

Elision in English and Colloquial Iraqi Arabic: A contrastive Study

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Abstract

Elision is among these productive connected speech aspects especially when colloquial form of a language is taken into consideration. It is simply defined as the deletion of a vowel or a consonant, which should be realized by the listener if a better communication is aimed at. Different types and patterns are existent in both English and Colloquial Iraqi Arabic. Elision in both languages is realized frequently to be associated with assimilation; despite the differences in such realizations. Idiosyncratic features of each language are found to be the main source of differences between English and Arabic. Similarities are found in the general types like consonant elision, vowel elision, and historic elision, but the actual realization of each one of these three types comes to be relatively different from the other language.

Keywords: Elision, Connected speech, English, Colloquial Iraqi Arabic, Al-hathif

Introduction

Fluent, unselfconscious speech shows a variety of characteristic differences in comparison with the citation form pronunciations. Such differences are attributed to general strategies called “connected speech processes” which include, among other things, elision. Elision or sound deletion affects the distribution of phonemes at and across word-boundary. In addition, the original syllabic structures and the syllabification of words may be changed as a result of such a process, and to some extent miscomprehension, misunderstanding and confusion may occur as well (see Katamba, 1989: 154ff). It is worth-noting that a simple enumeration of elision and other phonological processes cannot provide speakers of language with predictive ability in the light of which pronunciations are expected to occur in a randomly spoken corpus. Regional and social accents, degrees of stress, positions of the word in the utterance, degree of formality and speech rate all interact to increase the possibility of appearing the process in a given phonological context.

Elision is an example of a greater category of universally common phonological alternation processes called *lenition* by Swiss linguist Thurneysen in 1898. Consonant lenition is commonly known as an alternation which yields a

consonant that is articulated with a more sonorous manner of articulation; a process by which a consonant becomes weaker; in other words it becomes more vowel-like or less consonantal(see Reyes-Rodríguez ,2012:12ff) . Crystal defines elision as follows:

*A term used in phonetics and phonology to refer to the omission of sounds in connected speech. Both consonants and vowels may be affected, and sometimes whole syllables may be **elided**. Unstressed grammatical words, such as *and* and *of*, are particularly prone to be elided, as when the *f* is dropped in *cup of tea* (cf. *cuppa tea*), or the *a* and *d* are dropped in *boys 'n' girls*. Within polysyllabic words, the vowels and consonants in unstressed syllables regularly elide in conversational speech of normal speed, e.g. *camera* (/ckamrv/), probably (/cprɔobl/), *February* (/cfebr/). Complex consonant clusters are also often reduced, e.g. *twelfths* becoming /twelθs/ or /twelfs/. Several intricate patterns of influence can be demonstrated.(2008:166).*

Elision is the most extreme kind of lenition process (see Carr,1993:270f) by which a segment weakens to Ø. As various cross-lingual surveys illustrate, lenition is a unified process which almost all languages undergo. Based on universal surveys done in this area, Rishidi & Shokrollahi (2010:136f) believe that lenition appears to be frequently conditioned by: 1- Intervocalic position, 2- Coda position, 3- Final position. Lenition blocking or fortition environments are: 1- Word-initial position, 2- Onset of stressed syllables.

Crystal goes further to state that this phenomenon is of further functions, especially in rhetoric:

*Traditional rhetoric was much concerned with the phenomenon of elision, because of the implications for constructing well-formed metrical lines, which would scan well. In rhetorical terminology, an elision in word-initial position was known as *aphaeresis* or *prosiopesis*, in word-medial position as *syncope*, and in word-final position as *apocope*. A similar classification was made for the opposite of elision, *intrusion*.(ibid.)*

A change from the ideal form in connected speech may involve the deletion of a phoneme, e.g. English *first class* /fɜ:st "kla:s/ or /fɜ:s "kla:s/, and Dutch *mistbank* /"mistbank/ or /"misbank/. The phoneme is said to be **elided** and the process is termed **elision**. Frequently, assimilation processes may lead to elision, e.g. English *standpoint* /"st[nd]point/ or /"st[mbp]oint/ or /"st[mp]oint/, Dutch *brandpunt* /"brantpent/ or /"bramppent/ or/"brampent, a case described by Katamba (1989:277) as moving from lexical to post-lexical/. The converse of elision is **liaison**, i.e. the insertion of an extra sound in order to facilitate the articulation of a sequence (see Roach,2000:77). Liaison is found in English RP,

and other non-rhotic varieties, in the form of **linking-r** and **intrusive-r**. Dutch has **linking-n** and **intrusive-n** (Buuren,1993: 178f). French is notable for its elaborate system of liaison, e.g. *Elle est assez intelligente*, where 'est' and 'assez', pronounced /e/ and /ase/ in citation form, recover the final consonants when they occur pre-vocally in connected speech: /el et asez e~teliza~/ (see Collins & Mees:2003:206).

Iraqi Arabic is that variety of Arabic which is spoken in Iraq by educated and non-educated people alike (Khoshaba,2006:29). It is the one which has its own lexical and phonological properties that make it remarkable among other varieties. Like other existing Arabic dialects, Iraqi Arabic is characterized by the deletion of different segments particularly the glottal plosive in different words. Moreover, in many contexts, whole syllables in different word-positions are elided, especially in words derived from Classical Arabic. Iraqi Arabic also exhibits deletion of complete words in certain cases where the syllabic templates of the Classical Arabic counterparts are changed under the influence of deletion (see Woodhead & Beene,1967).

