Phonological Metathesis in Iraqi Arabic Dialect: A Synchronic Perspective

ظاهرة القلب الصوتي في العامية العراقية الدارجة

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Abstract

Phonological metathesis can be defined as an alternation in the normal sequence of two sounds under certain conditions. The present paper is intended to give a detailed synchronic description of phonological metathesis in Iraqi Arabic dialect. For data collection, the researchers have adopted two naturalistic techniques, viz., observation and notes taking. A synchronic analysis is carried out to provide some evidence that describe the sequential change of phonological metathesis in the dialect under investigation. Such sequential changes of metathesized sounds are presented and tabulated. The study concludes with the following finding that this process is not limited to cases where two consonant sounds are transposed, but three consonant sounds can be transposed as well. It has been found that metathesis is frequently involving two adjacent and non-adjacent consonant sounds. And this phonological process does not serve any grammatical function in Iraqi Arabic. As a result, it is an abrupt and sporadic process rather than being gradual and regular. Both Iraqi Arabic sonorants and obstruents undergo the process of phonological metathesis with relatively significant differences.

1. Introduction:

Since the mid-20th century, the term *diglossia* has been used to describe the sociolinguistic situation in most Arabic-speaking countries. In each Arabic-speaking region, there are two distinct language systems in use (cf. Ferguson, 1959). The first language system is the Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA) which is the sole system for official communication in governments, news reporting and academia and it is basically written. While MSA is used orally in speeches, broadcast news and formal settings, only a small minority of the population has facility in speaking it. For most users of MSA, it is like a second language, and its use consists mainly, if not exclusively, in reading and listening (cf. Maamouri, 2005:1).

The second language system is the spoken Arabic varieties, so-called *Ammiyyah* (vernacular). It is the primary language varieties spoken in the different Arabic countries, but their usage is almost exclusively oral. Each Arab country has its own variety of spoken Arabic. It is possible to group these varieties of Arabic into Iraqi, Syrian, Algerian, Egyptian, etc. These spoken Arabic varieties are used in everyday life activities in the home, street, markets, etc. The diverse vernacular forms of Arabic are interrelated, but vary considerably among speakers from different parts of the Arabian Peninsula, so that many are considered separate languages (ibid.). These language varieties differ from MSA, and from one another in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, and are usually labeled according to the major geographical regions in which they are used.

They reflect the ethnic and social characteristics which vary from region to region. The Arabic dialects fall into five geographical categories: 1. Egyptian / Sudanese Arabic is spoken by around 130 million people. Egyptian Arabic is the most understood variety of Arabic due to the prominence of the Egyptian media across the Arab world.

2. North African Arabic includes Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Libyan Arabic. These varieties are spoken by around 60 million people, though it is not fully understood between Arabs of the east.

3. Levantine Arabic includes Syrian, Lebanese, Palestine, and Jordanian Arabic. These varieties are spoken by almost 45 million people. It is one of the most understood varieties of Arabic.

4. Arabian Peninsular Arabic includes Saudi, Yemeni, Kuwaiti, Omani, etc. It is spoken by almost 40 millions.

5. Iraqi Arabic is spoken by about 28 million people in Iraq. Significant differences between the Arabian-like varieties of the south and the more conservative varieties of the north can be noticed.

Speakers of dialects in three of the categories-Egyptian/Sudanese, Levantine, and Arabian Peninsular-have relatively little difficulty understanding each other. The North African, Iraqi, and Gulf dialects, however, are relatively difficult for other Arabs to understand. The most noticeable differences among dialects occur in the pronunciation and vocabulary, although there are grammatical discrepancies too (Nydell, 2002:186).

