Verbs of Pretending and Augmentative Constructions in Hā'ili Arabic: A Construction Morphology Approach

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Abstract: This study applies Construction Morphology (CxM) (Booij 2010b) to a set of nonconcatenative morphological constructions in the Ha'ili dialect of Arabic (HD), a northern Najdi variety spoken in the Hā'il region of Saudi Arabia. Focusing on verbs of pretending and augmentative formations, the analysis draws on systematically elicited and naturally occurring data collected from native speakers of the dialect. The study investigates whether these constructions are best characterized as root-based templatic derivations or as word-based formations. The findings reveal a principled division between the two: verbs of pretending instantiate a root-based constructional schema in which consonantal roots map onto a fixed prosodic template, whereas augmentative forms are derived in word-based manner from diminutive counterparts. The coexistence of root-based and word-based mechanisms provides empirical support for a layered constructional architecture, in line with CxM, where abstract schemas and lexeme-based constructions interact within the morphological system of the dialect. More broadly, the HD data demonstrate that Arabic dialectal morphology cannot be reduced to a single derivational principle, but instead exhibits both root-based and word-based organization. The study therefore contributes to Arabic morphological theory by showing how CxM offers a unified framework for capturing systematic form-meaning correspondences in Semitic nonconcatenative morphology.

Keywords: augmentative, construction morphology, Hā'ili Arabic, nonconcatenative morphology, verbs of pretending

1. Introduction

Studies that consider the morpheme as the central unit of morphological analysis propose a dichotomy between concatenative and nonconcatenative morphology. The former, which is the most common in languages (e.g., Indo-European languages), assumes that a word is composed of a sequence of morphemes. In such systems, a morpheme is added to a lexical stem either before or after it, as in prefixation or suffixation. In this sense, morphemes are treated as discrete entities that occur linearly at either the right or the left edge of the morphological base. Nonconcatenative morphology, which is prevalent in Semitic languages, involves processes that do not involve linear affixation, but rather the modification of a word's internal structure (Simpson 2009). Words are typically analyzed as consisting of two components: consonantal roots and morphological patterns. The consonantal roots contribute core semantic content, which is interdigitated with a

vocalic melody within morphological patterns that specify more precise meanings or grammatical categories. A root is an abstract sequence composed mostly of three consonants, whereas a pattern, also a non-word string, is a template filled with vowels or with a combination of vowels and consonants (Goral and Obler 2003). Arabic morphological structure has been a crucial issue in theories on word-formation processes, particularly with respect to the nonconcatenative morphological structures characteristic of Semitic languages. Early works largely adopted a root-and-template framework whereby lexical meaning is associated with consonantal roots that are realized through vocalic patterning and prosody to generate full words (see McCarthy 1979, 1981; Watson 2002). Later studies have, however, questioned the centrality of the root as the minimal morphological unit. These competing perspectives propose word- or stem-based models of morphological organization, suggesting that many derivational relationships are better described in terms of surface forms and analogical relations among words rather than through the positing of abstract underlying roots (Hammond 1988; Ratcliffe 1997). Arabic nonconcatenative morphology was dealt with by McCarthy (1979, 1982), among others, within a framework in which roots and patterns are organized into specific CV prosodic templates that constitute the basic tier. Opponents of this view argue against the positing of a separate level that merely serves as the abstract exponent for the consonantal root. They instead consider the word to be the basic unit of morphological structure (McCarthy 1982; Bat El 1994; Bolozky 1999), often citing the Arabic broken plural as evidence against the root-and-template approach (Hammond 1988; Ratcliffe 1998; Mashaqba, Abu Guba, Huneety and Al-Deaibes 2023).

Despite the increasing amount of research in Construction Morphology (CxM), templatic morphology has rarely been addressed (see Inkelas and Zoll 2005 on reduplication; Davis and Tsujimura 2018 on nonverbal templatic morphology of Arabic—the comparative, professions nouns, and diminutive; Mashaqba**,** Al-Maani, Huneety and Al-Deaibes 2023 on Hypocoristics in Ammani-Jordanian Arabic). In analyzing Arabic nonconcatenative constructions in the framework of CxM, we examine underexplored area of Arabic templatic morphology: verbs of pretending and augmentative forms in Hā'ili Dialect of Arabic (HD). HD belongs to the northern Najdi group of Arabic spoken in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the city of Hā'il among members of the Shammar tribe. The data of verbs of pretending presented here were collected by the author, who is a native speaker of HD. The data of augmentative verbs, however, are drawn from our previous work (Alshammari and Davis 2019). This pattern parallels diminutive formation in the dialect, differing only in that the nucleus of the first syllable of the diminutive is replaced by a pharyngealized (emphatic) [**ā**]. The study addresses whether the derivational mechanism in such constructions is root-based or word-based. While our analysis of verbs of pretending in HD points toward a root-to-template morphological pattern, augmentative forms appear to be derived from their diminutive counterparts.

