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A phonological Study of Some Iraqi Arabic Tongue – Slips

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Abstract

Tongue-slips are classified into seven types :three of which have a phonological nature. The latter are : regressive assimilation, progressive assimilation, and metathesis. These three types of tongue-slips are available in Spoken Iraqi Arabic. The conclusions of this study show that consonants are more liable to be slipped than vowels, and this usually occurs in similar syllabic constituents. Moreover, it is found that sentences may include more than one type of tongue-slips.

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1. Introduction :

It is believed that prior to speaking is mentally planning what one intends to say. In other words, speaking is the result of two interleaved processes, namely: planning and execution. Lashley (1951), as cited in Clark and Clark (1977:273), argues "that speech execution... requires a plan- a plan to direct the order and timing of ... articulatory gestures, a plan to command what muscles to move when." This plan is called the articulatory program. Lashley (ibid.) states that the answers to questions about the articulatory program, its formation and its execution "can be found in part in an extra ordinary source of evidence : slips of the tongue."

The present study aims at presenting a phonological explanation of some Iraqi Arabic tongue-slips, few of which were uttered by the present researcher, the others were produced by relatives, friends, colleagues, and students. Such a phonological investigation may validate the existence of the articulatory program whose formation is dealt with in the following section.

2. Fromkin's Articulatory Program :

One of the assiduous investigators of the slips of the tongue phenomenon is Victoria A. Fromkin. Out of her studies of (1971) and (1973), she reached a conclusion concerning the way a speaker forms his articulatory program in his memory before getting it executed. Garrett (1975) suggested a similar form of the program. Both of Fromkin's (1973) and Garrett's (1975) have the following five steps which are quoted at length below, (see Clark and Clark, 1977: 278-279):

(1) Meaning selection. The first step is to decide on the meaning the present constituent is to have .
(2) Selection of a syntactic outline. The next step is to build a syntactic outline of the constituent. It specifies a succession of word slots and indicates which slots are to get primary, secondary and zero stress.
(3) Content word selection. The third step is to select nouns, verbs, adjective, and adverbs to fit into the appropriate slots.
(4) Affix and function word formation. With the content words decided on, the next step is to spell out the

phonological shape of the function words (like articles, conjunctions, and prepositions), prefixes, and suffixes.

(5) Specification of phonetic segments. The final step is to build up fully specified phonetic segments syllable by syllable.

After fulfilling the final step of the articulatory program, execution can then be carried out. However, the execution of these five steps is usually accompanied by a monitoring process on the part of the speaker to make certain that what is said matches what is intended to be said. The main functions of the monitoring process is the detection of a speech error and the stimulation of the speaker to stop speaking, correct himself, and then continues speaking.

Although the five steps of the articulatory program taken together give us a comprehensive view of the mental planning of speech, still only the fifth step is of vital importance in the execution and actual articulation of speech. This is highlighted in the next section.

3. MacNeilage's Ideal Targets :

MacNeilage (1970) contends that "the commands sent to the articulatory organs, presumably by the articulatory program, specify "ideal targets," places where the articulatory organs ought to be in the pronunciation of some phonetic segments," (as cited by Clark and Clark, 1977:291). He (ibid.) maintains that after the target position of the articulatory organs is specified by the articulatory program a computation of the discrepancy between the present position of the articulatory organs and the target position is carried out followed by a ballistic movement initiation so as to eliminate that discrepancy. Difficulty of attaining each of the successive ideal targets increase with the increase of speech-rate. Consequently, some of the targets are liable to be left out, others combined, and still others mispronounced. These consequences make up some of the types of tongue-slips. But, what is a slip of the tongue? And, what are the attested types of tongue-slips? The following section answers these questions.

4. Slip of the Tongue : Definition & Typology

Jensen (2001:1) defines a speech error or a slip of the tongue as "an unintentional movement, addition, deletion, blending or substitution of material within an utterance or between utterances." She (ibid.) adds saying that this "means that the speaker says something s/he didn't mean to say. Crucially, the utterance is the result of unintentional processes." The domain of occurrence of tongue-slips includes: consonants and/or

vowels, parts of words, complete words, phrases or even complete sentences.

