Precedence theory, root and template morphology, priming effects and the structure of the lexicon

Eric Raimy
University of Wisconsin, Madison

This paper will present an analysis of 'root and template' morphology found in Arabic based on the general mechanisms that encode precedence as proposed in Raimy (1999, 2000). As part of this analysis, a general proposal on the structure of the lexicon and how priming effects can be captured in this model will be presented. The lexicon can be viewed as consisting of a list of the underlying phonemes of a particular language with precedence connections between phonemes encoding the strings of lexical items. Following McClory and Raimy (2007) the precedence connections are marked for morphological affiliation along with other information. If this abstract structure is encoded using an ordered list to contain the precedence relations, priming (and frequency) effects can be captured by moving recently used precedence links to the beginning of the list. Thus, when searching through the lexicon via these ordered lists, frequently used links will be found quicker because they are earlier in the ordered lists. The conclusion from this paper is that the proposals about how precedence is encoded made by precedence theory are a general theory of phonological representations.