All these colloquial Arabic varieties are best characterized by being mainly spoken dialects, and by not having written standards. Despite this fact, these spoken Arabic varieties become the native languages of their users due to the absence of MSA in everyday life

use, i.e., no native speakers of MSA exist nowadays, instead native speakers of Arabic dialects do. Abu-Haider (1999: 144) argues that an in-depth study of Arabic dialects reveals many interesting features which are often overlooked by the most meticulous dialectologists. One reason why some characteristics of dialectal Arabic are rarely brought to light is probably because the little interest among Arabic linguists to study the dialectal varieties of Arabic. Up to date, most studies available have put more emphasis on certain syntactic features of a given dialect, and less emphasis on other features of different linguistic levels such as certain phonological features, for example. This argument has motivated the present paper to investigate one of the Arabic dialects, namely, Iraqi Arabic dialect (henceforth IAD). Due to the lack of such descriptive study on phonological metathesis in this Arabic variety in comparison to other Arabic varieties (See Bangar's study on metathesis in Makkan and Cairene dialects, 2002; for example), the present paper is intended to fill a gap in this area. The present paper is an attempt to answer the following two basic questions:

1. Does metathesis occur in the phonological system of Iraqi Arabic variety?
2. Does the metathesis process of this variety behave in a similar manner to that of other Arabic varieties and of other different languages?

Thus, the concern of this paper is mainly devoted to the phonological process of metathesis which takes place in the variety under investigation. A synchronic description of this phenomenon is carried out to substantiate evidence for the sequential change of metathesis in Iraqi Arabic variety. It should be noted that Iraqi Arabic

dialect has been used as a cover term for many various sub-dialects representing different Iraqi geographical regions. For data collection, the researchers have resorted to notes taking and observation to substantiate some instances of the phonological metathesis in IAD. These two techniques have been reported to be the most effective tools of gathering qualitative data (cf. Mackey and Gass, 2005: 165). A good part of the data for the present paper has been collected at various times between 2010 and 2012 in Baghdad and some Iraqi regions of Saamarah, Kut and Basrah.

To examine metathesis in IAD, a description of the segmental phonology of this dialect will be presented below.

2. The Phonological System of Iraqi Arabic

Generally speaking, most Arabic dialects differ from MSA in the number of sound segments. That is, they have a reduced and restructured consonant system, but more complexity in the vowel system (Holes, 1995: 56).

A closer look at the segmental system of Iraqi Arabic phonology is importantly needed to establish a dialectal background of this system for the reader. IAD has its own phonological system, that is, its phonological system consists of a number of consonants and vowels. As to the consonant sounds, there are thirty eight consonants in IAD, and these consonantal segments can be described according to the three parameters of voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation. There are more consonant sounds in IAD than in English. Some of these sounds are quite unlike anything in English, while others are in some respect, like certain English sounds

(Wallace, 2004:3). The consonant system is presented and described in Table 1 below:

Table 1: The Consonant System of Iraqi Arabic Dialect (After Wallace, 2004: 87)

	LABIAL	INTERDENTAL	DENTAL	PALATAL	VELAR	UVULAR	PHARYNGEAL	GLOTTAL
STOPS								
Voiceless	*p* *ṗ*		*t* *ṭ*		*k*	*q*		*ʔ*
Voiced	*b* *ḅ*		*d*		*g*			
SPIRANTS								
Voiceless	*f* *f̣*	*θ*	*s* *ṣ*	*š*	*x*		*ḥ*	*h*
Voiced	*v*	*ð* *ḍ*	*z* *ẓ*	*ž*	*ġ*		*ʿ*	
AFFRICATES								
Voiceless				*č*				
Voiced				*j*				
NASALS	*m* *ṃ*		*n*					
LATERALS			*l* *ḷ*					
FLAP			*r*					
SEMIVOWELS	*w*			*y*				

As for the vowel sounds, the IAD vowel system is composed of five long vowels, four short vowels, and a number of vowel/semi-vowel combinations called *diphthongs*. All vowels in IAD have a much wider range of variation than vowels in English. Within this

range, the precise phonetic quality of a given vowel depends upon its position in the word and the nature of the adjacent consonant sounds. Short vowels are shorter in actual time of duration than longer vowels, and may also differ from them in quality. On the other hand, diphthongs in IAD are sequences of a short or long vowel and a semi-vowel (*w* or *y*) in the same syllable. There are four common diphthongs (ibid.:26). The vowel system of IAD is presented and described in Tables 2 and 3 below:

