

The Impact of the Neighbouring Languages on Iraqi Language

Asst. lect. Dina Mohammed Salman

College of Education for Girls, Al-Iraqia University, Baghdad, Iraq

E-mail: dina.m.salman@aliraqia.edu.iq

Abstract: The present study is an attempt to investigate how Iraqi people of different regions are affected by the other languages such as Turkish and Persian languages. This study has presented the reasons behind the influence of Iraqi Arabic by these two languages. Of course, one of them is the position of Iraq and the other is the trading relationships between these countries and Iraq and many other reasons which will not be discussed in this research. The researcher through this study has presented the main three dialects in Iraq and how these dialects have affected by other languages.

The researcher has provided some real examples about the everyday life, non Arabic words that the Iraqi people use in their daily conversations. Some of these words are come from Turkish language and the other from Persian language.

Keywords: accent, dialect, Iraqi Arabic, Turkish, Persian.

Introduction

Arabic language has many variants, among them the Standard Arabic which has a unique position as the official written standard language of broadcast, art, music, literature and education throughout the Arab world. In Iraq, Standard Arabic can be used in media, meetings, and higher education institutes, while Iraqi Arabic can be found almost everywhere. Arabic dialects differ in many dimensions, primarily geography and cultural classes. The geographical point of view, 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 (Biadisy & Hirschberg 2009). In this paper, the focus will be only on the Iraqi Arabic. "There are three major geographical groups of dialects in modern Iraq that can be identified in general terms as northern, southern, and central. The northern dialect is centred on the city of Mosul (the largest city in the north), and the southern dialect is centred on the city of Basra (the largest city in the south). The central dialect is spoken in the capital city of Baghdad and its surroundings." (Alkalesi, 2007).

This study will discuss the three major geographical groups of dialects in modern Iraq with some examples from each dialect and the impact of other languages such as Turkish and Persian on the Iraqi Arabic. This study is divided into three main sections and a conclusion. The first one presents a general idea about the research, the purpose of the study, the problem that the researcher thinks it is important to be considered, and how this research is divided. Then, it presents a general idea about accents and dialects with definitions, a brief explanation about Standard and Iraqi Arabic, and a brief about Iraqi accent with examples. According to the findings, the researcher tries to find an answer/s to the problem of this study. At the end there is a conclusion which presents a summary about the whole study.

1.1. The Significance of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate, analyse, and assess how the Iraqi people use different accents/dialect according to different places in Iraq (the effect of the geographical factor). Therefore, the importance of this study lies in analysing and knowing the differentiation in using certain words and pronunciation in Baghdad, Mosel, and the southern of Iraq. Also, it is important to know that to what extent the Iraqi people may be bias toward one of those three dialects. Another important thing to add which is considered one the significance of this study which is to what extent the Iraqi Arabic has been influenced by other languages such as Turkish and Persian. In fact, the researcher thinks that people, after reading this study, may get benefit of the findings and the analysis of the findings by knowing that which one is the preferable accent/dialect in different regions in Iraq, specifically in Mosel, Baghdad, and the southern of Iraq. Also, the readers of this study will be able to know the source of some non-Arabic words that still be used within Iraqi dialects.

1.2. The Problem of the Study

As mentioned above, this study tries to find out how the Iraqi people use different dialect in different region in Iraq. The Iraqi dialect in this study, then, includes in its analysis all the three sub-dialects, manifesting here and there certain differences in pronunciation and vocabulary. The researcher also limits him/herself to a

few examples to make and defend her points at the three linguistic levels of this dialect: phonology, grammar, and vocabulary.

1.3. The Goal of the Study

This study aims at raising the awareness of Iraqi speakers and learners whether they are Arabic natives or learners of Arabic language on the issues of sounds and vocabulary that they may find when they try to learn Iraqi Arabic language or they may find some new strange words that used in Iraqi Arabic but not exist in Standard Arabic since Arabic language lacks such dialectal research.

