

The Arabic Origins of "Mandarin Chinese Pronouns": A Radical Linguistic Theory Approach

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the Arabic origins of Chinese pronouns from a radical linguistic theory standpoint, a slightly revised version of lexical root theory. The data consists of personal, genitive, and demonstrative pronouns in Mandarin Chinese in the main and traditional and modern Chinese dialects secondarily. The results show that Mandarin Chinese is perhaps the simplest language in the world structurally speaking; all whose pronouns have true Arabic cognates, with the same or similar forms and meanings. Their formal differences, however, result from natural and plausible causes and different courses of linguistic change. For example, spoken Mandarin **an** 'I' and all similar n-based forms in historical and modern Chinese dialects descend directly from Arabic **ana** 'I'; **wǒ/wu** 'I' come from Arabic **'iai** and/or **'ee** 'me/my' via /' & ai/-mutation into /w & o/; **ta** 'he, she, it; that' is derived from Arabic **ti (tīhi)** 'this (f)' via lexical shift; **de** 'of, whose' is from Arabic **dhi** 'of, whose' where /dh/ became /d/. As a consequence, the results indicate, contrary to Comparative Method claims, that Arabic and (Mandarin) Chinese are genetically related, leading to the postulation of a single, perfect, sudden world language, which may be called radical or root language, from which all human languages descended. The radical language could not have died out at all but has instead survived into modern languages, having been preserved almost intact in Arabic. They, therefore, prove the adequacy of the radical linguistic or lexical root theory according to which Arabic and Mandarin Chinese are genetically related besides English, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit which have already been found to be dialects of the same language with Arabic being their origin all because of its phonetic capacity or complexity and huge lexical variety and multiplicity.*

Keywords: *Pronouns, Chinese, Arabic, English, German, French, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, historical linguistics, radical linguistic theory, lexical root theory, language change, language relationships*

1. Introduction

The radical linguistic theory is a revised and extended version of the lexical root theory (Jassem 2012a-f, 2013a-q, 2014a-g) which originally derives its name from the use of lexical (consonantal) roots or radicals in retracing genetic relationships between words in world languages. It first emerged as a rejection of the Comparative (Historical Linguistics) Method or Family Tree Model in classifying Arabic as a member of a different language family from

English, German, French, and all (Indo-)European languages in general (Bergs and Brinton 2012; Algeo 2010; Crystal 2010: 302; Campbell 2004: 190-191; Yule 2006; Crowley 1997: 22-25, 110-111; Pyles and Algeo 1993: 61-94). In all his twenty-nine studies, Jassem (2012a-f, 2013a-q, 2014a-g) firmly established, on the contrary, the inextricably close, genetic relationship between Arabic and such languages phonetically, morphologically, grammatically, and semantically or lexically so much so that they can be really considered dialects of the same language.

Thus far twenty nine studies have been undertaken on all language levels. Lexically, eighteen studies successfully traced the Arabic origins of English, German, French, Latin, Greek and Sanskrit words in key semantic fields- namely, numeral words (Jassem 2012a), common religious terms (Jassem 2012b), water and sea terms (Jassem 2013d), air and fire terms (Jassem 2013e), celestial and terrestrial terms (Jassem 2013f), animal terms (Jassem (2013g), body part terms (Jassem 2013h), speech and writing terms (Jassem 2013i), time words (Jassem 2013j), family words (Jassem 2013k), cutting and breaking words (Jassem 2013m), movement and action words (Jassem 2013n), perceptual and sensual words (Jassem 2013o), cognitive and mental words (Jassem 2013p), love and sexual words (Jassem 2013q), wining and dining words (Jassem 2014a), divine and theological terms (Jassem 2014d), proper names (Jassem 2014f), and mathematical and computational terms (2014g). Morphologically, three studies established the Arabic origins of English, German, French, Latin, and Greek inflectional 'plural and gender' markers (Jassem 2012f), derivational morphemes (Jassem 2013a), and negative particles (Jassem 2013b). Grammatically, six papers described the Arabic origins of English, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit personal pronouns (Jassem 2012c, 2013l), determiners (Jassem 2012d), verb 'to be' forms (Jassem 2012e), question and modal words (Jassem 2014b), and prepositions and conjunctions (Jassem 2014c). Phonetically, Jassem (2013c) outlined the English, German, French, Latin, and Greek cognates of Arabic back consonants: viz., the glottals, pharyngeals, uvulars, and velars; needless to say, the phonetic analysis recurred in each study above. Finally, on the applied linguistics level, Jassem (2014e) extended this approach to the field of translation studies, showing how cultural universals can be translated this way between Arabic and such languages. In a nutshell, in all such studies, Arabic, English, German, and French words, for example, were true cognates with similar or identical forms and meanings, whose differences are due to natural and plausible causes and diverse courses of linguistic change.

This paper sets out to examine the Arabic origins and/or cognates of Mandarin Chinese pronouns. As is well-known in the above-mentioned Comparative Method or Family-tree Model (e.g., Campbell 2004: Chs. 6-7), both Chinese and Arabic are totally unrelated genetically: the former being Sino-Tibetan, the latter Semitic. Thus, it rejects the separation of Chinese from Arabic, on the one hand, and English and Indo-European languages, on the other. Furthermore, it supplements and complements Jassem (2012c, 2013l) which traced the Arabic origins of

pronouns in English, German, French, and Indo-European languages, by casting the net wider to include a hitherto totally unrelated language to Arabic and Indo-European languages- i.e., Mandarin Chinese. The remainder of the paper is organized into four sections: (ii) research methods, (iii) results, (iv) discussion, and (v) conclusion.

