

Language and Identity: An Analysis of Speech of Anbar Residents

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1- Introduction

This research is a contribution to the debate about the link between language and ethnic identity. It investigates the sociolinguistic situations of Anbar tribes in western Iraq. They are mainly Dlam tribes. The investigation reveals remarkable verbal behaviour in the area of consonant selection.

The link between language and identity is far from being simple. The degree of allegiance to a certain identity is often expressed through adherence to linguistic features stereotypical of the speech of the group.

Language is the principal vehicle for the transmission of cultural knowledge and the primary means by which we gain access to the contents of others' minds. Language has been defined as an abstract set of principles that specify the relations between a sequence of sounds and a sequence of meanings. Language use can play a role in affirming one's social identity and maintaining intergroup distinction.

Linguistic behaviour expresses complex social meanings. Through language we assert or cede control, we indicate the different social groups with which we identify, the social roles we embrace, and the sometimes conflicting values we espouse. As many researchers have demonstrated in their recent work, language is used to symbolise our different social identities, and in any particular interaction we draw on its symbolic power to construct a particular identity or identities, and to express our conformity with or rejection of mainstream norms and values. Individuals use language in face-to-face interaction to express, create, challenge and subvert a range of social meanings, but they draw on established sociolinguistic norms in doing so.

2- The Research

The cases investigated in this article involve various interactions with Dlam speakers. This research is the first to provide sociolinguistic profile to Dlam based on empirical research. It deals with conversations related to address forms, joke-telling, gossip, apology, condolence, greetings, swearing and threatening. The primary concern of this study is to determine the occurrence of certain consonant phonemes.

3- Population of the Study

The original homeland of Dlaim is the governorate of Anbar especially the right side of the Euphrates .They are efficient and skilled agrarian people known for loyalty and generosity. Classes of this big tribe differ in size but not in prestige.

To avoid the influence of the other dialects spoken by some people who live in Ramadi city , the investigation is limited to people who live in the rural areas extending from Tway village situated on the Euphrates to the west of Ramadi until Al-Muhammadi village about 15 kms to the east of Heet and from Buthyab village on the left side of the Euphrates until Zuwaya village opposite to Al-Muhammadi village. The study also includes the people who live in the villages situated to the west of Heet on both sides of the Euphrates which extend for about 15 kms . People live near the edges of the desert in Abu-Aljeer, Al-Awasil and Al-Seleichiya villages are also included. Most of them belong to Dlaim tribe.

4. Methodology

The technique followed in gathering the data in this study is the ethnographic approach.It refers to the spontaneous speech in natural setting.Hymes (1962) is a pioneering figure in the use of the method which derives from anthropology.Some other researchers,such as Manes and Wolfson (1981) adopt this method in their studies.They think that it is the only reliable method of gathering data in daily interaction.

The corpus of the study consisted of various interviews on a wide range of topics: social, religious, economic, etc.Each talk or interview lasts for (30) minutes with a total of approximately five hours of recorded natural speech.A reliable tape recorder was used to record the talks and conversations.The data were phonemically transcribed by the researchers who are native speakers of Dlaimi spoken Arabic, and they also know modern standard Arabic.

Our informants are monolingual Arabic speakers aged between 16-70 years.They reported normal hearing and no known speech impediments. The sample is restricted to men.Males are often the family brokers in interaction with outsiders: it is more often men than women who interact with others in shops and neighbourhood interactions, as well as in communications with schools, offices,etc. Men's social activities and jobs often involve them in interaction with a wider range of social contacts than women's.In such contexts, they are responsive to a variety of pressures, and they consequently tend to accomodate to the speech of others.

Men may exercise the right to speak for longer contexts such as meetings; they may interrupt others, use insults as silencing devices or alternatively they may explicitly require others to contribute. Because positions of power are in general more often held by men, these strategies tend to be encoded as "masculine".Masculinity is the affirmation of power.

