The two *i*'s of Qaraqosh Neo-Aramaic

This talk discusses the inflection of the so called /j/-final verbs in the Neo-Aramaic dialect of Qaraqosh (QA) (Khan 2002). Like other Semitic languages, QA displays triconsonantal roots, which are syllabified by means of vocalic patterns (templates). In the infinitive form in Table (1.i), one can see that the verb 'put' has a third radical [j] where the "sane" verb 'open' has [x]. However, this third radical is not present on the surface throughout the paradigm of 'put'. In its stead, one finds other differences between the inflections of the two types of verbs. In this talk, we account for these differences. Specifically we treat the following five differences: (i) The appearance of the seemingly epenthetic [ɪ] in the /j/-final 3msg non-past, where it is not required syllabically; (ii) the appearance of [e] rather than [i] in the 2pl and 3pl non-past suffixes; (iii) the mere existence of a three-way distinction in the /j/-final imperative paradigm, where sane verbs exhibit only a two-way distinction; (iv) the vowel [e] of the additional fmsg form; and (v) the vowel [oː] of the plural imperative of /j/-final verbs. In addition, we will account for the [ɪ]-[iː] alternation in [dáːrɪ] 'he puts' vs. [daríːlɪ] 'he puts it'.

The analysis is conducted within Strict CV (Lowenstamm 1996, Scheer 2004), where the only skeletal constituent is a CV unit; and within Element Theory (Kaye et al. 1985, Backely 2011), whereby all sounds are constructed from a limited set of elements (rather than from features). Especially relevant is the notion of headedness in vowels in this theory: tense and lax counterparts are distinguished by attributing head status to an element of the tense vowel's make-up, while lax counterparts are unheaded. Thus, tense [i] is headed by element I, while lax [ɪ] has the same element I but it is unheaded (head elements are underlined).

First, we assume verbs like 'put' are not /j/-final but I-final. We further link the non-head status of this radical I to the fact that it is associated to a templatic slot only when this is necessary (like the phonetically identical epenthetic [ɪ]). In the 3msg [darɪ] in (2), this I must link to the V-slot because it is not the final one (which can remain empty in QA, e.g. in [páːθɪx]). The [ɪ] in [dáːrɪ] is thus both like and unlike the [ɪ] in the parallel [páːθɪx]. Crucially, however, the realizations of unheaded I and headed I̲ converge in two other scenarios: when they are lengthened because of stress (3; note that all vowels are long in open stressed syllables and that there is no vowel reduction) and when they are associated to a C-slot (4). The plural [dáːre], by analogy to the sane verb in (7), must be /darɪ-i/ as in (5) (note that the pl. suffix is *headed* I̲). We propose that the vowel becomes [e] by a process of dissimilation and coalescence: the root I is transformed into A to resolve the OCP violation, and the sequence A+I̲ is realized as [e] (6; final diphthongs [aj#] are impossible in QA). We have thus explained facts (i)-(iii) above by assuming a distinction of I vs I̲.

This distinction is necessary for an account of the imperative paradigm. To cover fact (iv), we assume that there is an underlying three-way distinction not only in the I-final verb, but *also in the sane verb.* One must understand then why this distinction does not make it to the surface. Given the base [dríː] (8; again, stress-lengthened I is realized [íː]), the exponent of fsg in the imperative must be that which merges with the base I into [eː]. By analogy to the I+I̲=>[e] of (5-6), and in accordance with comparative evidence, we assume that this exponent is a high front vowel, in QA either I or I̲. If it were I̲, we would expect to surface in the sane verb too (e.g. 7). We conclude that it is unheaded I. In the weak verb it triggers dissimilation and coalescence (9), and in the strong verb it remains afloat, because it is not needed for syllabic purposes in the final V-slot (10). The I vs. I̲ distinction thus receives independent support in the analysis of the imperative paradigm. Finally, if we assume that a sequence of I and U also entails the dissimilation and coalescence process, then the form of the pl. [droː] also follows from the analysis (11). To conclude, there are two *i*'s in QA, I and I̲; the former is both the epenthetic vowel of the language and the third radical of the so-called /j/-final verbs.

(1)			a. 'open'	b. 'put'				a. 'open'	b. 'put'
(i)	infinitive		pθá:xa	drá:ja	(iii)	imperative	2msg	pθó:x	drí:
(ii)	non-past	3msg	pá:θɪx	dá:rɪ			2fsg	-	dré:
		3fsg	páθxa	dá:rja			2pl	pθú:xu	dró:
		3pl	páθxi	dá:rɪ					
		2msg	páθxɪt	dá:rət					
		2fsg	páθxat	dárjat					
		2pl	paθxí:tu	daré:tu					
		1msg	páθxɪn	dá:rɪn					
		1fsg	páθxan	dárjan					
		1pl	pá:θxax	dá:rax					

(2)
```
d   a   r   I
|   |   |   |
C   V   C   V   C   V
non-past 3msg [da:rə]
```

(3)
```
d   a   r   I           l   I
|   |   |   |\          |   |
C   V   C   V  ➘ V      C   V
                _
non-past /darI+l+I/ = [darí:lɪ] 'he puts it'
```

(4)
```
d   a   r   I  -  a
|   |   |    \     |
C   V   C    ➘V   C   V
non-past 3fsg [da:rja]
```

(5)
```
d   a   r   I  -  I
|   |   |   |     |
C   V   C   V₂ C  V₃          ➡
/darI+I/
```

(6)
```
d   a   r   A  -  I
|   |   |   |     |
C   V   C   V     C   V
non-past 3pl [dare]
```

(7)
```
p   a   θ       x  -I
|   |   |       |  |
C   V   C   V   C  V
non-past 3pl [páθxi]
```

(8)
```
d       r   I
|       |   |\
C   V   C   V ➘ V
            _
imperative 2msg [drí:]
```

(9)
```
d       r   I  -  I
|       |   |     |
C   V   C   V   C  V          ➡
          _
/darI+I/
```
```
d       r   A  -  I
|       |   |     |
C   V   C   V   C  V
          _
imperative 2fsg [dré:]
```

(10)
```
p       θ   o   x   I
|       |   |   |
C   V   C   V   C   V₃          ➡
```
```
p       θ   o   x   I
|       |   |   |
C   V   C   V   C   V₃
imperative 2msg [pθóx]
```

(11)
```
d       r   I  -  U
|       |   |     |
C   V   C   V   C  V          ➡
          _
/darI+U/
```
```
d       r   A  -  U
|       |   |     |
C   V   C   V   C  V
          _
imperative 2pl [dró:]
```

Selected references. BACKLEY, P. (2011) *An Introduction to Element Theory*. Edinburgh: EUP. KHAN, G. (2002). *The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Qaraqosh*, Leiden: Brill. KAYE, J., LOWENSTAMM, J. & J.-R. VERGNAUD (1985). "The internal structure of phonological representations: a Theory of Charm and Government." *Phonology Yearbook* 2, 305-328. LOWENSTAMM, J. (1996) "CV as the Only Syllable Type." *Current Trends in Phonology Models and Methods*, J. Durand & B. Laks (eds), University of Salford. 419-442. SCHEER, T. (2004) *A Lateral Theory of Phonology. Vol 1: What is CVCV, and Why Should it Be?* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.