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AKKADIAN FROM EGYPT

الأكادية من مصر

Matthias Müller

Akkadisch aus Ägypten
Akkadien d'Égypte

Akkadian, an ancient Semitic language from Mesopotamia written in the cuneiform script, was employed as a diplomatic lingua franca between the major powers of the Late Bronze Age. Akkadian from Egypt defines the language of the Akkadian texts that originated in Egypt. These were probably written by Egyptian scribes. On various linguistic levels ranging from phonology to morpho-syntax, Akkadian from Egypt differs from contemporary varieties of Akkadian. In several cases, these differences can be analyzed as probably representing interferences with Egyptian, the native language of the scribes. Rather than as an Akkadian dialect, Akkadian from Egypt can thus be characterized as an interlanguage, that is, as an attempt by non-native speakers to communicate in a foreign language that they have learned more or less successfully. This is also the reason behind the instability of the system, rule changes, and adjustments.

الأكادية، هي لغة سامية قديمة من بلاد ما بين النهرين مكتوبة بالخط المسماري، كانت لغة دبلوماسية مشتركة بين القوى الكبرى خلال العصر البرونزي المتأخر. تعرف الأكادية من مصر علي انها لغة النصوص الأكادية التي موطنها مصر. وهي علي الارجح كتبت من قبل الكتبة المصريين. تختلف الأكادية التي عثر عليها بمصر عن الاصناف الاكاديه المعاصرة، على مختلف المستويات اللغوية التي تتراوح بين علم الصوتيات الي البناء الداخلي للكلمات. في العديد من الحالات، هذه الاختلافات يمكن تحليلها علي انها ربما تمثل التداخلات مع اللغه المصرية، اللغة الأم للكتبة المصريين. بدلا من أن تكون ذات لهجة اكادية، لذلك الأكادية المصرية يمكن وصفها بأنها interlanguage (كلغة ثانية)، وهي محاولة غير الناطقين باللغة على التواصل بلغة أجنبية والتي تعلموها بنسبة بسيطة. وهذا أيضا هو السبب وراء عدم استقرار النظام، وتغير القاعدة، والتعديلات.

S oon after the first Akkadian texts from Egypt were identified as having been sent by Egyptian rulers, certain deviations from the more standard variety of Akkadian known from Mesopotamian sources were noticed (Friedrich 1924). These deviations cover the graphemic system, phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics; examples will be presented below according to the respective categories. Most features of Akkadian from Egypt are more or less in line with Mesopotamian Akkadian; these will not be discussed here.

The grammatical system of Akkadian from Egypt is not stable: there are major differences between the sub-corpora and even between individual texts within these sub-corpora. In addition, features can be discerned that agree neither with the grammatical system of Mesopotamian Akkadian nor with the system of contemporary Egyptian. Accordingly, Akkadian from Egypt can be classified as a

second language system (Müller 2010), more specifically as a system of interlanguages (Müller 2014). Interlanguages are individual-learner varieties of a given target language to be acquired. They show various stages of mastery, according to the degree to which their respective learners acquired the rules of the target language. Interlanguage systems are generally unstable, that is, new rules can be acquired and incorporated into the system. Hence the same individual might produce texts with different patterns over time.

Corpus

Akkadian from Egypt is known from texts of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE. The material is usually sub-grouped chronologically. The oldest and smallest group comprises ten texts from the Amarna archive found in Egypt (EA 1, 5, 14, 99, 162, 163, 190, 367, 369, and 370, cf. Knudtzon 1915 and Moran 1992; the circumstances of the finds are described in Mynářova 2007: 13-39). To these must be added two texts found at Kamid el-Lawz in the Beqa Valley (KL 69.277 & KL 69.279, see Edzard et al. 1970). The majority of these texts are letters sent by the Egyptian king or his officials to various rulers of the Near East; one text (EA 14) is a gift list sent with an envoy to the Babylonian court. In addition, copies of literary and scribal-training texts have been found at Amarna, such as *Adapa and the Southwind* and *Nergal and Ereshkigal*, as well as syllabaries and wordlists (for all of these, see Izre'el 1997).

