Journal of Basrah Researches (Humanities Series) V:31 No.(1) P : B , PP 109-133

The impact of literacy on Sociolinguistic Variation in Khasibi Iraqi Arabic

Asst. Lecturer
Abdul Hameed M. Daffar
College of Arts
University of Basra

Abstract

This study deals with the impact of literacy on a sociolinguistic pattern of variation in regard of four phonological variables found in Khasibi Iraqi Arabic (henceforth KIA), the variety of Arabic spoken in Abul Khasib, a rural area in the southernmost part of Iraq. By the application of a quantitative analysis to a corpus of data consisting of tape recorded speech of 60 informants representative of the users of this spoken variety of Arabic, the present research has come to a conclusion that that literate speakers of Khasibi Iraqi Arabic appear to adopt the prestigious linguistic forms of the four phonological variables in question in their speech much more than their illiterate peers. This inference conforms to the results of some other similar studies conducted in three other Arabic using communities.

1. Introduction

It has been found that speakers who use KIA[1] vary in their speech as regards four particular phonological variables (Daffar, 1990). A general sociolinguistic pattern has come to be revealed in this connection. Khasibi people who maintain contact with Basra centre (henceforth BC) tend to use the urban variants of (j), (q), (ġ) and (ɑ:),much more than those who have no such contact do (see table 1)[2]. The urban variants of these four variables are respectively the /j/, /q/, /ġ/ and /ɑ:/.

In addition, this pattern of sociolinguistic variation has been proved to be affected by some other social variables, one of which is the speaker's state of literacy[3].

The present study aims at re-reading and re-discussing the results detected by a previous analysis of data collected from the real speech of 60 Khasibi informants who were selected to be a representative sample of their speech community[4].The

results under reference are to be re-investigated for the purpose of revealing and ascertaining the range of the effect of the speaker's state of literacy on the choice of the urban linguistic forms by KIA speakers.

Table 1. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of the urban variants /j/, /q/, /ġ/, and /ɑ:/ in the speech of KIA speakers

Urban Variant	Cont'	Cont''	P value
/j/	71.3	38.2	P < 0.001 (P < 0.01)
/q/	81.1	67.4	P = 0.002 (P < 0.01)
/ġ/	83.4	69.6	P = 0.003 (P < 0.01)
/ɑ:/	62.9	44.5	P < 0.001 (P < 0.01)

Note: Cont' = the average percentages of the occurrences of the urban variants in the speech of Khasibi informants having contact with BC

Cont'' = the average percentages of the occurrences of the urban variants in the speech of Khasibi informants having no contact with BC

2. Methodology

For the purpose of re-analysing the data employed in a previous work (Daffar, 1990), the present study similarly uses a quantitative analysis approach which implies:

a. The selection of the same phonological variables studied formerly, i.e. the (j), (q), (ġ) and (ɑ:) variables. Each of these variables has a pair of urban vs rural variants which are used interchangeably by KIA speakers. They are /j/ vs /y/, /q/ vs /G/, /ġ/ vs /q/ and /ɑ:/ vs /a/ respectively. Socially speaking, the urban variants are considered the prestigious ones, whereas the others are regarded as stigmatized forms. Furthermore, these variables are so salient that one of them, viz. the (j), is characterized as a local stereotype (ibid).

b. The individual percentage scores of the urban variants of the four linguistic variables under investigation are tabulated into two main contrastive set to show patterns of sociolinguistic variation in the speech of literate vs illiterate KIA speakers. Such patterns were subjected to two widely familiar statistical techniques.

The first, which is known as the paired t test, was used for the purpose of verifying the significance of the patterns. If P is less than or equal to 0.01 ($P \leq 0.01$)[5], the pattern of differences is highly significant. If P is more than 0.01 and less than or equal to 0.05 ($P \leq 0.05$), the pattern of differences is significant. In case P is more than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$), the differences are insignificant.

The other statistical technique which has been applied to this study is the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The F ratio value produced by the implementation of this technique has been employed to prove whether or not any interaction of some other social variables is valid in this respect. If the F ratio appears higher than the F table value[6], it proves the validity of the intersection (Milroy, 1980: 122; Butler, 1985: 127-36).

3. The Analysis of the Results

In this section, as in (Daffar, 1990), each of the four linguistic variables in question is to be tackled separately. It is the scores of the urban variants which are to be taken mainly for the purpose of analyzing the data though those of the rural ones are not to be neglected thoroughly.

3.1 The (j) Variable

A previous analysis of the data under discussion has revealed that Khasibis who

Table 2. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of /j /, the urban variant of the (j) variable, by the male informants

Age	State of Literacy	Cont GN	Cont GM	Cont - GN	Cont - GM
60	+	1	56.8	7	37.8
	-	2	12.9	8	0.9
40 – 59	+	3	81.2	9	67.6
		4	65	10	22
20 – 39	+	5	97.2	11	80.9
	-	6	74.8	12	25.6
P = 0.012			(P < 0.01)		

Notes: GN = group number GM = group mean

Source: Daffar (1990, table: 4.1)

Table 3. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of /j /, the urban variant of the (j) variable, by the female informants

Age	State of Literacy		Cont+		Cont-	
			GN	GM	GN	GM
60	+	1	100		7	53.8
		2	18.2		8	9.6
40 – 59	-	3	97.5		9	54.9
	-	4	74.3		10	16.7
20 – 39	+	5	96.1		11	54.4
	-	6	81.8		12	34.7
	P = 0.002			(P < 0.01)		

Source: Daffar (1990, table: 4.2)

have close contact with BC tend to use the urban variant of the (j) variable more than their peers who do not have such contact do (ibid: 80). This is observable in tables 2 and 3 above.

However, a more accurate look at the results shown in tables 4 and 5 detects that with the exception of the last two cases of the middle aged and younger generations displayed in table 5, the choice of the urban variant in the speech of the literate informants who have no contact with BC is more than it is in the speech of either type of the illiterate informants: those who have contact with BC on the one hand and those who have no such contact on the other hand. The superiority of the scores in the case of the literate informants, who have no contact with BC, though with two exceptions, indicates that the impact of literacy on the adoption of the urban variant in question is greater than that of contact with BC.

