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Variations in the Dialects of Some Tribes in Sinai: A Phonological Study

Abstract

Abstract

The present study attempts to investigate variations in the dialects in Sinai. Egypt is a country where Arabic is spoken; however, there are regional variations. Sinai tribal dialects vary in pronunciation. The primarily purpose of this study is documenting phonological variations in the different reigns of Sinai. There are many other tribes in Sinai; however, this study focusses on three of them: the Sawarka, Tarabin, and Rumailat. Every tribe can be identified from other tribes by their unique dialect. Despite the fact that all Bedouins and Sedentary in any tribe speak Arabic, each tribe has certain variations in word phonetics. There are people who live in towns and others who live in the desert within every tribe. The phonetic distinctions between the Sinai dialects can be clearly seen via the study of phonetics. Because Bedouins pronounce their letters correctly, we can distinguish them from urban people based on phonetic differences in their dialect.

Keywords: Dialects, Bedouin, Sedentary, phonological variations.

Walaa Ibrahim
Muhammed Zaki Moftah
M A Student
Al-Arish University
Institute of Environmental
Studies
Department of
Environmental Linguistic
Sciences



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تباين لهجات بعض من القبائل في سيناء: دراسة صوتية

مستخلص الدراسة

أ. ولاء إبراهيم محمد زكي
باحثة ماجستير - جامعة العريش، معهد
الدراسات البيئية، قسم العلوم اللغوية
البيئية

تتناول هذه الدراسة الاختلافات في اللهجات في سيناء. مصر دولة ناطقة باللغة العربية ومع ذلك، هناك اختلافات إقليمية. تختلف اللهجات القبلية في سيناء في طريقة النطق. الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة توثيق الاختلافات الصوتية في مختلف المناطق في سيناء. هناك العديد من القبائل الأخرى في سيناء. ومع ذلك، تركز هذه الدراسة على ثلاثة منها: السواركة، الترايين، والرميلات. يمكن التعرف على كل قبيلة من القبائل الأخرى من خلال لهجتها الفريدة. على الرغم من حقيقة أن جميع البدو والحضر في أي قبيلة يتحدثون العربية، إلا أن لكل قبيلة اختلافات معينة في صوتيات الكلمات. ففي كل قبيلة من يقطن في المدن واخرين يقطنون بالبادية ويمكن تمييز الفروق الصوتية بين لهجات سيناء بوضوح من خلال دراسة الصوتيات. لأن البدو ينطقون بحروفهم بشكل صحيح، يمكننا تمييزهم عن سكان المدن بناء على الاختلافات الصوتية في لهجتهم.

الكلمات الرئيسية: اللهجات ، البدو ، الحضر ، الاختلافات الصوتية.

Variations in the Dialects of Some Tribes in Sinai: A Phonological Study

1. Introduction

One of the primary Semitic languages spoken around the world is Arabic. Arabic is an official language in 28 nations, approximately 369.8 million people inhabit the Arab world, spanning from Morocco to Dubai. With such a large area to cover, it is no wonder that this language has so many different and important dialects (Bouhama, 2018). The northern Sinai littoral is inhabited by Bedouins arranged into fourteen or fifteen tribes, who live either directly on the coast or slightly south of it. Sinai contains a lot of tribes such as Rmelat, Sawarkah, northern Tarabin, Biliy, Dawagrah, Biyyadiyyah, Axarsah, Samanah, Agaylah, Masaʿi:d, and Ayayda, roughly in that order from east to west. According to Miller (2007) although a dialect may have certain characteristics associated with being Bedouin, rural, or even mixed, it does not necessarily mean that its speakers lead a nomadic Bedouin lifestyle (P. 6). The same idea has been emphasized by Behnstedt and Woidich (2013), who have highlighted the same point: talking about being Bedouin today is more about using the term as a convenient way to describe a variety of characteristics than it is about learning about the speakers' actual daily lives. Al Arish was inhabited by Palestinians as well as Egyptian immigrants. The borders of lands align with drawn isogloss bundles, so dialects in Al Arish were influenced by the Palestine dialect. This study aims to explore the phonological and lexical distinctions between the dialects of three Bedouin tribes in Sinai, focusing on how these variations can be used to identify tribal affiliations.