Table 2: The Pure Vowel System of Iraqi Arabic Dialect (After Wallace, 2004: 87 with some modifications)

Type of Vowel		Front	Central	Back
High	**Long**	*ii*		*uu*
	Short	*i*		*u*
Mid	**Long**	*ee*		*oo*
	Short			*o*
Low	**Long**		*aa*	
	Short		*a*	

Table 3: The Diphthong System of Iraqi Arabic Dialect (After Wallace, 2004: 87 with some modifications)

Vowel Height	With glide to *y*	With glide to *w*
High vowels		*iw*
Mid vowels	*ooy*	*eew*
Low vowels	*aay* *ay*	*aaw* *aw*

As far as the present paper is concerned, most of the phonemic symbols presented in the aforementioned tables will be adopted in the

phonemic transcription of Iraqi Arabic words for the sake of intelligibility and precision.

3. The Phonological Nature of Metathesis

Metathesis is the process whereby in certain languages, under certain conditions, sounds appear to switch positions with one another. Thus, in a string of sounds where one would expect the linear ordering of two sounds to be ***xy***, one finds instead ***yx***. For example, *ask* is pronounced *aks* in dialectal English (cf. Crystal, 2003:291). Metathesis refers to what is generally known as *"iqlaab"* or *"al-qalb ?al-makaani"* in Arabic which means changing places (cf. Al-Rajhii, 1984: 14).

Metathesis has usually been regarded as one of the less common phonological processes, even to such an extent that researchers have asked the question whether it exists at all as a synchronic phonological process. Where it is discussed, the question is debated whether this process is driven by phonotactics, or whether perception-driven forces also play a role (cf. Hock 1991). At any rate, the formalization of metathesis has long been a problem for phonological theories- specific analyses have typically been subject to the criticism that while being descriptively adequate, they could not explain this process.

There is a commonly held view of metathesis as being irregular and sporadic process which is restricted to performance errors, child language or sound change (Hume, 2001: 1). This view is regularly expressed in the linguistic literature. In fact, Webb (1974) claims that metathesis does not exist as a regular phonological process in

synchronic phonology. According to Montreuil (1981), rules of metathesis are rarely productive. Thus, they are most likely to be discussed from the point of view of historical linguistics, and their sporadic nature gives them a definitely marginal character. Synchronic metathesis is viewed as a performance factor responsible for erratic surface deviations. Strazny (2005: 679) asserts that metathesis has been investigated typologically along with the following four parameters:

1. *Synchronic ~ diachronic*: Synchronic metathesis occurs within one chronological period. Diachronic metathesis takes place from one time period to another, e.g. from Middle English to Modern English.

2. *Adjacent ~ nonadjacent*: Adjacent metathesis occurs when two contiguous sounds are transposed. With nonadjacent or 'long distance'

metathesis, the transposed sounds may be separated by one or more intervening sounds.

3. *Regular ~ sporadic*: Regular metathesis applies consistently, to many different words. Sporadic metathesis is restricted to only a few words and

occurs haphazardly.

4. *Abrupt ~ gradual*: Abrupt metathesis completely transposes sounds in a single step. Gradual metathesis can best be understood as a type of chain reaction, a series of sound changes over time that eventually inverts two sounds. Gradual metathesis therefore uses one or more intermediate stages between the original order and the final transposed order.

