

Abstract
Study of Dialect Contact and Formation:
A Case Study of Glottal-initial Verbs in Amman, Jordan

Background:

In tandem with Al-Wer's ongoing Amman Project which discusses the dialect contact and potential for dialect formation in Amman, Jordan, this study seeks to understand the variance of conjugation patterns of the glottal-initial verbs 'akal 'to eat' and 'axad 'to take' based on the ethnic background and generational identity of the individual speaker. This study seeks to isolate a pattern of linguistic focusing in third-generation Ammani youth vis-à-vis the phonetic shape (\pm Yod; /a:/, /o:/) in glottal-initial verbs which could corroborate Al-Wehr's assertion that there is a new emerging vernacular as opposed to stable variation.

Method:

The bulk of the data collecting portion of this study has involved the recording of natural speech of Ammani natives. Utilizing the linguistic interview technique no standard script or method has been used on individual speakers in order to record the most natural of speech. Three main strategies have been used to elicit the appropriate conjugations of these glottal-initial verbs:

- 1) Asking the subject about normal, everyday occurrences in his/her life; asking about a moment of fear.
- 2) Asking two or more participants to discuss subjects which would encourage their usage of the words.
- 3) Asking participants to conjugate a full paradigm of these verbs in the present imperfect.

Thus, the study has been able to listen for usage both in natural and elicited settings which allows for better understanding of social and generational values among the third generation Ammani natives.

Analysis:

A spreadsheet has been created to run the regression of the data gathered. These data have been put into place in Excel, and their details selected and placed into a pivot table and chart system. This system will allow for any number of variables to be rated against each other. The study seeks to interpret the effect of demographics on phonemic usage, ultimately seeking to understand the social situation of the Ammani youth.

Using a simple t-test with these averages, the null hypothesis will be tested for its p-value which will statistically analyze the elucidations of the glottal-initial verbs (Feagin). These data will prove useful in understanding the current linguistic situation present in Amman, aiding Al-Wer's supposition of dialect emergence amidst dialect contact zones.

At right is a chart of Al-Wer's projected paradigm.

Conclusions:

At call time for abstracts, these data have as of yet not all been tokenized, and so the research is not yet concluded. However, by the end of 2015, a clearer picture should emerge. Preliminary results indicate that in addition to the 1S and 3SM variation across Ammani youth, there is an extension of the pattern to all 24 forms (1, 2, and 3 persons) rather than the original 6.

Paradigm I, conjugation with /a:/ (in first syllable)

1S	b-ākol	b-āxod
2SM	b-tākol	b-tāxod
2SF	b-tākli	b-tāxdi
3SM	b-yākol	b-yāxod
3SF	b-tākol	b-tāxod
1P	b-nākol	b-nāxod
2P	b-tāklū	b-tāxdu
3P	b-yāklū	b-yāxdu

Paradigm II, conjugation with /o:/

1S	b-ōkil	b-ōxid
2SM	b-tōkil	b-tōxid
2SF	b-tōkli	b-tōxdi
3SM	b-ōkil	b-ōxid
3SF	b-tōkil	b-tōxid
1P	b-nōkil	b-nōxid
2P	b-tōklū	b-tōxdu
3P	b-ōklū	b-ōxdu

References:

Al-Wer, Enam. The Formation of the Dialect of Amman: From Chaos to Order. *Arabic in the City*. 2007. 55-76.

Al-Wer, Enam. Yod dropping in b-imperfect forms in Amman. *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics*. *The Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*. (in Press).

Feagin, Crawford. 2002. *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers LTD; Oxford, UK. 1. 20-37.