5. Secondary Articulation and Articulatory Setting

The present study aims at investigating certain types of modification applied to the main articulation of a speech sound in Dialectal Arabic. The modification applied is termed secondary articulation which comprises velarisation, labialisation, palatalisation nasalization and glottalisation.(Collins and Mees,2003:248). However, this study is concerned with glottalisation only because Dialectal speakers have remarkable articulation of this secondary articulation.

As regards articulatory setting which is "a term used to cover the way in which the organs of speech are held throughout the speech process", (ibid), this paper studies pharyngealisation since many types of Arabic are characterised by a pharyngealised setting by having tongue-root retraction.(ibid ;56 ;Roach ,2002:56).

5.1 Glottalisation

It is the articulation of a glottal stop as a secondary feature of a speech sound ,for example ,glottal reinforcement of syllable –final English /p t k tʃ / in such words as shop [ʃop],pot [pot], shock [ʃok]and watch [wɒtʃ].(Gimson,1980:159;Hartmann and Stork, 1972:97) .Many types of British English have the oral closure reinforced by a glottal closure [ʔ].(Gimson, ibid.).The airstream coming from the lungs is momentarily blocked because the vocal folds and the arytenoids are close together.The closure of the glottis is followed by its sudden release.In this case , "the blocked air rushes out with an effect rather like a weak cough,or the noise one makes when lifting a heavy weight".(Collins and Mees ,2003:29).

As viewed by Roach (2000:55),"the most widespread glottalisation is that of /tʃ / at the end of a stressed syllable".Notice, for instance,the words nature [neɪtʃ], catching [kætʃɪŋ],and riches [rɪtʃɪz]. He (ibid) assures that /p t k / are also glottalised though glottalisation is not found so regularly.When the stop is followed by another consonant or a pause , glottalisation normally happens, e-g., actor[aktʃ],petrol [petrəl],cut [kʌt], football [fʊtbɔ:l].(ibid.)

However, the glottal stop [ʔ] also occurs in English in such dialect forms as Cockney['wɔ:ʔ]for water or when a speaker pronounces, for instance,the words there are in isolation as in RP with no linking [r].(Hartmann and stork, 1972:96).

Though [ʔ] plays an important role as reinforcement or replacement of English strong stop consonants,it is not a phoneme whereas,it functions as a phoneme in many languages including Arabic.(Collins and Mees, 2003:29).

5.2 Pharyngealisation

As stated by Hartmann and Stork (1972:169), pharyngealisation means "the articulation of a speech sound accompanied by a constriction in the pharynx".It is not a secondary articulation which adds a certain modification to the main articulation.It is an articulatory setting since pharynx "is usually classed as an articulator"as mentioned by Roach (2002:56).He (ibid.) affirms that Arabic is the

best known language that has consonants with pharyngeal place of articulation . He (ibid.) adds that "most dialects of which have voiced and voiceless pharyngeal fricatives made by constricting to the airflow from the lungs ".The speech sound [h] in Arabic Ahmed is a good example.

6. Analysis of the Data

Our informants who spoke Dlammi Arabic all reported that they acquired the most remarkable articulation of pharyngealization and glottalization. The data are phonemically transcribed. The authors are both speakers of Dlammi Arabic . Utterances are transcribed and pronounced by Dlammi speakers regardless of their standard forms. The following key of phonetic symbols is used throughout the study:

1-The consonants

/b/ ب as in /zibid/ 'butter'

/d/ د as in /darub/ 'way'

/t/ ت as in /tiin/ 'figs'

/t/ ط as in /teer/ 'bird'

/g/ گ as in /foog/ 'above'

/k/ ك as in /kaafi/ 'enough'

/q/ ق as in /qalam/ 'pencil'

/ʔ/ ء as in /ʔaani/ 'I'

/f/ ف as in /raf/ 'shelf'

/ð/ ذ as in /ðaki/ 'clever'

/ð/ ض as in /ðeef/ 'guest'

/θ/ ث as in /θoor/ 'bull'

/z/ ز as in /zeen/ 'good'

/s/ س as in /seef/ 'sword'