Seven major types of tongue-slips have been catalogued by different investigators such as Freud (1966), Bloomer and Laver (1968), Nooteboom (1969), Fromkin (1973) and Garrett (1975), among others. The commonest type of tongue-slips is anticipation which is the "result of looking forward in the utterance and getting material before you need it." (Jensen, 2001:2). Such as in saying (the gore pampaign) instead of (the gore compaign) in which the [*p*] of the last syllable of (campaign) performed a forward replacement of the initial consonant [*k*].

Perseveration is the second type of tongue-slips, as in saying (that was the pre-phone flan) instead of (that was the pre-phone plan). Jensen (ibid.) comments on this example saying that the [*p*] sound in (plan) is replaced by the [*f*] sound in (phone) which occurred earlier in the utterance; that is, perseverated.

Metathesis, reversals, or spoonerism is the third type of tongue-slips[1]. Jensen (ibid.) gives the following illustrative example: the speaker said (don't you fake your shinger at me!) instead of (don't you shake your finger at me!). In this example the initial consonants of the words (shake) and (finger) are switched and they exchanged places.

The fourth type of the slips is called blends. In this type of the slips the speaker has two words at his disposal, usually produced one after the other. He cuts out the second half of the first word and the first half of the second word, then he blends together the first half of the first word and the second half of the second word, as in saying (grastly) instead of (grizzly + ghastly).

Haplologies is the fifth type of tongue-slips which is somewhat similar to blends. Here, the speaker cuts out a small part of the utterance as in saying (posties) instead of (post toasties).

Clark and Clark (1977:274) comment on the sixth and seventh types of the slips, respectively, saying that in "misderivations, the speaker somehow attaches the wrong suffix or prefix to the word," as in saying (an intervenient node) instead of (an intervening node). They (ibid.) add that in "word substitutions, the speaker produces a word that is wrong, but typically related either semantically or phonologically to the word intended," as in saying (before the place closes) instead of (before the place opens). Fromkin (2002:2) believes that "speech errors also tell us a great deal about the structure and organization of the mental dictionary-the storage house of all the words a speaker of a language knows." She

[1] This term is coined on the basis of the name of the Reverand William A. Spooner, of the 19th century, Dean and Warden of New College, Oxford. He was very famous for producing many speech errors.

(ibid.) states that "nouns are substituted for nouns, verbs for verbs, and prepositions for prepositions --- ." These word substitutions can be similar in sound or meaning and this suggests that speakers store words in their mental dictionary in semantic classes and according to their sounds.

The above mentioned types of slips of the tongue indicate that they occur in different linguistic levels. For instance, in anticipation a single segment (a consonant or a vowel) is the domain of the speech error, whereas in misderivations an affix (a prefix or a suffix) is the domain of occurrence of the tongue-slip. Accordingly, we can call speech errors such as anticipations phonological errors, while those of the misderivations type of slips can be termed morphological ones . That is to say tongue-slips can be categorized into different kinds reflecting the linguistic level in question. Thus, one may come across the following kinds : phonological slips, morphological slips, lexical slips, and syntactic slips.

The present work is concerned with studying phonological Iraqi Arabic slips. As for the other kinds of tongue-slips, hopefully they will be the raw material for future research.

5. The Phonological Study of the Slips:

The study covers the first three types of tongue-slips mentioned in the previous section, namely: anticipation, perseveration, and metathesis. As for the other four types of tongue-slips and since they fall within the morphological, syntactic, and lexical (i.e., semantic) levels, hence their investigation lies outside the limits of the present work.

It is worthwhile to mention that many of the slips examples under consideration are composed of collocated lexical items. Moreover, the consonantal tongue-slips are far more than the vowel slips. Thus, the given examples of consonantal slips are not the only available ones in the corpus of the study, whereas those of vowel slips are actually the only collected material of such slips.

Starting with the first type of the tongue-slips, i.e., anticipation, one may note that both consonants and vowels can be anticipated. Now, consider the following anticipated tongue-slips :[2]

[2] The intended utterance occurs on the left of the arrow and the actual utterance with the slip on the right.

