

A Study of Phonological Variations in the Baghdad Arabic Dialect

دراسة في التنوعات الصوتية لهجة البغدادية العربية

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of phonology in language variation at local/native, (vernacular) national, and international levels. These variations in language may occur for the need of the speaker to reduce the difficulties of sound articulation in some speech positions. As a result, Arabic has various dialects that are spoken in different Arabic countries. The Baghdadi dialect is one of these variations which has its own rules and conditions. This study deals with important phonological issues related to the Baghdadi dialect which is one of the common dialects in Iraq. The study looks at the definitions of phonology, Arabic Phonology, and the Baghdadi dialect of Arabic at the segmental level as well as the similarities and differences between these two dialects. It also considers vowels of Arabic phonology and the Baghdadi dialect (monophthongs and diphthongs), and the consonants of the two dialects. The similarities and dissimilarities of sounds in the two dialects, problematic phonetic system symbols/sounds, voiced consonants, voiceless consonants and plosive consonants in the two languages are considered. The purpose of this study is to trace the phonological variations in the Baghdadi dialect and how far this dialect differs from Standard Arabic (MSA). This paper concludes that the phonological variations in the Baghdadi dialect result from one of three processes, either replacing, omitting, or inserting some sounds, and these phonological variations have two forms: either they have their origin in classical Arabic (CL), and this type follows specific rules, or they don't have specific rules and depend on hearing.

الخلاصة

تتناول هذه الدراسة دور علم الأصوات في التنوع اللغوي على المستويات المحلية (المحلانية) والوطنية والدولية. وقد تنشأ هذه التنوعات اللغوية نتيجة حاجة المتكلم إلى تخفيف صعوبات النطق في بعض المواقع الكلامية. وعليه، تمتلك اللغة العربية لهجات متعددة تُستخدم في مختلف البلدان العربية، وتُعدّ لهجة البغدادية إحدى هذه التنوعات التي تخضع لقواعدها وشروطها الخاصة. وتعالج هذه الدراسة جملةً من القضايا الصوتية المهمة المتعلقة باللهجة البغدادية، باعتبارها إحدى اللهجات الشائعة في العراق، إذ تستعرض تعريفات علم الأصوات وعلم الأصوات العربي واللهجة البغدادية على المستوى التجزيئي، فضلاً عن أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين هاتين اللهجتين. كما تتناول الدراسة أصوات (أحرف) العلة في علم الأصوات العربي وفي اللهجة البغدادية -أحادية الحركة وثنائية الحركة- إلى جانب الأصوات الصامتة في كلتا اللهجتين. وتُدرس كذلك أوجه التماثل والتباين بين الأصوات في اللهجتين، وإشكاليات الرموز الصوتية، والأصوات المجهورة، والمهموسة، والانفجارية. والغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تتبع التنوعات الصوتية في اللهجة البغدادية ومدى اختلافها عن العربية الفصحى. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن التنوعات الصوتية في اللهجة البغدادية تنتج عن إحدى ثلاث عمليات: الإبدال، أو الحذف، أو الإدراج. وتتخذ هذه التنوعات شكلين: إما أن تكون ذات أصل فصيح وتخضع لقواعد محددة، وإما أن تخلو من قواعد ثابتة وتستند إلى السماع.

Keywords

الكلمات المفتاحية

علم الأصوات العربي، علم الأصوات الإنكليزي، اللغة، اللهجة البغدادية، اللسانيات

Arabic phonology, English phonology, language, Baghdadi dialect, linguistics

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1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic has a unique sound system that differs from many other languages in terms of the diacritics system it has. Thus, dealing with Arabic makes non-Arabic researchers need special processes in terms of; its sentence structure, its

orthography, the diacritics system, and its special script to understand the process of pronouncing the syllables in Arabic. Understanding the Arabic sound system is essential as it explores for non-Arabic speakers how such a language can prove itself as a strong language even when it has only three vowel letters which in turn form only six vowel sounds. This study is going to explain how the consonant sounds in Arabic can join themselves with each other in the absence of these three vowel letters. These themes and others will be the base of this study which will be explained by using various examples from Arabic and the Baghdadi dialect.