This study is an attempt to investigate the phonological process of elision that occurs within the syllabic structure and across syllable and word-boundaries in English and Arabic, with special reference to Colloquial Iraqi Arabic. The study contributes to giving more phonological facts and information about the types of elision in English and Arabic, with focus on these points of similarity and difference on the one hand, and these guiding regularities between the two languages.

Elision in English

Elision (sound omission) can be looked upon as the process of omitting sounds or segments in connected speech. Both consonants and vowels are possibly affected, and sometimes even the whole sound sequences may be elided (i.e., post-lexical representation , as stated by Katamba(1989:277). Elision can be of two categories: historical elisions where a sound, which existed in an earlier form of a word, was omitted in a later form and contextual elisions in which a sound, existed in a word and said by itself, is dropped in a compound and in a connected phrase (see Skandera & Burleig ,H.P:2011:94ff).

Elision can be viewed as zero realization of phonemes in the sense that it occurs in certain circumstances as the gradation of phonemes which implies the loss of consonants or obscuration of vowel (Carr,1993:270). This view is confirmed by Roach (2000:140ff) and Cruttenden (2008:43) who both report that just like assimilation, elision is associated with rapid colloquial speech ,and this consequently leads to state that the process of change in phoneme realizations results from changing the speed and casualness of speech. Therefore, it is necessary for foreigners to be aware that when native users of

language to talk to each other, a great number of phonemes that the foreigners might expect to hear are not in fact pronounced (Wells,2012:15).

The occurrence of elision is interpreted in terms of economy of effort where the speech energy is minimized. The nature and incidence of elision is assumed to be different from one language to another and thus it is institutionalized and considered a part of culture behavior (Ladefoged, 2006:77). That elision varies in extent and in frequency of occurrence in different languages paves the way to purport that it is regarded as being a variety-specific, i.e. it can serve the purpose of differentiating groups of speakers (see Katamba,ibid.). A comparison of the citation forms and forms produced in connected speech elision may help in the understanding of dialect contact. Unlike ordinary variables, which are subservient to linguistic change, elision is phonetically motivated and its study therefore calls for a rather wider range of technique (see Buuren,1993:75ff).

The term “elision” may be broadly extended to traditional rhetoric, where the phenomenon of elision is dealt with in relation to the implications needed for the construction of well-formed metrical lines. In rhetorical terminology, elision in word-entail position is known as “aphesis” or “prosiopesis”, in word-medial position as “syncope”, and in word-final position as “apocope” (see Malak & Mahmoud ,2011:75). A similar classification is made for an opposite phenomenon known as “intrusion” (Buuren, 1993:78). Indeed ,in faster speech, the sound may be lost altogether in unstressed function words as ‘of’ and ‘have’ as in ‘piece of cake’ and ‘could have been’, where both ‘of’ and ‘have’ have the same pronunciation as the unstressed indefinite article ‘a’ ,where the three can be transcribed as /ə/.The dental fricative /θ, ð/ are subject to elision when they precede /s/ and /z/, as in ‘clothes’ and ‘months’ (see Davenport & Hannas,2005:29). In some cases, this elision may be optional (dictionaries usually represent the optional sound in italics) e.g. ‘lunch time’ /□lʌntʃtaɪm/, in others it is the norm (see Hornby,2005:919). Apostrophes that mark missing parts of words are signaling elision ,as in ‘can’t’ for ‘cannot’; sometimes sounds are totally omitted ,as in:

comfortable /□kʌmfətəbəl/ or /□kʌmfɪtəbəl/ (Hornby,2005:219)

fifth /□fɪfθ/ or /□fɪθ/

temperature /□tempərətʃə/ or /□tempətʃə/ or even /□temprətʃə/

If assimilation means the variation of a sound, elision means the loss of a sound(see Crystal (2008:38f) and Carr (1993:41)). The nature of elision may be stated quite simply: under certain circumstances sounds disappear; one might express this in more technically language by saying that in certain circumstances a phoneme may be realized as zero or Ø. As with assimilation, elision is

something, which foreign learners do not need to learn to do, but it is important for them to be aware that when native speakers of English talk to each other, quite a number of phonemes that the foreigner might expect to hear are not actually pronounced (Wells, 2012:17f). Here is an example of elision and assimilation going together. The word ‘handbag’ is frequently pronounced /bæmbæg/ because one stop consonant elides another which is directly in front of it, so the /d/ disappears and /n/ is assimilated to /m/ because of the adjacent /b/ of bag (see Skandera & Burleigh, 2011:95).

Elision can be described in terms of two (hierarchically, unrelated) categorization, based on the kind and the position of the sounds. Elision can be the omitted case if the issue is related to grammatical words, and their weak forms. The categorization based on the kind of the sound can be classified into three types (see Hasan, 2012):

- Elision of consonants
- Elision of vowels
- Elision of whole syllable
- Historical elision

Below is a detailed presentation of these common types of elision.