In this study, the term *Hāʾili Arabic (HD)* is employed as a regional descriptive label referring to the northern Najdi variety spoken in and around the Hāʾil region of north-central Saudi Arabia, particularly among members of the Shammar community. The term is not intended to designate an independently established dialect category in the sense of large-scale classifications (e.g., Ingham 1994; Holes 2004), but rather a sociogeographically defined regional variety within the northern Najdi continuum. HD shares core phonological and morphological properties with northern Najdi Arabic, including consonantal inventories, basic verb inflection, and templatic morphology. At the same time, it differs in locally salient ways from Central Najdi varieties (e.g., those of the Riyadh area) and from Gulf Arabic. In contrast to Central Najdi, HD is highly conservative, preserving several historical features such as productive diminutive formation, internal passive constructions, and the suffix *-in*, which parallels Classical Arabic *tanwīn*, among other archaic properties (Abboud 1979; Al-Sweel 1987; Ingham 1994, 2009). Recent studies show that HD exhibits distinctive augmentative formations (Alshammari and Davis 2019), as well as the raising of feminine *-ah* and the lenition of feminine plural *-āt* that set HD apart from other Najdi dialects (AlAmmar 2017; van Putten 2017; Alshammari 2025a). Focusing on verbs of pretending and augmentative forms, this study examines whether these constructions are more accurately analyzed as root-based templatic formations or as word-based derivations. The analysis demonstrates that HD employs both mechanisms, highlighting the explanatory power of CxM in capturing systematic form-meaning correspondences in Arabic nonconcatenative morphology.

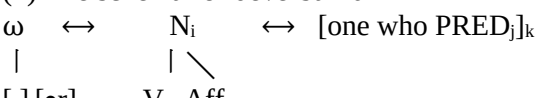
In what follows, we present an overview of the general principles and key concepts of the CxM framework. Section 3 provides a brief sketch on Arabic morphology. Section 4 addresses the issue of the root-to-template and word-based morphology in Arabic. In this section, we analyze verbs of pretending and augmentative forms within the CxM framework and examine whether they represent root-based and word-based constructions. Section 5 concludes that both root-to-template and word-based morphological mechanisms are present in HD.

2. Construction morphology

Booij's (2010b) seminal work opened new avenues for the development of Construction Morphology (CxM), a morphological theory influenced by the fundamental viewpoint of Construction Grammar (Goldberg 2006). CxM postulates that a construction consists of form–meaning pairings (Booij 2010a, 2015). *Form* includes phonological and morphosyntactic properties, whereas *Meaning* encompasses semantic, pragmatic, and discourse properties (Park 2019). Unlike rule-based accounts that emphasize input (Hoeksema 2012), CxM is a usage-based (output-oriented) model, but also highlights the creation of new words or word forms, that is, the productive potential of derivational and inflectional constructions (Audring 2022). Within this framework, morphological patterns as modelled as co-occurrences of form and meaning represented in constructional schemas (Booij 2010b, 2015). By treating morphological structures as

constructions rather than as outputs of rules, CxM offers new analytical tools for examining both concatenative and nonconcatenative morphology, including templatic patterns in Arabic (Booij 2018; Davis and Tsujimura 2018). Within CxM, constructional schemas represent generalizations and abstractions that language users rely on to comprehend and produce complex words; they encode systematic correspondences between form and meaning (Booij and Audring 2018). Consider, for example, the following English constructional schema (Booij 2010b: 8):

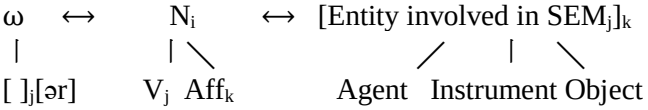
(1) The schema for deverbal *-er*



The schema in (1) shows that a derived lexeme such as *player* inherits information from its base verb *play*, and that a systematic form-meaning relation is involved, represented by the components [PHON], [SYN], and [SEM]. The variable *play* represents the phonological form [PHON] that serves as the base for the derived noun *player*. The morphosyntactic structure [SYN], located in the middle of the schema, specifies that the suffix *-er* attaches to *play*, yielding the noun *player* 'one who *V*s', where *V* represents the meaning of the base verb. The semantic component [SEM] indicates that the meaning of the noun is related to that of its corresponding verb through co-indexation. The schema assumes that the meaning of the verb must be provided independently; in other words, the construction relies on paradigmatic relations between the base verb and the derived noun.

The identification of the [SEM] component requires the use of subschemas in order to account for the polysemy of the suffix *-er*, which may denote instrumental meaning (e.g., opener), object meaning (e.g., reader), or an agentive interpretation. Thus, the schema for deverbal *–er*, together with subschemas, is shown below (Davis and Tsujimura 2018).

(2) The schema for deverbal *–er* with subschemas



Additionally, the phonological form of the adjectival comparative suffix *-er* differs not only in [SEM], but also in [SYN] and [PHON], since such forms require the base adjective to be at most bisyllabic. This naturally raises the question on how phonological specification can be incorporated into morphological constructions through CxM schemas. As we demonstrate below, the analysis of Arabic nonconcatenative morphology requires careful attention to morphological form in

order to satisfy its phonological constraints.