2. Research Methods

2.1 The Data: Mandarin Chinese

Chinese, which is the largest and perhaps structurally simplest language in the world, has many dialects, which may be unintelligible to each other in speech but not in writing.. They include Mandarin with a native speaker population of about 960 million users, Wu with 80 million users, Yue (Cantonese) with 60 million users, and Min (Taiwanese) with 50 million users. Because of its phenomenally huge native speaker population, association with the capital, and government adoption, Mandarin, however, has been selected the official language of China, known as standard Chinese or Beijing Chinese. The word *Mandarin* itself came originally via Malay from Hindi *mantra* from Sanskrit *mantri*, nominative of *mantrin* 'counselor, advisor'. In my view, it eventually derives on the basis of form (spelling or pronunciation) and meaning from Arabic *mundhir*, *mundhinee(n)* (pl.), *mundhir(u/a/i)n* (nom./acc./dat.) 'warner, advisor' where /dh/ became /d (t)/.

As to Mandarin Chinese pronouns, they are very simple in structure and very few in number. There are three pronouns only without any distinctions as to gender (masculine and feminine) and case (subject, object, or possessive) as is the case in English, German, French, and Arabic (Jassem 2013c, 2013l). This makes it perhaps the simplest such language in the world. These are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Standard Mandarin Chinese Personal Pronouns

Person	singular	Plural	
		Exclusive	Inclusive
'I, we'	wǒ	'you and s/he'	'you and I'
	'I, me'	wǒmen 'we, us'	zanmen 'we, us'

Second 'you'	Informal	Formal	nǐmen 'you'
	nǐ 'you'	nǐn 'you'	
Third 'he, she, it, they'	tā 'he/him, she/her, it; that'		tāmen 'they, them; those'

Source: Adapted from *Wikipedia* 2014 and *Ask.com* 2014.

The table shows three singular pronouns only whose plurals are all formed by adding the suffix *-men*. Moreover, the pronoun for *we* has two forms: *wǒmen* 'you and I' and *zānmen* 'you and someone else'. Similarly, the pronoun for *you* has two forms: formal *nǐ* and informal *nǐn*. Finally, the third person pronoun *tā/tāmen* may be used as a demonstrative distal inanimate pronoun *that*.

Besides, spoken Mandarin has two other forms for the first person singular pronoun, which are *an* 'I' and *ou* 'I', the latter of which can be considered a variant of *wǒ* 'I' above.

The genitive or possessive is indicated in three ways. The commonest is by attaching the suffix *-de* to the pronoun, e.g., *wǒde* 'my', *tāde* 'his, her, its', *nǐde* 'your'. It may be omitted when referring to the owner or one's family, called *inalienable*, for example, *wǒ mā* 'my mother' but *nǐde mā* 'your mother'; the latter form is called *alienable*. For older people, *ling* is used as in *lingzun* 'your father'. In literary style, *qí* 'his, her' is sometimes utilised as in *qízun* 'his/her father'.

In the demonstrative case, there are two pronouns, both singular and plural. The proximal singular form is **zhège** 'this' whose plural is **zhèxiē** 'these' versus the distal singular **nàge** 'that' and its plural **nàxiē** 'those'. Finally, the third person pronoun *tā/tāmen* may be used as a demonstrative as well as has just been stated above.

Historically speaking, Mandarin is the culmination of dialectal simplification in the evolution of the Chinese language. More precisely, Chinese underwent several developments that can be roughly classified into historical and modern. Historical Chinese included Shang (1700-1046 BC) and early Zhou dynasty (1045-256 BC), Classical Chinese (since 5th Century AC), and Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589 AC) and Tang Dynasty (618-917 AC). Modern Chinese refers to Mandarin, Wu (Shanghainese), Hakka, and Yue (Cantonese). In all these languages or dialects, there is a lot of variation amongst their pronouns as can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Historical and Modern Variants of Chinese Pronouns

		Historical (1045 BC – 917 AC)			Modern (After 917 AC)			
		Shang	C.C.	S.N.T	Man.	Wu	Hakka	Yue
Singular	1	la, la', Irem'	ŋ'aj', ŋ'a, la, la'	Wǒ, wū	wǒ	ŋu	ŋai	ŋo:
	2	Na', ne'	ne', na', ne, nak	ēr, rǔ, nǐ	nǐ	noŋ	ŋ	nei
	3	kot, te, ge	te, ge	qì, qū, yī, zhī, tā	tā	hi	ki	kei
Plural	1	n'aj'	Same as Singular	Singular + dēng, cao, bei	wōmen	a', la'	ŋai, teu, ŋin	ŋo:, tei
	2	Ne'			nǐmen	na	ng, teu, ŋin	nei, tei
	3	Not used			tāmen	hi, la'	ki, teu, ŋin	key, tei

Source: Adapted from *Wikipedia* 2014.

It can be clearly seen from the table that there are similarities and differences amongst all Chinese dialects, historical and modern. All have three pronouns which are divided by (i) number into singular and plural and (ii) speaker into first, second, and third. In the modern period, the forms are much simpler which might also look different in pronunciation. For example, Wu, Hakka, and Yue all have the consonant /n/ in the first person and the second person pronouns which is also shared by Mandarin. The last is the simplest in having three singular pronouns only whose plurals are made by the addition of the suffix *men* as has been described above. On the other hand, historical Chinese is more varied, with the most obvious differences lying especially in third person singular pronouns such as *kot, ge, qi/qu, yi, zhi, te/ta*. Also there is a lot of shared forms between historical and modern Chinese in all persons. In fact, most forms are shared to the extent that they can all be considered variants.