1-Alveolar consonants /t/ and /d/

When these are found between two consonants, elision exists. Examples are: *the next day* /ðə ñneks ñdeɪ/, *the last car* /ðə ñla:s ñka:/, *hold the dog!* /həʊl ðə ñdɒg/, and *send Frank a card* /sen ñfræŋk ə ñka:d/. This can also take place within affricates /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ when preceded by a consonant, e.g. *lunchtime* /lʌntʃtaɪm/ becomes /lʌnstʌɪm/, and *strange days* /streɪndʒ ñdeɪz/ becomes /streɪnʒ ñdeɪz/. The phoneme /t/ is a fundamental part of the negative particle not, the possibility of it being elided makes the foreign students life more difficult. For the negative of *can* – if followed by a consonant the /t/ may easily disappear and the only difference between the positive and the negative is a different, longer vowel sound in the second: *I can speak* /aɪ kən ñspi:k/ *I can't speak* /aɪ ñkɑ:n(t) ñspi:k/. Note that when *can't* is followed by a vowel, e.g. ‘I can't eat’, the /t/ is not elided.

2- The schwa /ə/

A second form involves the omission of the schwa /ə/ before liquids /l/ (see Reyes-Rodriguez, 2012:8ff) and /r/, e.g. *little* /lɪtl/, *cattle* /kætl/, *muddling* /mʌd|lɪŋ/, *secretary* /sekrət(ə)ri/, *camera* /kæm(ə)rəl/, and *memory* /mem(ə)ri/. In some cases, this elision may be optional (dictionaries usually

represent the optional sound in italics e.g. /□lAntʃtaIm/), in others it is the norm. In real connected speech, we sometimes link words together in special ways. The most familiar case is the use of linking r; the phoneme /r/ does not occur in syllable-final position in the BBC accent (see Collins & Mees,2008:196,234f), but when a word's spelling suggests a final /r/, and a word beginning with a vowel follows, the usual pronunciation is to pronounce with /r/, as in *car alarm* /kɑ:r əlɜ:m/ and *matter of fact* /mætə r əv fækt/. BBC speakers often use ' r ' in a similar way to link words ending with a vowel(see Roach,2000:63). This has been called intrusive r; some English speakers and teachers still regard this as incorrect or sub-standard pronunciation, but it is undoubtedly widespread(Collins & Mees,2008:266-270).The phenomenon of r-linking is based on the fact that, by default, in Standard British English (though not in many other accents of English), / r / in syllable final position is not pronounced, e.g. car /kɑ:/. R-linking takes place when a syllable ends with one of the following vowel sounds: /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ɜ:/, /ə/, or any of the diphthongs that finish with a schwa, e.g. /eə/, /Iə/ and /ʊə/, and the next syllable starts with any vowel sound (MacMahon,2002:73f). This may take place

1- within single words, e.g. care /keə/ and caring /keərɪŋ/ or

2- between word boundaries, e.g. care about /keər əbaʊt/.

It is noted that while a letter 'r' often appears in the spelling of the vowel sounds listed above, this is not always the case. For example, a common orthographic realization of /ɔ:/ is [aw], e.g. 'saw, draw, paw', similarly the schwa, /ə/ has spellings that don't include 'r', e.g. Australia, Austria. In these cases r-linking also takes place, even though there are those who would object to such pronunciations:

- draw all the flowers /drɔ:r ɔ:l ðə fləʊəz/

-There's a comma after that /ðəz ə kɒmər a:ftə θæt/

- Australia or New Zealand /ɒs treɪlɪər ɔ: nju: ɔ:zi:lnd/ .

- It's near enough /ɪts niər ɪnəf/

- It's quite far away /ɪts kwaɪt fɑ:r əweɪ/

- The doctor agrees /ðə dɒktər əgri:z/

- There are three places /ðər ə θri: pleɪsɪz/

- There's a tour along the river /ðəz ə tʊər əlɒŋ ðə rɪvə/

- It's made of fur and leather /ɪts meɪd əv fɜ:r ən leðə/

- Law and order /lɔ:r ən ɔ:də/

- The actor and playwright /ðɪ ˈæktər ən ˈpleɪraɪt/

- I can't hear anything /aɪ kɑ:n hɪər enɪθɪŋ/

3- The dental / θ/ and / ð/

Collins & Mees (2008:121) state that dental fricatives / θ/ and / ð/ are subject to elision when they occur in certain words such as *months* /mʌns/ and *clothes* /kləʊz/. However, / θ / is not elided in numerals such as *fifth* /fɪfθs/ and *twelfth* /twelfθ/.

4- Elision of / v /

Gimson (1977: 143), Collins & Mees (2003: 121) and Crystal (2008: 247) indicate that the phoneme /v / in the word *of* is elided when followed by a consonant ,especially / ð/:

lots of them / lots əv ðəm // lots ə ðə m /

lots o' people / lots ə pi:pl / .

three of the websites / θri: əv ðə websaɪts // θri: ə əð websaɪts /

5- Elision of a Whole Syllable

Crystal (2008:247) and Skandera &Burleigh (2011:05) state that a whole syllable may be elided, especially when there is a separated consonant , as in:

library / laɪbrəri/ // laɪbri / (the syllable / rə / is elided .)

particularly / pətɪkjuləli/ // pətɪkjuli/ (the syllable /lə / is elided .)

because can be heard as *cause*

probably can be heard as *probly*.

