

Baseline Data for Arabic Acquisition with Clinical Applications: Collecting Qatari Data

Authors **Haifa Al-Buainain, Kimary Shahin, Ranya Morsi, Ghada Khattab, Feda Al-Tamimi**

Institutions Qatar University, Doha, Qatar
Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt
University of Newcastle-upon Tyne, UK
Jordan University of Sciences and Technology, Amman, Jordan

e mail haifaalbuainain@gmail.com

This presentation discusses the collection of Qatari child speech data. For a large project, we are obtaining audio recordings of 1/2-hour spontaneous Arabic speech produced by 140 Qatari monolingual children in natural settings (e.g. home and preschools). Fieldworkers produce digital files of the child speech recordings, and text file transcripts of the recordings. Our data are being analysed and coded in the CHILDES format.

Baseline Data for Arabic Acquisition with Clinical applications is a three-year interdisciplinary project in Linguistics and Children's Health. It is multi-institutional and international. It is a cross-sectional study of child speech which involves research on normal conversational interaction produced by native Arabic-speaking children between the ages of 1 year and 4 months to 3 years and 7 months. The overall goal is to collect extensive new material on five colloquial Arabic dialects: Qatari, Saudi, Jordanian, Palestinian, and Lebanese.

Specifically, the project aims to achieve four online bilingual Arabic-English resources: Arabic Child Language Database, Analysis of the Arabic Child Language Database, Arabic Child Language Norms and Clinical Reference Materials for Arabic Speech-Language Pathology. The project will fill these resources with extensive material on five Arabic dialects. It will provide heretofore nonexistent baseline data on first language acquisition of Arabic, critically essential for Speech-Language pathologists working with Arabic children, and for linguists conducting research into the nature of language and first language acquisition. This is the second year of the project and we are still in the data collection stage.

The aim is to inform our language acquisition colleagues about the project, to facilitate cross-germination of ideas at this relatively early stage of our research. The presentation gives a small taste of the kind of data the Qatar team is encountering. We first summarize the progress made toward accomplishment of the aims of the project in Qatar, and problems and difficulties encountered and how they are being solved. We hope this will be helpful for fellow researchers who do child language research in the Arab Gulf region.