It is noticed that the sound system of Arabic differs from Latin languages, e.g. English, in that each Arabic letter symbolizes one sound each letter has diacritics that change the pronunciation of this letter. Thus, this article poses the following research questions:

- What are the phonological variations in the Baghdadi dialect?
- Do these phonological variations have any relation to the Standard Arabic?

By answering these questions through the lines of this paper, this paper will contribute by giving a comprehensive understanding of the Arabic sound system as well as the phonological variations in the Baghdadi dialect. The methodology of this study will include giving various examples to explain with detail how the sounds are pronounced and joined with each other.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of phonology has its importance from the fact that, as Omachonu (2010) states, it serves as lubrication for communication because it organizes human sounds and speech (Omachonu, 2010). There are many definitions regarding phonology. Azikiwe (1998) sees phonology as the “acoustic characteristics of speech, the sound aspect of language made up of the segmental phonemes which cover the vowels, semivowels, and consonants; and the suprasegmental phonemes which include the stress pitch and juncture of the language”. For Yule (1996), “phonology is essentially the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds in a language”. At the same level, Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) consider “phonology” as the description of the systems and patterns of sounds that occur in a language. According to Webster’s Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus (2010), phonology is “the study of speech sounds and their development; and of the sound systems of language”. Similarly, Hornby (2010) states that phonology is “the study of speech sounds of a particular language”, and Omachonu (2010), defines “phonology as the study of the systems and patterns that form units in a language”.

From all the above definitions, phonology can be summed up to be the study of speech sounds in a particular language which covers both the segmental (consonants, consonant clusters, diphthongs, triphthongs (vowels) and suprasegmental) stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns.

Arabic, which is the base of this study, originates from a group of languages called the Semitic languages. It was first formed sometime between the 1st and 4th centuries. Old Arabic, most likely came to fruition in what is now known as Saudi Arabia. Arabic began to develop as time went on. Classical Arabic is what the Quran contains, but eventually, Modern Standard Arabic developed according to the needs of developments in life. The Arabic language has many dialects that differ in many dimensions, primarily geography and social class. Geo-linguistically, the Arab world can be divided in many different ways. The main Arabic dialects are Gulf Arabic, Iraqi Arabic, Levantine Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, and Maghrebi Arabic (Biadys & Hirschberg 2009).

Many terms used in the various Arabic dialects originate from standard (classical) Arabic. In 1956, Taimur (as cited in Bakir 1984) attempted to demonstrate his support for linking classical Arabic with the various dialects used in the Arab World by providing examples (178–235) to demonstrate that there are terms used in contemporary spoken varieties of Arabic that have roots in the dialects spoken by ancient Arabs. Regarding pronunciation, however, these terms have developed.

The Iraqi Arabic or what is known as “Mesopotamian Arabic,” is a dialect of Arabic and a subgroup of the Afro-Asiatic language family. Iraqi Arabic includes three distinguished sub-dialects within the country: Baghdadi, Southern, and Maslawi dialects (Kessler, 2003). This paper will focus only on the Baghdadi dialect as one of the varieties of the Iraqi Arabic dialects. In Iraq, Aramaic was the lingua franca for many years, and, as may be expected, Iraqi Arabic demonstrates signs of an Aramaic substrate; the Gelet variety kept the features of Babylonian Aramaic until Iraq was affected by the Mongol occupation in 1258. In this era, many things changed, including the language (Kessler, 2003). Furthermore, due to Iraq’s inherent multiculturalism, Iraqi Arabic exhibits extensive borrowing in its lexicon from Aramaic, Akkadian, Kurdish, and Turkish. Regarding Arabic dialects, Janet C.E. Watson (2011) studied the Arabic dialects in general by making a comparison of dialect material across widely geographically separated areas showing both long-distance effects due to population movement and local effects due to interaction with the original local languages.

