Language Change The Case of Baghdadi Arabic
After the American Occupation of Iraq in 2003

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Abstract

This paper tackles language change in general, and changes in the Baghdadi Arabic Variety in particular. The study focuses on the changes that have taken place after the 8-years American occupation of Iraq (2003-2011). The method used for this study is the Apparent-time study approach, which is a synchronic method pioneered by Labov, that focuses on changes in terms of frequency of change (increase, decrease, or innovations) during a specific period of time. The American occupation of Iraq has caused many changes in the Baghdadi Arabic Variety ,and in the other varieties as well .The reason why focus in this paper is on the Baghdadi Arabic Variety is the fact that it is spoken by the majority of Iraqis, especially in the middle and south of Iraq. The main changes were found to be in the area of vocabulary, as many new expressions appeared and others diminished as a result of the new socio-political changes in the community in that period.

1. Language Change
1.1. Different Views:

Language is not a fixed thing, but is subject to change as many other things in life. Languages change and sometimes disappear for various reasons, and with different degrees. Latin was the prominent language of Western Europe for centuries. It was used for administration, science, and diplomacy, but was gradually replaced by the Romance languages: French, Italian, and Spanish and other languages of Europe such as English, German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish. By the 19th century, it was almost a dead language (Lyons, p.179).

Scholars have been aware of language changes since long times, and the historical and contrastive linguistic studies that were developed in the 19th century used diachronic methods to study language change, comparing language structures in different times (Ibid, p.179). Language was viewed as an organism that is born, grows, and changes as other beings, and language change

was seen as a natural internal process within the systems of a language, resulting mainly from language variation or differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and/or style (Richards et al, p.305).

Modern linguists, on the other hand, view language as a system that is affected by external social factors. Since language is a community's communicative tool that reflects its culture, it is expected to undergo changes in parallel with the social changes that take place within the community. Every language has its own interpretation of the physical world it functions within, and has its own intra-linguistic relations (Wilkins, p.133). When change applies to the totality of a language, it may lead to language loss, or even language death; as it happened with hundreds of languages of the Aboriginals of Australia (Holmes, p.58).

1.2. Language Change Studies:

The study of language change was pioneered by William Labov in the second half of the 20th century, and such studies of language change, which belong to sociolinguistics and contrastive linguistics (Crystal, p.338), is usually carried out by more than a method :

1.2.1. Apparent-time Study of language change :

Apparent-time Study of language change is carried out by observing the frequency with which a linguistic form is used whether having a steady increase in usage or a steady decline in it at a point in time. This synchronic method of studying language change was pioneered by William Labov in which data is collected from people of ages and social classes (Radford et al, pp. 17-18).

Age or generation can also be indicative of innovation or loss. When a linguistic feature is used more in the speech of young people than that of the older generations, it is an indicator that the linguistic form is spreading; but when the contrary happens, it indicates that its use is declining.

1.2.2. Study of language change in real time:

This type of study is concerned with studying the language of a sample of people in a community, and then going back to study a similar sample from the same community after a reasonable period of time (a decade or more), in order to compare the data in both studies and find out the changes that might have occurred during that span of time. A pioneer in this type of study was Peter Trudgill's study of Norwich dialect which he studied in 1968, and carried out another study on the same community in 1983 (Holmes,p.218).

The topic of language change has attracted many scholars as an interesting research areas which Labov sums up in an interview carried out by Artarxerxes Modesto :

In particular, we are interested in knowing more about the causes of linguistic change: the triggering events, the driving forces, and the ultimate resolution of change over time.

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1.3. Speed and Degree of Change:

Some changes are very slow and normal, that develop with the course of life, as a result of variation. Change may spread through individuals who have more contact with and influence on others, as waves that move in different directions from one social group to another (Holmes, pp.205-206). Chambers and Trudgill mention the spread of uvular *r* in western and northern Europe as spreading from city to city and from city into the countryside that surrounds it (Wardhaugh, p.195).