Hume (2001:1) argues that metathesis has resisted a unified, explanatory treatment in phonological theory despite advancements

in the formalism used to account for many other processes, such as assimilation and dissimilation. Unlike these phenomena, there is no unique formalism for characterizing metathesis as a primitive rule type. She asserts that the nature of phonological theories in both linear and nonlinear phonological theories resists the recognition of metathesis as a legitimate phonological process of segment reversal. In early generative phonology, Chomsky & Halle (1968: 55) propose to formalize metathesis by means of the transformational notation as in (1) below:

(1) Transformational notation:
s k
1 2 → 2 1 Output: [ks]

Unrestricted rewrite rules of this nature are excessively powerful and unconstrained, however; virtually any operation could be formally described in these terms, whether attested or not. For example, while capable of describing attested cases of metathesis whereby adjacent sounds switch positions as in (1) above, transformational formalism fails to rule out unattested cases in which sounds switch over any number of consonants and vowels. The fact that linear formalism is inadequate to represent metathesis is not a sufficient argument for rejecting metathesis as a basic operation.

Unlike other phonological theories, Optimality Theory (henceforth OP), which is a constraint-based theory, provides a promising approach to the analysis of metathesis since not only are segment reversals possible between an input and output in the theory, they are predicted to exist (cf. Prince and Smolensky 1993). Metathesis results in part from a mismatch in the linear ordering of sounds between input and output, formally encoded as a violation of the

constraint *LINEARITY*. Thus, unlike rule-based approaches, there is no longer a principled reason to reject the existence of metathesis; indeed, within an OT framework we have just the contrary. Since earlier theoretical frameworks have been unsuccessful in providing an explanatory account of this process, the study of metathesis provides an excellent testing-ground for a constraint-based approach to phonology.

To sum up, the present paper adopts the operational definition of metathesis as being a phonological process of transposition of sounds within a word. Examples of metathesis process from Iraqi Arabic data will be presented and described in the next section below to substantiate evidence for the existence of this phonological phenomenon in Iraqi Arabic variety.

4. Metathesis in Iraqi Arabic: Evidence & Discussion

Synchronically speaking, in Iraqi Arabic, metathesis has been observed in child language, speech errors, and colloquial speech of most illiterate people, and sometimes, of literate people. In the same vein, Hume (2001: 2) states that metathesis is viewed synchronically as a performance factor responsible for spoonerisms and other erratic surface deviations in everyday speech. Metathesis can be diagnosed and identified through resorting to the word stem or root (cf. Al-Rajhii, 1984:14). Accordingly, as far as the present paper is concerned, Iraqi Arabic words are compared with those of Modern Standard Arabic ones to identify the metathesized sounds that have occurred. The following metathesized sounds of IAD are diagnosed and presented in the tables below:

Table 4: n-l→l-n (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
banalti	balanti	Penalty
faniillah	faliinnah	T shirt

Table 5: l-n→ n-l (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
anɛyal	alɛyin	He is cursing
nahɛla	lahɛna	Curse
anɛla	alɛna	Cursed

l (Adjacent metathesized sounds) ɛ→ ɛ l Table 6:

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
aqahɛmil	laqahɛma	Spoon
aqɛmalaa	aal?qɛma	Spoons

l (Adjacent metathesized sounds) ƪ→ ƪ l Table 7:

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
ufaahƪsul	lufahƪsu	Turtle

(Non-adjacent metathesized sounds) l-r→r-l Table 8:

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
silindar	srindal	Cylinder

Table 9: r-l →l-r (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
roola	loora	Hair roll
roolat	loorat	Hair rolls

(Adjacent metathesized sounds) lt→tl Table 10:

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
afʗ?ilta	Af ʗ ʗ?itla	To wrap oneself with something
?iltawaa	?itlawwa	To twist oneself

Table 11: z-j→j-z (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
zanjabiil	janzabiil	Ginger
mutazaw?j	majaw?z	Are you married?
zawja	jooza	Wife
zawj	jooz	Husband
?azwaaj	?ajwaaz	Couples

Table 12: rf→fr (Adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
narfaz	nafraz	Got nervous
narfazah	nafraza	Nerves

Table 13: fw→wf (Adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
tafwiŞ	tawfiŞ	Authorization

Table 14: zr→rz (Adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
mizriib	mirziib	Spout