6- Historic Elision

In the historical development of the English language, some words have omitted consonants from cluster permanently in speech although the corresponding letter still occurs in the spelling. Skandera &Burleigh (2011:96f) and Gussmann (2002:18) state that certain instances in which there are silent consonants that reflect the earlier pronunciation and they have no longer been pronounced even in careful speech, as in *Knight*, *Wright*, *knee*, *gnaw*, *thistle*, *fasten*, *walk*, *lamb*, etc. In this respect, as a phonological rule , /g/ is elided when it occurs before a word final nasal as in: *sign* / saɪn / *design* /dɪzain /,and is pronounced when followed by a suffix as in: *signature* /sɪɡnɪtʃə / and *designation* /deziɡneɪʃən / .On the other hand,/b/ in old spelling is omitted when it occurs finally preceded by a nasal consonant as in: *thumb* / θʌ m / , *limb* / lim / , *climb* / klaim / ,and retained when a suffix is added as in: *limb* /lim / , *limber* / limbə /(Gussmann:ibid.:18f) .

7- Elision of Initial Vowels

Gimson (1975: 297) and Roach(2000:77) confirm that schwa / ə/ is elided when followed by a continuant and preceded by a word- final consonant. ("compensation for the loss of / ə/ frequently being made by the syllabicity of the continuant "). Examples are the following: *not alone* / nɒt əloun / / nɒtloun / , *get another* / get ənʌ ðə / , / get/ n n ʌə / . On the other hand, when a word initial schwa / ə/ is preceded by a vowel sound, it may coalesce with the preceding vowel: *try again* / trai əgen / / trai gen / (ibid). Lodge (2009:145) states that the process of eliding initial vowels is referred to as a phæresis pointing out that a vowel such as /a / can be elided in the word *am* when it occurs in a contracted form: *I am* / ai æm / I'm / aim / , and schwa / ə / in weak syllables , as in:

about / əbaut / bout / baut /

along / əlaŋ / long / laŋ /

8-Elision of Medial Vowels

Roach(ibid.) indicates that schwa / ə/ disappear when it follows aspirated sounds such as / p / , / t / and / k / as the following examples illustrate:

potato / pətəitəu / [p^htəitəu]

today / tədəi / [t^hdei]

canary / kənəəri / [k^hneəri]

On the other hand, Gimson (Ibid :297) states that schwa / ə / "may be elided if it is followed by linking /r / and word initial vowel " : *after awhile* / aftɹəwail / *father and son* / fa: ðr ən sʌn / . Lodge (2009: 157) names such a phonological process of vowel elision as syncope (syncopation):

secretary / sekritəri / / sekritri /

dictionary / dikʃinəri / / dikʃnri /

Davenport & Hannas (2005: 29f) indicate that a vowel sound can be elided in certain words such as *geography* / dʒi:əgrafi / / dʒəgrafi / , and also affirm that in English casual speech, the unstressed schwa / ə/ / or /, i/ is elided in the middle of words when the preceding vowel is stressed as in:

victory / viktəri / / viktri /

easily / i:zili / / i:zli /

finally / fainəli/ / fainli /

The following is those examples cited by Gussmann(2002:125) related to vowel reduction, a form of elision, in connected speech , compared by isolation

| <i>in isolation</i> | <i>in connected speech</i> |
|----------------------------|---|
| at [æt] | at home [ət _həʊm] |
| the [ð i: _] | the apple [ðɪ _æpl] |
| | the pear [ðə _peə] |
| and [ænd] | you and I [_ju _ən _aɪ] |
| | bread and butter [_bred n _b _tə] |
| to [tu _] | he wants to eat [hi _ _wɒnts tu _i:t] |
| | he wants to go [hi _ _wɒnts tə _əv] |
| but [bʌt] | but you must [bət ju _ _mʌst] |
| them [ðem] | how them to me [_ʃəv ð əm tə mi _] |
| | go with them [_əv _wi ð əm] |
| she [ʃi:] | will she come [wil ʃi _kʌm] |
| for [fɔ: _] | for better or worse [fə _betər ɔ _ _wɜ:s] |
| | wait for us [_weit fərʌs/frʌs] |
| does [dʌz] | what does it mean [_wɒt dəz It _mi:n] |
| are [ɑ _] | they are gone [ðei ə _ɒn]. |

Unstressed reduced vowels also get deleted across word boundaries. Carr states that vowels in function words in their weak forms (i.e. unstressed and in connected speech) “are deleted and the surrounding consonants may also be modified or deleted because of the stressless status of the syllable (1993:121). In other words, when pronounced in isolation the words are said to appear in their strong forms while in connected speech they display weak forms. What needs to be emphasized here is the close connection that exists between certain phonetic shapes and word stress.

Elision in Iraqi Arabic

For modern Arab (or Arabic-speaking) linguists, a kind of confusion is existent between elision as a phonological phenomenon and a cohesive device (i.e., ellipsis). In this respect, Malak & Mahmoud (2011:75) state that elision (not ellipsis) is Al-hathif (omission) of a word, a part of the sentence, or the whole sentence:

Elision is a kind of rhetorical brevity and it is a very significant chapter of rhetorical discussions. It leaves a deep impression on the readers or listeners from the perspective of meaning and sense of the statement. Looking from the angle of its elements, it is necessary for the speaker or the writer to know its essentials,

objectives and types to make the speech comprehensive. If these three things are not regarded, the speech becomes worthless or rubbish. Consequently, the speech loses its beauty, attraction, and delicacy.

Examining Malak & Mahmoud's paper, instances of phonological elision are very evident, especially in examining Quranic ayyahs. Other linguists, like Aquil (2012:168ff), Al-Azhari (1964:52), and Owens (2006:180-230), are well aware of such distinction, particularly as far as terminology is concerned.