At the level of finding the differences between the Iraqi Arabic dialects and Modern Standard Arabic, Saja Albuarabi (2018) studied the linguistic history of Iraqi Arabic by concentrating on the most important parts of the language which are the phonological, morphological, and syntactical features, and discusses how Iraqi Arabic dialect is different from Modern

Standard Arabic. According to Al-Shabi (1965), Iraqi Arabic was affected by the Mughal occupation early in the second half of the seventh (656 AH). In this era, many things had changed including the language. In his study, Al-Shabi points out that the present dialect of Iraqis is not much different from the dialect of the Iraqis in the ancient era of the Mugal. His study has been supported by Mutar (2009), who states that “There is only one Iraqi dialect for people who speak Arabic in Iraq, which is “Iraqi Arabic”. It is wrong to return the origin of Iraqi dialects to one of the Arabic community, such as the dialect of Bin Tamim, and consider its origins as Kḥalījī dialect (the dialect of the Gulf).” The author illustrates that in the history of Iraqi linguistics, the Iraqi dialect is considered a pure Iraqi dialect, and its influence has increased to the Gulf countries because of the effects of marriage, cultural relations, and trade (Mutar (2009:9).

As mentioned earlier, the Iraqi dialect includes three distinguished sub-dialects within the country. Muter (2009) explains that the Iraqi dialect tends to be rural when one moves from Mosul to the South. The Baghdadi dialect is a famous dialect in Iraq. It can be found in the middle of Iraq, in Baghdad, the Capital, and the areas near it. This dialect is characterized by its simplicity and speech clarity, which make it closer to Iraqi dialects. It is worth mentioning that the characteristic Baghdadi dialect was not used by a lot of people who lived in that area, while people like Jews and Christians kept using the dialect because they did not mix or marry other people who came from different places (Muter, 2009, p. 10). Regarding the study of the Baghdadi dialect, Muna Jasim Arif (2021) studied the alternation of consonants in the Iraqi "Baghdad" Dialect” and how the dialect of Baghdad inhabitants tends to replace [S] with [S:] and how the sound [q] alternates with [G]. On the other hand, AbdulRahman Abbood Hassan (2015) attempts to look at the sound system of Baghdadi Arabic in view of the Distinctive Feature Theory to see how far such a theory would be applicable to the language variety. Thus, what will distinguish this study from all the others is its general coverage of all the processes that respond to the phonological variations of Baghdadi dialects, such as substitution, omission, and insertion of sounds.

3. VARIATION OF IRAQI DIALECT

The Arabic dialects spoken in Iraq fall into two main categories, called *qeltu* and *gēlet*. This division was first described by Haim Blanc in his well-known book *Communal Dialects in Baghdad* (1964). Blanc coined the terms *qeltu* and *gēlet* (for typographical reasons he used the symbol *e* instead of *è*). The keywords *qeltu* and *gēlet* (both harking back to Old Arabic *qultu* ‘I said’) encapsulate two distinguishing linguistic features: the treatment of the Old Arabic uvular stop *q* and the shape of the inflectional suffix of the 1st person singular perfect.

The Iraqi dialect is one of the Semitic dialects that has undergone change and modernization. It was able to modify and form some of its interrogative tools and invent tools that could be new or alien to the language. Iraqis speak a variety of Standard Arabic, known as the Iraqi dialect. Depending on the region in which a dialect is spoken, there may be minor variations here and there. Baghdadi is one of the most widely spoken dialects in Iraq. This dialect is highly intelligible, and speakers of different dialects can readily understand each other.

3.1. Consonants in Standard Arabic

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has (29) letters and each letter symbolizes a sound. Al- Bazi (2006) states that the Iraqi dialect has 3 consonants more than the MSA, and 3 additional long vowels compared to the standard ones (Al- Bazi, 2006:23). The following table introduces the Arabic letters.

TABLE I. STANDARD ARABIC PHONOLOGY

No	Arabic sounds	sounds symbols	Arabic Examples	IPA Transcription	English Translation
1	ء	/ʔ/	أسد	ʔsad	Lion (n.)
2	ا	/a/	باب	ba:b	Door (n.)
3	ب	/b/	بط	baʔ	Duck (n.)
4	ت	/t/	تمر	Tamr	Dates (n.)
5	ث	/θ/	ثعلب	θʕlab	Wolf (n.)
6	ج	/dʒ/	جمل	dʒamal	Camel (n.)
7	ح	/ħ/	حلوى	ħalwa	Sweet
8	خ	/X/	خضار	xoda:r	Vegetables (n.)
9	د	/d/	درس	Dars	Lesson (n.)
10	ذ	/ð/	ذبابة	ðubabat	Fly (n.)
11	ر	/r/	رف	Raf	Shelf (n.)
12	ز	/z/	زرع	zarʕ	Plants (n.)
13	س	/s/	ساعة	aʕsat	Watch (n.)
14	ش	/ʃ/	شبكة	ʃabakat	Net (n.) (n.)
15	ص	/s/	صقر	ʕakar	Falcon
16	ض	/d/	ضوء	ɖawʔ	Light (n.)
17	ط	/t/	طالب	ʔalīb	Student (n.)
18	ظ	/dh/99	ظلام	Dhalam	Darkness (n.)