Table 15: hr→rh (Adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
kahrabaa	karhaba	Electricity
fahranhaayit	farhanhaayit	Fahrenheit

Table 16: b-h→hb (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
ʔablah	ʔahbal	Naïve

Table 17: b-š →š-b (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
ʔawbaaš	ʔawšaab	Tagrag

Table 18: rt→tr (Adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
ʔirtaxa	ʔatraxa	To relax oneself

Table 19: tš→št (Adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
atšaanʕ	aštaanʕ	Being thirsty

(Adjacent metathesized sounds)ʗt → tʗTable 20:

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
ttama ʗaˤ	Ama ʗ ʔitt	To protect oneself

Table 21: t-n→nt (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
mutanazah	muntazah	The park

Table 22: r-t→tr (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
Kaar?itrij	Kaatr?ij	Cartridge

Table 23: Š-f→f- Š (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
yuna?Š?f	?ynafuŠ	Cleaning

(Adjacent metathesized sounds)ɛk→ k ɛTable 24:

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
karoonaɛma	aroonaɛmak	Macaroni

(Non-adjacent metathesized sounds) ɛ-j→ j- ɛTable 25:

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
aal?jɛyu	ɛ? yjaal?	Dying

Table 26: ð -j →j- ð (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
baað?njaan	biij?nðaan	Eggplants

Table 27: r-z →z-r (Non-Adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*

yuɣruz	ʔyɣazʔr	Thrust into

Table 28: ð̣m →mð̣ (Adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
yatʔqarð̣m	yatʔgarmð̣	Biting one's nails

Table 29: b-l-h→h-b-l (Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
ʔblah	ʔhbal	Simple-minded
balaha	hubul	Simple-mindedness

(Non-adjacent metathesized sounds)ɛj-z- -j-z→ ɛTable 30:

MSA	*IAD*	*English Glossary*
ajazaɛ	aɛjaza	Feebleness

Generally speaking, some of those examples, mentioned above, of the metathesized sounds of Iraqi Arabic have been reported in other studies on other Arabic regional varieties, namely, Cairene and Makkan dialects (cf. Banjar, 2003). All of these examples show a general tendency of two metathesized sounds which are either adjacent or non-adjacent consonant sounds, with the exception of those in Tables 29 and 30. Surprisingly, in those examples, the metathesis process involves three rather than two metathesized

sounds. Such a tendency is contrary to what is universally known that metathesis involves two transposed sounds only. Unlike other languages and other Arabic dialects, in Iraqi Arabic dialect, metathesis can involve two or three transposed sounds (cf. Hume, 1998, 2001; Ultan, 1978, for example). Consequently, these examples from the present data lend support to the language-specific status of metathesis process.

A close examination of the metathesized sounds of Iraqi Arabic data, one can easily figure out that there are cases of both adjacent and non-adjacent metathesized sounds with relative differences in the frequency of the two types. That is, non-adjacent metathesized sounds are relatively more frequent than adjacent ones (cf. Figure 1 below). This finding is inconsistent with other studies on metathesis of other varieties of Arabic. In this respect, Banjar (2003:27) has observed the higher frequency of adjacent metathesized sounds in comparison with non-adjacent ones in Cairene and Makkan Arabic dialects.

Besides, there are some cases in which there are differences between the original order and the final transposed order, that is, there are cases in which the two sounds in question are non-adjacent in their original order, and become adjacent in their final transposed order, but not vice versa (cf. Tables 16, 21 &22 above).

Metathesis between the root segments (or radicals) of a word occurs frequently in the present data. This means that metathesis normally involves the root or stem, not the affixes such as prefixes, infixes or suffixes. Moreover, metathesis involves mainly the transposition of consonant sounds, and not of vowel sounds in the present data.