/s/ ص as in /seef/ 'summer'

/ʃ/ ش as in /ʃakar/ 'sugar'

/g/ غ as in /geem/ 'clouds'

/x/ خ as in /xas/ 'lettuce'

/ʁ/ ع as in /ʁa9ar/ 'hair'

/h/ ح as in /hiluw/ 'sweet'

/h/ ه as in /hawa/ 'air'

/d3 / ج as in /d3eeb/ 'pocket'

/tʃ/ چ as in /tʃibiir/ 'big'

/m / م as in /d3am / 'They came'

/n / ن as in /naas / 'people'

/l / ل as in /leeʃ/ 'why'

/r / ر as in /ruuh/ 'go'

/w / و as in /waahid/ 'one'

/j / ي as in /jaabis/ 'dry'

2- The vowels

/ii / as in /tiin / mud

/i / as in /min / from

/ee / as in /beeð / eggs

/a / as in /fat / river

/aa / as in /faaf / he saw

/o / as in /raadjon / radio

/oo / as in /joom / day

/u / as in /subah / morning

/uu / as in /duuda/ worm

/aw / as in /?awsa9 / wider

/aaw / as in /klaaw / head dress

/aj / as in /maj / water

/aaj / as in /gaajta / his purpose

/ooj / as in /booj / waiter

/eew / as in /hleew / sweet

/iw / as in /stiwtan / setting down

The following examples lay out all those phonological segments which were uttered by any of the individuals. The prevalence of the two articulations of pharyngealization and glottalization is what supports the hypotheses of the study:

A. Glottalized Consonants

1-/ k / in عيب عليك /9aab 9aleek / shame on you

It is noteworthy that Dlaimi glottal sounds are considered creak and glottal stop.

2-/t / in شتريد / fitriid / What do you want ?

3-/tʃ/ in ماكوهي ج حجي /maaku hiit/hatʃi / There is no such dispute

4-/tʃ/ in انجب /intʃab / shut up.

5-/k / in گاك , /tʃ/ in من گاك هل حجي حجي

/min gallak hal hatʃi / Who told you this speech ?

6-/t / in ديموت /dimuut / DIE

7- /tʃ/ in هاچ , /t / in طماطات

هاچ /haat/hattumaataat / Take these tomatoes.

The emphatic consonants / t, ð, s / complicate the Dlaimi consonant system .To produce such consonants one has to coordinate two articulations together ; a primary articulation and a secondary articulation: the latter of which requires drastic retraction of the back-root of the tongue into the pharyngeal cavity. This rearward manoeuvre which is similar to that required for the production of the Arabic uvulars and pharyngeals, indicates the extent to which the rear section of the vocal tract is manipulated in Dlaimi Arabic. In fact the rich manipulation of the rear section of the vocal tract in this dialect is so characteristic of Dlaimi Arabic that if one ever wants to specify the articulatory setting of this dialect one can never disregard the role of these posterior activities in formulating the setting.

See Odisho (1973)

8-/t / in جم البنيات من المدرسة ؟ البنيات

/dʒam libneijaat mnilmidrasa /

Have the girls come from school ?

9-/tʃ/ in أچلت نفر كباب أچلت

/ʔatʃalit nafar kubaab / I ate kabab.

10-/t / in ما تگلي , /k / in شجراك

/maatguli ʃdʒaraalak / Tell me what happened to you?

11-/k / in فك .. فک /fuk halbaab/ Open the door.

12-/tʃ/ in وين چنت ؟ /ween tʃinit/ where had you been ?

13-/tʃ/ and /t / in انچتل /intʃital / He was killed.

14-/t / in تخسه /itxasa / shame on you.

B- Pharyngealized Consonants

1-[ʔ] in والله انا ما جه هسع لذبحه ... هسع /9/ in

/walla iððmaadʒðhassa9 laðbaha/

By Allah I will kill him if he doesn't come soon.

2-The allophone [S] in مسطرة , [q] in قلم

يمحمد جيتلك مسطرة وقلم

/jamhimmad dʒibitlak mustara wqalam /

Mohammad I brought you a ruler and a pencil.