2.2 Arabic Pronouns

A brief, though full, description of Arabic pronouns can be found in Jassem (2012d, 2013l) which traced the Arabic origins of English, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit pronouns, indeed all Indo-European pronouns. The interested reader may consult either source which will be skipped over here to save on space, time, and effort. It has to be noted, though, that Arabic pronouns inflect for number (singular, dual, plural), gender (fem./masc.), case (nom, acc., gen.), and person (1st, 2nd, 3rd). The same happens in the other languages above, though to a lesser extent.

2.3 Data Selection and Transcription

Chinese pronouns have been selected and classified on the basis of internet sources in English such as www.wikipedia.org and various others, especially the references therein. Unfortunately, classical and modern Arabic writings are lacking on Chinese, it is worth noting. To facilitate reference, they will be examined one by one with brief linguistic comments in (3.) below.

In transcribing the data, normal Romanized spelling is used for both Chinese and Arabic for practical purposes. Nonetheless, certain symbols were used for unique Arabic sounds, including /2 & 3/ for the voiceless and voiced pharyngeal fricatives respectively, /kh & gh/ for the voiceless and voiced velar fricatives each, capital letters for the emphatic counterparts of plain consonants /t, d, dh, & s/, and /' for the glottal stop (Jassem 2013c). Furthermore, although Chinese is a tonal language where changes in voice height or tone movement (contour) often leads to changes in meaning, tone marks are not indicated because they do not affect the final result here.

2.4 Data Analysis

2.4.1 Theoretical Framework: The Radical Linguistic Theory

The radical linguistic theory, a slightly revised and more generalized version of the original lexical root theory (Jassem 2012a-f, 2013a-q, 2014a-g), will be used as the theoretical framework for data analysis. The lexical root theory (Jassem 2012a-f, 2013a-q, 2014a-g) was so called because of employing the lexical (consonantal) roots or radicals in examining genetic relationships between words such as the derivation of *observation* from *serve* (or simply *srv*) (see Jassem 2013o) and *description* (*subscription*, *prescription*, *inscription*) from *scribe* (*scrib*) (see Jassem 2013i, 2014e). The main reason for that is because the consonantal root carries and determines the basic meaning of the word irrespective of its affixation and vowels such as *observation* (*srv*). Historically speaking, classical and modern Arabic dictionaries (e.g., Ibn Manzoor 1974, 2013) used consonantal roots in listing lexical entries, a practice first founded by Alkhaleel, an 8th century Arabic linguist, lexicographer, musician, and mathematician (Jassem 2012e).

The lexical root theory has a simple, straightforward structure, which consists of a theoretical principle or hypothesis and five practical procedures of analysis. The principle states that:

Arabic and English as well as the so-called Indo-European languages are not only genetically related but also are directly descended from one language, which may be Arabic in the end. In fact, it claims in its strongest version that they are all dialects of the same language, whose differences are due to natural and plausible causes and different courses of linguistic change.

In the radical linguistic theory, the above principle has been slightly revised to read:

All human languages are genetically related, which eventually emanated from a single, perfect, sudden language which developed over time into countless human dialects and languages, that continue to become simpler and simpler. That original first language, which may be called radical or root language, has not died out at all but has instead survived uninterrupted into modern day languages to various degrees where some languages have preserved words and forms more than others. Perhaps Arabic, on spatial and temporal grounds, has preserved almost all of its features phonetically, morphologically, syntactically or grammatically, and semantically or lexically.

As to the five applied procedures of the lexical root theory which have been used all along to empirically prove that principle in data collection and analysis, they remain the same: i.e., (a) methodological, (b) lexicological, (c) linguistic, (d) relational, and (e) comparative/historical. As all have been reasonably described in the above studies (Jassem 2012a-f, 2013a-q, 2014a-g), a brief summary will suffice here.

Firstly, the methodological procedure concerns data collection, selection, and statistical analysis. Apart from loan words, *all* language words, affixes, and phonemes are amenable to investigation, and *not only* the core vocabulary as is the common practice in the field (Crystal 2010; Pyles and Algeo 1993: 76-77; Crowley 1997: 88-90, 175-178). However, data selection is practically inevitable since no single study can accomplish that at one time, no matter how ambitious it might be. The most appropriate method for approaching that goal would be to use semantic fields such as the present and the above topics. Cumulative evidence from such findings will aid in formulating rules and laws of language change at a later stage (cf. Jassem 2012f, 2013a-f, 2013l). The statistical analysis employs the percentage formula (see 2.2 below).

Secondly, the lexicological procedure is the initial step in the analysis. Words are analyzed by (i) deleting affixes (e.g., *explained* → *plain*), (ii) using primarily consonantal roots or radicals (e.g., *plain* → *pln*), and (iii) search for correspondence in meaning on the basis of word etymologies and origins as a guide (e.g., Harper 2014), which should be used with discretion,

though. The final outcome yields Arabic *baien*, *baan* (v) 'clear, plain' via /l/-insertion or split from /n/ (Jassem 2013i).

Thirdly, the linguistic procedure handles the analysis of the phonetic, morphological, grammatical and semantic structures and differences between words. The phonetic analysis examines sound changes within and across categories. More precisely, consonants may change their place and manner of articulation as well as voicing. At the level of place, bilabial consonants ↔ labio-dental ↔ dental ↔ alveolar ↔ palatal ↔ velar ↔ uvular ↔ pharyngeal ↔ glottal (where ↔ signals change in both directions); at the level of manner, stops ↔ fricatives ↔ affricates ↔ nasals ↔ laterals ↔ approximants; and at the level of voice, voiced consonants ↔ voiceless. For example, /t/ may turn into /d/ by voice or /th & s/ by manner.

