my father emigrated from the distant west / And came to this city/ Neither could his steps change its stubborn direction / Nor could his fingers change the features of this mad city ».

There is always a function to this positioning, that of emphasis which is usually to express a negative feeling: disgust: del halīl « this halīl » (see above); disapproval: dil-lahbaṭa « this confusion », etc.

4. We find constructions exhibiting *Dem.-Noun*, besides *Noun-Dem.* in texts mainly poetic as early as the 13th century (see al-Jammāl, 1966). In this section however we are dealing with prose texts exhibiting this feature. First Širbīnī's *Hazz al-quḥuf* by now well known by linguists and historians. This text was written after 1663/64 ⁽¹⁾, and contains large passages in the spoken language. The vernacular of the texts represents the speech of Lower Egypt, of Cairo and sometimes more specifically of the region of *Širbīn* (the home town of the author). *Širbīn* is a large village in the province of *Daqahliyya* on the east branch of the Nile.

Concerning the demonstrative there are two series represented in the text; that for close reference:

masc. da fem. di plur. dōl (or dī for broken plural)

and that for distant reference:

masc. dāk fem. dīk

We omit the classical series $h\bar{a}d\bar{a}$, it occurs mainly in passages written in the elevated language, in rarer cases in the vernacular passages. It would seem that in the latter the presence of $h\bar{a}d\bar{a}$ is due to a certain randomness in the style. $D\bar{a}k$ and $d\bar{i}k$ are used for reference to distant objects: Širbīnī p. 41:30 $d\bar{i}k$ alwezza « that goose ». In order to make more discrete the mention of the sexual act: p. 20:13 $d\bar{a}k$ al 'amla « that action »; and Širbīnī p. 18:2 'amalt ma'āha mā ta'mil arriğāl ma' annisā' ya'ni dīk alqadiyya « I did with her what men do with

(1) This date is given by Širbīnī himself as being the date of his pilgrimage to Mekka.

We have used the Būlāq edition of 1274/1857 for this study.

women; I mean that business ». Finally Širbīnī p. 152: 25 kalt min dāk aṭṭaʿām matrid matridayn « I ate from that food a matrid or two (matrid is a type of dish in which food is served) ». The food referred to is the hoškanānik, known by townsmen, and obviously foreign to the fellāh's diet, this explains the use of dāk.

We find in Hazz al Quḥūf the following compounds issanādi « this year » (as shows its orthography السنادى, innahārda «today» دالوقت. «and dalwaqt «now» النهار ده.

As for the position of the demonstratives $d\bar{a}$, $d\bar{i}$ it is not regular, being either postpositive or prepositive to the noun; Širbīnī p. 16: 20 al ām almādī dīk w-al ām dā dīk (1) « last year a roster (was lost) and this year another one ». Širbīnī p. 23: 26 mā-taqūlī fī'illi yāhod alferāh min alfallāh dā « What do you think if someone were to take the chicken away from this fellah? ». Then we have cases where the demonstrative precedes (2): dehket alek di-lāhera wu-hadet minnak elferāh, Širbīnī, p. 24: 7 « this prostitute fooled you and took the chicken away from you »; yāmā qāsēt fī di-lsafra, p. 22: 28 « O, how I suffered during this trip! ».

Actually there are 19 occurrences of *Noun-Dem*. and 32 of *Dem.-Noun*. This count should however be qualified:

- (1) Among the 32 cases of *Dem.-Noun*, 13 occur in verse. We have seen earlier, that verse up to the present day favors this construction. This probably accounts for the large number of occurrences of *Dem.-Noun* in our text. Let us add on the other hand that none of the cases of *Noun-Dem*. appears in the verse.
- (2) In the case of *Noun-Dem.*, one should also keep in mind that some cases call for this word order; when the noun is followed by a personal suffixe and is made definite by it and not by the definite article šābi tā dah « this finger of mine ». Of these cases there are 5 among the 19 *Noun-Dem*.

With these reservations in mind one clearly notes the presence of two word orders: Dem.-Noun, Noun-Dem. If we look more closely into the cases of

dil $q\bar{o}l$ دی القول. The most plausible explanation is that given by Fischer (1959, p. 63), where he posits that the vowel i of dil should be accounted for by the loss of the vowel proper to the demonstrative da, and the adoption of the vowel of the article thus giving dil or del.