Table 4. The choice of /j /, the urban variant of the (j) variable, by three male age groups of Khasibi informants different as regards literacy (Lit) and contact with BC (Cont)

Age	Lit & Cont+	Lit & Cont-	Lit & Cont-
60	0.9	12.9	37.8
40-59	22	65	67.6
20-39	25.6	74.8	80.9

this connection whereas the illiterate females have scored only 39.25 on the other hand. In both cases these results were calculated regardless of the cross sectional impact of the social variable of contact with BC.

Table 6. Effect of literacy on the choice of the urban variant of the (j) variable by men

Age	Contact with BC	Lit GN	Lit GM	Lit GN	Lit GM	P value
60+	+	1	56.8	7	12.9	
	-	2	37.8	8	0.9	
40-59	+	3	81.2	9	65	P = 0.002
	-	4	67.6	10	22	
20-39	+	5	97.2	11	74.8	(P < 0.01)
	-	6	80.9	12	25.6	
		Avg.	70.3	Avg.	33.5	

Note: Lit+ = literate
Lit- = illiterate

Source: Daffar (1990: table 4.8)

Table 7. Effect of literacy on the choice of the urban variant of the (j) variable by women

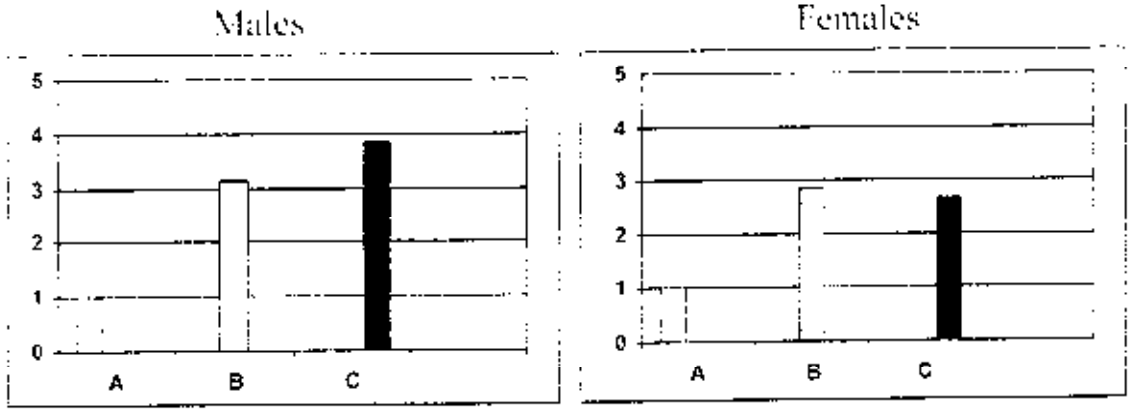
Age	Contact with BC	Lit GN	Lit GM	Lit GN	Lit GM	P value
60+	+	1	100	7	18.2	
	-	2	53.8	8	9.6	
40-59	+	3	97.5	9	74.3	P = 0.015
	-	4	54.9	10	16.7	
20-39	+	5	96.1	11	81.8	(P < 0.05)
	-	6	54.4	12	34.7	
		Avg.	76.1	Avg.	39.2	

Source: Daffar (1990: table 4.9)

However, the details in table 7 disclose the two exceptions already mentioned above. It is also clear that illiterate women of the middle aged and younger generations who have contact with BC adopt [j], the urban variant, in their speech more than literate women of the same generations who no such contact do, which means that the effect of contact with BC in these cases is more than that of literacy.

It is worth noting here that the implementation of the paired t test to these two tables has proved that the patterns of differences in table 7 are significant ($P < 0.05$) and they are highly significant ($P < 0.01$) in the case of table 6. The application of the ANOVA on the other hand has indicated that the interaction between sex and literacy is valid. The F ratio which was obtained is 12.32 whereas the F table value is only 0.999.

Figure 2 shed more light on this issue. It shows the proportion of the effect of literacy to the effect of contact with BC on the choice of /j/ by KIA speakers. This proportion is slightly more than 1.2 to 1 in the case of males and slightly more than 0.9 to 1 in the case of females. This makes it clear that the impact of literacy on the adoption of /j/ is roughly speaking more than that of contact with BC in the case of males but it is the opposite in the case of females.



Note: A = illiterate informants having no contact with BC

B = illiterate informants having contact with BC

C = literate informants having no contact with BC

Figure 2. Proportion of the effect of literacy to the effect of contact with BC on the choice of /j/

3.2. The (q) Variable

For the purpose of getting a clear insight into the impact of literacy on the use of the urban variant of the (q) variable, it is important to note:

a. This variable, as in some other Arabic dialects, has several variants one of which is the /q/, which is considered a reflex of the voiceless uvular stop found in Standard Arabic (Abd-el-Jawad, 1987: 361).

In KIA, the /q / and /G / occur interchangeably only in words which are residuals of classical Arabic, neologisms that are borrowed from Standard Arabic, and some loanwords and proper nouns.

b. This variable has been undergoing an advanced phase of linguistic change in progress Daffar, 1990: 84-85).

c. The rural variant of this variable appears to be stigmatized by most of KIA speakers as well as the urbanites in BC (ibid: 84).

As in the case of the (j) variable, the analysis of the data in the previous study has also inferred a similar pattern of sociolinguistic variation with regard to the (q) variable. It has also been found that "KIA speakers who have contact with BC choose q , the urban variant, in their speech more frequently than those who do not have such contact" (ibid: 94). The percentage scores shown in tables 8 & 9 reveal the differences in the use of the /q / between those two types of informants in various groups.