1. [ʕarmu:T Ha:r] › [Harmu:T Ha:r][3]
   (hot donuts)
2. [laHam ni:] › [naHam ni:]
   (raw meat)
3. [siddil šibba:č] › [šiddil šibba:č]
   (Close the window.)
4. [ši:f wa:Hid] › [ša:f wa:Hid]
   (one slice) (He saw someone.)
5. [ra:H labu:k] › [ru:H labu:k]
   (He went to your father.) (Go to your father)
6. [xe:T na:ylo:n] › [xa:T na:ylo:n]
   (a nylon thread)

In (1) above, the speaker substituted the initial consonant [H] of the second word for the initial consonant [ʕ] of the first syllable of the first word. Notice that these two pharyngeal consonants share the following distinctive features (henceforth df.$_s$) : [+ continuant], and [+ retracted tongue root]. In (2), the speaker replaced the lateral consonant [ ] of the first word by the nasal consonant [n] of the second word. Both of these consonants have the following df.$_s$ in common :[+ sonorant], and [+ anterior]. In (3), the speaker produced a [š] sound in the initial position of the first word instead of a [s] sound under the anticipatory influence of the initial consonant [š] of the second word. These two sounds are : [- sonorant], [+ continuant], [+ strident], and [+stiff vocal folds]. Note that in these three examples, the consonantal anticipation involved initial consonants in initial stressed syllables; that is consonants in homologous parts of syllables.

In (4) above, the speaker replaced the high vowel [i:] in the first word by the low vowel [a:] of the first syllable in the second word. Both of these vowels are :[- round], and [- back]. In (5), the speaker intended producing the low vowel [a:] but instead she produced the high vowel [u:] under the influence of the nucleus of the second syllable of the second word, i.e., [u:]. Notice that these two vowels have no single df in common and the only thing they share is their being the nuclei of stressed syllables. Finally, in (6), the speaker substituted the [a:] of the first syllable of the second word for the [e:] of the first word. These two long vowels have the following df.$_s$ in common :[- round], [- back],and [-high].

As for the second type of tongue-slips, i.e. perseveration, we may examine the following examples :

[3] The phonemic notation is after Rashid (1997), with the exception of the pharyngealized consonants which are capitalized in this study.

7. [xubiz Ha:r] › [xubiz xa:r]
(hot loaves)
8. [gurna de:r] › [gurna ge:r]
(Qurna-Dear districts)
9. [nafsil ši:] › [nafsil si:]
(the same thing)
10. [xo:š Si:t] › [xo:š So:t]
(a good reputation) (a good voice)
11. [šinu: fo:g ra:si:] › *[sinu: fo:g ru:si:][4]
(What is there on my head?) *(What is there on my heads?)
12. [ʔaxu:k ra:H lilsu:g] › *[ʔaxu:k ru:H lilsu:g]
(Your brother has gone to the market.) *(Your brother go to the market.)

In (7) above, the speaker substituted the [x] of the first syllable of the first word for the initial [H] of the second word. These two pharyngeals share the following $df._s$: [- sonorant], [+ continuant], [+ strident], [+ retracted tongue root], and [+ stiff vocal folds]. In (8), the speaker replaced the initial consonant [d] of the second word by the initial consonant [g] of the first word. Both of these consonants have the following $df._s$: [- sonorant], [- continuant] and [+ slack vocal folds]. In (9), the speaker intended producing a [š] in the initial position of the second word, but under the influence of the initial consonant [s] of the second syllable of the first word, she produced instead a [s]. The common $df._s$ between these two consonants are : [- sonorant] [+ continuant], [+ strident], and [+ stiff vocal folds]. In (10), the speaker produced an [o:] instead of an [i:] as the nucleus of the second monosyllabic word because of the influence of the nucleus [o:] of the first monosyllabic word. It seems that such a change in vowel quality is frequent in the speech errors of this speaker who is the same speaker of the following two tongue-slips, i.e. (11) and (12). Note that [i:] and [o:] share the following $df._s$: [+ advanced tongue root], and [- low]. In (11), the speaker substituted the [u:] of the second syllable of the first word for the [a:] of the first syllable of the third word. Lip-rounding continues throughout the production of the first and second words because of the presence of the initial [š] which is produced with lip protrusion and the presence of the rounded vowels [u:] and [o:] in the first and second words, respectively. It is highly probable that the spreading of this lip-rounding is the main reason behind replacing [a:] by a rounded vowel. Still, why an [u:] and not an [o:] ?

[4] An asterisked utterance is either syntactically or semantically ill-formed.

