yìsza [4]("*'Syàndzài'*, these two *dz̀*, have what meaning?"). This sentence is, I think, particularly instructive in several ways. Firstly, it shows that the speaker is conscious of the fact that this disyllabic unit, as a unit, is a free form and has meaning. The speaker did not utter or ask for the meanings of the individual syllables.

Secondly, it shows that the Chinese speaker did not have at his disposal a term meaning "word" or "morpheme," but had only the term *dz̀*, in this case, two of which contain meaning and constitute a minimal free form. In other words, the psychological unit in which the speaker is dealing is the syllable; this is the concrete unit he can identify and name. It is on this level that Chao describes the Chinese syllable as being equivalent to the "word" of other languages: "that type of unit intermediate in size between a phoneme and a sentence, which the general, nonlinguistic public is conscious of, talks about, has an everyday term for, and is practically concerned with in various ways." [5]

With regard to this feature, both the "word" in English and the syllable in Chinese are called by Chao the "sociological word." I would prefer

that one be a bit more vague and avoid the possibility of misunderstanding "word," and call the syllable simply "*the* psychological unit between the phoneme and the syntagma."

We have, then, two reasons for considering the single syllable to have a special status in the Chinese language. Let us now present a definition of a monosyllabic language which is an acceptable description of Chinese. "A monosyllabic language is one in which the single syllable forms the most significant phonologically describable and psychologically relevant unit between the phoneme and the syntagma."

Now a further question arises as to the appropriateness of the term "monosyllabic" for typological comparisons. It seems that it would be meaningful only if it could be contrasted with other languages that might be called disyllabic, trisyllabic, or polysyllabic in the same sense. However, it appears that other languages deal with units of a different nature such as words, which are not connected with a simple syllable count. For this reason, it might be preferable to replace "monosyllabic" by something like "syllabically oriented," a feature which can then be contrasted with "morpheme oriented" or "word oriented" languages.

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[4] Y. R. Chao, *A Grammar of Spoken Chinese*, preliminary edition, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965), p. 84. I have changed Chao's GR transcription to Yale system.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

a 現 在 這 兩 個 字 是 甚 麼 意 思 ?

To Which Dialect Group Did Sicilian Arabic Belong?

In a stimulating article,[1] R.J. Di Pietro and G.D. Selim dealt, *inter alia*, with the relationship of Sicilian Arabic to the other Arabic dialects. In contradistinction to most scholars, who classify Sicilian Arabic with the Western Dialects, they consider it to have closer ties with the Arab East

in general and Egypt in particular. Their contention rests on historical events, as well as on two usages in the realm of vocabulary.

Nobody will question the historical ties of Sicily with Egypt; yet they do not suffice to separate Sicilian Arabic from its immediate Western surroundings, including the Western dialect of Malta. Nor will one pay too much attention to solitary affinities with Egyptian Arabic

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[1] "The Language Situation in Arab Sicily," in *Linguistic Studies in Memory of R.S. Harrell*, Washington, 1967, pp. 19–35.

in the realm of vocabulary: not only is one of the two usages adduced by Di Pietro-Selim attested in Western dialects as well,[2] but lexical similarities with Western dialects are adduced by Di Pietro - Selim themselves (p. 23).

Much more important are *grammatical* phenomena characteristic of Western dialects, which occur in Sicilian documents: they are amply attested in Jewish documents of Sicilian provenance.[3] One will not claim that Jews spoke a dialect different from the rest of the population:[4]

even in the Cambridge Chronicle, on which Di Pietro - Salim mainly rely, there is at least one conspicuous Western form (although the monotonous style of this text excludes the occurrence of various dialectal features): in *Bibliotheca Arabo-Sicula* the form *khalât* "she was devastated" occurs (p. 173, note 4),[5] exhibiting the feminine 3rd person perfect singular ending of *verba tertiae infirmae -ât*, characteristic of Western dialects.[6] Accordingly, pending new proofs, one will continue to account Sicilian Arabic to belong to the Western dialect group.

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[2] V. M. Beaussier, *Dictionnaire pratique arabe-français* . . . , nouvelle édition . . . par M.M. ben Cheneb, Alger, 1931, *s.v. addâ*.

[3] See most recently J. Wansbrough, *BSOAS*, 30 (1967), p. 306.

[4] As it was perhaps the case in medieval Egypt, see J. Blau, *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic* . . . , Oxford 1965, p. 56 ff.

[5] This form occurs, of course, together with classical forms, since such texts are invariably written in a mixture of classical and vulgar style.

[6] See for example Blau, *The Emergence* . . . p., 60.

On Problems of Polyphony and Archaism in Ugaritic Spelling[1]

1. As is well known, Proto-Semitic phonemes are, in Ugaritic, sometimes represented by two, or more, letters. Thus Proto-Semitic *ð* is, as a rule, represented by Ugaritic *d*.[2] Sometimes, however,[3] especially in texts 75 and 77,[4] Proto-Semitic *ð* is represented by the 16th letter of the Ugaritic alphabet. But this letter occurs mostly in Hurrian words, presumably denoting a sound like *ʒ*.[5]

2. The question, whether or not the representation of Proto-Semitic *ð* by *d* demonstrates the shift of *ð* to *d* in Ugaritic, is one of the most important problems of Ugaritic historical phonetics. Most shifts wherein Canaanite dialects differ from Ugaritic (as that of â > ô, absent in Ugaritic), may be explained (in spite of chronological difficulties, such as the occurrence of the shift â > ô in El-Amarna) by the assumption that Ugaritic exhibits

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[1] A lecture delivered at the 27th Congress of Orientalists at Ann Arbor, August, 1967. I had the privilege of discussing these problems with my friends and colleagues, Prof. S. E. Loewenstamm and Prof. J. C. Greenfield, who also furnished me with important material.

[2] We dispense with the documentation of well-known phenomena, and as a rule refer to C. H. Gordon's *Textbook*.

[3] V. *Textbook* §5.3.

[4] The texts 75 and 77 use the 16th letter even in words in which the other texts employ *d*. Contrariwise, the other texts utilize the 16th letter in special words only. In these texts there are no sure cases of words spelled both with *d* and with the 16th letter.

[5] The 16th letter also occurs in the Semitic word *k-16-d* "to strive for", alternating with *kšd* (v. M. Held, in *Studies and Essays in Honor of A. A. Neuman*, Leiden

1962, p. 285, note 4), thus exhibiting a similar pronunciation (assimilation of *š* to *d*). Cf. also presumably *šd* "field," also *16-d* [yet one has to take into account the possibility that *16-d* represents Akkad. *šadû*]. Even more complicated is *16-d* "breast," since for this "nursery word" not only *ðd* but also *zd* and Hebrew *dad* are attested. Cf. also D. N. Freedman, *BASOR* 175 (1964), 49 *a-16-ddy*, if = Hebrew *ašdôdî*. At any rate, *pace* F. M. Cross, *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962), 249, cases of sign 16 corresponding to *š* and not preceding *d* (as *16-rt* "vision," allegedly Hebrew *šwr*), are completely uncertain. The same pronunciation is reflected by the Akkadian transliterations of the personal name *16-mrhd* by *ši-im-rad-du* and *zi-im-rad-du*, v. *Palais Royal d'Ugarit* IV, p. 250, *s.v.*