⁽¹⁾ The orthography of da following the noun varies between |a| and |a|.

⁽²⁾ The orthography of the demonstrative preceding the noun is usually 1, or 1; for the masculine form, 6, for the feminine, however there are cases of 6, or 6, coming before a masculine noun; Širbīnī p. 43: 29;

Dem.-Noun it appears that emphasis is the dominant function of preposition. The noun or the whole utterance is strengthened by this means; Širbīnī p. 14: 12 law 'innī ṭāwe tuhum ya 'amīr wa sirt kull yawm 'adhul dā-lgāme kān 'inkasar alayyā māl alsulṭān « If I followed their advice, o prince and were to enter this mosque every day, then I couldn't pay the duties to the sultān »; and Širbīnī p. 151: 29 ṭūl umrī 'aštadd | fī hamm dī-l-baṭn 'illī ma-tirayyaḥ ḥadd «All my life I suffer from the torment of that stomach which leaves no one in peace ».

The emphasis can also be aimed at expressing a positive feeling; Širbīnī p. 43: 29. Zīdū yā muġanniyīn alqawm min dī-lqawl almalīḥ « O, singers tell us more of this good poetry »; or a negative one: Širbīnī p. 24: 7, hadit minnak alfirāḥ wa-taraketak fī di-lḥāla « She took the chicken away from you and left you in this state ».

5. Širbīnī's text dates from the second half of the 17th century. Bāsim al-Ḥaddād is a popular tale of which many versions circulated in some arabic speaking countries (of which we know Egypt and Syria) until the last century. It was collected and edited by Landberg in 1888. In the preface to his book the editor explains that the Egyptian version of Bāsim is based on the text of a manuscript which he acquired in Cairo in 1887. Landberg argues that the very existence of the manuscript proves that the text would go back to an earlier period, for example the 18th century. It seems fair to follow this argument especially that the language of the text does appear to be previous to the last century (if we compare it with texts and grammatical descriptions of the same period: ex. Tantâvy).

For the feature at stake in this paper, we have found in the text of $B\bar{a}sim$ evidence of the two constructions:

57 occurrences of *Noun-Dem*. 36 occurrences of *Dem.-Noun*

(No verse is contained in the Egyptian version of *Bāsim*).

The occurrences of *Dem.-Noun* appear in contexts quite similar to what we found in *Hazz al-Quhūf*: Landberg, p. 36: 20 *Farahāt di-lkarkūba li-ldukkān wa-qālet ṣabāḥ al-ḥer* « so this old woman went to the shop and said good

morning!»; and Landberg, p. 27: 3 wa ḥayāt rās al'afandī 'alqādī mā'anā mitta 'ta 'min hunā 'ellā wa reglahā 'alā reglī dī l'āhira « I swear on the head of the judge, that I will not move from here if this prostitute does not follow me ».

The results seem quite consistent; the relative number of prepositive demonstrative is smaller than it was in *Širbīnī's* text, but the feature is still alive and productive a century or less later. *Dem.-Noun* is used to underline emphatically a noun-phrase in a larger utterance, or to underline the whole utterance.

Finally we have studied a text consisting of four tales gathered and published by Dulac (1889). Among the large number of nouns qualified by demonstrative adjectives only one case is of the *Dem.-Noun* order; Dulac p. 59: wa dannohom māšyīn lammā daḥalū Isarāya wa qasūlak di-lhulhāl ṭilit alā qaddahā bizzabt And they kept walking until they entered the palace, there they tried this hulhāl (anklet) it fit her exactly! ». It is particularly interesting to see how Dulac dealt with this feature. As he adds in a foot-note that dī co here should be translated as ādi avoilà ». Actually both the use of lak (1) suffixed to the verb and the preposition of the demonstrative are stylistic effects aimed at emphasizing a particularly surprising episode of the tale. It is interesting to note Dulac's misunderstanding; it shows us that *Dem.-Noun* was not any longer common in the dialect and that the order which prevails today of *Noun-Dem*. was already dominant.

Attention should be given to the various dialects where it is admitted that both word orders exist in order to determine whether the use of one or the other of the two constructions corresponds to any emphatic effect.

(1) The suffix *lak*, fem. *lik*, which Dulac qualifies as « explétif », or superfluous element, added to a verb is still today a productive

way of marking an utterance. This procedure is common in story-telling.

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