In similar fashion, vowels change as well. Although the number of vowels differ greatly within and between English (Roach 2008; Celce-Mercia et al 2010) and Arabic (Jassem 2012g, 1987, 1993), all can be reduced to three basic long vowels /a: (aa), i: (ee), & u: (oo)/ (and their short versions besides the two diphthongs /ai (ay)/ and /au (aw)/ which are a kind of /i:/ and /u:/ respectively). They may change according to modifications in (i) tongue part (e.g., front ↔ centre ↔ back), (ii) tongue height (e.g., high ↔ mid ↔ low), (iii) length (e.g., long ↔ short), and (iv) lip shape (e.g., round ↔ unround). In fact, the vowels can be, more or less, treated like consonants where /i:/ is a kind of /j (y)/, /u:/ a kind of /w/, and /a:/ a kind of /h/ or vice versa. Their functions are mainly (i) phonetic such as linking consonants to each other in speech and (ii) grammatical like indicating tense, word class, and number (e.g., *sing*, *sang*, *sung*, *song*; *man/men*). Thus their semantic weight is marginal and little in significance, if not at all. For these reasons, vowels may be totally ignored in the analysis because the limited nature of the changes do not affect the final semantic result at all.

Sound changes result in natural and plausible processes like assimilation, dissimilation, deletion, merger, insertion, split, reordering, substitution, syllable loss, re-syllabification, consonant cluster reduction or creation and so on. In addition, sound change may operate in a multi-directional, cyclic, and lexically-diffuse or irregular manner (for detail, see Jassem 2012a-f, 2013c).

Regarding the morphological and grammatical analyses, some overlap obtains. The former examines the inflectional and derivational aspects of words in general (Jassem 2012f, 2013a-b); the latter handles grammatical classes, categories, and functions like determiners, pronouns, prepositions, question words, nouns, verbs, and case (Jassem 2012c-e, 2013l, 2014b-c). Since their influence on the basic meaning of the lexical root is marginal, inflectional and derivational morphemes may also be ignored altogether. As both morphological and grammatical features have already been dealt with in full, there is no need to include them in every single case later.

As regards the semantic analysis, meaning relationships between words are examined, including lexical stability, multiplicity, convergence, divergence, shift, split, change, and variability. Stability means that word meanings have remained constant over time. Multiplicity denotes that words might have two or more meanings. Convergence means two or more formally and semantically similar Arabic words might have yielded the same cognate in English. Divergence signals that words became opposites or antonyms of one another. Shift indicates that words switched their sense within the same field. Lexical split means a word led to two different cognates. Change means a new meaning developed. Variability signals the presence of two or more variants for the same word (for detail, see Jassem 2012a-f).

Fourthly, the relational procedure accounts for the relationship between form and meaning from three angles: formal and semantic similarity (e.g., *three*, *third*, *tertiary* and Arabic *thalath* 'three' (Damascus Arabic *talaat* (Jassem 2012a)), formal similarity and semantic difference (e.g., *ship* and *sheep* (Jassem 2012b), and formal difference and semantic similarity (e.g., *quarter*, *quadrant*, *carat*, *cadre* and Arabic *qeeraaT* 'a fourth; carat' (Jassem 2012a)). As in the morphological and syntactic or grammatical procedures, there is no need to tackle it in every single case for it will lead to undesirably lengthy treatments.

Finally, the comparative historical analysis compares every word in English in particular and German, French, Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit in general with its Arabic counterpart phonetically, morphologically, and semantically on the basis of its history and development in English (e.g., Harper 2014; Pyles and Algeo 1993) and Arabic (e.g., Ibn Manzour 2013; Altha3aalibi 2011; Ibn Seedah 1996) besides the author's knowledge of both Arabic as a first language and English as an equal second language. Discretion should be exercised here due to uncertainties and inaccuracies, especially in Harper's work, though.

To sum up, the most appropriate operational procedure in relating words to each other genetically would be to:

- (i) select a word, any word,
- (ii) identify the source language meaning (e.g., English, Latin, Mandarin Chinese) on the basis of especially word history or etymology. It is essential to begin with meanings, not sounds or sound laws; the former will lead you to the cognate naturally; the latter will get you lost definitely,
- (iii) search for the equivalent meaning in the target language (e.g., Arabic), looking for cognates: i.e., words with similar forms and meanings, and
- (iv) explain the differences in form and meaning between the cognates by following the above steps lexicologically, phonetically, morphologically, and semantically.

That is the whole story simply and truly. For example, *Augustine* (*Augusta*, *Augustan*, *Augustus*) all come from Latin *August* 'holy, sacred', which eventually derives from Arabic *qudus* (*al-qudus*) '(the-) holy, sacred' via reordering and turning /l, q, & d/ into /u, g, & t/; English *Ghost* and German *Geist* are related derivatives or cognates (Jassem 2014e).

2.4.2 Statistical Analysis

The percentage formula will be used for calculating the ratio of cognate words or shared vocabulary, which is obtained by dividing the number of cognates over the total number of investigated words multiplied by a 100. For example, suppose the total number of investigated words is 100, of which 90 are true cognates. The percentage of cognates is calculated thus: $90/100 = 9 \times 100 = 90\%$. Finally, the results are checked against Cowley's (1997: 173, 182) formula to determine whether such words belong to the same language or family (for a survey, see Jassem 2012a-b).