In other cases, change may be restricted to a number of groups only without acquiring full conventional status in the community as a form of internal linguistic change for purposes of socio-cultural identity preservation as did the Martha Vineyard Islanders who lived on that small island three miles off the Massachusetts coast who exaggerated the centralization of the diphthong shifting /ai/ in words like *night* into /əi/, and /au/ in words like house into /əu/ (Ibid, pp 197-198). Physical barriers such as rivers, high mountains, etc may become barriers to the spread of new changes. A change of vowel in some northern American cities such as the vowel in *caught* which changed and became similar to that in *cot*, the vowel in *bag* to become like that in *beg*, etc., which spread east from New York to Chicago and Detroit, but did not reach Windsor in Canada which is across the river (Ibid, p.194).

The degree and speed of such changes, however, may differ from one area to another, and from one linguistic community to another, depending on a variety of internal and external factors and causes (Jones and Singh, p.52).

Andre Martinet stresses the importance of internal factors in bringing about language change, and views language as a self-regulating semiotic system governed by the two communicative principles of least effort and clarity of meaning; but sociolinguists on the other hand, emphasize the role of external factors in causing language change (Lyons, p.209).

External factors are related to the communicative environment in which a particular language is used, which include social class, age, gender, etc., as well as violent and abrupt events and circumstances to which a community and its language are exposed.

The external factors behind language change can be:

- Political as clear in the many expressions coined by American presidents such as Nixon's *silent majority*, Regan's *evil empire*, the elder Bush's *read my lips*, Clinton's *war room*, and younger Bush's *war on terror* (Safire, 2008).

- Economic and Technological (resulting from new important inventions such as the telegraph, mobiles, and internet).
- Social through interaction or the influence of the more powerful social class as clear in the role and influence of 15th century London merchants in turning the London dialect into standard English, and the role played by women and young people in being more receptive of innovation and change (Mercer and Swan, p.64; Holmes, pp.60-61). I t has been rightly stated that in our era of globalization and modern technology, "foreign affairs are no more foreign" as what happens somewhere affects people elsewhere, and that there is a "hidden languages history in international events" (Footett, p.1).

Another important and essential factor in bringing about language change at a faster rate is related to violent events , wars, occupation, and population displacement.

War and violence result in tremendous materialistic, social, and psychological human suffering, loss of life and resources, and negative effects of various types and degrees not only on the life of people directly involved in wars, but also on their regions. English throughout its history has been influenced by the languages of its invaders (Swedish, Danish, French, etc). For example, by the 14th century, 21% of the English vocabulary came from French as a result of French occupation of England which happened in 1066 and lasted for three centuries.

The first Gulf War (1980-1988) between Iraq and Iran between 1980-1988 produced a number of terms and expressions in Iraqi Arabic media such as : The expression *al-Qaadisiyya Al-thaniya* (lit.: the second Qaadisiyya), signifying another large-scale war between Arabs and Persians, became a widely-used expression in media and Iraqi military communiqués. Other similar expressions that became common in Iraqi military communiqués and media were : "suqoor al-jaw" (lit.: falcons of the air) signifying Iraqi fighter pilots) ; the expression "fursaan al-jaw" (lit.: knights of the air) signifying Iraqi military helicopter pilots); the expression "al-sawaaʕiq al-mawaahiq" (lit.: the devastating thunderbolts) signifying Iraqi fighter-bomber planes); the expression "hadaf bahri kabeer" (lit.; a big naval target) signifying a big ship or oil tanker-ship targeted by Iraqi war planes); and the expression "masabeeh al-ard al-haraam (lit.: lanterns of the battle-field), i.e. military engineers (Ilyas, p.130).

The 1990-1991 Gulf War between Iraq and American-led allies in 1991 produced many new English expressions such as "smart bomb" to mean bombs that are supposed to be highly precise in hitting targets), and 'collateral damage' designating civilian casualties that result from bombing (Safire, p. 227).

1.4. Areas of Language Change :

1.4.1. Sound change :

Sounds changes are either phonetic or phonemic. Phonetic change are in pronunciation of allophones (of a phoneme) without affecting the language's phonemic system.

Phonemic change on the other hand affects the phonemic system by the addition or loss of a phoneme. In old English the phoneme /v/ did not exist , but was later borrowed from French, and thus the phoneme /f/ came into contrast with the new one /v/ in words as : safe / save.