A later sub-corpus, of the thirteenth century, comprises roughly 100 texts and fragments found during excavations at Hattusa (near modern-day Boghazköy in Turkey), where they were sent by the court of Ramesses II to the Hittite rulers Hattusili II (formerly Hattusili III) and his wife Puduhepa, and Tudhaliya III (formerly Tudhaliya IV; for the different numbering of the Hittite rulers, see Breyer 2010: 57-59). As with the older group, the majority of texts are letters (Edel 1994). To these can be added the two slightly varying versions of the peace treaty between Ramesses II and Hattusili II/III (fig. 1; Edel 1997), as well as three letters found during excavations

at Ugarit (the modern-day port city of Ras Shamra in Syria; Arnaud 2001; Lackenbacher 2001). Edel sub-divided the larger group of texts from Hattusa into finer graded corpora (Edel 1997; and see the overview in Müller 2010: 13-14).

Figure 1. Treaty of Kadesh between the Hittites and the Egyptians (1269 BCE). Clay tablet found at Hattusa, Turkey.

Graphemic System, Grapho-phonemics, and Phonology

In general, the cuneiform script in Akkadian texts written by Egyptians does not deviate much from the Mesopotamian variety. In comparison to Old Babylonian texts (Buccellati 1979) and to texts from the western periphery of Akkadian usage (Gaebelein 1976), no greater preference for phono- or logograms—as might be assumed based on the Egyptian writing system—can be discerned. However, texts in Akkadian from Egypt display a certain tendency to employ graphemic marking of the plural (by the graphemic plural marker MEŠ added after the noun) as was done in the Egyptian script. In addition, it can be

noted that the number of signs used to cover a high percentage of the sign tokens in any given text is notably less than in comparable texts from Mesopotamia (Müller 2010: 43-69).

The picture changes with respect to the function of the signs. Although not uncommon also in other varieties of Akkadian, Akkadian from Egypt shows an almost complete disregard for the assumed differences in signs representing obstruent phonemes: for example, the sign TA can represent Akkadian <ta>, <da>, or <ṭa>. Fluctuation in use can be observed for the representation of the Akkadian alveolar fricative between signs with <š> and those with <s>. Akkadian from Egypt also ignores a couple of assimilation rules (Müller 2010: 111-113).

The just-mentioned features concerning obstruent signs have been explained as acquired rules (Cochavi-Rainey 2011)—that is, the learners may have been taught to disregard possible differences—or as the result of using the writing system against the backdrop of the Egyptian phoneme system (Müller 2010).

Morphology

With a few very obvious exceptions, the most difficult type of deviation to identify is morphological. For example, a verbal form marked as the present tense might, or might not, have been intended as such. In most cases, this cannot be determined based on the extant text, as one would need to know what the writer intended to express. The fragmentary state of preservation of most texts further hampers evaluations as to whether the verbal (and partly also other) forms were used correctly.

The most obvious morphological deviation is the (occasional) disregard of the "correct" case assignment, as in *nukurtu ša ilu* (enmity.NOM of god.NOM) "enmity of a god" (Edel 1994: I #24,V17) instead of *nukurtu ša ili* (enmity.NOM of god.GEN). Although a similar feature is known from Mesopotamian texts of the same time, the absence of case markings in the first language of the scribes, Egyptian, could be the reason for it in Akkadian from Egypt.

