

User's guide for the Tel-Aviv University audio database of Judeo-Tripolitanian Arabic¹

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Judeo-Tripolitanian Arabic (JTA) is an endangered dialect of Arabic, spoken primarily in Israel by Jews who emigrated from Tripoli, the capital city of Libya. The dialect is distinct from the Muslim variety spoken in the city, and from other Judeo-Arabic dialects spoken in Libya (e.g., Yefreni; D'Anna 2021). According to the 2023 yearly report of the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, only a few hundreds of the 10,100 Libya-born Jewish citizens of Israel today are under the age of 65.² The vast majority of second-generation immigrants have not acquired the dialect, which is therefore unfortunately expected to disappear as a native language in the decades to come.

Aspects of the phonology, morphology and syntax of JTA have previously been described in Yoda (2005), based on recordings from nine speakers born and raised in Tripoli city.

This is the first public database of transcribed and annotated recordings of JTA. It consists of recordings of a speaker who was born in the city of Tripoli in 1947 and emigrated with his family to Israel in 1949, continuing to speak the language at home and within the community. Elicitation sessions were conducted in Hebrew between March 2022 and March 2024. The database contains approximately 2,200 JTA productions, pruned from sessions as single words in isolation or as phrases. Each production is accompanied with the following information, given in columns (from left to right):

1. **Item number.**
2. **Session number.**
3. **Session date.**
4. **File name.**
5. **Transcription:**
 - a. Given in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), with the exception of stress, which is indicated by an acute accent (´).

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² *Population – Statistical Abstract of Israel 2023 – No. 74*. The full report is available online at: <https://www.cbs.gov.il/en/publications/Pages/2023/Population-Statistical-Abstract-of-Israel-202-No-74.aspx>

- b. Pauses are marked with [P], hesitations/corrections with [M].
 - c. Some words may appear more than once with different transcriptions, reflecting within-speaker variation.
 - d. Generally, each word (i.e., each separated string in the transcription) carries one stress. Exceptions are *ma* (negation), *ħab* (modal), *ka* (if/as) and the prepositions *ʕal* 'on', and *min* 'from', which may appear with or without stress.
6. **Link to the recording.**
 7. **Gloss:** An English gloss.
 8. **Morphological segmentation:** A segmentation of the word into morphemes (when possible).
 9. **Morphological gloss:** Morphological glosses follow the conventions below:

abbrev.	value	category
1	1st person	person
2	2nd person	person
3	3rd person	person
POSS	possessive	possessive determiner, pronoun and pronominal index slot
ACC	accusative	grammatical case relator
M	masculine	gender
F	feminine	gender
SG	singular	number
DU	dual	number
PL	plural	number
/	non-concatenative morphology, e.g., broken plurals	
SGT	singulative	nominal
IMP	imperative	mood
PFV	perfective	aspect
IPFV	imperfective	aspect
PROG	progressive	aspect
NRFUT	near future	aspect

abbrev.	value	category
DET	determiner	pronominal
NEG	negative	
NEG.IMP	negative (imperative form)	
DO	direct object	pronominal index slot
IO	indirect object	pronominal index slot
CONJ	conjunctive	interpropositional relation
DISJ	disjunction	interpropositional relation
EXIST	existential	grammatical verb
CARD	cardinal	numeral
ORD	ordinal	numeral
DEM	demonstrative	determination
APTCP	active participle	
PPTCP	passive participle	
VOC	vocative	
[ALL CAPS]	recent loanword/code switch	loanword
F	construct-state linking morpheme	
V, VI, VII, X	verbal template prefixes	
<VIII>	verbal template infix	

In cases of syncretism in affixes (e.g., the prefix *t-* stands for both ‘2msg’ and ‘3fsg’), the gloss corresponds to the intended meaning provided by the speaker.

10. Syllable structure. C = consonant, V = vowel, EEE = pause.

Verbs are classified with respect to two additional properties:

11. **Binyan** (also *Wazan*; plural *Binyanim*): The vocalic and prosodic template characteristic of Semitic verbal morphology, which may include affixes. In Judeo-Tripolotanian Arabic, nine of the traditional Arabic Binyanim are used. Verbs are classified on the basis of the following, traditional enumeration of Binyanim (C stands for a consonant slot):

- I. CCáC
- II. CəCCáC
- III. CaCáC
- IV. Not used in JTA
- V. t̤̣-CəCCáC
- VI. t̤̣-CaCáC
- VII. n-əCCáC
- VIII. Cə<t̤̣>CəC
- IX. Not used in JTA
- X. stə-CCáC
- XI. CCáC

12. **Gizra** (plural Gzarot): The type of the root according to the traditional analysis of Semitic languages:

- a. “Strong triradical” (XYZ) roots: roots with three stable consonants that are not deleted across the paradigm. For example, [kt̤̣áḅ] ‘he wrote’.
- b. Quadriradical roots (WXYZ): roots with four consonants. For example, [ʕafláq] ‘he distressed (someone)’.
- c. “Geminated” (XYY) roots, in which the second and third root consonants are identical and typically surface as a double consonant. For example, [hább] ‘he loved’.
- d. Glide-first roots (jXY; sometimes referred to as “weak” or “assimilated”). For example, [j-uzáʕa-ni] ‘will be painful to me’.
- e. Glide-second roots (XjY; sometimes referred to as “hollow”). For example, [tʕár] ‘he flew’.
- f. Glide-third roots (XYj; sometimes referred to as “defective” or “lame”). For example, [nsá] ‘he forgot’.

Some roots belong to two root-types at the same time. For example, [ʒá] ‘he came’ is classified as both glide-second and glide-third (XjY and XYj).

The database will be updated and corrected periodically. For questions, comments, or to report any errors you come across, please contact us at phoncomplab@gmail.com.

References

Yoda, Sumikazu. 2005. The Arabic dialect of the Jews in Tripoli (Libya): grammar, text and glossary, volume 35 of *Semitica viva*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

D'Anna, Luca. 2021. The Judeo-Arabic dialect of Yefren (Libya): phonological and morphological notes. *Journal of Jewish Languages*, 9(1), 1-31.