2. The aim of the study

This study aims to analyze and document the pronunciation patterns of Sinai dialects. It aims to understand the dialects of three tribes (Sawarka, Tarabin and Rumailat). This study seeks to identify the factors contributing to the diversity of dialects in Sinai. It aims to understand the Bedouin dialects, which can be used to identify a person's tribe. The study aims

to make comparisons of the method of pronunciation between the dialects of the different tribes in Sinai and urbans.

3. Data collection

The researcher obtained the data either in face-to-face interviews or through phone interviews. Also, through fairy tales and Bedouin poetry, data were collected.

4. Participants

Around 50 participants were all native speakers with different ages. The interviews included different ages of women and men who included friends, neighbours, and other persons. It included elderly people aged from 60 to 70 years (5 women and 4 men) and young people aged from 25 to 40 years (17 women and 24 men).

5. Methodology

According to Labov (1972), who notes that “the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain this data by systematic observation.” (Labov, 1972, p. 209).

As a result, he offers a few methods that may reduce the researcher's influence on the participant's dialect. The Labovian principles that follow include: In order to analyze sociolinguistic patterns, it is important to:

- (1) Gather all the demographic information required.
- (2) Gather comparable answers to questions that characterize disparate attitudes and experiences.
- (3) Extract personal experience narratives where social conventions and interpersonal interaction styles are most obviously displayed and where style is frequently altered to become more colloquial.
- (4) To encourage group interaction between those in attendance, thus documenting any talk that is not directed at the interviewer.
- (5) To select the subjects that most interest the interviewee from a variety of speakers and provide them the freedom to steer the conversation's topic.
- (6) Use formal

elicitation to get specific information about linguistic structures: reading word lists and texts (Labov, 1984, PP32-33).

During the interview, for instance, the interviewer can take breaks to draw the speaker's focus away from the circumstances of the setting. The speakers may become engaged in narrating the stories and lose track of the fact that they are being interviewed if the researcher leads discussions on subjects that create powerful emotions. During the interviews, some of the informants talked about their daily lives, and others answered some questions that had been prepared previously. While some speakers required no encouragement to begin speaking freely on the topics, others were unmoved to go into detail, even somewhat on their answers to one short sentence, or sometimes even on their "yes" or "no" answers. These topics, covering everyday activities and various other topics, were expected to be close to a Bedouin's experience of his environment. These topics included agricultural activities, fishing activities, bread preparation, making coffee or tea, and receiving guests. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in participants' houses, in local shops, in transportation, and at the sea. In case of difficulty in the interview, the dialogue was conducted through a phone call to the participants.

Three social variables were included in this study when gathering and analyzing the target language data: speaker age, gender, and social networks. As Milroy and Gordon (2003) write "Age by itself has no explanatory value; it is only when examined in the context of its social significance as something reflecting differences in life experience

that it becomes a useful analytical construct". (Milroy and Gordon, 2003, p.39). So the participants from different ages. Milroy et al. (1991) suggests that "women prefer

supra-local linguistic features while men are more likely to use localised features". The participants included men and women to obtain different dialects. According to Chambers (1995) "linguistic influence is more likely to occur through informal interactions between

friends, neighbours, workmates". So the interviews included a lot of participants who are neighbours, friends, or strangers.