The verbal system employs the roots primarily in the unmarked and in the geminated stem, whereas both the morphological causative and the morphological passive are almost completely absent. In the older corpus, bare verbs can be used as relative clauses thus resembling Egyptian relative forms (see below for an example). The distribution of verbal forms with past reference—morpho-syntactically determined in more standard varieties of Akkadian—is largely ignored, obviously due to the non-existence of a similar rule in Egyptian; thus both the perfect (*iptaras*) and the preterite (*iprus*, a form denoting an action or event accomplished in the past) can occur in any given clausal pattern. In the younger corpus, the cliticized (unstressed) personal pronouns are additionally marked to distinguish between direct object markers (direct clitics) and indirect object markers (cliticized via an additional morpheme, *-am*-PRN); thus one finds a form *ipuš-an-ni* (make.3MS.PRT-*am*-1S with assimilation of *m* > *n*) "he made for me" (Edel 1994: I #28,R18) instead of an expected *ipuš-ni* (make.3MS.PRT-1S). While standard Akkadian allows double clitization (i.e., VERB-INDIRECT.OBJECT. PRONOUN-DIRECT.OBJECT.PRONOUN), Akkadian from Egypt uses an alternative pattern by which only the direct object pronoun is cliticized while the indirect object is introduced with the help of the preposition *ana* "for." Thus we find a pattern VERB-DIRECT.OBJECT PREPOSITION-PRO NOUN, as in *ileqqū-šunūti ana-ka[ša]* (bring.IPF.3P-3P for-2MS) "they will be brought to you" (Edel 1994: I #24,V3), similar to the Egyptian pattern, where the pronoun is introduced by the preposition *n* "for." Akkadian from Egypt also introduces restrictions such as the avoidance of clitic pronouns with the stative form of the verb as in *anāku lamuddaku ana-šāši* (1S inform.STA.1S for-3MS) "I learn about it" (Edel 1994: I #22,V23), where again the pronoun is introduced indirectly by the preposition *ana* "for" instead of being cliticized directly to the verbal form. This obviously follows the Egyptian grammatical restrictions that pronouns cannot be cliticized to a stative (see Müller 2010: 222-226 for a detailed description of all mentioned features).

Among other noteworthy features, possessive markers are usually cliticized directly to the possessed noun except when the noun is indefinite. In this case an alternative system is used, as in *ilten karāšu attu-ja* (one army.NOM POSS.ABS-1S) "an army of mine" (Edel 1994: I #24,V32; see Müller 2010: 230-233). Adverbs can be used for grading adjectives as in *[amāte madātu] lā banātu danniš* (word.P.GEN/ACC plenty.P.NOM NEG good.P.NOM very) "[many] very unpleasant [words]" (Edel 1994: I #24,V8-9), which is not allowed in Mesopotamian Akkadian. In addition, adverbs can be used to mark excessiveness by iteration. These features, by which Akkadian from Egypt differs from Mesopotamian Akkadian, are on the other hand reminiscent of similar constructions in Egyptian.

Syntax

Nominal syntax shows irregular changes of position between the noun and the demonstrative, usually NOUN-DEMONSTRA-TIVE, occasionally DEMONSTRATIVE-NOUN, as in *annūtu sugullāti ša immēri* (this.P.NOM herd.P.GEN/ACC of sheep.P.GEN) "these flocks of sheep" (Edel 1994: I #55,V6). Given the non-systematic nature of the alternation, this could be classified as ad hoc errors based on interference of the first language of the scribes.

In verbal sentences the unmarked word order is SVO (subject-verb-object) in contrast to the SOV order (subject-object-verb) in Mesopotamian Akkadian. This has been explained as an interference of the Late Egyptian Present I syntax (Cochavi-Rainey 1990a, 1990b, 2011). However, the SVO order is valid for all verbal sentences and clauses regardless of tense. Furthermore, the structural copy would have been only partial as the Late Egyptian Present I is not constructed with an agreement-marking verbal form but with a preposition plus infinitive or with the stative. In addition, the position of the negation would fail to copy the Egyptian pattern where it is positioned at the beginning of the sentence whereas in Akkadian from Egypt it appears after the subject in front of the verb. Thus the direct derivation of the verbal syntax from an Egyptian pattern is to be dismissed (Müller 2010: 313-317). Instead, the syntactic patterning is based on a "new" rule of the interlanguage generalized over all pattern. Such introductions of new rules that neither match those of the target language nor are direct copies of the learner's first language are typical for interlanguage systems. There are, however, structural copies of Egyptian sentence patterns, such as a future with the preposition *ana* "to" followed by an infinitive (NP$_{SUB}$ PRP-INF): this is unknown in Mesopotamian Akkadian but similar to the Egyptian so-called Future III, e.g., *amur PN ana epēši ṭēma* (PTC PN for make.INF plan.ACC) "Behold, Ramses … will accomplish the plan" (Edel 1997: §3). In the same vein, patterns with the verb in initial position, also different from Mesopotamian Akkadian, are similar to Late Egyptian past or prospective patterns, e.g., *aḫaddi anāku ana* DUMU^{MEŠ}-*ki* (rejoice.IPF.1S 1S.ABS for son.P-2MS) "I shall rejoice over your sons" (Edel 1994: I #65,R5). Although even rarer, patterns with telic verbs marked as statives to express motion in the past are occasionally encountered, e.g., *3* KARAŠ^{MEŠ} *tebū ina* KASKAL^{MEŠ} (NUM army.P approach.STA.3P in way.P) "Three armies approached on the roads" (Edel 1994: I #24,V23). A similar use is attested in Egyptian, see *ṯ=j spr-k r pr-Rˁ-ms-sw* (PTC=1S reach.STA-1S to-TOP) "I reached Piramesse." (*LEM* 21,12, Gardiner 1937; see Müller 2010: 320-324 for further deliberations).