Table 8. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of /q /, the urban variant of the (q) variable, by the male informants

Age	State of Literacy	Cont+		Cont-	
		GN	GM	GN	GM
60+	+	1	84.8	7	70.2
		2	32.9	8	20.8
40 - 59		3	90.4	9	82.7
		4	70.7	10	36.3
20 - 39	+	5	94.6	11	88.1
		6	76.1	12	46.2
	P = 0.015		(P < 0.05)		

Source: Daffar (1990, table: 4.12)

Table 9. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of /q /, the urban variant of the (q) variable, by the female informants

Age	State of Literacy	Cont+		Cont-	
		GN	GM	GN	GM
60+	+	1	100	7	88.5
	-	2	52	8	48.1
40 – 59	+	3	100	9	100
	-	4	90.3	10	63.7
20 – 39	+	5	98.4	11	97.4
	-	6	82.4	12	67.3
		P = 0.068		(P < 0.05)	

Source: Daffar (1990, table: 4.13)

However, the percentage scores displayed in tables 10 & 11 demonstrate a case similar to the one found in the present study with regard to the (j) variable, yet without any exception this time. It is clear that the literate informants who have no contact with BC exceed in their scores of adopting the q in their speech their illiterate peers who have such contact as well as the illiterate who have no such contact.

Table 10. The choice of /q /, the urban variant of the (q) variable, by three male age groups of Khasibi informants different as regards literacy and contact with BC

Age	Lit+ & Cont+	Lit+ & Cont-	Lit- & Cont-
60+	20.8	39.9	70.2
40-59	36.3	70.7	82.7
20-39	46.2	76.1	88.1

Table 10. The choice of /q /, the urban variant of the (q) variable, by three male age groups of Khasibi informants different as regards literacy and contact with BC

Age	Lit+ & Cont+	Lit+ & Cont-	Lit- & Cont-
60+	20.8	39.9	70.2
40-59	36.3	70.7	82.7
20-39	46.2	76.1	88.1

This pattern, which implies the priority of literacy over contact with BC in affecting the choice of /q /, the urban variant of the variable under reference, by KIA speakers is also indicated by the details of figure 3. Disregarding the scores of the literate informants who have contact with BC, it is clear that the peaks of the use of the /q / by the literate informants without such contact are higher than the ones pertaining to the illiterate informants maintaining such contact. This indicator emphasizes again the superiority of the impact of literacy over that of contact with BC.

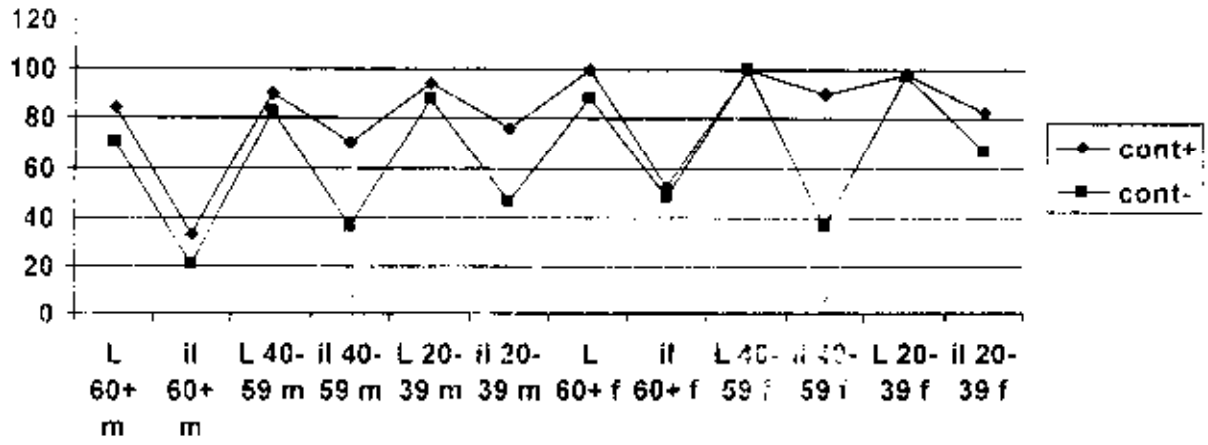


Figure 3. Distribution of the urban variant of the (q) variable: the effect of literacy

The results shown in tables 12 & 13 reveal the same pattern of sociolinguistic variation in this connection. It is also apparent that literate informants without contact with BC tend to choose /q / the urban variant, in their speech more frequently than illiterate informants who do have such contact. In addition, table 13 discloses two distinguished cases in one of which both types of the literate female informants, those who have contact with BC and those who do not have such contact, have scored the same number of occurrences of the /q / in their speech, i.e. 100% (see groups 5 & 6 in table 13). In the other case it is clear that while the literate female informants who maintain contact with BC have used the /q / 98.4%, their literate peers who do not have such contact have approximated to this same result in their choice of this variant. The difference is nothing but one (cf. groups 5 & 6 in table 13). As such, the effect of contact in these cases appears to be nil or trifle.

Table 12. Effect of literacy on the choice of the urban variant of the (q) variable by men

Age	Contact with BC	Lit⁻		Lit⁺		P value
		GN	GM	GN	GM	
60⁻	+	1	84.8	7	32.9	
	-	2	70.2	8	20.8	
40-59	+	3	90.4	9	70.7	P = 0.002
	-	4	82.7	10	36.3	
20-39	+	5	94.6	11	76.1	(P < 0.01)
	-	6	88.1	12	46.2	
		Avg.	85.1	Avg.	47.2	

Source: Daffar (1990: table 4.17)

Table 13. Effect of literacy on the choice of the urban variant of the (q) variable by women

Age	Contact with BC	Lit⁻		Lit⁺		P value
		GN	GM	GN	GM	
60⁻	+	1	100	7	52	
	-	2	88.5	8	48.1	
40-59	+	3	100	9	90.3	P = 0.004
	-	4	100	10	63.7	
20-39	+	5	98.4	11	82.4	(P < 0.01)
	-	6	97.4	12	62.3	
		Avg.	97.4	Avg.	67.3	

Source: Daffar (1990: table 4.18)

It is worth noting here that when tables 12 & 13 were subjected to the paired t test, it was found that the P value is 0.01 in both of them, which means that the patterns of differences are highly significant. The application of the ANOVA on the other hand has produced the F ratio value of 25.92 which, when compared with the F table value of 0.9995, proves that the interaction of sex with literacy is valid. In this connection, the results, which are displayed in tables 12 & 13, show that all types of the female informants exceed their male peers with respect to their tendency to avoid the rural variant of the variable under discussion.