6. Phonological Variation Between Arabic Dialects

Phonology is the study of sounds in relation to a variety of speech variations and languages. It is concerned with the sounds that a language makes and the order in which they are used. It focusses on how sounds contribute to the process of communication (Poole, 1999, p. 55). Ryding (2014) defines phonology as the study of a language's sound system, including the examination of individual sounds and their articulation (articulatory phonetics) as well as perception (acoustic phonetics). Additionally, phonology includes the examination of phonemes, or significant sound segments: their arrangement, dispersion, and purpose (phonemics) (p. 2). "The domain of phonology is the language-specific selection and organization of sounds to signal meanings. Phonologists are interested in the sound patterns of articular languages" (Nurhayati, 2019, p. 2). The tribal dialects in Sinai rely on phonetics to analyse linguistic differences through phonetic standards such as consonants(place of articulations and manner of articulations), vowels and their way of pronouncing sounds.

7. Consonants

A consonant is a sound that is made when the airflow is blocked by either your lips or your tongue (Mojsin, 2016, p. 33). "If we make a sound like /s/, /d/, it can be clearly felt that we are making it difficult or impossible for the air to pass through the mouth. The sounds like /s/ and /d/ are called consonants "(Roach, 2009, p. 10). The inhabitants of Sinai, particularly the Bedouins, rely on Stillness word ends and Tanwin beginnings, as well as generally starting verbs with the letter Baa. Bedouin pronunciations alter the letter Qaf /q/ to the letter Jiim /dʒ/ and pronounce the letter Daad /dˤ/ as Dhaa /d/. It is thought that identifying Bedouins can be done based on how correctly they pronounce the letters Thaa /θ/ and Dhaal /ð/.

7.1 Labial

1. Voiced plosive /b/: /badri:/ means "early", /albars^sa/ means "the sand", /ði:b/ means "wolf".
2. Voiced nasal /m/: /laħm/ means "meat", /miθlak/ means "like you", /ħurma/ means "wife".
3. Semi vowel /w/: /wadʒʕa:n/ means "he is hurted", /taww/ means "just now", /mawwa:l/ means "popular folk song".

7.2 Labiodental

Voiceless fricative /f/: /se:f/ means "sword", /faraħ/ means "wedding".

7.3 Interdental

1. Voiceless fricative /θ/: /θala:θ/ means "three", /muθagaf/ means "educated person".
2. Voiced fricative /ð/: /ðabaħ/ means "slaughtered", /juð^srub/ means "he hits".
3. Emphatic /ð^s/: /ð^sahr/ means "back", /ʕað^sm/ means "bones".

7.4 Alveolar

1. Voiceless plosive /t/: /gajjalat/ means "took a nap", /taʕlji:la/ means "evening".
2. Voiced plosive /d/: /ʕaged/ means "run", /daħlah/ means "slope".
3. Voiceless plosive emphatic /t^s/: /mat^sar/ means "rain", /t^salaba:t/ means "goods".
4. Voiceless fricative /s/: /sala:ma/ means "male name", "samak" means "fish".
5. Voiced fricative /z/: /kinz/ means "treasure", /zama:n/ means "long ago".
6. Voiceless fricative emphatic /s^s/: /s^sinna:rah/ means "fishhook", /ʔs^safir/ means "yellow color".
7. Emphatic /ð^s/: /að^sð^saʕan/ means "the trek", /ʕð^sm/ means "bones".
8. Voiced nasal /n/: /anaħl/ means "palm trees", /na:s/ means "people", /ʕanam/ means "sheep".
9. Voiced lateral /l/: /ga:l/ means "he says", /flu:s/ means "money", /dʒabal/ means "mountain".
10. Voiced trill /r/: /barr/ means "desert", /baro:da/ means "gun", /ʕakru:t/ means "Nauty boy".

7.5 Post- Alveolar

1. Voiced affricate /dʒ/: /dʒima:l/ means "camels", /madʒnu:n/ means "crazy boy".
2. Voiceless fricative /ʃ/: /ʃams/ means "sun", /ʃigg/ means "reception place", /ʃiʃb/ means "grass".