3. Results

The main focus of the results will be on the Arabic lexical (consonantal) radicals or roots of Mandarin Chinese pronouns in the main and other dialects secondarily. Therefore, vowels or their exact quality will be overlooked generally for having little or no semantic impact whatsoever on the final output.

3.1 Singular Pronouns

3.1.1 First Person Pronouns

Wǒ 'I, me' comes from or is cognate to Arabic '*iai* 'me (acc.)' (pronounced *wiai* in spoken Arabic (Jassem 1987, 1993)) or '*ee* 'my, me' in which the glottal stop /ʔ/ and the vowel /ai (ee)/ turned into /w & o/. In old Southern, Northern, and Tang Chinese dialects (SNT), *wǒ* varied with *wū* which can be considered real variants. In early Japanese, a similar form *oi* 'I' was used (en.wikipedia 2014).

Furthermore, in spoken Mandarin, **ǎn** and **ǒu**, both meaning 'I', are infrequently used by the young especially in online communication. While the latter can be clearly seen as a variant of **wǒ** above, the former descends directly from Arabic *ana* 'I' to which it is a true and identical cognate. The same applies to traditional and the other modern Chinese dialects all of which have the consonant /n/ or /ŋ/ in the first singular pronoun like *ŋ'a*, *ŋ'ai*, *ŋu*, *ŋo*: (see Table 2). In Shang *la* 'I' occurred which in Classical Chinese varied with *ŋ'a* (*ŋ'aj'*) where /n/ became /l/. In light of this, they can all be considered variants, which have been simplified into *an* 'I' in modern Chinese, Mandarin.

In short, Chinese had two forms for the first person singular pronoun *I*, which are *wǒ* and *an* and their respective variants. The first survived into standard Mandarin from

Southern, Northern, and Tang dynasties' dialects whereas the latter from Classical Chinese into spoken Mandarin, Wu, Hakka, and Yue. In all, differences in pronunciation ensued, of course. The same situation holds for Arabic *ana/iai* ('*ee*') 'I/me (me/my)' and most of the so-called Indo-European languages like English *I/me*, German *Ich/mich*, Latin *Ego/me*, and French *Je/moi*.

3.1.2 Second Person Pronouns

Nǐ 'you (informal)' is informal, whose formal variant is **nǐn** 'you (formal, polite)' which is used in speaking to elders and people of authority. Both can be directly derived from two Arabic cognates. That is, the first is *anta/anti* 'you (m/f)' where (i) /n & t/ merged into /n/ in **nǐ** or (ii) /t/ turned into /n/ in **nǐn** which may also come from the Arabic plural form *antun* 'you (fem. pl)' via /t & n/-merger. Alternatively, they may derive from Arabic *na2nu* 'we' via /2/-loss and lexical or semantic shift: i.e., *we* became *you*. However, the first option is the likeliest by analogy with Japanese *anta/anata* 'you' (and Malay *anda* 'you' also), which directly descended from Arabic *anta* above (Jassem 2013l).

Traditional and modern Chinese dialects exhibit little variation in the form of the above pronoun, which can all be considered alternants of it. All derive from Arabic *anta* in which /k/ in the Chinese forms might have arisen from /t/ or from emphatic Arabic *innak* 'you' which is nearly identical to Classical Chinese *nak*. In Old English, a similar form occurred, which was *inc* 'you' that varied with *ge/you* in some contexts (Jassem 2013d).

In addressing deities and gods, **mi** 'you' is sometimes used which can be considered (i) a variant of *ni* by replacing /n/ with /m/ or (ii) derived from the Arabic plural form *antum* 'you (m/pl.)' via /n, t, & m/-merger into /m/. In Arabic, people of authority are addressed by using the plural form of the same pronoun.

3.1.3 Third Person Pronouns

Tā 'he/him; she/her; it' obtains directly from the Arabic demonstrative pronoun *ti (tihi)* 'this (f)' because in traditional Chinese usage *ta/tamen* were used as demonstrative pronouns as was the case in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and English third person pronouns like *it/they* 'lit., this' (see Jassem 2012d, 2013l). Another option is Arabic *ta-* 'prefixed she' via lexical shift, though less likely.

In traditional and modern Chinese dialects, third person pronouns exhibit a great deal of variability. In some traditional dialects, *te* varied with *ge* in Shang and Classical Chinese besides *kot* in the former; in traditional Southern, Northern, and Tang dynasties' dialects, *ta* varied with *qi*, *ge*, *yi*, and *zhi* and in modern dialects with *hi*, *ki*, *kei*. All can be traced back to Arabic (i) *hua/hia* 'he/she' in which /h/ evolved into /q, k, g, y, or zh/, or (ii) *iaka* 'you (acc.)' via lexical shift and replacing /k/ by /q, g, y, or zh/. Furthermore, since the

third person pronoun functioned as a demonstrative in Mandarin and all traditional Chinese dialects as a matter of fact, all other variants like *kot*, *ki*, *qi/qu*, *ge* might have actually arisen from other demonstrative Arabic variants. For example, *kot* came from Arabic *kait* 'such; like this', a variant of *kaih/dhaih* 'like this', *ka-dha* 'like this', or *dhak* 'that' via reversal and turning /dh/ into /t/; *ke*, *qi*, *ge*, *zhi/yi* from Arabic (i) *kaih* 'such, like this' via different sound changes where /k/ became /g, zh, or y/ while /h/ was dropped (cf. English *she* in Jassem (2012d, 2013l)).

