Root Mixing in Syrian Arabic

This paper is about language mixing is Syrian Arabic ; it discusses mixing of English items into the Syrian Arabic skeleton as an instance of root mixing rather than word or stem mixing .The English item is changed into a consonantal root before being merged with a "nominal or verbal head that forms an immediate environment for determining its interpretation " Arad(2003). Following Arad (2006) roots are phonologically and semantically underspecified cores ; the root combines with features, phonological exponents of abstract morphemes, to form words. In this sense, mixing of an English root into the Syrian Arabic skeleton will follow the same computational process of merging any Arabic root that my combine with potential nominal ,verbal or adjectival features giving rise to a variety of categories . Data from English mixing in Syrian Arabic should support the view that roots are the core atomic lexical elements, what Borer(2005)terms as a' listem' is actually a root. Since the matrix language is Arabic, the inflectional morphology will follow from the matrix language not from the embedded language, English. I will follow an exo-skeletal approach to analyze my data I should note that I collected my data from my conversations with friends and from my own social observations. I have also observed that earlier evidence of mixing in Syrian Arabic was from Turkish and French which have been present due to direct contact with both languages during the times of the Turkish occupation and French mandate of Syrian. However, the influence of English on Arabic might be , to my experience, the result of indirect contact with the advent of technology and the social media revolution. I would like to note that some of the data was taken from Lebanese Arabic speaking videos on "Youtube", but they are also used in Syrian Arabic.

Data and Analysis :

1-ballaktu ʕ-l-fesbook (Verbal Environment)
Blocked-I-him on-the- facebook
"I blocked him on facebook"

2- shiltllu l- blok (Nominal Environment)
Removed-1Sg the block
" I unblocked him"

Examples 1&2 form a minimal pair that shows how the invented English root "BLK" merged in Verbal and Nominal Environments. In 1, the root merges with verbal morphological features , and the resulting verb carries the subject agreement suffix '-t' and the object pronominal clitic '-u'. In 2, the root merges with a nominal environment and later merges with the determiner 'l-' that marks definiteness .

3-Hasan ʕm jwattes mʕ rfʔatu (Imperfective Mood)
Hasan prog use whatsapp with friends-his
" Hasan is chatting with his friends on whatsapp"

4-Hasan wattas mʕ rfʔatu b-ʔalmania (Perfective Mood)
Hasan used whatsapp with friends-his in Germany
" Hasan used whatsapp to chat with(whatsapped) his friends in Germany"

Examples 3&4 are also a minimal pair that shows how the root is mixed in verbal environment , and also shows the T-V relation as the interpretable Mood feature on T checks the uninterpretable Mood feature on V , the vowel melody also changes between the perfective 'wattas' and the imperfective 'wattes' mood . It is predictable that the verb carries the Arabic inflectional morphology since the matrix language is Syrian Arabic. I should also mention that Perfective & imperfective verb forms are not used in the sense of Mood as Wright's classification, but rather it is a method of classifying morphological verb forms with their tense interpretation , the perfective morphemes show on the verbs and give the sentence a past tense interpretation, whereas the imperfective affixes show on the verbs with present and future interpretation.

The following table shows some more examples of English root mixing in Syrian Arabic:

Root Inventory	Phonological features of abstract morphemes*	Noun	Gloss	Verb (imperfective)	Gloss
NRFZ	a-a: u-u: i-i:- j s m-n ʔ h	narfazi	nervousa	jnarfez	To become nervous
ʔOVR		ʔovara	exaggeration	jʔover	To exaggerate
DPRS		daprasi	depression	jdapres	To become depressed
PNK		panek	panic	jpannek	To panic
MSDʒ		masedʒ		jmassedʒ	To send a message
GOGL		gugel		jgogel	To google

*If you want to look up an Arabic word in an Arabic-Arabic dictionary , you must drop these morphemes to deduce the root which is made up of three consonants at least.

Reference

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