7.6 Palatal

1. Semi- vowel /j/: /jo:m/ means "day", /jntres/ means "he falls", /χajja:l/ means "horseman".

7.7 Velar

1. Voiceless plosive /k/: /kaðða:b/ means "liar", /dʒiddak/ means "your grandfather", /abuk/ means your "father".
2. Voiced plosive /g/: /bagar/ means "cows", /gird/ means "monkey", /digig/ means "flour".
3. Voiceless fricative /χ/: /naχla/ means "palm tree", /muχχ/ means "brain".
4. Voiced fricative /ɣ/: /ɣada/ means "lunch", /laywih/ means "dialect".

7.8 Pharyngeal

1. Voiceless fricative /ħ/: /laħam/ means "meat", /ħatʕab/ means "firewood", /ri:ħ/ means "wind".
2. Voiced fricative /ʕ/: /burguʕ/ means "veil", /ʕasal/ means "honey".

7.9 Glottal

1. Voiceless plosive /ʔ/: /ʔákal/ means "he ate", /mitʔakkd/ means "certain", /jasʔalu:/ means "they ask", /dawa:ʔ/ means "medication".
2. Voiceless fricative /h/: /fawa:kih/ means "fruits", /ʃo:kah/ means "fork", /ħagigah/ means "truth".

8. Phonological Variations between Tribes

The sound	Swerkiy Arabic (SA)	Turbaniy Arabic (TA)	Remily Arabic (RA)	Arish Arabi (AA) (Sedentary)
/θ/	/θaniʃ/means "second" /kiθi:r/ means "many"	/saniʃ/ /kisi:r/	/θaniʃ/ /kiθi:r/	/saniʃ/ /kisi:r/
/ðˤ/	/ha:ða/means "this" /bazzabt/ means "precisely"	/ha:ðˤa/ /baðˤðˤabt/	/ha:ða/. /bazzabt/	/ha:ðˤa/ /baðˤðˤabt/
/s/	/maθalan/ means "for instance"	/masalan/	/maθalan/	/masalan/

In Bedouin dialects, Bedouins produce (/θ/, /ð/ and /ðˤ/) with true way such as:

It was noted from the interviews which included young people, children, and old men and women that Swerkiy and Rmeliy produce the letter 'Thaa' as /θ/= /θaniʃ/ means "second", the letter 'Dhaal' as /ð/= /ðibaħ/ means "he slaughtered", and the letter 'Dhaa' as /ðˤ/= /juðˤrub/ means "he hits", /aðˤðˤʕn/ means "the trek with camels". In Turbaniy Arabic and Arish Arabic one will usually hear /ðˤ/ instead of /ð/ as in /ha:ðˤa/ means "this". In Rmeliy Arabic and Swerkiy Arabic one will normally hear /ha:ða/.

In Arish Arabic, they produce the letter /s/ instead of the letter /θ/ and the letter /z/ instead of /ðˤ/ as well: /masalan/ > /maθalan/ means "for instance", /taldz/ > /θaldz/ means "ice", /ásibtih/ > /áθibtih/ means "I prove it", and /bizer/ > /biðrih/ means "seeds". In RA and SA, we find /z/ for /ðˤ/ such as /bazzabt/ > /baðˤðˤabt/ means "precisely", /mazbu:t/ > /maðˤbu:t/ means

"correct", /niza:m/ > /niðʕa:m/ means "system". They also produce the letter θ with true way such as /kiθi:r/ means "many" and ð /kaðða:b/ means "liar. Through phonetic differences between tribes, this led to the emergence of new words and helped determine each person's belonging to any tribe.

9. The /q/ variable

/q/ is pronounced as /qa:f/. The /q/ variable is one of the highly-salient variables characterising Arabic dialects (Al-Wer & Herin, 2011). Because of its high salience and "social and geographical importance ... as a carrier of local or regional loyalties" (Abdel-Jawad, 1981, p. 59). The literature review is limited to the speech communities where the variants of /q/ include either /g/ or /ʔ/ or both. "These include Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Egypt. Examples include /galam/ "pen", /gird/ "monkey" in Bedouin dialects and the glottal stop /ʔ/ in /ʔabl/ "before", /farʔ/ "difference"" (Sadiq, 2016, p. 69).