3. Arabic morphology

Several issues related to Arabic morphology are worth discussing. Arabic is commonly regarded as a prime example of nonconcatenative morphology (McCarthy 1986; Watson 2002). It exhibits the well-known root-and-pattern system shared with other Semitic languages (Ussishkin 1999; Holes 2004: 99). The verbal root, as defined by Vernet Pons (2011: 2), is "a radical morpheme whose constituent elements cannot be combined arbitrarily but are subject to specific combinatory sequences." Arabic verb consists of consonantal roots and vocalic melody units that are fitted into different prosodic templates (Watson 2002). Moore (1990:64) proposes that the Arabic lexicon comprises the following morpheme types, with the first three functioning as discontinuous morphemes of a lexical word:

a. Templates: the prosodic pattern
b. Roots: the consonantal root (consonantal melody)
c. Vocalism: the vocalic melody units
d. Affixes: elements that may consist of both prosodic and melodic units

Wright (1967) identifies fourteen derived verbal patterns (or templates) in Arabic (see also McCarthy 1979). A root could be biconsonantal, triconsonantal or quadriconsonantal, although the majority are triconsonantal, combining with corresponding verbal templates to produce verbs. All inflected Arabic verbal forms can be associated with an invariant root consisting of consonants, typically tri-consonantal, which provides the core lexical meaning. Additionally, other word classes, such as nouns and adjectives, can also be derived from the consonantal root. This relationship is illustrated in the following table. (In the transcription, [y] represents a palatal glide.)

Table 1. Some derivatives of the root *ktb* in Arabic (Wehr 1961:812-813)

	/k	t	b/	
	k a	t a	b a	'he wrote'
	k ā	t a	b a	'he corresponded with'
	k a	tt a	b a	'he dictated'
ya	k	t u	b u	'he writes'
	k ā	t i	b	'writer'
	k u	t i	b a	'it was written'
in	ka	t a	b a	'it is written'
	ki	t ā	b	'book'
	ku	t u	b	'books'
	k u	t ayyi	b	'booklet'
ma	k	t a	b	'office'

ma	k	t a	b ah	‘library’
ma	k	t ū	b	‘written down’

Table 1 illustrates the productivity and regularity of Arabic root-and-pattern morphology as demonstrated by the derivational potential of the consonantal root /k-t-b/. Through combinations of vocalic melodies, affixes, and prosodic templates, Arabic produces a wide range of nominal and verbal forms that differ in grammatical class, voice (active, passive), aspect (perfective/imperfective), and semantic specification. Verbal derivatives exhibit contrasts such as basic, intensive, causative, and passive forms, while inflectional forms indicate tense and agreement. Nominal patterns are responsible for creating agent nouns, abstract and concrete nouns, diminutives, collectives, and locatives (words referring to offices or libraries). The resulting surface forms differ markedly in phonological shape and syntactic behavior, yet they are semantically unified by the core concept of writing encoded in the root. The distribution of meaning between these consonant roots and morphological templates highlights the nonconcatenative nature of Arabic morphology and its capacity for lexical expansion from a single root.

4. Data sources and method

Although the present study is primarily theoretical in orientation and framed within CxM, it draws on systematically collected dialectal data from HD, mainly from speakers belonging to the Shammar community in the Hā’il region of Saudi Arabia. The author is a native speaker of HD, and the dataset was assembled through a combination of introspective judgments, naturally occurring forms, and targeted elicitation with other adult native speakers.

Data collection involved informal but structured elicitation sessions with eight adult speakers (five males and three females, aged 25–60), all long-term residents of the Hā’il region. Elicitation techniques included acceptability judgments, paradigm completion tasks, e.g., requesting verbs of pretending, diminutive, or augmentative counterparts of given base forms, and prompted production using contextualized scenarios, e.g., “How would you say ‘he pretended to be X’?”. These procedures yielded 140 tokens covering verbs of pretending, diminutive, and augmentative constructions, from which representative examples were selected for analysis. To ensure reliability, candidate forms were cross-checked with at least three additional speakers. Only constructions judged acceptable by the majority of consultants were retained. Speaker variation was limited and largely confined to predictable phonological alternations, e.g., glide realization, vowel quality, while the core morphological patterns—particularly the verbs-of-pretending template *tə.Cey.CaC* and the derivation of augmentatives from diminutives—were robust across all speakers consulted.

The data were analyzed qualitatively, with particular attention to form–meaning correspondences, templatic structure, and derivational relationships. The goal is not statistical generalization but the identification of productive

constructional schemas and their interaction with phonological constraints. Accordingly, the examples presented are intended to illustrate recurring and structurally stable patterns rather than to provide an exhaustive catalog of all possible forms.