19	ع	/ʕ/	علم	ʕalam	Flag (n.)
20	غ	/ɣ/	غلاف	ɣilaf	Cover (n.)
21	ف	/f/	فلاح	fallaḥ	Peasant (n.)
22	ق	/q/	قدم	Qadam	Foot (n.)
3	ك	/k/	كتاب	Kitab	Book (n.)
24	ل	/l/	ليل	Lail	Night (n.)
25	م	/m/	ماء	maʔ	Water (n.)
26	ن	/n/	نور	nu:r	Light (n.)
27	هـ	/h/	هلال	hila:l	Crescent moon (n.)
28	ئ	ae	رأى	rʔae	Saw (v.)
29	و	/w/, /o/	ولد	Walad	Boy (n.)
30	ي	/j/, /i:/	يد	Jad	Hand (n.)

As well as these sounds, there is one additional sound that comes from combining the silent letter /n/ plus one of the following 15 letters; /t/, /θ/, /d/, /dʒ/, /d/, /ð/, /z/, /s/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /d/, /t/, /dh/, /f/, /q/, /k/. This sound is called غنه (ghunah) and represented as /ŋ/ as in: (من فوقهم) /mɪŋ-faʊkɪhm/.

3.2. Vowels in Standard Arabic

Regarding the vowels in Standard Arabic, there are three vowel letters only; a, o, and i (ا/و/ي) as well as the three diacritics which in combination with the three vowel letters result in 6 vowels - 3 short and 3 long - and 2 diphthongs. The three long vowel sounds in Arabic are represented by the following three letters.

1. (a) 'Alif حرف الألف
2. (o) Waw - حرف الواو
3. (i) Ya' حرف الياء

The three short vowel sounds in Arabic are represented using the following symbols either above or below the letters.

1. Fatha الفتحة - indicated by a small diagonal stroke above the consonant. This is the neutral *a* vowel sound, such as in the words, (nun) and (woman).
2. Kasra الكسرة - indicated by a small diagonal stroke below the consonant. Similar to the sound in the middle of the word (did).
3. Damma الضمة - written like a miniature واو (و) above the letter. It's pronounced like the *u* in (bull).
→ Sukun سكون - indicated by a small circle above the letter. It is used to signify the absence of a vowel, for example, بنت (bint) and كُنْ (kun). These six vowels are represented with examples in the following table:

TABLE II. VOWELS IN STANDARD ARABIC

No	Arabic sounds	sounds symbols	Arabic Examples	IPA Transcription	English Translation
1	حرف الألف	a:	قال	Qa:la	Said (v.)
2	حرف الواو	u:	يقول	Yaqu:l	Say (v.)
3	حرف الياء	i:	يمشى	yamʃi:	Walk (v.)
4	الفتحة	A	كتب	Kataba	Wrote (v.)
5	الضمة	o	قتل	Qotila	Killed (v.)
6	الكسرة	i	قتل	Qa:til	Killer (n.)

A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds occurring next to each other within the same syllable. The two diphthongs in Arabic are the two sounds:

1. /eɪ/ as in the word بيت
2. /aʊ/ as in the word يوم

Regarding the vowels in Baghdadi Arabic, there is one more vowel that is /e/, and the following table shows their characteristics.