Peoples in Sinai produce the letter q, such as /qabilitna/, which means "our tribe", /ħuquq/ means "rights", and /muθaqqahin/ means "educated person". Cairo Arabic, spoken by the Bedouin in this northern region of eastern Arab Arabia, has voiceless /k/ reflexes and unaffricated voiced /g/ reflexes (Al-Tajir, 2010, p. 49).

Cairo Arabic /q/ is reflexed to /g/ and /k/ among bedouins. For example, in RA, SA, and TA, /jgu:l/ means "he says", /digig/ means "flour". The informants produce the letter g for q.

They pronounce the /k/ for the letter q, such as /akall/ > /aqall/ means "less", /katal/ > /qatal/, /juktul/ > /juqtul/ means "kill or beat", and /kina: bil alhawn/ means "matar shells".

10. Sociolinguistic literature

In Amman Arabic (henceforth AA), Abdel-Jawad (1981) investigated the variation in /q/ and its relationship to style, ethnicity, education, and sex. /q/, /ʔ/, /g/, and /k/ are among the variants in Amman Arabic that he listed. The first three are characterized as markers, while the

last is a stereotype associated with Fallāḥi:n "villagers" (p. 177). According to Abdel-Jawad, /k/ is associated with Fallāḥi:n and "comment, parody, and ridicule by the other groups". /ʔ/ is associated with urbanization and modernization, /q/ is associated with toughness, manhood, and masculinity; and /q/ is associated with Fusḥa: and its literary as well as religious status (p. 160).

In his study of linguistic variation in the Damascus speech community, Dahir (1998) focusses on the differences between men and women in the use of standard and colloquial variants of three phonological variables: /q/, /θ/, /ð/, and /aw/, /ay/. He comes to the conclusion that both Damascus Arabic and standard Arabic function as speech norms and that the variation in θ / ð and aw/ay is stable, but the variable /q/ is socially marked in that men tend to use it in its standard value, while women mostly change it into /ʔ/.

Dendane (2013) investigated age and gender differences in /q/ in Tlemcen, Algeria. Within this speech community, the variant /ʔ/ is heavily linked with women and stigmatized by Algerians from other cities. However, due to the significant number of rural migrants in Tlemcen, the variation /ʔ/ is associated with men and is spreading there. Dendane discovered that while those over 50 kept /ʔ/, younger boys, particularly those between the ages of 10 and 20, avoided using /ʔ/, converged on the migrants' version /ʔ/, and occasionally hypercorrected. Women kept it as well, but they felt differently about men who used it. Through previous studies of sociolinguistics and the application of sociolinguistics theories, this helped the researcher to understand and analyse Sinai tribal dialects in a correct way.

11. Vowels

The production of vowels involves a free flow of air through the oral tract without significant obstruction (McMahon, 2002, p. 68). According to Yule (2010), vowel sounds are created with a relatively unobstructed flow of air (p. 33). O'Connor (1980) described phonology

as a voiced air passing through various mouth shapes that produces vowels, with differences in mouth shape caused by varying positions of the tongue and lips (p. 79).

11.1 Long vowels

Bedouins in Sinai pronounce long vowel /i:/ in their speech such as /zi:n/ means "good", /ʃi:n/ means "bad", /si:f/ means "sword", /zi:t/ means "oil",

/dʒi:na/ means "we arrived".

There are some words with long vowel /e:/ such as: /snate:n/ means "two years", /findzale:n/ means "two cups", /be:n/ means "between", /we:n/ means "where", /e:ʃ/ means "what?", /hadʒdʒe:na/ means "we escaped".

There are words with /a:/ such as: /ga:lat/ means "she said", /ħaya:/ means "life".