This may indicate that Khasibi women stigmatize /G /, their local variant, more than Khasibi men do. And hence, it corresponds to what Ttrudgill (1974: 94) states in this respect, that women, due to their status consciousness, tend to use the more prestigious linguistic forms in their speech.

Figure 4 illustrates this pattern of sociolinguistic variation more evidently. It apparently shows that literacy has more effect on the choice of the /q / in the speech of Khasibi people than their contact with BC does. The proportion of the influence of literacy to that of contact with BC is slightly more than 1.3 to 1 in the case of men and approximately 1.5 to 1 in the case of women. However, this does not contradict the inference, which has already been mentioned above, that the tendency of the female informants to use /q / is prior to that of their male peers. Actually, that inference has been established by comparing the percentage scores of the literate informants in both cases. In other words, it indicates sex differentiation as regards the effect the speaker's state of literacy on the choice of this urban variant. On the other hand, the use of the proportions given here does not aim at confirming such a case of sex differentiation. These proportions indicate the effect of literacy on the choice of /q / by each sex separately, i.e. men and women when they are treated as two separate unrelated categories. The objective behind these proportions is to show the influence of the variable of literacy on the choice of the urban variant under discussion. The lag of the proportion of the effect of literacy in the case of females can be explained by the dominant use of the /q / variant not only by the literate women but also by their illiterate peers who do not have contact with BC, a case which consequently makes the difference in the scores of such types of informants decrease and hence the difference in the proportional value.

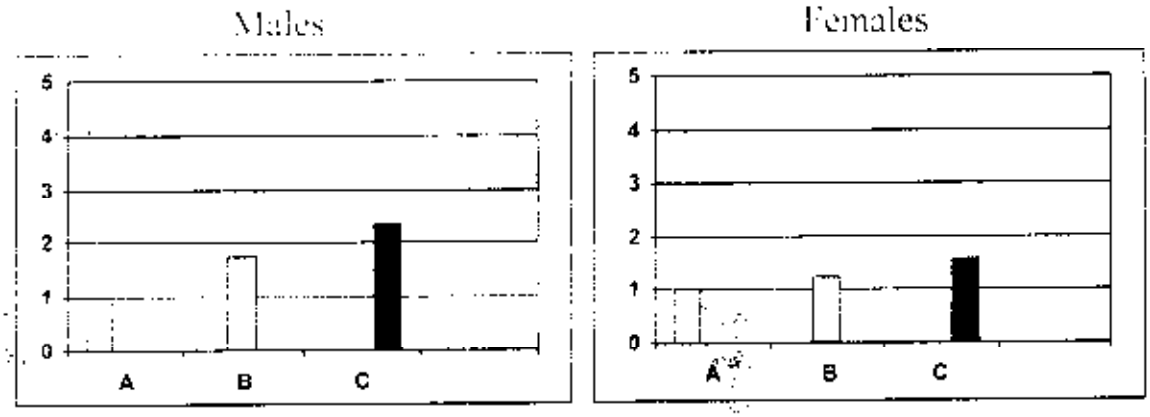


Figure 4. Proportion of the effect of literacy to the effect of contact with BC on the choice of /q /

3.3 The (ġ) Variable

As regards this variable, the analysis of the results in Daffar (1990:98 & 104) have shown a pattern of sociolinguistic variation similar to the one found in the cases of the (j) and (q) variables (see 3.1 & 3.2). Yet, the reading of the numerals set in tables (14 & 15) offers another finding. It indicates that literate informants of various age groups who have no contact with BC take the lead in the adoption of /ġ /, the urban variant of the (ġ) variable. They choose it in their speech more than their illiterate peers who have such contact do. This means that they follow the same sociolinguistic pattern of variation which they preserve with regard to the (j) and (q) variables as concerns literate vs. illiterate.

Table 14. The choice of /ġ /, the urban variant of the (ġ) variable, by three male age groups of Khasibi informants different as regards literacy and contact with BC

Age	Lit⁻ & Cont⁺	Lit⁺ & Cont⁻	Lit⁺ & Cont⁺
60⁺	28.9	37.2	80.1
40-59	40.3	72.1	89.6
20-39	46.5	79	88.9

Table 15. The choice of /ġ /, the urban variant of the (ġ) variable, by three male age groups of Khasibi informants different as regards literacy and contact with BC

Age	Lit⁻ & Cont⁻	Lit⁺ & Cont⁺	Lit⁺ & Cont⁻
60⁺	42.2	56.9	89.7
40-59	55.1	88.6	96.5
20-39	76.8	84.5	100

As such, it is apparent that literacy appears to have more obvious effect than contact with BC as regards the adoption of the urban variant of the (ġ) variable by KIA speakers.

This finding is clearly shown in figure 5. The graph in this figure ascertains that the peaks of the percentage scores of the literate informants without contact with BC are higher than those of their illiterate peers whether or not having such contact.