Boundaries are sometimes a source of contact, innovation, and change; or of isolation and conservatism (Chambers et al, p.628). Physical barriers such as rivers, high mountains, etc may become barriers to the spread of new changes. For example, in some northern American cities the vowel in *caught* changed and became similar to that in *cot*, and the vowel in *bag* became like that in *beg*, which spread east from New York to Chicago and Detroit, but did not reach Windsor in Canada which is across the river (Ibid, p.194).

Sounds change through a number of processes:

a. **Assimilation:** the influence of one sound on an adjacent one as it changed Latin /k/ when followed by /i/ or /y/, first to /ky/, then to "ch", then to /s/.

b. Dissimilation involves a change in one of two 'same' sounds that are adjacent in a particular word. The first "l" in the English word *colonel* is pronounced as "r", and thus the word *colonel* is pronounced : "kernel".

c. Haplology involves dropping out or the omission of one of two similar adjacent <u>syllables</u> in a <u>word</u> as in the pronunciation of Modern English *prob'ly* for *probably* , or substituting **morphonemic** for **morphophonemic.**

d. Metathesis involves the change in order of two adjacent sounds as in the development of *crud* from *curd* or the pronunciation
<u>www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metathesis</u> (20,June, 2012)
Other old English examples are Hros, frist, thridde, and bridd, which became horse, first, third, and bird respectively in modern English.
http://pattyinglishms.hubpages.com/hub/Language_Change (23,July,2012)

e. Merger : merging a short vowel /o/ and a long one /o:/ as in *stock* , *stalk*,both of which had the same pronunciation.
The expression *O.K., which stands for oll korrect,* which originally was a joke on the misspelling of *all correct,* is another example of the merger that took place in North America in the 1830s [www.spiritus-temporis.com/cot-caught-merger].

f. Splits: when a formerly conditioned alternation of two sounds splits into two independent sounds that contrast with each other as with /v/ which previously was an alternate of /f/ when /f/ occurred in an intervocalic position).
<u>www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/Fall_2009/ling001/language</u> (15 June, 2012)

g. Loss involves the loss of a sound from a language.

The final /r/ sound was pronounced in London up to the 17th century; and Shakespeare's period witnessed the Great Vowel Shift, in which vowel length changed, and this is clear in the way the pronouns 'he' and 'she' are written with /e/ reflecting the old pronunciation). The phoneme /k/ in such words as *knit* or *knife* was pronounced in the 15th century and was not silent.

h. Monophthongization: a diphthong changing to a simple vowel a monophthong (single) sound. For example, the dipthoung [iu] which occurred in old English words such as [riude] became a monothong /u:/ in such words as : /ru:d/ (rude) , and [riule] became /ru:l/ (rule). *http://pattyinglishms.hubpages.com/hub/Language_Change* (23,July,2012)

i. Diphthongization: is a change from a simple vowel sound to a diphthong. The monothong /u:/ in /hu:s/ became /au/ in /haus/ (house).
    http://pattyinglishms.hubpages.com/hub/Language_Change
(23,July,2012)

1.4.2. Grammar change :

Grammar forms also change, but that takes a much longer period of time. Old English word order was different from modern English in being more flexible than modern English. Inflections were added to nouns, adjectives, and verbs. The verb phrase was put at the end of the clause. Case endings in Old English differed in respect of gender (masculine, feminine, or neutral) , and whether a noun is classified as strong or weak. By the 10th century , the inflection system of Old English was in a process of change, and was dropped later but that took many centuries to be accomplished (Graddol et al, pp. 115-118).

1.4.3. Vocabulary change :

As already mentioned, a language's vocabulary and word meanings change faster than phonology and grammar. In vocabulary, new words are invented or borrowed, the meaning of old words change, and a word's morphology develops with new derivations or shrinks in accordance with speakers' communicative needs. As soon as new forms of words or expressions develop and spread among a number of people, the change may become in progress as it happened with such slang words as *cool* or *wicked* (meaning 'really good').