5. The root-to-template and word-based morphology in Arabic

Semitic languages often display parallel word-formation processes, some of which appear for the traditional concepts of 'root' and 'template'. Some scholars view Semitic words as consisting of roots and pattern (or templates) that participate in paradigmatic relations (Buccellati 1997; Owens 1997; Ratcliffe 1997). The root typically consists of consonants, most commonly three. The pattern consists of a configuration of consonantal and vocalic slots into which the consonants of the root are inserted. In this system, the first consonant of the root fills the first consonantal slot of the pattern, the second fills the second slot, and the third fills the final slot (Shimron 2003; Mashaqba, Abu Guba, Huneety and Al-Deaibes 2023). Under the root-based approach, a root is linked to an abstract template, which is treated as an independent morpheme consisting of syllabic (or moraic) positions onto which the root is mapped (McCarthy 1979, 1981). McCarthy (1981: 375) later argues that the root-and-pattern analysis provides "no general treatment of relations between vowel patterns except as instantiated on a particular root." Consequently, this approach provides an insufficient account of certain word-formation processes that require correspondence relations, such as those between singular nouns and broken plurals (Ratcliffe 1997).

The diversity of viewpoints reflects broader disagreement over the appropriate model of word formation in Arabic, particularly the root-and-template approach. Modern approaches instead propose viewing word-formation processes as either stem- or word-based morphology. Proponents of this view argue that derived forms are created on the basis of existing lexical words (Hammond 1988; Ratcliffe 1997; Benmamoun 1999). In this approach, templates function either as constraints on vowel/consonant combinations or as independent morphemes (Rose 2003). Both Benmamoun (1999, 2003) and Heath (2003) treat the Arabic imperfective and singular form of simple nouns as the default or underived stems that serve as inputs to derivational processes, yielding derived stems by ablaut, affixation, or a combination thereof. The word-based approach is also assumed to provide an appropriate framework for examining phonology-morphology interaction, particularly in the phonology of geminates and glides (Gafos 2003, 2009). For example, the insertion of a third consonant in biconsonantal root nouns e.g., *dam* 'blood' > *dimāʔ* 'blood, pl.' and the deletion of a consonant in quadrilateral nouns e.g., *barnāmij* 'program' > *barāmij* 'programs, pl.' are often explained within this approach. These processes are best explained by assuming that derived forms are created according to templatic patterns that impose structural constraints (Ratcliffe 2003, 2013). Ratcliffe (1997, 2003) extends this analysis to verbs with a stem-initial glide *w-*, such as *waṣala*, *ya-ṣilu* 'arrive'. The root-and pattern approach requires the supposition that the imperfective reflects an

underlying form **ya-wṣilu*. However, as Voigt (1988) observes, there is no clear phonological motivation for deleting the *w* in such verbs. Moreover, not all verbs with *w* in the imperfective lack it in the perfective, and verbs with stem-initial *y-* never undergo such deletion. Under word-based approach, the imperfective of these verbs is seen as the basic underived form, which is biconsonantal. In this analysis, the *w* of the perfective is treated as a default consonant inserted to satisfy templatic structure. However, one challenge for the word-based analysis concerns the predictability of vocalic alternation between verbal forms (Benmamoun 2003).

5.1. Root-based templatic construction in HD

5.1.1. Verbs of pretending

HD, spoken predominantly by members of the Shammar tribe in Hā'il region of Saudi Arabia, exhibits productive verbs of pretending derived denominally from adjectives and verbs. These forms are created by prefixing [tə-] and infixing [ey] into the base adjective or verb. In addition, the final syllable satisfies the structure *CaC*, ensuring that the form conforms to the templatic pattern *tə.Cey.CaC*, meaning 'he pretended to be X' (where X represents an adjective or verb). Watson (2006) refers to this pattern as diminutive verbs, distinguishing them from diminutive nouns, which denote physical smallness. According to Watson (2006: 191), "[t]he denotative meaning of verbal diminutives with infix *-y-* is lightness/unimportance of the action of the verb, including diminution of harm, with connotations of contempt, pejorativeness, *pretence*, playfulness, and jocularity" (emphasis added). She adds that "(t)CayCaC verbs mostly describe mental and physical states with pejorative overtones of pretence, viz: 'to act as if/pretend to be X'". The precise semantic and pragmatic interpretation of these forms depends largely on context. For example, the verb *tə.key.**bar*** 'pretended to be big' expresses an action of pretence. This form must be distinguished from the From V verb *tə.CaC.CaC*, e.g., *tə.kab.**bar*** 'became arrogant'. The term *verbs of pretending* is therefore more descriptively accurate than diminutive verbs, since the construction primarily encodes the act of pretence. The associated meanings of contempt, playfulness, or irony arise as pragmatic consequences of the pretence itself, e.g., pretending to be big, sick, or tall).[1]

While verbs-of-pretending constructions are attested in other Arabic varieties (e.g., Mashaqba 2015), HD exhibits several morphologically distinctive properties that motivate its analysis within CxM. First, HD displays a highly productive verbs-of-pretending template tə.Cey.CaC, which applies across a wide range of adjectival and verbal bases through systematic root extraction and templatic mapping. Unlike varieties in which such forms appear more lexically restricted, HD allows broad derivational extension, including bases that lack corresponding perfective verbs. Second, HD exhibits consistent phonologically conditioned allomorphy in root-final glide contexts, where the template surfaces as tə.Cey.Ca, reflecting dialect-specific constraints against word-final glides. Comparable verbs-of-pretending constructions are also reported by Mashaqba (2015: 237–238), including forms such as *tibayṭar* 'to pretend to be an expert' and *timarjal* 'to pretend to be strong'.