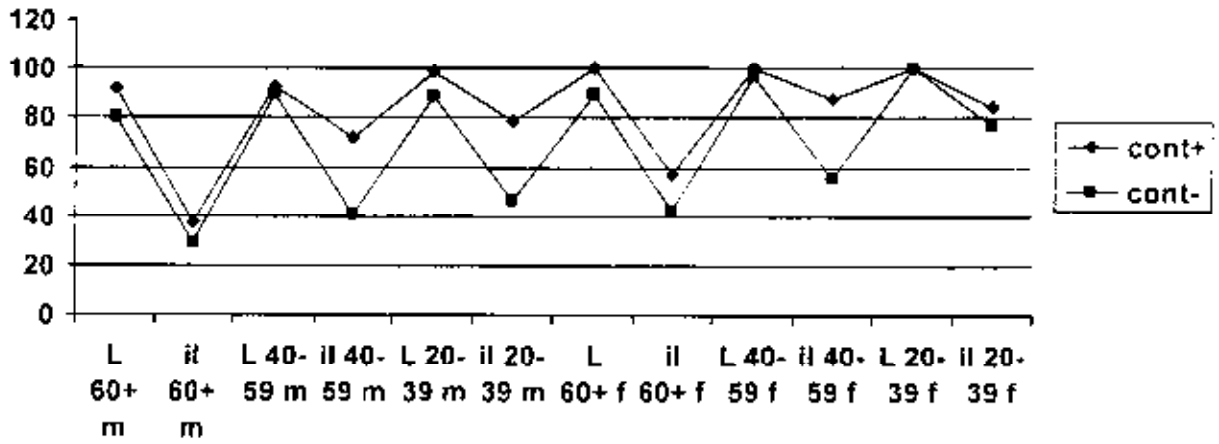


Figure 5. Distribution of the urban variant of the (ġ) variable: the effect of literacy

In tables 16 & 17, more light is cast on the details of this sociolinguistic pattern of variation as regards the use of the urban variant of the variable in question. It is evident that the percentage scores of the literate younger female groups are equal. 100% in both types of the informants: those with contact with BC and those without such contact. This case indicates that the impact of contact with BC is nil as far as the choice of /ġ / by these two younger female groups of the informants is concerned. However, this is only a specific case which does not contradict the general sociolinguistic pattern formerly pointed out as regards the effect of contact with BC on the use of the urban variant of the (ġ) variable by Khasibi informants[8].

Table 16. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of /ġ /, the urban variant of the (ġ) variable, by the male informants

Age	State of Literacy	Cont+		Cont-	
		GN	GM	GN	GM
60+	+	1	91.7	7	80.1
	-	2	37.2	8	28.9
40 – 59	+	3	92.3	9	89.6
	-	4	72.1	10	40.3
20 - 39	+	5	98.7	11	88.9
	-	6	79	12	46.5
P = 0.034			(P < 0.05)		

Source: Daffar (1990, table: 4.22)

Table 17. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of /ġ /, the urban variant of the (ġ) variable, by the female informants

Age	State of Literacy	Cont		Cont-	
		GN	GM	GN	GM
60	+	1	100	7	89.7
	-	2	56.9	8	42.2
40 – 59	+	3	100	9	96.5
		4	88	10	55.1
20 - 39	+	5	100	11	100
	-	6	84.5	12	76.8
P = 0.062			(P > 0.05)		

Source: Daffar (1990, table: 4.23)

Similar to the two cases of the (j) and (q) variables, the proportion obtained by figure 6 indicates that the effect of literacy on the choice of /ġ / is also more than that of contact with BC. It is slightly less than 1.4 to 1 in the case of men and approximately 1.25 to 1 in the case of women. This shows that the range of the impact of literacy on the choice of the urban variant by women is not so much as it is in the case of men. Actually, this is due to the fact that women in general (whether literate or illiterate) are more status conscious and hence tend to use the more prestigious linguistic forms (Trudgill, 1974: 94), and it consequently indicates that the rural variant of the (ġ) variable is so much despised by most Khasibi women regardless of their state of literacy.

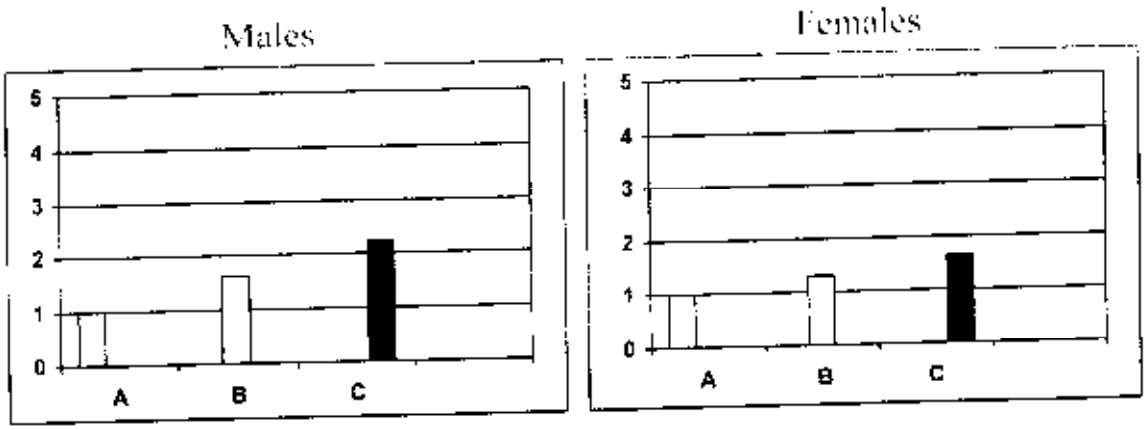


Figure 6. Proportion of the effect of literacy to the effect of contact with BC on the choice of /ġ /

3.4 The (a:) Variable

In connection with this Variable, the same aforementioned study of sociolinguistic variation in KIA (Daffar, 1990: 107) has inferred a general pattern of sociolinguistic variation similar to the ones pertinent to the (j), (q), and (ġ) variables. It has been found that Khasibi informants who have contact with BC adopt the urban variant of the of the variable under reference much more than those who do not have such contact (see tables 18 7 19).