The English word *nice* meant 'ignorant', which later came to mean 'fastidious' and after that it came to mean 'precise' all of which are different from it's present meaning (Holmes,p.204). The word *invention* in Othello meant 'imagination' and had nothing to do with technological invention, since it acquired its technological sense after the 19th century industrial revolution in England, but some translators of Othello inaccurately translated it into Arabic as a technological term (Ilyas, p.71). In Shakespeare's time the word *entertain*

meant 'to 'hold'. The word *sensible* in Jane Austin's works meant 'being aware'. The expression *that begs the question* according to Bauer et al (p.21) originally meant 'that seems to answer the question by assuming the answer that you wanted' for elder people (the first edition of the Oxford Concise Dictionary in 1911), but for the new generation it means 'that raises the question' or to 'invite a question' (as the tenth edition of the Oxford Concise Dictionary in 2002 explains it).

According to Crystal (p.332), word meanings change through a number of linguistic processes such as extension or widening of meaning (*virtue* was a male quality but changed to be applicable to both men and women); narrowing (*mete* in old English meant food in general which now means one kind of food *meat*); shift from one domain to another (*navigator* which was only for ships is now for planes and cars as well); figurative use (*crane* which denoted a long-necked bird is used nowadays for an equipment that lifts weights); amelioration (in which a word loses its negative connotation as in the case of *mischievous* which meant disasterous, but now has a milder meaning of 'playfully annoying'); and pejoration in which a word with positive meaning develops a negative meaning as with *notorious* which meant 'widely known', but now means 'widely and unfavourably known'.

2. Vocabulary Change in the Baghdadi Arabic Variety

2.1. New terms and expressions

One resource of vocabulary expansion in human languages is the creation of new words and/or expressions to express new experiences, and/or items. The two main processes in semantic change are the loss of some words, and the arrival of new words (Crystal, p.332).

The following are some examples of the new terms and expressions that appeared and acquired wide usage in the Baghdadi Arabic Variety (henceforth: BAV), in the aftermath of the American occupation of Iraq:

- *hawasim* (looters):

This term spread in association with the large-scale looting of banks and governmental institution following the American invasion of the main Iraqi cities. It is used for reference to individual or group looters.

- *zaman Saddam* (the time of Saddam)

The expression *zaman Saddam* is used for comparing life conditions following the occupation with those during Saddam's rule.

- *ʔabwa ṣawtiyya* (sound bomb)

This expression means a sound bomb which American troops used to forcibly open exterior home doors and gates for surprise night inspection of homes or buildings.

- *Il-amreekan ikhthaw wilidhum* (the American troops arrested their sons)
- *Qaaʕida amreekiyya* : American (military) base

2.2. Figurative use of existing terms or expressions:

- *?looj* (a type of blood-sucking insect)

This was an obsolete word that belongs to classical Arabic designating a blood-sucking insect.The word *?looj* was the first lexical product of the American invasion of Iraq when it was used by Muhammad Al-Sahaaf, the then Iraqi Minister of Information in one of his press conferences, as a negatively-charged nickname for the American troops. This was an obsolete word that belongs to classical Arabic designating a type of blood-sucking insect, but it very quickly spread among Iraqis and Arabs in other countries.

2.3.Pejoration of meaning: a word with positive or neutral associations acquires negative or pejorative associations:

Hadeeqa (garden)

The word *hadeeqa* which literally means 'garden' and has positive associations has acquired a negative meaning after the American occupation: 'being bored and having nothing to do out of unemployment or economic recession'.

Daggimhum (button up your buttons)

This expression which used to have neutral associations acquired a new figurative meaning after the occupation to mean 'shut up, or stop your unbelievable stories'.

2.4. Extension meaning:

- *ʕallaasa* (chewers)

This plural noun form was derived from the verb root *ʕalaasa,* and its imperfect form *yaʕlis* in the BAV (as well as in standard Arabic) which means "to chew". After the American invasion of Iraq, it came to mean something totally different, to refer to those who cooperate with gangsters by providing them with victims' identity information, to kidnap and/or murder them.

- *Shadda* (the sum of 10 000 $)

This word originally meant a pack of something. Its meaning was shifted to mean the sum of 10 000 $, and replaced the term *dafter* which had this meaning before the American occupation.

Sabba (a concrete roof or layer)

The word *sabba* and its plural form *sabbaat* in the BAV (as well as in many other Arabic varieties was used to signify the process of constructing building roofs by using mixed cement, pebbles, sand, and water (concrete). This word acquired a new associative meaning in relation to the thousands of protective concrete walls used by U.S. and Iraqi troops as military shields or barriers against explosions in every street and road of Baghdad, causing traffic jams, and distorting the scenary of the city.