A regressive assimilation occurs where the /s/ is pronounced [S] due to the effect of [t].

3-/9/ in يبعود بعثك الحال بفلس ونص يبعود

/jam9awwad bi9itlak ilhalaal bfils wnus /

O dear ! I sold you the animals for a miserable price.

/9/ and /t/ in بعثك

/h/ in الحال , /s/ in ونص

4-[l] in /walla / والله الرمل مطشر على طول الدرب للجريه

/walla arramal mittafir 9la tuul iddarub lid3arja /

By Allah !sand is scattered along the way to the cottage.

[l] in والله and الرمل , / t / in مطشر , [t] and [l] in طول

Although Arabic / r / is most frequently identified as a tap ,Dlaimi / r / is trill which is the outcome of gemination.

As far as / l / is concerned , there is a great tendency among Dlaimi speakers to use / l / which is more representative of vigour .This phenomenon extends to the replacement of / 9 / instead of / ? / to serve the same purpose as in / 9āl∂/ instead of / āl∂/ .

5-[x] in /Xuut istikaanak/ خوط إستكانك/ Stir the sugar in your tea glass.

6-[l] in تره لطيف وتعجبك سوالفه ... لطيف

/tara litiif wti9d3bak suwaalfa /

He is nice and of good talk.

7-/h / in محمدنه يشتغل بالرطبه الرطبه [t] , محمدنه

/imhimmadna ji/tagil birratba /

Our Mohammad works in rutba.

8-/9 / in /9iz alla fara9/ عز الله الشرع/ By Allah's decree.

9-/t / in /d3iibu hatabal/ جيبوا هالطبل ... هطبل

Bring the drum.

Gemination is a significant feature in Dlaimi Arabic in all positions. Although geminate consonants occurring word finally are non-distinctive in standard Arabic ,they occur in Dlaimi Arabic as in the example (9) above.

In certain phonetic contexts ,gemination has been considered as a natural consequence of the phenomenon of assimilation.

10-/ ð / in / ðal 9idna t/am joom/ ظل عدنا جوم .. ظل

Stay with us for a few days.

11-/l / in /aani a9arfa min gabal/ ... گابل ني اعرفه من گابل آ

I know him already.

12-/ ð / in / ð / in ظلايم , ضيم

أيام الفراق جانت ضيم وظلايم

/ajjam lifraag t/aanat ðeem wðlajim /

The days of separation were desperate and gloomy.

/d/ does not exist in Dlaimi Arabic ;therefore it is substituted by / ð /

7- Findings and Conclusions

Language plays an important role in identifying the speaker's identity for him or herself .There can be little doubt that the language one speaks is an important dimension for both self and social categorization .Language use can also play a role in affirming one's social identity and maintain intergroup distinction.

The sounds discussed in this paper derive social significance due to their association with a particular social group, viz, Dlaim of western area. So the particular phonological variants acquire their social significance because they tend to be used most often by these social groups. See Holmes (1997:215) .She (ibid) adds that :

In some contexts, then , speakers are simultaneously creating meaning for a phonetic variant and for a social identity,and the use of phonetic variation and the constr- uction of identities are inseparable.

Phonologically speaking , people in the western area have utmost harshness of voice compared to other regions. This may be attributed to their way of living in the rims of desert .Harsh voice implies power and manhood since sound features, like linguistic aspects can generalize meaning .

Generally, pharyngealization and glottalization are used intentionally because people in these districts prefer power and vigour as part of the necessities of the environmental conditions. Sometimes people hid outlet for their anger while producing these sounds.

Thus speakers are simultaneously creating meaning for a phonetic variant and for a social identity. In fact "the use of phonetic variation and the construction of identities are inseparable". Eckert and Mcconnell-Ginet (1995: 505).

Dlaimi Arabic contains noticeably more geminate consonants than the standard Arabic.

The use of dark / l / and glottalized sounds are signs of power among Dlaimi speakers.

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