Table 18. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of /a: /, the urban variant of the (a:) variable, by the male informants

Age	State of Literacy	Cont		Cont -	
		GN	GM	GN	GM
60	+	1	66.1	7	54.8
		2	30.6	8	18.1
40 - 59	-	3	81.9	9	73.4
		4	66.1	10	42.3
20 – 39	+	5	82.6	11	73.8
		6	77	12	52.5
P = 0.004			(P < 0.01)		

Source: Daffar (1990, table: 4.30)

Table 19. Effect of contact with BC on the choice of /a: /, the urban variant of the (a:) variable, by the female informants

Age	State of Literacy	Cont		Cont -	
		GN	GM	GN	GM
60	+	1	85.7	7	40.9
		2	16.8	8	9.3
40 - 59	+	3	83	9	51.3
		4	42.8	10	26.2
20 - 39	+	5	75.1	11	57
	-	6	46.8	12	34.1
P = 0.012			(P < 0.05)		

Source: Daffar (1990, table: 4.31)

However, the re-tabulation of the same numerals analyzed in that study can indicate another pattern of sociolinguistic variation. Tables 20 & 21 evidently show that literate informants without contact with BC incline to adopt the urban variant of the (a:) variable more than their illiterate peers including those who have contact with BC. There is only one exception here. It is the case in which the illiterate younger age group of male informants who have contact with BC exceed their literate peers who have no such contact in the use of /a: / in their speech.

Table 20. The choice of /a: /, the urban variant of the (a:) variable, by three male age groups of Khasibi informants different as regards literacy and contact with BC

Age	Lit & Cont	Lit & Cont	Lit & Cont
60	18.1	30.6	54.8
40-59	42.3	66.1	73.4
20-39	52.5	77	73.8

Table 21. The choice of /a: /, the urban variant of the (a:) variable, by three male age groups of Khasibi informants different as regards literacy and contact with BC

Age	Lit & Cont	Lit & Cont	Lit & Cont
60	9.3	16.8	40.9
40-59	26.2	42.7	51.3
20-39	34.1	46.8	57

Figure 7 illustrates this sociolinguistic pattern with respect to the variable use of a: more evidently. It is apparent that the peaks of the scores of the use of /a: / by literate KIA speakers are higher than those of their illiterate peers. It indicates that literacy has remarkable effect on the choice of /a: / by KIA speakers.

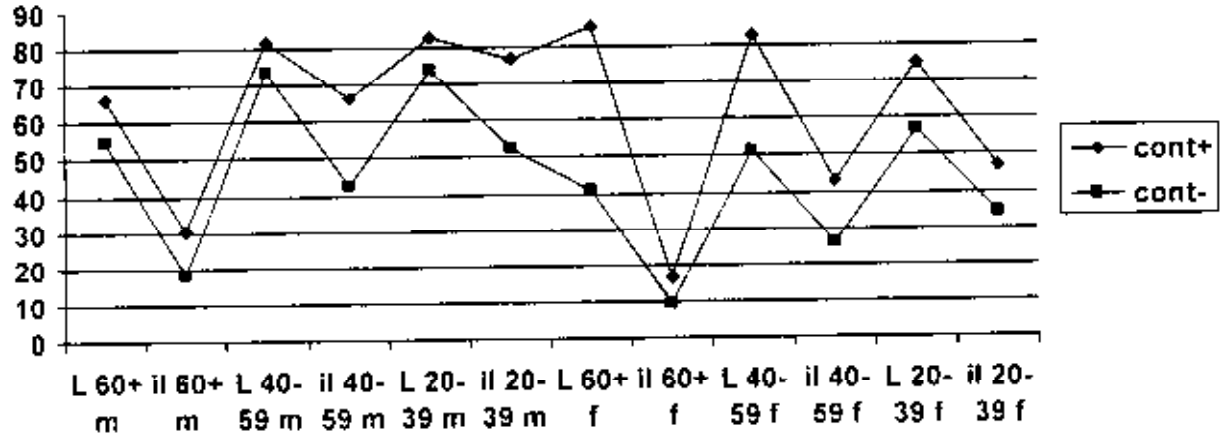


Figure 7. Distribution of the urban variant of the (a:) variable: the effect of literacy

Tables 22 & 23, which were subjected to the paired t test, have ascertained the high significance of the sociolinguistic pattern of variation as regards the variable under discussion. The P value has been found to be less than 0.01 ($P < 0.01$). It reads 0.005 in the case of men and 0.004 in the case of women.

Table 22. Effect of literacy on the choice of the urban variant of the (a:) variable by men

Age	Contact with BC	Lit		Lit		P value
		GN	GM	GN	GM	
60+	+	1	66.1	7	30.6	
	-	2	54,8	8	18.1	
40-59	+	3	81.9	9	66.1	P = 0.005
	-	4	73.4	10	42.3	
20-39	+	5	82.6	11	77	(P < 0.01)
	-	6	73.8	12	52.5	
		Avg.	72.1	Avg.	47.8	

Source: Daffar (1990: table 4.34)

Table 23. Effect of literacy on the choice of the urban variant of the (a:) variable by women

Age	Contact with BC	Lit GN	Lit GM	Illit GN	Illit GM	P value
60+	+	1	85.7	7	16.8	
	-	2	40.9	8	9.3	
40-59	+	3	83	9	42.7	P = 0.004
	-	4	51.3	10	26.2	
20-39	+	5	75.1	11	46.8	(P < 0.01)
	-	6	57	12	34.1	
		Avg.	65.5	Avg.	29.3	

Source: Daffar (1990: table 4.35)

Similar to the way followed in treating the (j), (q) and (g) variables, figure 8 is employed here to illustrate the proportion of the effect of literacy to that of contact with BC on the choice of the urban variant of the (a) variable. It is only slightly more than 1.16 to 1 in the case of men whereas it is 1.4 to 1 in the case of women.