TABLE III. VOWEL SOUNDS OF THE BAGHDADI ARABIC

	i:	i	E	u:	o	ɔ	a
Consonantal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vocalic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Diffuse	+	+	-	+	+	-	-
Compact	-	-	+	-	-	+	+
Grave	-	-	-	+	+	+	-
Flat	-	-	-	+	+	+	-

4. VARIATION OF BAGHDADI DIALECT

Regarding The Baghdadi dialect, it includes all the sounds that are found in Standard Arabic as well as some sounds that have been taken from other languages such as English, Kurdish, Turkish, and Persian, like the sounds /p/, /v/, /g/, ... etc. as the following table shows:

TABLE IV. SOUNDS THAT ARE FOUND IN THE BAGHDADI DIALECT BUT NOT FOUND IN STANDARD ARABIC

No	Baghdadi sounds	sounds symbols in Latin	Arabic Examples	IPA Transcription	English Translation
1	/پ/	/p/	پرده	Parda	curtain (n.)
2	/ف/	/v/	فیر / فانیلا	Vanila	Vanilla (n.)
3	/گ/	/g/	گبة (غرفة)	gobba	Room (n.)
4	/چ/	/tʃ/	چای	tʃai	Tea (n.)
5	/ژ/	/ʒ/	های شیک	ʒbi:k	What happened to you?

From the above sounds, the three sounds; /v/, /p/, /ʒ/ are not widely used in the Baghdadi dialect, except in a few words that are borrowed from other languages, such as (فیزا) (visa), while the two sounds /g/ and /tʃ/ are used widely in the Baghdadi dialect. Some Christian speakers of Baghdadi Arabic produce the sound [ʒ] as a variant of [ʃ] but not as a phonemically distinct sound.

The speakers of Baghdadi Arabic sometimes either substitute, omit, or insert some sounds into the original Arabic words during their speech. These three processes either have their origin in standard Arabic or come from substituting the sounds that have the same articulation process or nearness in their phonological features.

1- Process of Substitution

This process is widely used in the Baghdadi dialect as speakers of this dialect try to reduce the difficulties of pronouncing some sounds, thus they tend to replace some sounds with others that have nearness or similarity in some features. The following sections are going to introduce these processes.

a. Substitution of the sound /q/ ق to /g/ گ/

Baghdadi speakers replace the sound ق /q/ to /g/ in many words such as:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
یقلب	yaqlib	یگلب	Yuglob	Turn over (v.)
یقلی	yuqallı	یگلی	Iygallı	Fry (v.)
یقول	Yaqol	یگول	Iygot	Saying (v.)
باقلاء	Baqıla	باگلة	Bagıla	Green beans (n.)
قلب	Qalb	گلب	Galb	Heart (n.)

This process has its origin in old Arabic dialects and it is called "jaljala" (الجلجلة), as some old Arabic tribes replace the sound /q/ ق with /g/ گ/ in many regions such as Iraq, Yemen, and some Gulf countries. The reason behind that is the need of Arabic speakers to rely on rapid pronunciation, it tends to replace the /q/ qaf with the sound /g/ گ/. The sound /q/ ق/ requires more deliberation because it requires closing the articulation point. Therefore, it is emphasized with the tongue raised. Unlike the sound /g/, which does not require additional force and emphasis, it has an accentuation of emphasis. It is a dialectal phenomenon in our time, widespread in many Arab countries. (<https://albukhari.com/arabdialects/>)

b. Substitution of sound /ʃ/ ش to the /tʃ/ (چ)

Also, they replace the Arabic sound ش /ʃ/ with the English sound /tʃ/ (چ) as in the following examples:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
شرف	ʃarʃaf	چرف	tʃarʃaf	Bed sheet (n.)
شای	ʃai	چای	tʃai	Tea (n.)

This issue doesn't have exactly a basis in classical Arabic but it has a similar one, in rarity. The old tribe "Tamim" shifts the sound /ʃ/ to /dʒ/. The reason for the exchange between them is the similarity of the exit point, and both are middle-throated sounds. Similarly, Baghdadi speakers shift the sound /ʃ/ to /tʃ/ because the latter is more familiar in their dialect. (Ibn Sikkı 1998:370)

c. Substitution of the sound /k/ to /tʃ/

Baghdadi speakers also replace the sound /k/ with /tʃ/ as in:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
حكي	ħakae	حجي	ħiʃa	talk (v.)
كف	Kaf	چف	tʃaf	Palm (n.)
مكيال	Mikyāl	مچيال	mɪtʃjal	Measure (n.)
كلب	Kalb	چلب	tʃalb	Dog (n.)
يكنذب	Yak	يچذب	yaʃ	Lie (v.)

This process also has a similar basis in classical Arabic of Arabic tribes in Yemen, as they change the letter (k) ك to the letter /dʒ/ ج (Ibn Zakariya, 1997:30).