3.2 Plural Pronouns

In Mandarin Chinese, the plural is formed by adding the suffix *-men* to the singular forms of the pronouns, yielding **wōmen** 'we, us', **nǐmen** 'you (pl)', and **tāmen** 'they/them (pl)'. In Arabic, the plural is formed by adding the suffixes /-um/ to masculine pronouns as in *hu(a)/hum* 'he/they' or /-un(na)/ to feminine forms as in *hi(a)/hun(na)* 'she/they'. On this basis, it can be safely said that the Chinese pronominal plural marker is (i) a combination of both Arabic /m & n/ into one morpheme, (ii) a split of /m/ into /n & m/ or vice versa, or (iii) a dissimilation of the first element of *-nna* 'plural feminine marker': i.e., *-nna* → *mna* → *man* (**men**).

In addition, in formal and northern Mandarin Chinese, **zánmen** 'you & I' is used, whose direct Arabic cognate is *na2nu* (pronounced *2inna*, *i2na* in spoken Arabic) in which /2/, a voiceless pharyngeal fricative, became /z/. In Latin and French, *nos/nous* 'we' are direct cognates as well via reversal and turning /s/ into /z/ (Jassem 2013d, 2013l). Thus, these Arabic, English, French, Latin, and Chinese forms are real cognates.

3.3 Genitive Pronouns

The three Mandarin Chinese genitive suffixes have true Arabic cognates all. First, the commonest suffix **de** 'of, whose' is a direct cognate of Arabic *dhi* 'of, whose' in which /dh/ became /d/ (see Jassem 2012c-d, 2014c). The Arabic particle expresses the genitive when used between two nouns: the first being the owner, the second the owned. Otherwise, it means 'this'. It is worth noting that the same particle occurs in French, Italian, and German (see Jassem 2012c-d).

Secondly, the old people's suffix **ling** as in *lingzun* 'your father' comes from Arabic *lakun* 'to you (f. pl.)', from *laki* 'to you (sing. f.)' via reordering and turning /k/ into /g/. Finally, the literary style suffix **qi** 'his, her' as in *qizun* 'his/her father' derives from (i) the Arabic possessive and accusative suffix *-ka/-ki* 'you (m/f)' via lexical shift, (ii) *-hi/-hu* 'his', *-ha* 'her' where /h/ became /q/, or (iii) *kaih* 'like this' via /h/-loss (see 3.1.3 above). It has to be noted that *zun* 'father' also derives from Arabic *Sunu* 'son, uncle, brother' via lexical shift and turning /S/ into /z/ (Jassem 2013k).

3.4 Demonstrative Pronouns

All the Mandarin Chinese demonstrative pronouns have Arabic cognates. Both the proximal singular form **zhège** 'this' and its plural **zhèxiē** 'these' and the distal singular **nàge** 'that' and its plural **nàxiē** 'those' consist of two parts or morphemes each, the second being the classifier *ge* in the singular and *xiē* in the plural. Viewed thus, **zhège** derives from Arabic (i) *dha* 'this' in which /dh/ became /zh/ and (ii) *-ka* 'distal suffix' as in *dhak(a)* 'that' where /k/ turned into /g (x)/; likewise, **nàge** obtains from Arabic *huna* 'here' and/or its distal variant *hunak(a)* 'there' via lexical shift, /h/-loss, and turning /k/ into /g (x)/.

In addition, **ta/tāmen** 'he, she, it/they; this/these' were also used, on top of being third person pronouns, as demonstratives in traditional usage; their true and direct Arabic cognate is *ti (tihi)* 'this (f.)' as has already been shown.

3.5 Reflexive Pronouns

The Mandarin Chinese reflexive form **ziji** 'self (myself, yourself)', which is added after the pronoun, is similar to **zhège** 'this' above. As such, it is cognate to Arabic *dhaat* 'self', related to Arabic *dha* 'this' and *dhak* 'that' above, in which /dh & t (k)/ became /z & j/. Alternatively, it is cognate to spoken Egyptian Arabic *zaiyee* 'lit., like me; myself' in which /y/ became /j/

To sum up, the total number of Mandarin Chinese *personal, demonstrative, possessive, and reflexive pronouns* amounted to 10, all of which have true Arabic cognates: i.e., 100%. All the other Chinese pronouns of all types and dialects have true Arabic cognates as well.

4. Discussion

The above results clearly demonstrate that Arabic and (Mandarin) Chinese *pronouns* are true cognates for having similar or identical forms and meanings. Their formal differences, however, are due to natural and plausible causes and different courses of phonetic, morphological and semantic change. As all the pronouns have true Arabic cognates, the ratio of shared vocabulary between both amounts to 100%, which exceeds Cowley's (1997: 172-173) 100 word list-based classification according to which an 80% ratio indicates membership to the same language- i.e., dialects.

Moreover, on a more general level, they are in harmony with all the findings of previous studies (Jassem 2012a-f, 2013a-q, 2014a-g) in which English, German, French, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit and Arabic were all found to be rather dialects of the same language, let alone the same family. In particular, Jassem (2012d, 2013l) established without a single shred of doubt the Arabic source cognates of English, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit pronouns. Therefore, this entails that Chinese pronouns are not only cognates to Arabic but also to all Indo-European ones as well. However, Mandarin Chinese is the simplest and easiest of all, structurally

speaking. Therefore, this supports the postulation of a radical or root language from which all human languages descended (see below).