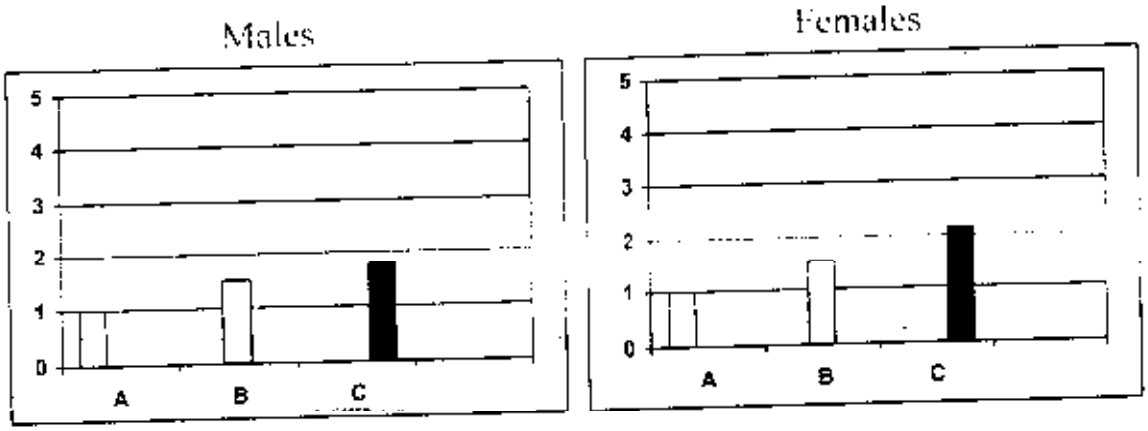


Figure 8. Proportion of the effect of literacy to the effect of contact with BC on the choice of /a: /

16. Explanatory Hints

Two important points are to be handled in this section. The first is the paradox which the sociolinguistic pattern of variation already inferred brings about as it seems at first sight to contradict the results found in the writer's previous study (cf.

Daffar, 1990). The other point is the correspondence between the present inference and a few other findings brought out by some similar studies.

As for the first point, it is worth noting that the pattern of sociolinguistic variation which the previous study has brought out was arrived at by analyzing the speech of four main different groups of informants. They are the literate who have contact with BC, the illiterate who have contact with BC, the literate who have no contact with BC and the illiterate who have no contact with BC (Daffar, 1990: 42).The use of such categories was necessary for the study of effect of contact with BC on the pattern in reference. However, that study has shown some incidental cases wherein the speaker's state of literacy exerts a very clear inter sectional effect on the main pattern (ibid: 129).

Thus, for the purpose of studying such an intersectional effect, the first of the four aforementioned categories of informants has been excluded to demonstrate emphatically the impact of literacy on the sociolinguistic pattern of variation in question. This exclusion of the literate group of informants who have contact with BC is indispensable to such a concentrated study that aims at finding out the effect of the social variable of literacy on the pattern in reference. It makes difference in the data and consequently in the results of the analysis. As such, this pattern of sociolinguistic variation was looked at from two different perspectives which though unlike, are not incompatible. On the contrary, it was possible by this intentional change in the selection of the categories of the informants to show the effect of this social variable, i.e. the speaker's state of literacy. Actually, such social variables as contact with city centres, the speaker's age, sex and state of literacy, etc operate together simultaneously to express different identities (Milroy' 1980: 114-5). This means one and the same pattern of sociolinguistic variation may be correlated with an unlimited mass of social variables which makes it possible and considerable to be studied from various prospects. Thus, the present study has disregarded the category of the literate informants who maintain contact with BC as an attempt to demonstrate the effect of literacy on the pattern of sociolinguistic variation separately.

Furthermore, my previous study which concentrates on the effect of the social variable of contact with BC by no means denies the effect of the speaker's state of literacy on the pattern of the variable use of (j), (q), (ġ) and (a:) in the speech of KIA speakers. On the contrary, it refers to several cases in which literacy exerts much more impact on this pattern than contact with BC does (Daffar, 1990: 129). Neither does the present study refuse the conclusion arrived at in my former study. Actually, the present inference, which has been come up to by reprocessing the

results induced from previous data, is a further emphatic indication of some incidental cases that have been come across formerly.

Turning to the other point, it is important to note that the inference whereby the present study has proved the significant effect of literacy on the pattern of sociolinguistic variation under reference and its direction has some considerable evidence from other similar fieldwork studies conducted in some other Arabic using communities. Such studies ascertain that the speaker's state of education (or literacy) affects their choice of one or the other variant of certain linguistic variables in the direction of their prestigious forms (see abdel-Jawad, 1981 & 1983; Kojak, 1983 mentioned in Ibrahim, 1984; Holes, 1980 & 1986)[9].

Ibrahim, (1984: 1550 reported that both Abdel-Jawad (1981 & 1983) and Kojak (1983) have studied the case of some particular phonological variables in the speech of a number of Arabic speakers from Amman in Jordan and from Damascus and Hama in Syria respectively. Kojak (1983) "investigated the phonetic realization of three interdentals (θ), (d) and (Đ)" whereas Abdel-Jawad (1981) added to them "the voiceless uvular plosive (q) as well as some lexical forms." Each of them has concluded that their educated subjects in general tend to use the prestigious linguistic forms despite the sex differentiation whereby Ibrahim distinguishes between two sorts of prestigious linguistic forms (1984: 155). This conclusion apparently implies that the speaker's state of education affects the choice of the prestigious forms in their speech. And if 'education' is employed to mean the exact equivalence of 'literacy', it indicates that Kojak and Abdel-Jawad's conclusion conforms to the inference of the present study.

As for Holes (1980 & 1986), they also appear to be in agreement with the present study. They both have come to the same conclusion that the speaker's state of literacy affects their tendency to use the prestigious forms in their speech. Holes (1980) has explored the effect of literacy on the distribution of the /j/ variant (a voiced alveolar affricate) in the Arabic dialects of Bahrain. It infers that:

> the variation between [j] and [y], allophones of /j/, is not free but constrained in a way which reveals ... the linguistic dominance of ... the supra-dialectal influence of literary Arabic in the speech of those who have been exposed to it in the course of their education (ibid: 88).