This means that it is not a constant phenomenon, but rather it is used out of linguistic necessity and for phonetic reasons. The two letters (k) and /dʒ/ are similar in their qualities in terms of emphasis and openness.

This process also has its origin in classical Arabic of the old tribe “Rabia” and it is called “kashkasha” كشكشة. During this process, the speakers try to distinguish between the pronoun *you* (ك) of females from the pronoun ‘*you*’ (ك) of males especially in the stop position as in this position the diacritics are not pronounced and both have the same pronunciation. Thus, they tend to change the pronoun *you* (ك) /k/ of females to (ش) /ʃ/ for the sake of feminization. (Ibn Zakariya, 1997:30) Similarly, Baghdadi speakers shift the sound /ʃ/ to /tʃ/ because the latter is easier in pronunciation and more familiar in their dialect. Thus, they tend to replace the pronoun *you* (ك=ك) of females with (چ) /tʃ/, rather than to as (ش) /ʃ/, and the historical sequence of this phonological phenomenon can be explained as follows:

Ex: احبك (ʔuxubuki) → احبش (ʔuxubuʃ) → احبيج (ʔaxɪbɪtʃ)

The following table shows more examples.

With Male (you)		With Female (you)		With Female (you) in Baghdadi		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
احبك	(ʔuħubuka)	احبك	(ʔuxubuki)	احبج	(ʔaxɪbɪtʃ)	I love you
اخذك	(ʔaxuðtuka)	اخذك	(ʔxuðtuki)	اخذج	(ʔaxuðɪtʃ)	I take you
اعطيك	(ʔuʔtɪka)	اعطيك	(ʔuʔtɪki)	انطيح	(ʔantɪtʃ)	I give you
اخترتك	(ʔaxtaruka)	اخترتك	(ʔxtarokɪ)	اخترج	(ʔxtarɪtʃ)	I select you
منك	(mnka)	منك	(mnki)	منج	(mnɪtʃ)	From you

This phenomenon is not limited to the Baghdadi dialect; rather, many dialects pronounce it this way. The explanation for this phenomenon is that the intent is to emphasize the kasrah of the letter kaf (ك) of the female addresser. The intent is that Arabs may use certain vocal and linguistic manipulations when addressing women (Tha’alab 2008:28).

d. Substitution of the sound /l/ to /n/

As both the two sounds /l/ and /n/ are alveolars, it is found that Baghdadi speakers replace the sound /l/ with /n/ in some words such as:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
اسماعيل	ismaʕil	اسماعين	ismaʕɪn	Ismael (proper. n.)

This kind of pronunciation style was known among the Himyarite tribe in Yemen.

e. Substitution of the sound /ʔ/ (ء) to /i:/ (ي) or /ɛ/ (ع) or

The one who described the pronunciation of the sound /ʔ/ “hamza” accurately among the ancients was Ibn Sina (428 AH). He explained how the air is expelled with a strong push, and then the air is held behind the two strings until it is released. Then the air is released and explodes forcefully, producing the hamza sound (Ibn Sina 1999). This is something that requires intensity and strength, which leads to difficulty in producing the hamza sound. Thus, speakers tend to replace it with the sound /i/ because both have the same place of articulation and the latter is easier in pronounce, as the following examples show:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
قراءة	qɪraʔa	قراية	qɪraɪa	Reading (n.)
بداية	Bɪdaʔa	بداية	Bɪdaɪa	Starting (n.)

Another reason that makes speakers replace the sound /ʔ/ “hamza” is that it is a voiceless sound and Arabic tribes who live in the desert tend to use voiced sounds to make their voice louder, thus they replace it with the sound /ɛ/ (ع). This

process is called "anana' العننة and it also has its origin in the classical Arabic of the old tribe of Tamim (Omar 2008: 1563), as in the following examples:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
قرآن	Qorʔan	قرعان	Qorʔan	The Holy Qur'an (n.)
قراءة	qiraʔa	قراءة	qiraʔa	Reading (n.)

f. Substitution of the letter /ʔ/ (ع) to /n/

This phenomenon is called in Arabic "Istintta" (الاستنطاء) which means replacing the silent letter /ʔ/ ع with /n/ only if it was followed by the letter /t/ ط as the following examples:

MSA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
اعطى	ʔʔtae	انطى	ʔntae	Gave (v.)
معطى	moʔti	منطى	monti	Giver/granter (n.)