Like every Semitic language, Akkadian from Egypt also employs patterns of non-verbal predication such as nominal sentences. At first glance patterns with pronouns, as in *amur nukurtu ša ilu šū* (PTC enmity.NOM of god.NUM 3MS.ABS) "Behold, it was the enmity of a god" (Edel 1994: I #24,V17), look similar to Mesopotamian Akkadian ones. However, functionally they are employed differently as the predication is not "He is the enmity of a god"; the pronoun functions as a subject index and thus similar to nominal sentences in Egyptian, the first language of the scribes (Müller 2010: 338-339). Very specific to Akkadian from Egypt is the regular use of a nominal sentence pattern with an initial nominal phrase followed by a relative clause

(Müller 2010: 341-342), as in *amur ṭēmu* SI[G₅ *ša aḫḫūti*] *u salāmi ša anāku ina libbi-šu itti* PN (PTC plan.NOM good of brotherhood and peace.GEN REL 1S.ABS within-3MS with PN) "Behold, it is a perfect state of brotherhood and peace that I am in with great king and king of Hatti" (Edel 1994: I #28,R22-23). Even though cleft constructions of that kind are known in Mesopotamian Akkadian, their frequency there is rather low whereas in Egyptian such cleft constructions are a common pattern. A similar description applies to patterns with a prepositional phrase or an adverb in predicative position (Müller 2010: 344-345), which is attested, but uncommon, in Mesopotamian Akkadian, e.g. *anāku kanna ina libbi-šu adi ārīti* (1S.ABS thus within-3MS until eternity.GEN) "I am thus in it for ever" (Edel 1994: I #28,R24). Patterns with a morphological adjective in initial position in predicative use are entirely absent from Mesopotamian Akkadian; these are, on the other hand, found in Akkadian from Egypt where the subject position is occupied either by a noun or by a complement clause (Müller 2010: 343), as in *banī kī amīla inandin pāna ana šipri* (good.GEN that man.ACC give.IPF.3MS face.ACC for task) "It is good, that one focuses on a task" (Edel 1994: I #46,V29). Without doubt the underlying structure is the Egyptian adjectival sentence (*nfr sw*-pattern). In addition, the expression "to give the face to" for "concentrate, focus" is based on an Egyptian pragmatic expression (Cochavi-Rainey 2011: 177).