Later Holes added another phonological variable to the one he had studied before. It is the (θ) variable (see Holes, 1986: 35). By means of investigating these two variables, he induced that literate speakers as compared to their nonliterate peers from all the Bahraini communities which he studied appear to be moving towards the modern Standard Arabic (ibid:49), which he himself considers a prestigious variety of Arabic (Holes, 1983: 435). This also points out the conformity of the inference of the present study as much as the effect of literacy is concerned to what Holes states in this connection (op. cit.).

5.Conclusion

The present study has disclosed a pattern of sociolinguistic variation in KIA whereby literate KIA users appear to adopt the prestigious linguistic forms in their speech more than their illiterate peers. The superiority in the choice of the prestigious linguistic forms has been found to be correlated with the effect of the speaker's state of literacy. This inference appears to be compatible with the results arrived at by some other similar studies which were formerly conducted in three other Arabic using communities.

Notes

1. Khasibi Iraqi Arabic is an Iraqi Arabic variety spoken by the natives of Abul-Khasib, a rural district which lies to the south of the urban centre of Basra in the southernmost part of Iraq. For further information with this respect, see (Daffar, 1990: 31-37).

2. For the description of these variables, the reader is referred to (Daffar, 1990: 54-62).

3. Literacy is considered an effective factor to which linguistic variation is linked specially in a diglossic situation such as that found among Arabic using speakers (Abdel-jawad, 1986: 83). It affects people in their choice of particular linguistic variants which are usually associated with the high variety of their language.

   In the present study literacy is seen as a factor which influences the choice of the linguistic variants usually associated with the urban dialect of BC. It functions as an influential factor in the approximation towards the more prestigious behaviour commonly related to the urban dialect of BC. It is not

taken here in the sense of Ferguson (1959) as a factor that affects linguistic variation in the direction of the adoption of the linguistic forms which are usually associated with the high variety of the speaker's language in a diglossic situation (cf. Ferguson, 1959).

In this concern , Ibrahim (1984) and Mitchell (1986) state that the effect of literacy can be noticed in the process of approximation to the prestigious urban linguistic forms regardless of their closeness to or identity with the standard forms. This point of view has been supported by fieldwork studies of linguistic variation in Bahrain (holes, 1986) and in Jordan (Abdel-Jawad, 1986).

The principle adopted here for defining the informants as literate is based on the fact that standards of literacy in such a community as Abul-Khasib are relative and connected with the different developmental stages of the society. For instance, Khasibi people of the first two generations who have had only nine years of schooling are defined as literate whereas people of the third generation who have not continued their schooling beyond this level of learning are generally regarded as illiterate.

4. For further information in this respect, the reader is referred to (Daffar, 1990: 39-44).

5. P (probability value) is obtained by the implementation of the paired t test. For more details with this respect, see (Milroy, 1980: 121-2 & 1987: 138-9).

6. An F table value is a statistical value which can be obtained out of an F distribution table. For further information, consult (Milroy, 1980: 122 & Butler, 1985: 127-36).

7. For the variable use of (q) in some other Arabic dialects, see (Johnstone, 1967; Blanc, 1969; Matar, 1969: 26-33; Al-Ani, 1978: 109; Holes, 1983 & Abdel-Jawad, 1986).

8. The application of the paired t test to table 17 indicates that the set of differences seems to be insignificant here, i.e. ($P > 0.05$). However, it is worth noting that the little variance is possibly due to the high average percentages of the occurrence of g in the speech of all the female informants apart from the effect of literacy and contact with BC. As such, this may refer to the feeling of contempt which all groups of Khasibi women

bear towards /q /, the rural variant of (ġ) variable.

9. For more examples of such studies that provide a similar notion, the reader is referred to (Bakir, 1986).

References

Abdel-Jawad, Hassan (1987) "Cross-dialectal Variation in Arabic: Competing Prestigious Forms." Language in Society 16: 359-68.

Butler, C. (1985) Statistics in Linguistics. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Daffar, Abdul Hameed (1990) Sociolinguistic Variation in Khasibi Iraqi Arabic. M.A. Thesis, University of Basra.

Holes, Clive (1980) "Phonological Variation in Bahraini Arabic: the [j] and [y] Allophones of /j /." Journal of Arabic Linguistics 4: 72-89.

..... (1983) "Pattern of Communal Language Variation in Bahrain." Language in Society 12: 433-57.

..... (1986) "The Social Motivation for Phonological Convergence in Three Arabic Dialects." International Journal of the Society of Language 61 (5): 33-51.

Ibrahim, Muhammad (1984) "On the Notions 'Standard' and 'Prestigious' in Arabic Sociolinguistics." In Abu-Salim & Owens (eds.) Proceedings of the Third Annual Linguistics Conference, April 1984: 154-63.

Milroy, Lesley (1980) Language and Social Network. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Trudgill, Peter (1974) Sociolinguistics: An Introduction. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

أثر التعلّم على التنوّع اللغوي الاجتماعي
في لهجة أبي الخصيب العربية العراقية

خلاصة

تبحث هذه الدراسة في أثر التعلّم على نمط التنوّع اللغوي الاجتماعي بالعلاقة مع أربعة متغيرات صوتية موجودة في لهجة أبي الخصيب العربية العراقية وهي اللهجة العربية المحكية في أبي الخصيب، المنطقة الريفية الواقعة في القسم الجنوبي الأقصى من العراق. بتطبيق طريقة التحليل الكمي على مادة من البيانات تتألف من كلام مسجل بجهاز تسجيل صوتي لستين شخصا يمثلون مستخدمي هذه اللهجة العربية المحكية، توصلت الدراسة الحالية إلى استنتاج مفاده أن متحدثي لهجة أبي الخصيب العربية العراقية المتعلمين أظهروا ميلا في كلامهم لاستخدام الصيغ اللغوية التي تعتبر ذات مكانة راقية للمتغيرات الصوتية الأربعة مدار البحث أكثر من أقرانهم غير المتعلمين. يتطابق هذا الاستنتاج مع نتائج دراسات مشابهة تمّ أجراؤها في ثلاث مجتمعات أخرى تستخدم لهجات عربية أخرى.