This pronunciation is attributed to the language of the old tribes of Hudhayl and Sa'd ibn Bakr, but it is considered one of the poor and reprehensible dialects. Ibn Faris mentioned it under the chapter (Reprehensible Languages) and Al-Suyuti mentioned it under the title (Knowing the Poor and Reprehensible Languages). Likewise, the only evidence of this phenomenon is the word (anṭa) (Al-Suyuti 1998:120), and this word is used in most of the Iraqi dialects today (Al-Dabbagh, 1965:12). Modern studies do not support the interpretation of this phenomenon as the letter /ʔ/ 'ayn being replaced by a /n/ nun, since the two letters are far apart in phonetic quality, and there is no common denominator between them. It is commonly known that substitution only occurs if there is some kind of phonetic kinship between the two sounds in quality and articulation (Ramadhan, 1999:121). In this regard, Ibn Jinni (2000) says: "The origin of the substitution in letters is only in those that are close together, and that is in the following groups of the letters (d, ṭ and t), (ḍ, dh and θ), (h and ʔ), (m and n) and others whose points of articulation are close together.

As for (Ḥ), it is far from (θ), and there is a difference between them that prevents one from being replaced by the other (Ibn-Jinni 2000:193/1). The letters (ʔ) and (n) are far apart in their points of articulation, but they are similar in some characteristics, namely: voicing, lowering, and openness, and this is most likely the reason for the substitution between them (Hilal, 1993:186). This phenomenon exists today on the tongues of the common people in Jordan.

As for the Baghdadi speakers, they are considered eloquent in terms of their pronunciation of letters, as they can pronounce all letters. Their substitution for the sounds has no fixed rule, as it is not regular. Thus, they replace the sound /ʔ/ ع with /X/ خ although they can pronounce both these sounds easily, as in the following examples:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
يغسل	Yaɣsɪl	يخسل	YaXsɪl	Wash (v.)
مغتشوش	Maɣʃuʃ	مختشوش	MaXʃuʃ	Cheated (adj)
مغتر	muɣtar	مختر	muXtar	Arrogant (adj)

2- Process of Insertion

a. Insertion of hamza /ʔ/ at the beginning of words:

It is also noted that Baghdadi speakers try to put the sound /i/ in front of most words (nouns or verbs) especially at the beginning of the sentence. This method comes from the fact that Arabic speakers don't start their speech with silent letters. Thus, they pronounce the sound /ʔ/ in front of the words that a sentence begins with. Then, this habit continues to even the words in the middle of sentences, as in:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
عيوني	ʔiyoni	ايوني	ʔʔiyoni	My eyes (n.)
رموشي	romuʃi	ارموشي	ʔromuʃi	My eyelashes (n.)
قلبي	qalbi	اقلبي	ʔqli:bi	My heart (n.)
تراب	Torab	اتراب	ʔtorab	Soil (n.)
يقول	yaqu:l	ايقول	ʔiqu:l	Saying (v.)
يعود	yaʔu:d	ايعود	ʔiʔu:d	Return (v.)
نجوم	nu:dʒu:m	انجوم	ʔndʒu:m	Stars (n.)

b. Insertion of the two letters /a:/ and /i:/ at the middle of words to make diminutive nouns.

Using the letters (a) and (i) for making singular nouns such as:

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
بصل	Başal	بصلاية	Başlaiya	One piece of onion
تمر	Tamr	تمراية	Tamraiya	One piece of date
لحم	LaḤam	لحماية	LaḤmaiya	Small piece of meat

Generally, Iraqi people are distinguished from other Arabs by their ability to pronounce all sounds, such as /g/, /tʃ/, and /p/, as well as the long (o:), the long /i:/, and the dark (l), which they use in their speech. Even, they can pronounce the sounds /ʒ/ (like the English word /measurement") and (v), although they don't use them. It is noted that some Christian speakers of Baghdadi Arabic produce the sound [ʒ] as a variant of [ʃ] but not as a phonemically distinct sound.