2.5. Compounding words :

- *sayyaara mufakhakha* (car-bomb)

The expression   *sayyaara   mufakhakha*   is a compound of two words : *sayyaara* (vehicle), and *mufakh-akha* (stuffed with explosives).

- *darraaja   mufakhakha* (bicycle/motorcycle bomb)

The expression   *darraaja   mufakhakha* is another similar compound which consists of two words : *darraaja* (motorcycle or bicycle), and *mufakh-akha* (stuffed with explosives).

These two expressions are sometimes used in an abbreviated one-word form *mufakhakha* (i.e. explosive-stuffed).

- *ʕ ubwa laasiqa* (sticking cointainer)

The expression *ʕubwa   laasiqa*   is a compound of two words : *ʕubwa* (container), and *laasiqa* (sticking) which in its compound form signifies an explosive device magnetically stuck on or attached to a vehicle. This compound has also an abbreviated one-word form : "*laasiqa*" (lit.: sticker).

- *hizaam naasif* (exploding belt)

This expression is a compound of two words : *hizaam* (belt), and *naasif* (exploding). It signifies a belt filled with explosives and fixed on men or women (in some cases on animals or even children) to be used against targets (military or civilian).

- *saitara wahmiyya* (unreal checkpoint)

The expression *saitara wahmiyya* is a compound of two words : *saitara* (checkpoint), and *wahmiyya* (unreal). It signifies a fake checkpoint used by gangsters to rob or even kill people.

- *almuqaawama al-ʕiraaqiyya* (Iraqi resistance)

The expression *almuqaawama al-ʕiraqiyya* is a compound that consists of two words : *almuqaawama* (resistance), and *al-ʕiraaqiyya* (Iraqi).

This collocation had been used during the British occupation of Iraq in the first part of the twentieth century and later on was forgotten about for many decades. The term *muqaawama* became used in collocation with words related to other nationalities such as Palestinian resistance.

The collocation *almuqawama al-iraqiyya* became revived again after the American occupation of Iraq.

- *Dustoor braimer* (Brimer's constitution written during Brimer's rule of Iraq as the governor general).

This expression is usually used by the opposition parties and groups.

2.6. Semantic narrowing of existing words :

- *al–Taaifiyya* (sectarianism)

The word *al–Taaifiyya* is used in many parts of the Arab world, denoting sectarianism that is race-based or faith-based. During the American occupation of Iraq, and between 2005-2007, a sectarian strife erupted in Baghdad, and the meaning of this term underwent narrowing to signify that particular sectarian strife.

- *federaaliyya* (federal system)

This loan word had a general meaning of 'federal system' in association with countries united within a federal system, but after the American occupation, its meaning became mainly associated with the Kurdish elf-rule in the northern region and its ties with the central government in Baghdad.

- *Iqleem* (region)

This term used to denote a region or state, but after the American occupation, it acquired the meaning of any governorate having the right to become a region with independent administration.

Intihaari (some person with suicidal intentions or tendency)

The word *intihaari* in Arabic which means a person with a psychological condition of suicidal tendencies, but it acquired new associations of a person wearing a belt of explosives to turn himself into a human bomb who would explode him/herself among a number of enemy soldiers or even fellow citizens.

istish-haadi (martyrdom-seeker)

The word *istish-haadi* is a synonym to *intihaari* but has more religious associations and motives, scarifying self to win paradise in the hereafter

2.7. Semantic borrowing and calquing

Borrowing is a major process in lexical change, and nouns, verbs, and adjectives are the main items usually borrowed (Chambers et al, pp. 649-650).

A person's full hair-cut (by razor) is called *zian sifr* in the BAV, but after the American occupation, it became *zian marines* which means 'have a marine-style hair cut'.

- *haras watani* (national guards)

This expression appeared after the formation of the Iraqi 'national guards' during the American occupation.

- *shirta fidraaliyya* (federal police)

This expression too appeared after the formation of the Iraqi 'federal police' during the American occupation.

- *lak haa* (hey you!)

The expression *lak haa* could be a calquing of the American widespread expression 'Hey You' used by American troops.