The same principle of elision applies in Arabic, particularly in the Qur'an and ḥadīth literature. Elision can occur between two letters if the first has a sukūn السكون, and the second is vowelised (Watson, 2002:36). If it is difficult to pronounce the two letters together, then the first is elided into the second. To show this, the first letter loses its diacritical mark (it becomes 'silent', like the *t* in the above example, and so is ignored) and second takes a shaddah الشدة (ibid.:17). The complete rules for how letters elide are studied as part of the subject called *tajwīd*, and will not be dealt with here (Nahir, 1998:57). The loss of different segments in a variety of context is well-documented in Arabic dialectology (O'leary, 1963:19f). It has been reported that a number of Arabic dialects displays a tendency to delete certain segments in different environments. This deletion is not only conceived as a form of economy of effort but it is also thought of as "laziness in the production of speech sound" (Owens, 2006:43). Tendencies like *التخفيف والتعطيل والادغام* are so common in this respect, all under the title of changes in the rules of sounds (see Khan, 2004:29-37).

Iraqi Arabic shows two main types of elision: historical and contextual. The former stands for the loss of segments of certain lexemes whether these lexemes are spoken in isolation or within phrasal contexts. Such elided forms occur at a specific period of time and they are still in common use. That is, lexemes pronounced with certain elided segments in Iraqi Arabic have become a part of the vocabulary of this variety and have retained their deleted forms whether in isolation or in word-combination (O'leary, ibid.). Within Iraqi historical elisions, two subtypes can be recognized: elisions which take place for purely phonological purposes, and elisions which have resulted from morphological and syntactic processes such as affixation, negation and phrase formation (Mitchell, 1962:49). In the light of these two sub-types, both the underlying vowels and consonants are dropped. This can be clarified by reducing nouns of the classical word-pattern /faʿala/ which are pronounced colloquially in Iraqi Arabic as /fuʿla/ or /fiʿla/. In such cases, a number of vowels of the classical words are deleted as in /ruʿba/ "neck" instead of /raqaba/, where the short vowel /a/ of the second unstressed syllable is dropped

together with the phonemic substitution of / q/ by /g/ and the short vowel /a/ by /u/ of the first stressed syllable, /ʃibtʃa/ “net” in variation with /ʃabaka/, in which the segmental replacement of /k/ by /tʃ/ and the short vowel /a/ of the first syllable by /i/.

Equally important, Iraqi Arabic does not distinguish between pausal and non-pausal forms(see Al-Khalesi(2006:5)and Owens (2006:171)). All words are pronounced with a distinct pausal form where the final short vowel of classical words whether they occur in isolation or in running speech is lost (see also Ibrahim,2012:46f), as in:

| Iraqi Arabic | Classical Arabic | |
|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| Tirak | taraka | “he left” |
| Taar | taara | “he flew” |
| difaʕ | dafaʕa | “he pushed” |

Elision of short vowels of the first unstressed syllables of bi-syllabic and monosyllabic words in Iraqi Arabic is another example of historical deletion which occurs because of phonological purposes (ibid.:5f). This can be shown in words ,as in:

| Iraqi Arabic | Classical Arabic | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Tjuur | tjuur | “birds” |
| ʃhuud | ʃuhuud | “witnesses” |
| jadirsuun | jadrusuun | “they study” |
| jʃirfuun | jaʃrifuun | “they know” |

Consonantal segments have also been dropped in Iraqi Arabic in individual words at a certain period of time. This can mainly be represented by the loss of the glottal plosive in different word-positions(see Ibrahim,2012:47), for example:

| Iraqi Arabic | Classical Arabic | |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|
| sbuuʕ | ʔusbuuʕ | “ a week” |
| xuwwa | ʔuxuwwa | “brotherhood” |
| Braahiim | ʔibraahiim | “a proper name” |
| dbaara | ʔidbaara | “file” |

In Arabic (al) التعريف before the definite nouns is deleted as a whole or as a part when pronounced in phrases. The place of articulation plays a role in this phenomenon but Arab Grammarians attribute elision to the fact that Solar Alphabets versus Lunar Alphabets. When Mitchell (1962:28)tried to find out what makes solar sounds encourage the elision of (L), he stated that they (solar ones) include the alveolar (laterals + sibilants), the alveolar dentals and inter –

dentals, and the Arabic emphatics (pharyngealized – Almufakhamat) consonants(ر ل ن ش ز س ت د ذ ث ظ ض ط ص)(see Watson,2002:18):

- طلع منصف becomes طلع من الصف -
- تشوفه بش شارع becomes تشوفه بالشارع-
- يتعاملون ويا ز زبون بل خشن becomes يتعاملون ويا زبون بالخشن-

This is how the Iraqi native speakers do with solar consonants in the normal speech or in their very colloquial form(ibid.). Elision is also very clear after prepositions because they are not stressed in a sentence but followed by ال then a noun as an object:

- بعد ن نوم becomes بعد النوم -

Also, we have:

من ص صبيح
عس سطح
بل بيت
مننا(نا)
لهنا (لهنا)
قبل ل ظهر
تالي ل ليل

Elision is also clear by not pronouncing (n) in the verb to have ('aında) and it comes out in speech as ('aid da). The sound/n/ is completely dropped in a speedy conversation:

she has 'aidha عندها

You plural have 'aidkum عندكم

They have 'aid-hum ('aindim Moslawi عندهم , عندهم , عندهم). Also :