Most relative clauses have the initial relative particle *ša*. Only texts of the older sub-corpus display relative clauses without the particle

(Cochavi-Rainey 2011: 170 EA 1:80, *ṣuharti iddinu-ni* (maiden.GEN give. IPF.3MS. SUB-1S) "the maiden he gave to me"). The younger corpus shows a couple of dependent /coordinated clauses marked by the connector *u* used as relative clauses (Müller 2010: 369-370), as in *iltet šipri arḫiš danniš danniš u anāku altapar-šunūti* UGU-*ša ana* PN *ina pī-šunu* (one.F message.GEN urgent very very and 1S.ABS send.PF.1S-3P because-3FS to PN in mouth-3P) "a very very urgent message because of which I sent them to PN" (Edel 1994: I #48,V11-13). Adverbial clauses are usually construed and employed as in Mesopotamian Akkadian with possibly two exceptions: an anterior temporal clause (Müller 2010: 389) that avoids the Mesopotamian Akkadian marker *lama* using a dependency-marked clause with *adīna* and negated present as in *u adīna ul taḫ[assas aḫḫut-ni u salam-ni]* (DEP yet NEG think.2MS.IPF brotherhood-1P and peace-1P) "…, before you remembered our brotherhood and our peace" (Edel 1994: I #24,V13-14). Thus it resembles the Egyptian negative completive *bw sḏm.t⸗f* or *bw jr.t⸗f sḏm.* The other candidate could be sought in a clause marking a hypothetical condition where one finds the following pattern *u lūman* DN *u* DN *liqbi u šipru … ittenpuš* (DEP HYP DN and DN say.3MS.PRK DEP task.NOM … do.PASS.3P.IPF) "Should the sun- and the weather-god agree, the treatment…shall be done…" (Edel 1994: I #75,R6-8). Neither the use of the particle *lūman* nor the marking of the verb as a precative follow the Mesopotamian Akkadian pattern. Instead using a particle and connecting the apodosis with *u* resembles the Late Egyptian pattern (see Müller 2010: 393-394).

Bibliographic Notes

For the texts from the el-Amarna-archive, the groundbreaking edition by Knudtzon (1915) is now replaced by Rainey (2015); the various other linguistics systems of the archive have been described in a concise way by Tropper and Vita (2010); the Egyptian sub-system is described in Cochavi-Rainey (1990a, 1990b, 2011), but see now Müller (2014) for a variety of issues. The texts from the Ramesside Period that were found in Boghazköy have been conveniently published by Edel (1994, 1997), the remaining texts can be found in Arnaud (2001) and Lackenbacher (2001); the linguistic

system has been described by Müller (2010) and Cochavi-Rainey (1990a, 1990b, 2011; focusing on certain issues only).

Glossing

Glossing is a word-by-word relationship where one word connects to many gloss elements. Dashes in the glossing separate discrete morphological segments (units) that combine to form a word (defined as a unity of stress). Dots in the glossing link fused elements of morphology (elements that cannot be further broken down in segments). Furthermore, in the transcription of Akkadian, capitalized words indicate "sumerograms", signs that stand for a whole word in the Akkadian text following their original Sumerian value.

The following abbreviations are used in glossing:

1,2,3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person
ABS	absolute
ACC	accusative
DEP	dependency marker
DN	divine name
F	feminine
GEN	genitive
HYP	hypothetical
INF	infinitive
IPF	imperfective
M	masculin
NEG	negation
NOM	nominative
NUM	number
P	plural
PF	perfective
PN	personal name
POSS	possessive
PRP	preposition
PRT	preterite
PTC	particle
REL	relative
S	singular
STA	stative
NP$_{SUB}$	nominal phrase (subject)
SUB	subjunctive
TOP	toponym

Examples:
nukurtu ša ilu (enmity.NOM of god.NOM)   "enmity of a god"
(with both *nukurtu* "enmity" and *ilu* "god" in the nominative form).

ipuš-ni (make.3MS.PRT-1S)   "he made for me"
(with the expressions of the third masculine singular subject of the preterite tense being fused with the lexical root of the verb "to make" into a single segment *ipuš*, which in turn is followed by an unstressed personal pronoun of the first person singular, here expressing the dative).

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Figure 1.   Treaty of Kadesh between the Hittites and the Egyptians (1269 BCE). Clay tablet found at Hattusa, Turkey. Istanbul Archaeological Museums. Photograph by Giovanni Dall'Orto. (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Istanbul_-_Museo_archeol._-_Trattato_di_Qadesh_fra_ittiti_ed_egizi_(1269_a.C.)_-_Foto_G._Dall%27Orto_28-5-2006.jpg).