As a consequence, the results lend further support to the lexical root or radical linguistic theory which has been found as adequate for the present analysis as it was for the previous ones. The main principle which states that all world languages are genetically related is, therefore, theoretically and verifiably sound and empirically true. Retracing Chinese *pronouns* here and the above-mentioned Indo-European ones earlier (Jassem 2012d, 2013l) back to true Arabic cognates clearly substantiates that on all planes of analysis: phonetic, morphological, grammatical, and semantic.

At the phonetic level, all the changes were natural and plausible including substitution, deletion, merger, split, reordering, and so on. Morphologically, Chinese is a very structurally simple language in lacking gender and case distinctions in pronouns, which might be due to the logographic system of writing in the first place. In fact, Chinese word classes are not inflected for person, number, gender, case, and tense.

Semantically, lexical stability was the general pattern where most pronouns here maintained their basic meanings across the languages. The recurrence of lexical convergence in the data was due to formal and semantic similarity between Arabic words, on the one hand, and their Chinese cognates, on the other. For example, *ni(n)*; *kot*, *ke*, *qi*, *zhi*, and so on might each derive from different Arabic words, all formally and semantically similar (see 3.1.2-3 above). Lexical shift occurred in *tā*, which shifted from a demonstrative to a third person pronoun (see 3.1.3 above); possessive *-de* showed a similar pattern whose Arabic cognate *dhi* is used differently (see 3.3 above). Finally, lexical variability was rampant in first and third person pronouns which had different forms in traditional and modern Chinese dialects as can be clearly seen in Table 2 above.

What are the implications and significance of such findings? They signify a number of issues, which back up Jassem's (2014a-b, 2014e) rather lengthy elaboration on the subject. First, they signify that Chinese is not only genetically related to Arabic but also to English, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit, all of which have two sets of pronouns: subjective and objective. For example, all these languages have two forms for the first person singular pronoun: i.e., *I/me* in English, *Ego/me* in Latin, *an/wǒ* in Chinese, and *ana/iai* in Arabic. More precisely, Mandarin Chinese *wǒ/an* can be considered such remnants or residues which underwent lexical shift from (subjective/objective) case to (formal/informal) style. Furthermore, in all these languages, third person pronouns emanated from demonstrative pronouns which they all share with Arabic in form and meaning but not in usage or function. However, Mandarin Chinese is the simplest on all counts in this regard, which shows that the split between Chinese and such languages happened very, very much earlier, which was aggravated by physical and social isolation also.

Secondly, from the viewpoint of general linguistic theory, language typology or taxonomy, and language origin (Jassem 2013), they show, as a result, that there was a radical or root world language from which all human languages came in the first place, which emerged suddenly perfectly. So one can postulate in light of the evidence presented in this paper that the Radical Language had a complex structure with two sets of pronouns, which became simpler and simpler over time. As Mandarin Chinese is the simplest and Arabic is the most complex and varied phonetically, morphologically, and lexically, the latter is closer to the source, parent, or radical language. Therefore, this entails that there is no need to *reconstruct* a hypothetical, fictitious old world language (Ruhlen 1987, 1994) or proto-language (Campbell 2004; Harper 2014); rather that proto-language, or radical language to be more precise, has variably survived into today's languages here, the closest descendant of which is Arabic. Thus one can say that early (prehistoric) man, or Adam and Eve for the matter, spoke a language which was not too far removed or different from Chinese, English, German, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, or Arabic, the last of which is the nearest, closest, and likeliest spatially, temporally, and, above all, structurally. The differences amongst such languages are the consequence of the operation of the natural forces of language change phonetically, morphologically, grammatically, and semantically as well as orthographically.

There are at least two strong, logical arguments for the existence of a perfect radical language: one from the nature of language acquisition and/or learning and the other from the course of language evolution. As to the former, all human languages, it is taken for granted, are the result of learning; one speaks a language because someone (usually the parents) taught him it; it is really and certainly impossible otherwise. Whether it was yesterday's language at *time zero* when humanity first appeared on earth, today's language in the 21st century, or tomorrow's language a million years later, the same rule would still apply irrespective of time. In fact, time is immaterial because the same outcome would still obtain as a million or a billion years would make no difference whatsoever. This unshakably solid and well-established fact is the axis upon which all first and second language acquisition research rotates and supports worldwide (for a survey, see Crystal 2010; Yule 2006; Jassem 1987, 1993, 1994). That is, all languages are acquired or learnt without exception. In this sense, language learning is just like computer processing where both the hardware and software have to be designed by someone; a computer neither makes nor runs itself; it must be designed and prompted externally.

As to language evolution, the main principle is that languages change by becoming structurally simpler and simpler over time especially at the phonetic and morphological level. This entails that the Radical Language was perfect and/or more complex but got simpler and simpler at every step of the change and as time went by, whether the simplification was within the same language or across languages. For example, Mandarin Chinese pronouns, which are simpler than traditional ones, are also simpler than their Arabic cognates phonetically, morphologically, and semantically; the same applies to today's Arabic words themselves, which

are simpler than Classical Arabic ones. Furthermore, the change or simplification progressed extremely slowly over time, spanning thousands of years to such an extent that nobody could have ever imagined. For instance, Pagel et al (2013) showed that some 27 common English core words (e.g., pronouns) were not any different 15, 000.00 years ago during which they changed or simplified little; this runs contrary to current established knowledge about their history of not more than two millennia at the very most (e.g., Pyles and Algeo 1996).