من عندهم becomes من عندكم

ما عندهم شي becomes ما عندكم شيء

Moslawi dialect speakers drop completely (hu from hum) whether possessive after nouns, or object after verbs(see Khoshaba,2006:25):

Possessive (Noun+hum) = their + noun

Standard Moslawi

| | |
|---------|---------|
| بيوتهم | بيوتهم |
| بنادقهم | بنادقهم |
| سلاحهم | سلاحهم |
| عتادهم | عتادهم |

Furthermore, one-word VSO- sentences ending in هم also express elision, as in . Sentences like the following ones are illustrative (see Khoshaba,2006:19):

- كبل يومين دزيتلهم فلوس بس ذوله مه يشبعون
- شفته بل حديقة يتخطى
- افضل حياة بر ريف علل حياة بل مدينة
- خلتل قوات امنية ان ناس يتركول منطقة

- لمن اط طفل شرب ال حليب خللى راسه ونام لل صبح
- اخذل كتاب وفتحه
- سعد عئل حايط و شمر نفسه ليجوه

Further examples are the following:

الله بالخير / صبحكم مساكم الله بالخير

شعليه / أي شيء علي

فيما الله / في امان الله

هسه/ هالساعة

اويلي/ اه يا ويلي

شبيك/ أي شيء فيك

جبيه/ جنى به

معليه/ ما علي

مناك/ من هناك

شلبلي/ أي شيء لي به

Historical elision of other consonants in Iraqi Arabic in relation to purely phonological factors can be illustrated by the loss of the glottal fricative /h/ in word-final positions. Such a process takes place within word boundary and in word combination as in qibloo “*they admitted him*”, baaḥoo “*they sold it*”, saaḥdoo “*they helped him*”, minḥoo “*they awarded him*”, min-naa “*from here*” and ḥallaa bil-xeer “*a type of greeting*” in contrast to qiblooh, baaḥooh, saaḥdooh, minḥooh, min-naah and ḥallaah bil-xeer.

Vowel deletion takes place across two words. For example, in the following examples, the preposition [fi] gets connected to the neighboring phonological word, with the assimilation of /f/ to /b/ (see Aquil (2012:172) and Newman (2005:190f):

ḥana fi xidmitak → ḥanaf xidmitak 'I am at your service'

fi issinema → fissinema 'in the movies'

In these examples, the vowel /ɪ/ in the preposition [fi.] ‘in’ gets deleted and hence the stray [f] connects to the pronoun [ḥana ‘I’] as in (a). As for (b), the vowel /i/ of the definite article [i[s]]i is deleted. Vowel deletion occurs because Iraqi Arabic does not allow two consecutive open syllables.

The Contrastive Analysis

This section deals with comparing and contrasting types of elision in English and Colloquial Iraqi Arabic, with special reference to Baghdadi Iraqi Arabic, in order to arrive at the similarities and differences between them, and then these points will be regarded as the guiding points for the regularities of this phenomenon in the two languages. Ibrahim (2012) focused on the idiosyncratic nature of elision in Iraqi Arabic with no particular reference or

illustration from a particular dialect. Hasan (2012) examines the patterns of elision in standard English and Standard Arabic , with no particular focus on connected speech. The present study puts itself in between , where Baghdadi Iraqi Arabic is studied with some reference to connected speech in English.

Elision of Consonants

As a matter of fact, the phonemes /t/ and /d/ are considered the most commonly elided consonants in English rapid speech, especially when they occur in a sequence of two or three consonants ,as in *mostly* /mousli / and *handsome* /hans ə m / (see Gimson (1975:297) and Collins & Mees (2008:118)). Similarly, in Iraqi Arabic the [t] in the word استطيع [istataa a] is elided and . Thus, sound this word changes into استطع [istaa' a] It can be noted that the sound [d] is not elided in Iraqi Arabic. However, it can be assimilated with a following [d] where one of them disappears as رددت [radadtu] which changes into ردت in the word [radit] .

Elision of /t / in Contracted Forms

In English , the consonant /t / is elided when it occurs in negative contracted forms such as *can't* , *don't* , *wouldn't* , *mustn't* and others provided it is followed by a consonant as in : *You can't do it* / ju ka:n du it / . (Gimson ,1975 :298) Such a type of elision has no counterpart in Arabic.

Elision of /h /

In English , this consonant is elided when it occurs in weak forms of function words as in :

I think he will invite him. /ai θ ink i: wil invait im /.

In Iraqi Arabic , the [h] in the word هذا [haaḏaa]is elided .Thus, this word becomes ذا sound [aa] as illustrated in the following ayyah :

قوله تعالى: من ذا الذي يشفع عنده

[qaulhu ta9ala : man ḏa lla ḏi ye ʃfa(indahu illaa bi?ḏinihi)

On the other hand , [h] in the words شففه [ʃafhah] , عضه [adhah]and سنه [sanhah] the sound is elided .As a result, these words resulted شفه [ʃafah] , عضه [adah] and سنه [sanah] (Al-Yemeni, 2002:572).

Elision of / ð / and / θ /

In English, the phonemes, dental fricatives, / ð / and / θ/ can be elided when they occur in certain words such as *months* / m ʌ ns / and *clothes* / klouz / , respectively (Collins and Mees, 2008:121) . In Arabic, those phonemes are not elided. The only example the researcher could find is in Iraqi Arabic : منذ مدة to be من مدة .