Probably because [ru:s] and not *[ro:s] is a meaningful word in spoken Iraqi Arabic and a related word to the intended one [ra:si:]; that is its plural form. As we said previously, there are no shared df.s between [a:] and [u:]. In the last example (12), the speaker substituted the [u:] of the second syllable of the first word for the [a:] of the second word. Notice that the second syllable of the third word also contains an [u:]; accordingly, we may explain the replacement of the [a:] of the second word by the [u:] of the third word as a case of anticipation. Therefore, this utterance can be considered as an example of vowel anticipation and perseveration at the same time.

The third type of phonological tongue-slips whose frequent occurrence was registered in the corpus of the present study is metathesis. It's frequent occurrence in spoken Iraqi Arabic, when compared with the other types of tongue-slips, has resulted in the fossilization of the metathesized expressions with the passage of time.[5] This type of tongue-slips undergoes single segments or more, or even entire words. Consider the following examples:

13. [darbak Tiwi:l] › [Tarbak diwi:l]
    (Your way is long.)
14. [ʔilzawra: wiljawwiyya] › [ʔiljawra: wilzawwiyya]
    (Al-Zawra and Al-Jawwiyya teams)
15. [ʔiklu: ča:yw kaʕak] › [ʔiklu: ka:yw čaʕač]
    (Eat biscuits and tea.)
16. [duʕa:ʔ kumayl] › [kuma:ʔ duʕayl]
    (Kumayl's Call)
17. [ʔilHinTa wilšaʕi:r] › [ʔilšiʕTa willani:r]
    (wheat and barley)
18. [maʕju:n ʔasna:n] › [masnu:n ʔaʕja:n]
    (tooth paste)
19. [xidran rijlayya] › [rijlan xidrayya]
    (My feet numbed.)
20. [ʔilSaTil matru:s] › [ʔiltaris maSTu:l]
    (The bucket is filled.)
21. [raggi:w baTTi:x] › [baTTi:w raggi:x]
    (water melon and melon)

[5] For further information, see Rashid (forthcoming) "Metathesis in spoken Iraqi Arabic: A phonological Study." In The Journal of The First Scientific Conference of the College of Arts. Vol.I .

22. [ji:b fa:š] › [ja:b fi:š]
(Bring lemon.)
23. [digam bi:Dw su:d] › [digam bu:Dw si:d]
(white and back buttons)

In (13), (14), and (15) above, a single consonant in one word exchanged places with another consonant in an adjacent word. Thus in (13), [d] exchanged positions with [T]. These two consonants share the following df.$_s$:[- sonorant], [- continuant], [+ anterior], and [-distributed]. In (14), [z] interchanged positions with [j]. Their common df.$_s$ Are : [-sonorant], [+ strident], and [+ slack vocal folds]. In (15), the order of [č] and [k] is switched. However, if we examine the utterance carefully once more, we can notice that the first word [ʔiklu:] contains a [k]; so, we may explain the change of the [č] of the second word [ča:y] into a [k] as a case of perseveration. Consequently, the two [k]$_s$ of [kaʕak] are changed into a [č] as a result of metathesis. Hence, in this utterance we have two types of tongue-slips, namely: perseveration and metathesis. /č/ and /k/ share the following df.$_s$:[-sonorant], [- continuant], and [+ stiff vocal folds].

In (16), (17), and (18), a pair of consonants in one word exchanged places with another pair of consonants in an adjacent word. In (16), the [d] and [ʕ] of the first word exchanged positions with the [k] and [m] of the second word. [d] and [k] are similar in being :[- sonorant], and [- continuant]. But [ʕ] and [m] have nothing in common except their being consonants. In (17), the [H] and [n] of the first word interchanged places with the [š] and [ʕ] of the second word. The df.$_s$ shared by [H] and [š] are :[- sonorant], [+ continuant], [+ strident], and [+ stiff vocal folds]. No df.$_s$ Are shared by [n] and [ʕ] except for their consonantal characterization. In (18), the order of the [ʕ] and [j] of the first word and the [s] and [n] of the second word is switched, respectively. [ʕ] and [s] are similar in being: [- sonorant], [+ continuant], whereas [j] and [n] are similar only in being consonants.