Mashaqba (2015) also documents related patterns in Sanʿāni Arabic and Rijāl Alma' Arabic, notably the template *t-C_1ayC_2aC_3*, which expresses a similar pretence meaning. These parallels confirm that the HD verbs-of-pretending schema belongs to a wider Arabic templatic formations while exhibiting dialect-specific realizations.

In addition to their semantic complexity, verbs of pretending in HD are morphologically productive and highly regular, being derived from adjectives and verb stems. The construction retains the consonantal root of the base but imposes a fixed templatic pattern, supporting an analysis in which abstract morphological structure plays a crucial role in derivation. These verbs also conjugate regularly for tense, person, gender, and number, indicating that they are fully integrated in the verbal system of the dialect. From a theoretical perspective, verbs of pretending provide strong evidence for a templatic root-based mechanism, since their formation does not require a one-to-one correspondence with the phonological form of the base word. Instead, meaning and grammatical function arise from the interaction between the root and constructional schema, a pattern consistent with the principles of CxM; and illustrates the explanatory potential of a schema-based account of Arabic nonconcatenative morphology. Representative data from HD are presented in Table 2 (**bold** indicates emphatic pronunciation).

Table 2. Verbs of pretending in HD

Adjective	Perfective	Root	Verbs of Pretending	Gloss
a. kə.bīr	ki.bīr	kbr	tə.key.**bar**	he pretended to be big
b. mɪ.rīḍ	mi.riḍ	mrḍ	tə.mey.**raḍ**	he pretended to be sick
c. ṭə.wīl	ṭāl	ṭwl	tə.ṭey.**wal**	he pretended to be tall
d. xi.bil	in.xa.bal	xbl	tə.xey.**bal**	he pretended to be lunatic
e. neym	nām	nwm	tə.ney.**wam**	he pretended to be sleeping

Table 2 shows that verbs of pretending in HD are formed through a root-based templatic process. In all cases, verbs of pretending are formed by extracting the three consonants of the root and inserting them into the templatic pattern *tə.Cey.CaC* ; that is, *kbr, mrḍ, ṭwl* are mapped onto the fixed template ***tə.Cey.CaC***, yielding the interpretation "to pretend to be X". A trochaic foot is extracted from the non-pretending base and placed into an iambic template. The resulting verbs of pretending do not display phonological congruence with either the adjectival base or the perfective verb form; rather, derivation occurs through abstract root insertion into a prosodic skeleton. This provides evidence for a root-to-template analysis rather than a word-based derivation. Verbs formed on this template can inflect for gender and number, e.g., *tə.ṭey.**wal**-at* 'she pretended to be tall', and *tə.ṭey.**wal**-**aw*** 'they pretended to be tall (masc.)', and *ytə.ṭey.**wal*** 'he pretends to be tall'.[2] The

following CxM schematic representation captures verbs of pretending in HD, as shown in (3):

(3) HD verbs of pretending construction
 a. Form: tə.Cey.CaC
 b. Semantics: pretending to be big
(4) Base: kə.bīr
 k b r
 | | |
 tə.Cey.CaC

The structure in (3a) represents a root-based constructional schema for verbs of pretending in HD. The form ***tə.Cey.CaC*** imposes a fixed prosodic and segmental template, while the semantics encode the meaning 'to pretend to be X'. In (4), the base adjective *kə.bīr* 'big' contributes only its consonantal root /k-b-r/, which fills the designated positions in the template. The vowels and the prefix originate from the construction itself rather than from the base. The vertical alignment shows that each root consonant occupies a predetermined position within the template, regardless of the phonological form of the base word. This lack of phonological correspondence between the base and the output in root-derived forms suggests derivation from an abstract constructional schema to individual lexical items. This analysis is consistent with CxM, in which word form and meaning arise from the interaction between an abstract constructional schema and a consonantal root rather than from word-to-word derivation. Another allomorphic template of verbs of pretending *tə.Cey.Ca* appears when the final consonant is a glide, [w] or [y], in which case the glide does not surface. Instead, the final glide is deleted. This pattern parallels the comparative formation in HD and Egyptian Arabic (see Davis 2016; 2017; Davis and Tsujimura 2018 for further discussion). This pattern is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Verbs of pretending with root-final glide in HD

Adjective	Perfective	Root	Verbs of pretending	Gloss
a. ġa.bi	---	ġby	tə.ġey.ba	he pretended to be stupid
b. ʿā.li	ʿa.li	ʿly	tə.ʿey.la	he pretended to be high
c. gu.wi	gu.wi	gwy	tə.gey.wa	he pretended to be strong
d. ḥi.lu	ḥa.li	ḥlw	tə. ḥey.la	he pretended to be sweet

