

WHAT DOES AGREEMENT IN PALESTINIAN ARABIC TELL US ABOUT THE PERCEPTION OF ITS SPEAKERS.

Agreement is a pervasive and varied phenomenon which is evident in almost every language with a wide linguistic scope (Corbett, 2006) and may function as a secondary classifier in languages with inflectional morphology as it indicates the perception of the referents towards the plural (Barlow, 1988) which further depends on animacy (Belnap, 1993). Animacy is rather a continuum between total inanimate entities and total (high) animate entities, which relies on the speaker's cognition. Therefore, animacy depends on the level of association the speaker has towards a noun, and other factors (Yamamoto, 1999). Consequently, agreement and cognition are closely related (Barlow, 1988).

This research is the first to study agreement in Palestinian Arabic¹ and it looks at the agreement patterns obtained with plural heads. This study concludes it is the speaker's cognition that determines the agreement patterns obtained. Speaker's perception and assigning different levels of animacy for the head nouns affects the choice of number marking; e.g., plural adjectives modify plural animate nouns unlike singular adjectives modifying less animates and inanimate plural nouns. For example, food items perceive a greater importance level, and this is conveyed through the use of plural adjectives to modify a plural food noun. However, animals perceive a less importance level; so, a plural animal noun is modified by a singular adjective. Palestinian Arabic redefines the animacy hierarchy by Haspelmath (2013).

Bibliography

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¹ Apart from Hoyt's (2000) MA dissertation that studied agreement only in existential and presentational Constructions.