So, as all languages change over time by splitting up into simpler dialects due to internal (e.g., linguistic) and external (e.g., social) factors (for a survey, see Jassem 1987, 1993, 1994), they must have, by inference, descended, evolved, or originated eventually from one perfect, complex source. Over time, they have changed form and meaning but not substance where the essence of the word remained intact: i.e., the word itself. For example, Arabic *ana* 'I', Chinese *an* 'I', English and German *me/mich*, and Latin/French *me/moi* all kept their substance in general as words denoting first person pronouns in all but changed their form or pronunciation where /n/ became /m/ in some, for instance. The same applies to third person pronouns, all of which stemmed from the demonstrative pronoun, which has the same form in Arabic also. Therefore, this entails, in light of these facts, that pre-historic language has survived to this day into contemporary world languages, though variably. In other words, all current human languages are variations on or variable developments of that old, primary, sudden, perfect source, called Radical Language. Put more simply, such a pre-historic language has never died out and will never do so, which still exists to varying degrees in all human languages in current use. The mutation or change is just like what happens to any natural phenomenon such as the relationship between snow, ice, sleet, fog, dew, vapour, and *water* (all are water) or dust, sand, ash, rock, stone, and *earth* (all are earth). Viewed thus, language is just like a chameleon, which changes skin colour but not body, flesh, and spirit. Disintegration and reintegration is the pattern in all.

One might ask where and when that happened exactly. Although that is actually immaterial to the final conclusion of this research, the original homeland of the radical language must have been the place of its closest descendants spatially and temporally, especially the one that resembles it the most, the one which has preserved almost all its features, if not all, until today, the one that still occupies the seat and cradle of ancient civilizations. In other words, the area geographically named Arabia, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, broadly speaking.

In a nutshell, the bulk of linguistic evidence from pronouns here and elsewhere (Jassem 2012d, 2013l) shows that there must have been a radical or root language from which all human languages initially stemmed and into which it has survived variably, though getting simpler and simpler over time. Earlier, question words in Arabic and the so-called Indo-European languages have provided strong clues to that (Jassem 2012d, 2013l). Of course, further research is needed into the subject which will shed further light on language typology, taxonomy, and origin. Numerically speaking, such a root language, on the basis of pronominal data alone here, has a

current speaker population of no less than 5 billion users out of a total world population of 7 billion, judging by world language distribution statistics.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The main findings of the study show that the radical linguistic theory, a revised version of lexical root theory, has been adequate for the analysis of the close genetic relationships between *pronouns* in Arabic and Chinese here as well as between Arabic, English, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit pronouns before (Jassem 2012d, 2013l). The main results can be summed up as follows:

- i) Arabic and Chinese *pronouns* (as well as English, German, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit) are true cognates with the same or similar forms and meanings, whose differences are due to natural and plausible causes and different courses of phonetic, morphological, and lexical change. The Arabic origins and/or cognates of Chinese pronouns can be summed up as follows:
 - a) Formal Mandarin Chinese *wǒ* 'I' and Arabic *iai* 'me' or '*ee* 'me, my' are true cognates where front vowels became back ones; the same applies to English *I*, French *Je*, Latin *Ego*, and Japanese *oi* via different sound changes.
 - b) Informal Mandarin Chinese *an* 'I' and Arabic *ana* 'I' are cognates; the same holds for English *me*, German *mich*, French *moi*, Latin *me*, Romanian *am*, turning /n/ into /m/.
 - c) Mandarin Chinese *ni(n)* 'you' and Arabic *anta* 'you' are cognates where /t/ became /n/; the same applies to Old English *thou/thine*, German *du/dein*, French *tu/tien*, Latin *te*, Japanese *anta/anata* 'you', Malay *anda* 'you' as a result of different sound routes like reversal and /t/-mutation into /th (d)/ in English and German.
 - d) Informal Chinese *zanmen* 'we' and Arabic *na2nu* (spoken *2inna*) are cognates in which /2/ became /z/; the same goes for English *we/us*, German *wir/uns*, French *nos*, Latin *nous* via different processes like reversal and turning /s/ into /z/.
 - e) Mandarin Chinese *tā* 'he, she, it; that' and Arabic *ti* 'this' are cognates; the same applies to all third person pronouns as well in English and Indo-European languages such as English *she, it, they* besides *the, this, that, there, than, though, although*, all of which originally mean 'this' (Jassem 2014c).
 - f) Phonetically, the main changes included substitution, reversal, reordering, split, and merger; lexically, the recurrent patterns were stability, convergence, multiplicity, shift, split, and variability; convergence and multiplicity emanated

from the formal and semantic similarities between Arabic words from which Chinese, English, and Indo-European words stemmed in the first place.

- ii) All such languages have two sets of pronouns: nominative and accusative, with Mandarin Chinese being the simplest in which they have been reduced to their bare minimum where *wǒ/an* is a residue of that dichotomy. This means that the early or prehistoric language, called Radical Language here, had such a complex system which became simpler and simpler over time.
- iii) The Radical Language, or early prehistoric language, is real which has variably survived into today's languages; Arabic resembles it the most closely due to its phonetic capacity and complexity, huge lexical variety and multiplicity as shown in its *pronouns* in comparison to those in Chinese, English, and Indo-European languages, which all point to Arabic being the Radical Language.
- iv) Finally, the current work supports Jassem's (2012a-f, 2013a-q, 2014a-g) calls for further research into all language levels, especially lexis or vocabulary. Also the application of such findings to language teaching, lexicology and lexicography, translation (Jassem 2014d), cultural (including anthropological and historical) awareness, understanding, and heritage is badly needed to promote and expedite constructive cooperation and acculturation.

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