In (19), (20), and (21), three consonants in one word exchanged places with another three consonants in a neighboring word. In (19), the speaker switched the order of the [x] , [d] , and [r] of the first word with the order of the [r], [j], and [l] of the second word. Notice that there are no shared df.$_s$ between the consonants [x] and [r]. As for [d] and [j], both of them are: [- sonorant], [- continuant], and [+ slack vocal folds]. [r] and [l] are similar in being : [+sonorant], [-nasal], [+ anterior], and [- distributed]. In (20), the entire consonantal skeleton, (except for the definite article [ʔil]), exchanged position with the consonantal skeleton of the second word, (except for the first consonant [m]). [S] and [t] have the following df.$_s$ in common: [- sonorant], [+ stiff vocal folds], [+ anterior], and [- distributed]. The df.$_s$ shared by [T] and [r] are :

[- continuant], [+ anterior], and [- distributed]. The common df.$_s$ between [l] and [s] are : [+ continuant], [+ anterior], and [- distributed]. In (21), the whole consonantal skeleton of the first word exchanged positions with the first two consonants of the second word. The only df shared by the consonants [r] and [b] is : [- continuant]. As for the geminated (i.e., [+ long]) consonants [g] and [T], they are similar in being: [- sonorant], and [- continuant].

Examples (22), and (23) above, exhibit cases of vowel metathesis. In these two examples the long vowel [i:] exchanged position with the long vowels [a:] and [u:], respectively. [i:] shares two df.$_s$ with [a:], namely : [- round], and [- back]. Moreover, it shares three df.$_s$ with [u:], namely :[+ advanced tongue root], [+ high], and [- low].

6. Conclusions:

After examining the above examples of the three types of tongue-slips, one can conclude the following :

1. Consonants are more frequently slipped than vowels and this can be attributed to different reasons that are stated below:

a. The number of consonants in any phonemic-system is usually far larger than the number of vowels.

b. A good number of consonants, when compared with vowels, can be altered into different consonants by means of changing the value of a single df or at most two df.$_s$ taking into consideration the difference in the number of the consonantal df.$_s$ and the vocalic df.$_s$.

c. As far as syllable-structure is concerned, consonants constitute marginal segments while vowels are the nuclei of syllables. Thus, we believe that margins of syllables are more liable to be slipped than their nuclei.

2. Segments in homologous parts of syllables (i.e., initial, medial, or final) are more readily slipped than those in non-homologous parts. Such bits of information may suggest that segmental df.$_s$, segments, and syllables are parts of the articulatory program that can specify which segments can be anticipated, perseverated or metathesized and which segments cannot.

3. Some segments are slipped for other segments, though there is not any shared df.$_s$ between the intended segment and the uttered one. However, we noticed that in such cases if the segment is a vowel then it is the nucleus of a stressed syllable. This consequently indicates that there are different slots spared for stressed and unstressed syllables in the articulatory program. On the other hand, if the segment is a consonant, then its slipping is conditioned by the presence of other adjacent slipped consonants. That is to say, the tongue-slip undergoes

not only a single consonant but two or more consonants, consecutively.

4. It was noticed that consonants are always slipped for other consonants, and vowels for vowels, usually present within the same utterance. No single occurrence of a consonantal slip for a vowel or vice versa was attested in the corpus of the present study. This finding can support the belief that different segmental slots are spared for consonants and vowels in the articulatory program.
5. More than one type of tongue-slips can occur within the same utterance.

Finally, one may say that desbite the great development achieved in the studies of the slip of the tongue phenomenon, still more linguistic, psycholinguistic and even neurolinguistic research is needed to uncover many of its secrets.

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دراسة صوتية لبعض زلات اللسان في اللهجة العراقية

الخلاصة :

تصنف زلات اللسان إلى سبعة أنواع ، ثلاثة منها طبيعة صوتية ، وهي : التماثل المتقدم والتماثل المتأخر والقلب المكاني .

هذه الأنواع الثلاث من زلات اللسان موجودة في اللهجة العراقية ، من بين الاستنتاجات التي خرجت بها الدراسة الحالية هي أن الأصوات الصحيحة عرضة للزلل اللساني اكثر من أصوات اللين وهذا عادة ما يحدث في أجزاء مقطعية متماثلة .. كما وان من الممكن أن تحتوي جملة واحدة على اكثر من نوع واحد من هذه الزلات اللسانية .