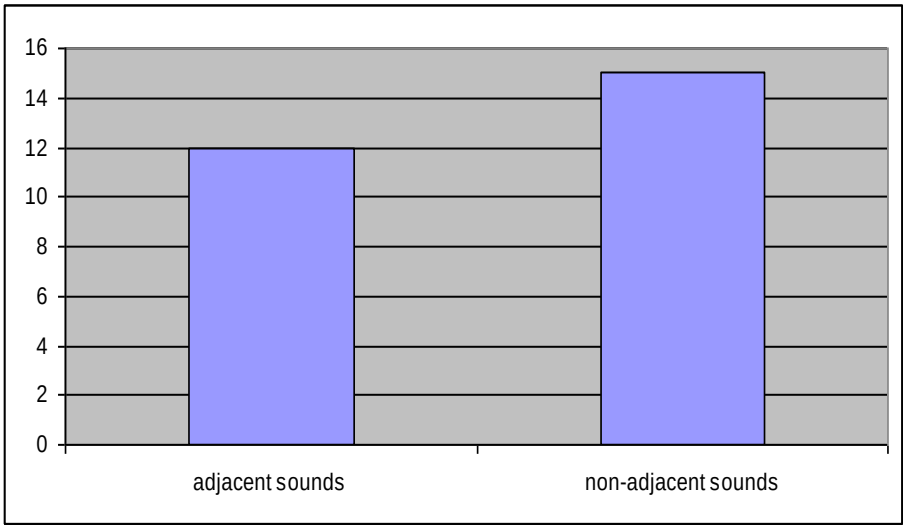

Figure 1: Distribution of adjacent & non-adjacent metathesized sounds.

Phonological metathesis does not serve any grammatical function in Iraqi Arabic dialect unlike other languages. For example, in Rotuman, a Malayo-Polynesian language of the central Pacific, metathesis marks the distinction between definite and indefinite nouns: /hosa/ 'the flower' vs. /hoas/ 'some (unspecified) flower' (cf. Strazny, 2005:679). This is also applicable to other Arabic regional dialects. Moreover, it is an abrupt and sporadic process. To support this argument, Strazny asserts that in the absence of grammatical conditioning, synchronic metathesis is sporadic and abrupt, motivated by speech errors ('slips of the tongue') or by the influence of words related in form or meaning (ibid.). Similarly, Hock (1991: 233) contends that metathesis can become regular only when it serves a specific structural purpose usually that of converting phonologically or perceptually marked structures into more acceptable ones. Sporadic and abrupt synchronic metathesis is well attested in a wide

range of languages cross-linguistically and conditioned by natural language constraints (cf. Humes, 2001).

Figure 2 displays the more frequently occurring metathesized sounds in Iraqi Arabic dialect. It is noteworthy that the nature of Iraqi Arabic */l/*, */r/*, and */t/* lends them more credit to be metathesized in comparison to other consonant sounds. This result gives a partial support for the widely reported argument that sonorant sounds (including *laterals, nasals, glides*, and *vowels*) are more frequent within the metathesized sounds (cf. Ultan, 1978; Ahmadkhani, 2010, for example). It has been found that obstruents (including *stop, fricatives*, and *affricates*) lend themselves to be metathesized as well in the present data. That is, obstruent sounds such as */t/,/f/, /h/, /z/,etc*. are also frequently metathesized in the study data.