Elision of / f / and / v /

In English / f / can be elided in words such as *fifth* / fiθ/ and *twelfth* / twelθ / . In Arabic, the [f] in the word سوف [sawfa] that occurs in the structure إذا افعل سوف [sawfa ?f alu ka ɗ aa] is elided. Consequently, this إذا افعل سو [saw ?f a l kaɗaa] structure will be (Al-Yemeni,2002:272) This sound is also elided when it is represented by a geminated letter in the word [uffin] اف which changes into اف [ufin] . On the other hand, / v / in the word *of* is elided provided this word is followed by sound as in : *lots of them* / lots ə ðəm / (Gimson ,1975 :143) . It should be noted that this sound has no counterpart in Arabic.

Elision of a Whole Syllable

In English, a whole syllable can be elided especially when there is a separated consonant as in: *library* /laibri / (here the syllable / rə / is elided) *probably* /probli / (here the syllable / bə / is elided) (Crystal, 2003:247) .In Iraqi Arabic , a whole syllable can be elided as illustrated in the elision of the second sound of the verb that consists of three consonants , the second of which is followed by a vowel sound / i/ and [t]functioning as subject(first person singular)as in :

the third is attached to the pronoun(ظلت [dhaltu]) (Al Moosili, 2001:561). This example shows that a whole syllable such as [li] is elided .

Another example is the elision of the whole syllable [na] as in :

لا تذهبن [laataɗ habinna] لا تذهبين [laataɗ habiinanna]
لا تضربن [laatadribunna] لا تضربونن [laatadribuunanna]
كذبت to be كذبت

Historic Elision

In English, certain words contain consonants that cannot be pronounced. They reflect the earlier pronunciation of these words: *Wright*, *gnaw*, *knee* etc. . It is worth noting that the elided consonants in those words are /w/ , /g/ and /k/ respectively . In Arabic, there is no counterpart to such a type of elision. Palva (2009:17-41) examined the diachronic notes on the linguistic adaptation in Baghdadi Arabic represented by /qəltu/ into /gələt/, an example representing both vowel elision and reduction. The following are his further examples: *quba* ‘to receive’, ‘to collect’, *quball/qibal* ‘to agree’, ‘to accept’, *qarrab* ‘to cause to come near’, ‘to get close’, *qira* ‘to read’, ‘to recite’, *qisam*, *qassam* ‘to divide’, *qiṣad* ‘to intend’, *qaṭṭar* ‘to drop’, *qifaz* ‘to jump’, *qufaṣ* ‘to catch’, *qufal* ‘to lock’, *qilla* ‘shortage’, *qalil* ‘few’, *quwa* ‘to be or to become strong’, *quwwa* ‘strength’, *qawi* ‘strong’, *qā* ‘bottom’, *baqar* ‘cow’, ‘cattle’, *buqa* ‘to stay’, ‘to remain’, *ṣiqat* ‘to fall’, ‘to topple’, *ṣaqqat* ‘to cause to fall’, *iqab* ‘to

follow', 'to succeed', *xilaq* 'to create', *xōzaq* 'to stick', 'to cheat', 'to take in', *sibaq* 'to be, come, or happen before or ahead of', 'to precede', and *ṭariq* 'way'.

Elision of [y] and [w]

In English, these sounds are pronounced as /j / and /w / which are referred to as gliding consonants or semi- vowels, and they cannot be elided, whereas in Arabic they may be elided as the following points illustrate :

a- The [y] in the word يدي [yedyu] is elided. Thus, it changes into يد [yadun] sound

b- The [w] in the past form of certain verbs such as وعد [wa' ada] is elided when sound changed into present. Thus it becomes يعد [ya' idu]

Elision of the Glottal Stop [ʔ]

In English, the glottal stop is not elided, whereas in Arabic it can be elided as shown below:

The glottal stop الإله [ʔilaah], الاناس [ʔunaas], ترى [tarʔaa] and اشياء [ʔaʔaa] is elided and الله [ʔllaah], الناس [ʔnaas], ترى [tara] and اشياء [ʔaʔaa] in the words these words become respectively. (Al-Yemeni, 2002:570-572) The glottal stop in ابن [ʔbn] is elided when this word occurs between two proper nouns, two surnames or a proper noun and a surname. As a result this word becomes [bin] (Al-Batliyoosi, 1980 :338). Al-Maayta (2008:127ff) stated that examples like اسبوع و اسنان و اباط و يواسي instead of سبوع , باط , سبوع و اسنان و اباط و يواسي. She moved further to identify four reasons : مثل الحركة و انزلاق شبه الجملة و التشديد و حذفها : دون تعويض. Her examples for these rules are :

مثل الحركة ثالول بدلا من ثؤلول
انزلاق شبه الجملة: واكلت فلاناً بدلا من اكلت معه
التشديد: ضحوة بدلا من اضحوة
حذف دون تعويض: وزّة بدلا من أوزّة

Elision of vowels

Elision of Initial Vowels

In English, a vowel sound can be elided initially as in :

a- the contracted forms of *I am* /ai am / *I'm* /aim / (/a / is elided) , *he is* /hi: iz / *he's* /hi: z / (/ i / is elided). Also, instance in words like *about* / baut / , *try again* / trigen / , *not alone* / nɔtl ləun / (Gimson ,1975: 297). It is important to state that in Arabic and Iraqi Arabic a vowel sound is not initially elided.