2.8. Lexico-semantic borrowing

A compound word, one item of which is a loan word, but the other an Arabic word with semantic borrowing:

- *hamaraat li?looj* (American military Hummar vehicles)

This expression consists of two parts, the first one is a loan word derived from 'Hummar', and the second one an Arabic word *?looj* signifying American soldiers (with negative connotations) .

- "zian Marines" (hair cut as that of a soldier) is a substitute synonymous expression for the Arabic expression "zian sifr" (haircut zero, i.,e. the length of the hair is zero).

Another type of lexico-semantic borrowing is related to modern communication and information technologies which found their way into the Iraqi markets and life, after the American occupation, some of which are:

masij (n) : message

mas-saj (v) : send a message

mobaayil (n) : mobile (telephone)

miscoal (n) : miscall

dish : dish (for satellite TV channels)

reseever : TV satellite receiver

shareehat *mobaayil* (n) : mobile chip

battaariyyit *mobaayil* (n) :mobile battery

2.9. Words and expressions that have been dropped from BAV :

As mentioned earlier, loss of words and expressions is a basic process of semantic change. Many words and expressions associated with Saddam's government, and the former Baʕth party are lost or avoided in communication after the American occupation of Iraq,such as :

ʕudu : (party member)

rafeeq (comrade)

naseer/mu'ayyid : lower-ranked Baʕth party supporters

maqqar al-hizib : party headquarter

khafaara hizbiyya : overnight sentry duty

jaish sha?bi : popular army

ba?thi : baathist

sadeeq al-rayyis :Saddam's friend, (a special rank)

al-austaath : referring to Saddam's elder son ʕUday

nadwa hizbiyya : a party symposium

ittihaad al- nisaa ; women union

al- majlis al- watany liqiyadat al- thawra : the revolution council command

fidaaiyyo Saddam : Saddam's special commandos

anwaat al-shajaaʕa : bravery medals

shaarat um-al-ma?aarik : The Mother of Battles Medal

shaarat al-hizib ; The Baath party Medal granted to those who have been in the party for 25 years

failaq al-quds : the Jerusalem Corps

al-majlis al-watany : 'parliament'.

Conclusion

Language change takes place for various reasons some of which are internal (linguistic) but others are external (social). The case of changes in BAV

Following the American occupation of Iraq reflects the impact of wars and occupation on language change.

The BAV has undergone many changes at the lexico-semantic level in terms of introducing new terms and expressions, acquiring new meanings and associations, narrowing or extending the meaning of existing terms, producing new compound expressions, and borrowing. On the other hand, many words and expressions have been dropped, and are no more used in the new socio-cultural contexts brought about by the American occupation of Iraq.

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التغييرات اللغوية وما طرأ من تغييرات في اللهجة البغدادية

بعد الأحتلال الأمريكي للعراق من 2003–2011

ندى عاصم اسماعيل التتنجي

الجامعة المستنصرية – كلية التربية الرياضية

ملخص البحث

يتناول هذا البحث التغيرات اللغوية بشكل عام والتغيرات التي حدثت في اللهجة العربية البغدادية بشكل خاص بعد الأحتلال الأمريكي للعــراق خـــلال الـــسنوات 2003–2011. والطريقة المستخدمة في دراسة التغيرات اللغوية هي الطريقة الاتزامنية التـــي ابتكرهـــا لابوف والتي تركز على تزايد او تناقص الأستخدام اللغوي لتعابير معينـــة خـــلال فتـــرة زمنية محددة. لقد ادى الأحتلال الأمريكي للعراق الى حدوث تغيرات لغوية عديـــدة فـــي اللهجة البغدادية (واللهجات العراقية الأخرى ايضا) ولكن اختيار اللهجة البغدادية للدراسة يعود لكونها اللهجة التي يتحدث بها ويفهمها معظم سكان العراق وخاصة في المنطقتـــين الوسطى والجنوبية. وتظهر الدراسة أن التغيرات الرئيسية هي فـــي ميـــدان المفـــردات والعبارات حيث ظهرت مفردات وتعابير جديدة وتلاشت مفردات وتعابير أخـــرى نتيجـــة التغيرات السياسية والأجتماعية التي شهدها المجتمع العراقي في هذه تلك الفترة.