The consonantal roots in the data presented in Table 3 end with glides. However, these glides are deleted in the formation of verbs of pretending. Note that the adjectival and perfective forms contain glides underlyingly, e.g., *ʿāl.yah* 'she/it is high' and *ʿāl.yat* 'she/it became high'. Following Davis and Tsujimura (2018) on comparative forms in Egyptian Arabic, the absence of the final glide in verbs of

pretending can be attributed to a phonological constraint whereby vowel-glide sequences do not surface word-finally in HD (see also Broselow 1976; Youssef 2013 on Egyptian Arabic). Moreover, when rising sonority occurs between the first and second members of a coda cluster in a CVCC syllable structure in HD, the cluster undergoes resyllabification and epenthesis occurs, resulting in a bisyllabic CV.CVC structure. However, glides are not permitted to surface word-finally; instead, a corresponding vowel surfaces in their place (Alshammari 2020). This pattern is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. CVCC syllable shape in HD

Underlying	Output	Gloss
a. ḥiml	ḥi.miıl	load
b. ʿijl	ʿi.jıl	calf
c. kawy	ka.wi	ironing
d. laġw	la.ġu	erroneous speech

Table 4 illustrates the phonological behavior of CVCC syllable structures in HD and the strategies used to repair illicit surface forms. Underlying CVCC sequences are not realized faithfully; instead, they undergo resyllabification and vowel epenthesis, yielding a bisyllabic CV.CVC structure. This process is triggered when the coda cluster violates sonority sequencing constraints or other syllable well-formedness conditions in HD. In cases involving final glides, such as *kawy* and *laġw*, the glide fails to surface word-finally and is replaced by a corresponding vowel, resulting in outputs such as *ka.wi* and *la.ġu*. The data demonstrate that HD enforces strong phonotactic restrictions against complex codas and word-final glides. These phonological constraints are crucial for understanding the surface realization of templatic constructions, including verbs of pretending, where underlying morphological structure interacts systematically with syllable-level phonological well-formedness conditions. Another set of data involving suffixal consonants that supports the root-based (rather than word-based) nature of verbs of pretending is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Verbs of pretending with suffixal consonants in HD

Adjective	Perfective	Root	Verbs of pretending	Gloss
a. kə.sūl/ kas.laan	ki.sil	ksl	tə.key.sal	he pretended to be lazy
b. maj.nūn	inn.jan	jnn	tə.jey.nan	he pretended to be crazy
c. taʿ.bān	tí.ʿib	tʿb	tə.tey.ʿab	he pretended to be tired
d. ṣġay.yir	ṣiġir	ṣġr	tə. ṣey.**ġar**	he pretended to be small
e. mam.lūḥ	---	mlḥ	tə.mey.laḥ	he pretended to be acceptable[3]

The adjectives in (5a-c) contain final derivational suffix, (5d) contains a diminutive infix [ayy], and (5e) contains a derivational prefix. Moreover, some verbs of pretending appear to lack a corresponding perfective verb form, as illustrated by the data in (3a) and (5e). This further supports the claim that verbs of pretending are derived from consonantal roots rather than from fully formed lexical bases.

(5) Verbs of pretending in HD instantiate a root-based constructional schema, formally represented as follows:

Form: tə.Cey.CaC
Syntax: Verb
Semantics: 'to pretend to be X'

In this schema, the consonantal root supplies theC-slots, while the prefix [tə], the infix [ey], and the prosodic template are contributed by the construction itself. Crucially, no phonological material is inherited from a base word; instead, derivation proceeds through the direct mapping of the abstract root onto the template. This contrasts with traditional root-and-pattern models, which treat templates as independent morphemes, and with word-based approaches, which assume surface correspondence between the base and the output. Under CxM, verbs of pretending are licensed by a construction that pairs a specific phonological configuration with a pretending semantic function, forming a productive schema within the verbal construction.

Phonologically conditioned variants, e.g., glide-final roots yielding tə.Cey.Ca, are treated as allomorphic subschemas inherited from the general verbs-of-pretending construction but constrained by dialect-specific phonotactics. This inheritance-based representation captures both structural uniformity and phonological variation without recourse to ordered derivational rules.

5.2. Word-based templatic construction in HD: Augmentative forms

In the previous section, we have discussed root-based constructions in Arabic based on data from HD. We now turn to word-based templatic constructions, focusing on a unique and productive augmentative morphological process in HD. A brief description is also provided by Assuwaida (1997), who attributes the origin of the augmentative to an archaic dialect of the *Tayy* tribe, dating back to pre-Islamic times (Alfozan 1989; Ingham 2009), which was spoken in the region of Jabal Tayy ('mountain of Tayy'), now the Hā'il region of Saudi Arabia. Augmentative forms have received far less attention than diminutive formation in Hā'ili Arabic, despite their relevance for understanding evaluative meaning and morphological structure. Augmentative forms constitute a productive and systematic morphological process that contrasts with diminutives and expresses meanings of largeness, intensity, emphasis, or salience. Unlike diminutives, which typically encode smallness or

attenuation, augmentatives in this dialect convey an increase in size, degree, or pragmatic prominence, often with expressive or evaluative overtones. Most of the data presented here are drawn from Alshammari and Davis (2019). Augmentative forms in HD are formed by substituting the first syllable nucleus of the diminutive with a low-back emphatic (i.e., pharyngealized) vowel [**ā**], although a plain [ā] may occur in some environments. The data below indicate the number of syllables and the syllable structure of the base word in HD, the diminutive, and its augmentative counterpart.