Elision of Medial Vowels

In English, weak vowels such as schwa / ə / and / i / that occur in the middle of words can be elided as shown in the examples bellow :

a- *tonight* / tnaɪt / , *police* / pli:s / , *correct* / krekt / (Roach ,2000 :142)

b- *victory* / viktri / , *finally* / faɪnli /

c- *secretary* / sekritri / , *dictionary* / dikʃnri /

d- *potato* / phteitou / , *today* / thdei / , *canary* / khneð ri / (Gimson ,1975 : 143)

In Arabic , a vowel sound can be elided in the middle of words as indicated below :

a- The vowel sound[aa] in certain verbs يخاف [yexaaf] is elided provided this verb is such as preceded by لم [lam] .Thus , it becomes لم يخف [lam yexaf] . (Nahir , 1998 :273).

b- The vowel sound[ii] in المستقرئين [?lmustaqri?iin]is elided .As a result it becomes words such asالمستقرئين [?lmust aqri?in] (Al-Yemeni ,2002 :605)

c-The vowel sound[uu] in يقول [yaquul] is elided provided such a verb is preceded by verbs such asلم [lam] . Consequently, it becomes لم يقل [lam yaqul] . (Nahir,1998 : 273) It can be noted that the long vowel sounds[aa] , [ii] and [uu] in the Arabic examples (a) ,(b) and (c) change into short vowels [a] , [i] and [u] respectively . Al-Maayta (2008:67) mentions many similar examples : بيت ويبرم و بيطار و تعالي و ريحان و العيش و غيرة

Elision of Final Vowels

In English, a vowel sound cannot be elided finally, whereas in Arabic it may be elided as illustrated in the following points :

a- The vowel sound [aa] at the end of the اما [amaa] that comes in the structure word [amaa wallaah] is elided and this الله'ام [amawallah] . (Al-Yemeni, 2002:568) structure becomes

b-The vowel sound [aa] in the ما [maa] is elided when this word is attached to interrogative [alaa] إلى [ilaa] and في [fi] .As a result they become علام [alaama] prepositions such as على الام [ilaama] and فيم [fiima] respectively . (Ibid :606)

c-The vowel sound [i] at the end of words المتعالي [?lmuta' aali] is elided and such a similar to word changes to المتعال [?lmuta aal] . (Nahar ,1998 : 273)

d-The vowel sound [i] at the end of the word امس [?msi] is elided and this word becomes امس [?ms] (see Aziz,1988 :118).

f- The vowel sound [u] at the end of the word قبل [qablu] in the structure من قبل [min qablu] is elided and the structure becomes من قبل [min qabl] (Ibid : 273)

It should be noted that the long vowel sound [aa] in (a)and (b) above changes into a short vowel [a].

Conclusion

The main findings of the present study are:

- 1- It should by now be clear that there is a great deal of difference between the way words are pronounced in isolation and in the context of connected speech. It would not be practical or useful to teach all learners of English to produce assimilations; practice in making elisions is more useful, and it is clearly valuable to do exercises related to rhythm and linking.
- 2- Elision of consonants occurs in order to simplify consonants cluster. Colloquial Iraqi Arabic miscellaneous examples are so many, and classifying them is a relatively hard process, if to compare Baghdadi, Mousali , Basrahi dialects.

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- 3- التّعرّيف is commonly elided in Iraqi Arabic, in comparison with English.
- 4- الشّدّة والسّكون are two reflective in Iraqi Arabic , and are subject to elision for simplicity, as in ما كو شي to be شكو .
- 5- It can be concluded that there are points of similarity and difference between English and Iraqi Arabic types of elision as illustrated below:

Points of Similarity :

- 1- Elision of / t /, 2-Elision of /h /, 3- Elision of / f /4- Elision of a whole syllable, and 5- Elision of medial vowels.

Points of Difference

- a. The following types of elision occur only in English, i.e. they have no counterparts in Iraqi Arabic: 1- Elision of / d /, 2- Elision of / t / in contracted forms, 3- Elision of / θ / and / ð/, 4- Elision of / v /, 5- Historic elision, 6- Reduction of two similar successive consonants into one such as / t /in *want to* and similar structures.7- Elision of initial vowels.
- b. The following types of elision occur only in Arabic , i.e. they have no counterparts in English :1- Elision of [y] and [w], 2-Elision of the glottal stop [ʔ], 3-Elision of ن[n], ح[h], خ [x] and ب [b],and 4- Elision of final vowels
- c. Final consonants are frequently lost in Iraqi Arabic as in شبي "what is wrong with him" in comparison with وشبيهه , وياه instead of وشبيهه , and تعال اكلك for تعال اكلك , and خوب ما زعل with خوب مزعل .
- d. Iraqi Arabic shows many examples where both vowels and consonants are dropped in word-medial position. Iraqi speakers often delete short vowels occurring in the first unstressed syllables of bi-syllabic words having the structure /cv+cvvc/. So, words like كبار "big (pl.)", دموع "tears", جنود "soliders", نريد "we want" and هناك "there" are commonly used instead of the classical versions kibaar, dumuuʔ, dʒunuud, nuriid and hunaak, where inflections are existent (like كبار، ديموع

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