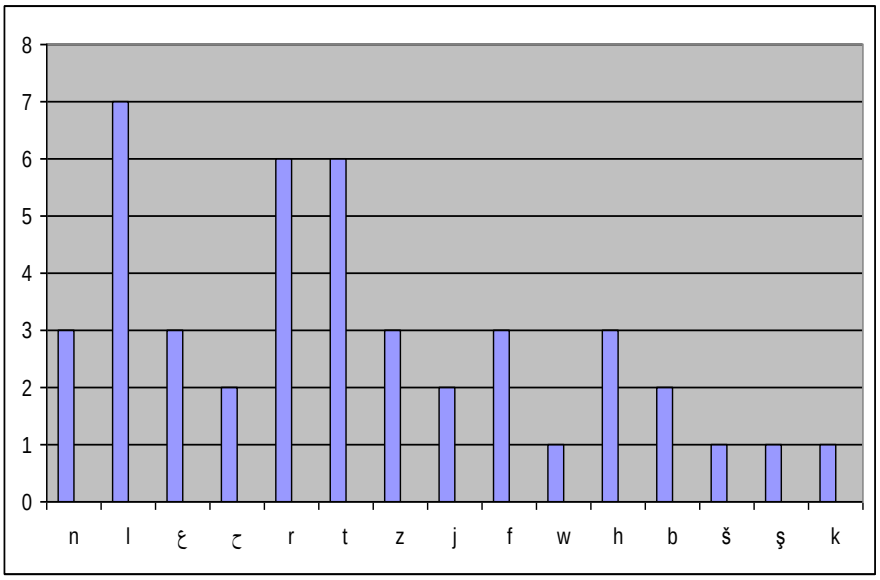

Figure 2: Frequency of commonly occurring metathesized sounds in IAD.

5. Conclusions

The synchronic analysis of metathesis in Iraqi Arabic has concluded that this process is not limited to cases where two consonant sounds are transposed, but three consonant sounds can be transposed as well. It has been found that metathesis is frequently involving two adjacent and non-adjacent consonant sounds. And, this phonological process does not serve any grammatical function in Iraqi Arabic. As a result, it is an abrupt and sporadic process rather than being gradual and regular. Both Iraqi Arabic sonorant and obstruent sounds undergo the phonological process of metathesis with relatively significant differences. Metathesis is not an end but a means for ease of perception and production on the part of Iraqi Arabic native speakers/listeners (cf. Ahmadkhani, 2010). Ease of production and perception are the motivations for this phonological process.

Such generalizations motivate the need for more diachronic studies in this area. That is, such need is in line with Labov's (1980) view of using the present language data to explain the past data since the result of the present study of synchronic metathesis triggers the need for studies of diachronic metathesis in Iraqi Arabic to find answers for many unanswered questions such as under what conditions metathesis applies, why metathesis happens, and how metathesis interacts with other processes affecting sound structures. With the same view, Hume (2001: 2) contends that basic knowledge has been lacking concerning the full range of phonological metatheses that are possible in human languages. This information is critical to providing an accurate picture of the nature of metathesis. It is also of crucial importance for the advancement of phonological theory since without a clear understanding of the fundamental

phonological processes possible in human language, developing an explanatory theory of sound systems is impossible.

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ظاهرة القلب الصوتي في العامية العراقية الدارجة: دراسة وصفية

المدرس المساعد تهاني عواد جاسم
والمدرس المساعد خالد شمخي شرهان

الخلاصة

تُعّرف ظاهرة القلب الصوتي بأنها تغيير في المواقع الطبيعية لصوتيين متجاورين تحت ظروف معينة . تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى وصف هذه الظاهرة في العامية العراقية الدارجة بشكلٍ دقيق . استخدم الباحث أسلوبين لجمع البيانات وهما الملاحظة المباشرة وتدوين الملاحظات غير المباشرة . تم وصف هذه الظاهرة الصوتية من خلال اخذ عينة من الأمثلة التي تمثل هذه الظاهرة في اللهجة قيد الدراسة ومحاولة تفسيرها . لقد توصلت الدراسة بأن هذه الظاهرة لا تقتصر على تغيير مواقع صوتيين ساكنين فقط بل تتعدى ثلاثة أصوات وهذا التغيير يشمل أصواتاً" متجاورة وغير متجاورة في الوقت ذاته . فضلا عن ذلك إن هذه الظاهرة الصوتية لا تخدم وظيفة نحوية معينة لأنها عملية غير قياسية وغير متدرجة . ولقد تبين تأثر السواكن المعاقة وغير المعاقة بهذه الظاهرة في العامية العراقية بنسبٍ متفاوتة.