1.4. Definitions of Accents and Dialects

Each term in any language has its own unique definition. In this part, the researcher will presents various definitions from different sources about the term accent and the term dialect in a language. The researcher believes that presenting various definitions of these terms will make it easier for the reader to fully understand the whole study. Peter Roach (2009) claimed in his book (*English Phonetics and Phonology*) that "It is usual to distinguish between dialect and accent. Both terms are used to identify different varieties of a particular language, but the word 'accent' is used for varieties which differ from each other only in matters of pronunciation while 'dialect' also covers differences in such things as vocabulary and grammar."

Accent is a term that is unlike other related terms such as 'dialect' and 'standard language' has received a good deal of definitional agreement. It is defined by Simpson (1994:8) as a "spoken variety of language (that) is realized in speech sounds... and their combinatorial possibilities." For Trask (1997:3) it represents a special way of articulating a certain language. It is considered by Lippi-Green (1997) as a decisive factor for characterizing age generations, social identity and class, level of education, and even ethnicity. According to him different accents are, as a matter of fact, different bundles of prosodic and phonemic features that characterize different geographic areas and/ or social classes. The New Oxford American Dictionary., in its version of (2005), defines an accent as "the way in which people in a particular area, country or social group pronounce words." Accents typically differ in quality of the voice, pronunciation and distinction of vowels and consonants, stress, and prosody. Although grammar, semantics, vocabulary, and other language characteristics often vary concurrently with accent, the word "accent" may refer specifically to the differences in pronunciation, whereas the word "dialect" encompasses the broader set of linguistic differences. Often "accent" is a subset of "dialect". John Lyons writes that "Many linguists subsume differences of accent under differences of dialect." (Lyons, 1981). In general, accent refers to variations in pronunciation, while dialect also encompasses specific variations in grammar and vocabulary (Lyons, 1981). From the definitions above we can conclude that when people talk about regional English, they often use the words accent and dialect rather without knowing the difference between them. For example, they could say of someone, 'She has a Moslawi accent' or, 'She speaks a strong northern dialect', and both statements might be understood as meaning more or less the same thing. The distinction between accent and dialect has already been referred to later on: the term accent refers only to the system of pronunciation a speaker uses; dialect refers to a speaker's grammar and vocabulary. So, accent in this sense is distinguished from dialect, which usually refers to a variety of a language that differs from other varieties in grammar and/or vocabulary.

1.5. Iraqi Dialects

As mentioned above that this study has chosen and focused on three sub-dialects in Iraq: The northern dialect is centred on the city of Mosul, the southern dialect is centred on the city of Basra, and the central dialect is spoken in the capital city of Baghdad and its surroundings. (Alkalesi, 2007) The Baghdadi dialect which is spoken by the majority people in 'Baghdad', the capital of Iraq and in the areas near to it is characterized by its simplicity and clarity of speech, which make it closer to Iraqi dialects, the Southern dialect which is spoken by people in the districts south of Baghdad such as Hilla, Al'maara, Nasiriya, and Basrah (Zhao, 2006). It is also known as (Sharkawiya) which means the dialect of East Iraq. This dialect is characterized by reduction and switching /k/ to /g/ or /ch/ sound in many cases, and the Northern dialect which is spoken by the minority people in Baghdad and in all districts in the North part of Iraq such as Mosul, Sharqaat, Kirkuk and the suburbs of Tikrit and Samarra. What characterizes this dialect is turning the /r/ sound to /gh/ as in this word 'ghah' originally 'rah' which means 'went'. In fact, as Mutar (2009) claimed that "Iraqi dialect is considered a pure Iraqi dialect, and its influence has increased to the Gulf countries because of the effects of marriage, culture relations and trade" Later, these dialects have affected by other languages such as Turkish and Persian. This has led to the formation of a dialect distinct to the northern region which is affected by Turkish language and the southern region which is affected by the Persian language Which led to different dialects spoken in Iraq.