Table 6**.** Base words, diminutive and augmentative forms in HD

Syllable structure	Base word	Diminutive	Augmentative	Gloss
a. CVCC	kalb	kleyb	k**lāb**	dog
b. CVGG	xadd	xdeyd	**xdād**	cheek
c. CVVC	beyt	bweyb	bwāb	door
d. CV.CVC	ga.**lam**	**gley**m	**glām**	pen
e. CV.CVVC	ki.bīr	k**bay**.yir t͡s**bay**.yir	k**bā.**yir/ *t͡s**bā**.yir	big
f. CVV.CVC	šā.ʿir	šwey.ʿir	š**wā**.ʿir	poet
g. CVC.CVC	dir.h**am**	d**rey**.him	d**rā**.him	Dirham
h. CVC.CVVC	sir.wāl	s**rey**.wīl	s**rā**.wīl	pants

The data in Table 6 are divided into eight groups according to the syllable structure of the base word. Table (6a-b) presents monosyllabic nouns, with (6b) having a geminate coda (CVGG). Table (6c) shows a monosyllabic noun containing a long vowel. Table 6 (d-h) includes disyllabic forms in which the first syllable in (6d-f) is open and the second is closed, with variation in vowel quality across both syllables. While the first syllables in Table (6d-e) contain a short vowel, the second syllable varies in vowel length, with (6d) having a short vowel and (6e) a long vowel. Table (6f-g) share a short vowel in the second syllable, although (6f) deviates from this pattern by containing a long vowel in the first syllable. Table (6h) contains a long vowel in the second syllable.

The diminutive of these forms depends on the prosodic structure of the base noun.[4] When the base begins with an onset cluster, the diminutive has the sequence *CCey*, where the C-slots correspond to the first and second consonants of the base form. If the first syllable of the base form contains a long vowel, the second consonant is realized as [w], as shown in the third column of Table (6f). The diminutive follows an iambic template. As the first syllable is light and the second is heavy (McCarthy and Prince 1986). The long vowel in the second syllable of the base form in Table (6e) neutralizes to a short vowel in the diminutive, as shown in the diminutive form and its augmentative counterpart. When the first syllable of the base form is open and the second contains a long vowel (e.g., CV.CVVC), the diminutive infix is [ay], and an additional palatal glide [y] is inserted in the onset

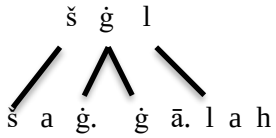
position of the second syllable in both the diminutive and augmentative forms to avoid onsetless syllables in HD, as shown in the third and fourth columns of Table (6f). Whenever variation occurs in the diminutive form, a corresponding variation appears in its augmentative counterpart. This pattern is illustrated in the examples in Table 7.

Table 7. Variation in diminutive and augmentative counterpart

Base word	Diminutive	Augmentative	Gloss
a. šaġ.ġā.lah	a1. šġey. ġī.lah	**šġā**.ġī.lah	housemaid
	a2. šġey.líi.lah	**šġā**.lī.lah	
	a3. šwey.ġī.lah	š**wā**.ġī.lah	
b. siy.yā.r**ah**	b1. swey.rī.rah	s**wā.**rī.rah	car
	b2. swey.rī.rah	s**wā.**rī.rah	

In the base word shown in Table (7a-b), variation in the formation of the diminutive form is reflected in parallel variation in the corresponding augmentative form. This pattern supports the claim that the augmentative form is derived from the diminutive rather than directly from the base word, and represented in (6) and (7) below.

(6)



(7) The schema for the Arabic occupation noun construction (R = root consonants)

$R \leftrightarrow N_i \leftrightarrow [\text{occupation of } SEM_j]_k$

$[\ ]_j \quad [C_1aC_2C_2\bar{a}X]_k$[5]

The schema in (7) shows that the derivation of the Arabic occupation noun follows a root-based templatic construction. However, when we consider at the diminutive form of the occupation noun, the derivation shifts to a word-based templatic construction, as shown below.

(8) š a ġ. ġ ā. l a h

(a) š ġ ey. ġ ī. l a h

(b) š ġ ey. l ī. l a h

(c) š w ey. ġ ī. l a h

In (8), three diminutive variants are derived from the occupation noun *šaġġā.lah* 'housemaid'. All diminutive forms begin with a sequence *CCey*, where the first two consonants of the base noun fill the CC-slots of the template, as shown in (8a-b). The vowels of the occupational noun are not realized because the template specifies its own vocalic pattern. In (8c), however, the second C-slot is filled with

[w]. This occurs when the first syllable of the base word contains a long vowel, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Base words with a long vowel in the first syllable

Base word	Diminutive	Augmentative	Gloss
a. **fār**	fweyr	f**wā**r	mouse
b. ḥā.mil	ḥwey.mil	ḥ**wā.**mil	pregnant
c. jā.mūs	jwey.mīs	jw**ā.**mīs	buffalo

This indicates that the diminutive form in (8c) may have been reanalyzed as having a long vowel in the first syllable.