They pronounce long /o:/ such as /xo:x/ means "peach", /ro:h/ means "soul", /xo:sʕa/ means "knife", and /sʕo:sʕ/ means "bird", /ʃo:ka/ means "fork", /katalo:h/ means "they beat him".

Records indicate that a few minimal pairs of short vowels are gathered.

/sʕifr/ "zero"	/sʕufr/ "yellow"
/gisʕsʕah/ "story"	/gusʕsʕah/ "hairlock"
/χiff/ "thin out"	/χuff/ "camel hoof"
/ħibb/ "kiss"	/ħubb/ "love"
/fitt/ "make fattah"	/futt/ "I passed"

12. Assimilation

Assimilation is a phonetic process that occurs in a sequence of two consonants. One consonant is affected by its neighbor, and they become identical or more similar to each other. Yule (2020) explained assimilation as “when two sound segments occur in sequence and some aspect of one segment is taken or "copied" by the other, the process is known as assimilation” (p. 47). There are two kinds of assimilation: regressive and progressive. Regressive

assimilation occurs when the second consonant affects the first, and progressive assimilation occurs when the first consonant affects the second.

Progressive Assimilation

k+ h → kk	/tjʃbikkum/	Interlock them
χ+ h →χχ	/ʃe:χχum/	Their sheikh
ħ + h →ħ ħ	/niftaħħiy/	We open it
t+ h →tt	/binttiy/	Her daughter

Regressive Assimilation

l + dʒ → dʒ dʒ	/adʒdʒiri:d/	The palm leaves
l + k → k k	/akkala:m/	The talk
n + r → r r	/irru:ħ/	We go
t+ z →z z	/jizzajjan/	He decorated

13. Elision

Elision is a phonological phenomenon in which some segments are dropped under specific conditions. In other circumstances, a phoneme may be deleted, realized as zero, or have zero realization, according to Roach (2009), who also notes that this is "typical of rapid casual speech" (P. 113). Yule (2020) described elision as "the process of not pronouncing a sound segment that might be present in the deliberately careful pronunciation of a word in isolation is described as "elision" (p. 51). Elision of a short vowel can be found in the following examples:

/ja:kuluw/ means " they eat " → /ja:kluw/

/mintaʃriħ/ means " wide- spread " → /mintaʃriħ/

/naʃazilih/ means "we isolate him " → /naʃazlih/

14. Findings and results

Although Egypt is an Arabic-speaking nation, it has a wide variety of dialects; this is partly owing to the region's geographic diversity in the dialects of Sinai. Numerous tribes from the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, and Jordan are found in Sinai. The Bedouins and Araishiya (urbans) live in Al-Arish, together with people from every governorate in Egypt, Palestinians, and people of different nationalities who have settled in Al-Arish as families. The dialects in Sinai differ as a result.

Results imply that the various dialects in Sinai contribute to the language's richness of meaning. The dialects of Sawarka, Tarabin, and Armilat are distinct from one another. There is a unique dialect spoken by every tribe. There are variances in both meaning and articulation manner. The phonological and lexical distinctions between the dialects of three Bedouin tribes in Sinai, focusing on how these variations can be used to identify tribal affiliations. Applying previous studies, such as (Abdel-Jawad (1981), Dahir (1998), Dendane (2013)), tribal dialects in Sinai were analyzed and phonetic differences of dialects were identified. In Arish Arabic, they produce the letter /s/ instead of the letter /θ/ such as /masalan/ > /maθalan/ means "for instance". In RA and SA, we find /z/ for / ð^s / such as /mazbu:t/ > /mað^sbu:t/ means "correct". In Cairo Arabic /q/ is reflexed to /g/ and /k/ among Bedouins. For example, in RA, SA, and TA, /jgu:l/ means "he says", /katal/ > /qatal/ means "kill or beat".

The results thus show that contemporary technology, social media, new advances in their everyday lives, and their neighbors from the Nile Valley have an influence on the younger generations of tribes, resulting in a shift in their language.

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