1.6. The Effect of Other Languages on Iraqi Arabic

Because of the strategic position of Iraq which is considered the gate of the Arabic world which connects the Middle East with eastern Asia countries. This strategic position allows many countries to strength their relationship with Iraq. These relationships were in trade and culture which lead to mix cultural between these countries. This mix cultural lead to borrowing words from Turkish and Persian to Iraqi Arabic. Therefore, many dialects in Iraq have affected by this borrowing which makes a noticeable differentiation among these dialects. Thus, there are so many words of foreign original especially Turkish and Persian that entered the Arabic books like dictionaries. In this part of the study the researcher will show some of these languages with their impact on the Iraqi Arabic (Shalawee, 2018).

1.6.1. The Effect of Turkish on Iraqi Arabic

There were many attempts in early centuries to conquer Iraq such as the conquest of Turkmens on Iraq which had major effects on the Iraqi Arabic. Because of its location Iraq became the central of the Islamic Golden Age during the Iron Age and Classical Antiquity. It fell under Ottoman rule in addition to Sumerian, Babylonian, and Akkadian (Shalawee, 2018). The Iraqi Arabic had been affected by the Ottoman Empire, mainly in Mosul. The city of Mosul was under the Ottoman Turkish occupation for a long time. The Ottoman Turkish occupation impacted the people of Mosul in all aspects. The Mosul slang has been affected by the Turkish language. People there had to learn the Turkish language - even the lessons in the schools were taught with Turkish language (Shalawee, 2018). It can be clearly seen that some of the people in Mosul use some words of Turkish language, such as 'barda' which means 'starah' in MSA and 'curtain' in English. Another reason that Mosul's people have been affected by the Turkish language is because of trade and marriage (Mutar, 2009). The Maslawi dialect borrows words from Turkish reflecting the history of Mosul and the surrounding plains of Ninevah. It includes the classical 'q' sound, pronounced like the English "k" which is coming from deep in the throat. Instead of rolling the "r" sound, Maslawis pronounce it as "gh," similar to French.

1.6.2. The Effect of Persian on Iraqi Arabic

Persian language is one of the foreign languages that affects the Iraqi dialect because Iraq is influenced by the eastern civilization, especially Iranian one since the 3rd century (A.D.). It is clear that there is some impact of Persian language on Iraqi Arabic. These words are listed according to the (Persian-Arabic) university dictionary compiled by Sayyah (2003). It is noticed that people of southern regions use a great number of Persian words in their everyday life since so many Iranians always visit the holy shrines in Iraq and another reason which is the trading relationship between the two countries.

| No. | Persian Word(the same words used in Southern dialect) | Arabic Equivalence | English Equivalence |
|-----|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | أتو | المكواة = الأوتوي | Iron |
| 2. | أجاغ | موقد النار = المطبخ | Stove |
| 3. | استاد | المدرس = الاستاذ | Teacher |
| 4. | استكان | الفنجان = قدح الشاي | Cup of tea |
| 5. | أنبار | المخزن | Storehouse |

This study has investigated the influence of any foreign languages on the Iraqi dialects. The languages that the researcher has chosen are the Turkish and Persian. In addition to the influence that these languages can make on the pronunciation of the Iraqi dialect, they can also influence on the culture of the speakers of Arabic language in Iraq and how the loanwords have been adapted in the Iraqi dialect to make some differentiations that can be recognized between a dialect and another. One of the most crucial points to note is that language is in a dynamic change. This change and effect are taking place towards Iraqi dialects where any Arabic learner can recognize that through the new words that the Iraqi dialects borrowed from both Turkish and Persian languages. Another crucial point to mention here is the reasons behind choosing Turkish and Persian to be considered as the most languages have affected on Iraqi dialects are their locations according to Iraq and their culture relationships with Iraqi people.

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