(9) The schema for Arabic diminutive

ω ↔ N_i ↔ [diminutive $SEM_j]_k$
⌈ ⌈
[ ]$_j$ [CCeyX**]**$_k$ / [CCayyX**]**$_k$
X indicates the reminder of the word.

We now turn to the augmentative form, which is also a word-based templatic construction. That is, the diminutive form serves as the base for the augmentative, as shown in (10).

(10)

š	ġ	ey.	ġ	ī.	l	a	h	š	ġ	ey.	l	ī.	l	a	h	š	w	ey.	ġ	ī.	l	a	h
⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈	⌈
š	ġ	ā.	ġ	ī.	l	a	h	š	ġ	ā.	l	ī.	l	a	h	š	w	ā.	ġ	ī.	l	a	h

(11) The schema for Arabic augmentative

ω ↔ N_i ↔ [augmentative $SEM_j]_k$
⌈ ⌈
[ ]$_j$ [CCāX**]**$_k$ / [CCāyX**]**$_k$
X indicates the reminder of the word.

(12) Augmentative forms, by contrast, instantiate a word-based constructional schema, taking diminutive forms as their input:

Form: CCāX / CCāyX
Syntax: Noun
Semantics: ‘augmentative/intensive of X’

In (12), the construction operates on an existing lexical item (the diminutive), replacing the vowel nucleus of the first syllable with long [ā]. The parallel variation between diminutive and augmentative pairs demonstrates direct surface correspondence, confirming that augmentatives are derived from words rather than from roots. This contrasts with the verbs-of-pretending construction and aligns with CxM's allowance for constructions that select fully specified lexical bases.

6. Conclusion

Nonconcatenative morphology denotes morphological processes that form words through internal modification of a word pattern rather than through linear concatenation of stems and affixes (Booij 2018). Moreover, it subsumes a range of phenomena, from stem vowel alternation (e.g., ablaut patterns) to reduplication. Some morphological processes in Arabic are more adequately modelled as root-based, whereas others are better analyzed word-based. Arabic nonconcatenative morphology is particularly revealing in this respect, since some derivational processes are best captured through root-based mechanisms, while others are more apparently analyzed as word based.

The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of how Construction Morphology (CxM) schemas can account for Arabic nonconcatenative morphology. Our discussion has focused specifically on templatic morphology. More precisely, we examined how the prosodic templates of verbs of pretending and augmentative forms in HD are captured within the schema-based framework of CxM.

Verbs of pretending are formed by infixing [tə] and infixing [ey] into the consonantal root of an adjective or verb. In addition, the final syllable must conform to the *CaC* structure so that the resulting form fits the templatic pattern *tə.Cey.CaC*, expressing the meaning 'pretend to be X' (where X denotes an adjective or verb). These forms are therefore analyzed as products of root-based morphology. A variant template *tə.Cey.Ca* appears when the final consonant is a glide ([w] or [y]), in which case the glide deletes. This process involves the combination of consonantal root with a templatic pattern that specifies the vocalic structure.

Augmentative forms, by contrast, appear to be word-based. Under this analysis, new words are derived from existing lexical items, specifically from their diminutive counterparts. Taken together, the findings provide strong evidence that Arabic nonconcatenative morphology systematically employs both root-based and word-based derivational mechanisms, highlighting the explanatory power of a schema-based CxM approach.

Endnotes

[1] Watson (2006: 191) includes reduplicated verbs under diminutive verbs. Although, this type of verbs might give a diminutive connotation, I prefer to call them pluractional verbs as they denote multiple actions (for more details, see Alshammari (2025b) on pluractional verbs).

[2] HD, unlike other Najdi Arabic dialects, has one [t] in the imperfective form, e.g., *tə.ṭey.**wal*** 'she pretends to be tall' and *ti.kal.lam* 'she speaks' where the two [t]s assimilate. This is, *ti.kal.lam* 'she speaks' is homophonous with the masculine perfective form 'he spoke' and only context can decode the meaning. Other dialects have e.g., *tit.ṭéy.**wal*** 'she pretends to be tall' and *tit.kal.lam* 'she speaks'.

[3] Literally, it means 'salty', but it is used metaphorically to refer to an acceptable person in terms of behavior or even in appearance (to be beautiful).

[4] The data on diminutive forms is also attested in Wadi Ramm Arabic (Mashaqba 2015:188-189).

[5] The schema in (6) applies if we consider the masculine form *šaġ.ġā.l* + the feminine suffix *–ah* (šaġ.ġā.l-ah). However, the schema proposed by Davis and Tsujimura (2018) treats only masculine forms, i.e., $[C1aC_2C_2āC_3]_k$ (see Davis and Tsujimura (2018) for more details).

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