The reasons behind this ability to pronounce any letter in all languages are the following:

- 1- All of the above sounds, without exception, are present in the Kurdish language which is spoken in the north of Iraq.
- 2- Most of the above sounds are present in Turkish and Persian, especially /tʃ/ and /g/, which transferred to the Baghdadi dialect through the rule of Ottomans and Persians.
- 3- A portion of these sounds have been proven to exist in the old Sumerian language which was spoken in Iraq.

All of these languages influenced Iraqi Arabic, and thus Iraqis have become capable of interacting with their sounds.

3- Process of Omitting

One of the characteristics of the Baghdadi dialect is the omission of the sound /ʔ/ hamza in the middle of some words due to difficulty and effort in pronouncing this sound. This kind of omission has its origin in classical Arabic among the people of the Hijaz and it is also found in the Qur'anic readings. Omitting the /ʔ/ hamza has become prevalent in many dialects because the Arabic tongue tends towards softening, and all languages tend towards this (Aziz and Madhlum 2022:92).

SA pronunciation		Baghdadi pronunciation		English Translation
Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	Arabic Word	IPA Transcription	
يؤمن	yʊʔmɪn	يومن	yomɪn	Believe (v)
ياكل	yaʔkol	ياكل	Yakol	Eat (v.)

For more explanation about the mechanism of producing these sounds, the following table is going to determine the place of articulation and the manner of Articulation of Arabic sounds.

TABLE V. SOME VOICED CONSONANTS IN ARABIC PHONOLOGY (After Katamba ,1989:13)

Manner of Articulation	Place of articulation										
	voice	bilabial	Labiodental	interdentals	Alveolars	Alveopalatal	Palatals	Velars	Uvulars	Pharyngeal	Glotal
Nasals (Nasal stops)	- +	m m			n			ŋ			
Plosives (oral stops)	- +	P B			T r			K g	q		
Fricatives	- +		f v	θ ð ð	S s z	ʃ ʒ		x ɣ		ħ ʕ	ʔ
Affricates	- +					tʃ dʒ					
Glides	- +	W					y	w			
Liquids	- +				L l						

5. THE EFFECTS OF THE ARABIC MOTHER TONGUE ON ENGLISH SOUNDS PRONUNCIATION

Using various sounds by Baghdadi speakers affects their pronunciation for English sounds such as the sound /s/ at the beginning of words like (sun, small,) which should be pronounced as /sʌn/ and / smɔ:l/ alternately. However, it is found that Baghdadi speakers replace the sound /s/ with the Arabic sound /s̤/. This replacement comes from the fact that both sounds are fricatives and alveolars as the above table (5) shows.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study revealed the existence of phonological variation in Baghdadi Arabic, how this variation has origin in classical Arabic, and how this variation developed through time to be at its current shape in Baghdadi dialect today. This study concludes the following:

- The number of sounds in the Baghdadi dialect is more than those in Standard Arabic because of the interlingualism among the three main languages used in Iraq. These three main languages in Iraq are; Arabic, Kurdish, and Turkish as well as many other minor languages such as Armenian, Gorani, Domari, and Neo-Aramaic.
- Replacing, omitting, or inserting some sounds by others has two forms:
 - 1- They have their origin in classical Arabic and these types follow specific rules.
 - 2- They don't have specific rules and depend on hearing.
- These three processes don't affect the meaning of the words but only their form.
- Replacement of some sounds by others occurs relative to the similarity either in their features or in their place of articulation.
- Speakers tend to replace some sounds with others or omit them to mitigate difficulties of speech.
- Replacing some Arabic sounds with foreign sounds relative to the overlap between Arabic and other languages such as; English, Turkish, Kurdish, and Persian result in phonological variation.
- In most cases, phonological variation in the Baghdadi dialect doesn't follow any rules, only for phonological reasons.
- Phonological variation as a phonetic phenomenon presents in the Baghdadi dialect contributes to enriching dialects with new vocabulary and contributes to the abundance of words and the diversity of dialects.
- Phonological variation occurs due to the similarity between sounds, either in their features, place articulation, or both. It also occurs due to the individual's tendency to soften and facilitate what may be difficult for the tongue to pronounce.

Some of these phonological variations have no analogy but rather came as a deliberate change on the tongues of speakers to make their pronunciation easier and lighter, or they were an inheritance from the dialect itself that generations have inherited over the ages.

Conflicts Of Interest

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