THE IMPACT OF Y REPLACEMENT ON THE PHONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE VERB FORM IN HADHRAMI DIALECT.

Najat Ahmed Busabaa

Faculty of Arts , Hadhramout University for Science & Technology.

Abstract

The tendency to replace one sound in the place of another sound is a natural phenomenon in the languages of the world. This phenomenon is a well-known phenomenon in Arabic language too. [y] Replaces [dʒ] in many contexts. /y/ is a characteristic especially in some southern Yemeni dialects as in Hadhramout dialect, the dialect in question.

This study investigates the impact of [y] replacing [dʒ] in the verb form in many contexts in Hadhrami dialect. Many words have been collected of the verb forms: The present, the past and the imperative. Some have been used as the basic corpse of this study with /y/ replacing /dʒ/ in different positions of the word: initial, middle and final. The results show that this replacement affects the inner phonological and morphological structure of the verb form. The changes the verb forms undergo result into a sort of difficulty on one hand and to some kind of unacceptability on the other hand compared to the standard Arabic ones.

1. Introduction

Many attempts have been made to explain why one segment replaces another segment.. However, no one, till now, has discovered the real cause. The tendency to replace one sound in the place of another sound seems to be a natural phenomenon in the languages of the world. This phenomenon is a well-known phenomenon in Arabic language too. [y] replaces [dʒ] in many contexts and the reason to do so is more than ease of articulation.

Several questions have been raised attempting to force an adequate account of the nature and the status of [dʒ]. Bishr (2000: 320-321) points that /dʒ/ can be pronounced by most Arab speakers as /dʒ/. It can be pronounced as /ʒ/ by Damascus. Egyptian speakers of Cairo and some speakers of southern Yemen can pronounce it as /g/ (Bishr, 2000:334). Moreover, /y/ is a characteristic especially in some other southern Yemeni dialects as in Hadhramout dialect, the dialect in question.

In Arabic, /y/ and /dʒ/ are two distinctive phonemes. Jamal "camel" and yamel "to be born of" are two different words in Arabic. However, /y/ replaces /dʒ/ in many contexts and this is known as linguistic replacement (Abd-el tawaab. 2000). In standard Arabic /dʒ/ in ʃajarah "tree", for instance, is in free variation with /y/ in

ʃiyarah. Some earlier Arab linguists recognized this as a dialectical change. Ibn Jinni justifies this by saying that the replacement occurs due to /i/ replacing /a/ to cope with the genitival form of the first syllable of the second word, ʃiyarah.. This becomes true when minimizing; but the change, to him, must occur in consonants and not in vowels. Such a change of the consonant is reliable to take place by a sudden leep or substitution rather than a gradual change as it does in vowels (Brook, 1975: 81).

This study investigates the impact of y replacing /dʒ/ in many contexts in Hadhrami dialect. /dʒ/ has been rarely used recently in Hadhrami dialect. The excessive use of /y/ instead of /dʒ/ in most if not all contexts is the main reason of the widespread of this phenomenon. This dialectal change has its effect on the phonological structure of the words. /y/ replacing /dʒ/ can be attributed to:

1- /y/ and /dʒ/ have the same place of articulation. Sibawaiyh points out that "between the blade of the tongue and the mid of the hard palate the point of the articulation of the jiim , shiin and yaa."

2- In addition to the similarity in their place of articulation, /y/ and /dʒ/ are voiced sounds (Hillal, 1998:191-192).

3- /y/ differs from /dʒ/ in their manner of articulation. To this Ibn Yaeish says "except for the intensity the /dʒ/ has, otherwise it will be /y/". In Arabic studies, /d□/ is considered a stop sound while /y/ is an approximant. (Steitiya. 2003).

With /y/ replacing /dʒ/ in many contexts in Hadhrami dialect, this study attempts to show:

1. The phonological change and the phonotactic constraints that condition the syllable structure of Arabic compared to the Hadhrami one.
2. The morphological change the word in Hadhrami dialect undergoes is due to the phonological change.

This will be carried out through the following ways:

a. Collecting as many words as possible from Hadhrami dialect;
b. Showing the environments where phonological and morphological change takes place.

2. Methods

To perform this work the researcher has collected as many words as possible. The present, the past and the imperative forms are the basic corpse of this study with /y/ replacing /dʒ/ in different positions of the word: initial, middle and final. These were analyzed to identify the environments in which the changes do occur.

3. Data analysis

In Hadhrami dialect, we do find some instances of verb forms with /y/ replacing /dʒ/. It seems that the replacement takes place in different positions in the word. This can be summed up as follows:

1. There are no constraints restricting the replacement of /dʒ/ by /y/. Whatsoever the consonant sound is, it does not affect the choice of /y/ over /dʒ/.

2. The phonological structure of the verb forms that undergoe a change results into a morphological change.

3.1. The past tense form

There are three morphological forms of the past forms in Arabic Hadhrami dialect with [dʒ] occuring in initial, middle and final positios. These are as follows

a. Faʔal
b. Faʔul
c. Faʔil

As shown above, the difference between the three forms is in the second syllable of the verb form. It is /ʔal/ as in (a), /ʔul/ as in (b) or /ʔil/ as in (c) respectively. However, the most common past form used in Arabic Hadhrami dialect is faʔal. consider,

a.1. dʒa.las → Ylas "sat down (ms 3rd per sin)".

  ħa.radʒ → ħray "went out (ms 3rd per sin)".

What the above examples show is that

1. [y] replaces [dʒ];

2. Consequently the inner phonological structure of the word changes in two respects:
   a. Because of the omission of the case ending "i.e., /a/ at the end of the word" the word has been redcued into two syllables instead of three syllables in Standard Arabic "[dʒa.la.sa]". This results into a verb form consisting of two syllables. Therefore, the verb form [dʒa.las] has been reduced into one syllable in hadhrami dialect, [ylas]. Simialarly, [ħa.radʒ] has been reduced into one syllable [ħray]
   b. The reduction of the verb form into one syllable leads to a succession of two consonants: /yl/ and /ħr/ respectively.
   c. The stress has been moved from the first sound of the first syllable to the second sound of the word.

There is another instance of the same verb form (faʔal), in addition to the above examples listed in (a.1),

a.2. dʒa.raħ → yi.riħ "has been injured, (ms 3rd per sin)".

  The difference between (a.1) and (a.2) is in the structure they take in Hadhrami dialect. The above example shows the following:

a. Vowels have been changed from /a/ to / i/ with the loss of the case ending.
b. There are two syllables instead of one syllable as in the examples above; the first is [yi], the second is [riħ] respectively.

3.2 .The imperative form

In Hadhrami dialect, the imperative forms of the above past forms are constructed as follows:

a.

yi.lis

ħi.riy

b.

yraħ

What the above examples show is that:

1- There are two syllables in the first examples and one syllable in the second example.
2- The two forms of the imperative verb forms show how simultaneously they are used in relation to the past form. It seems, as shown in the examples above that, the imperative form in (a) takes the structure of the past form (b), while the imperative form in (b) tends to take the structure in (a). This can be illustrated in figure (1) below:
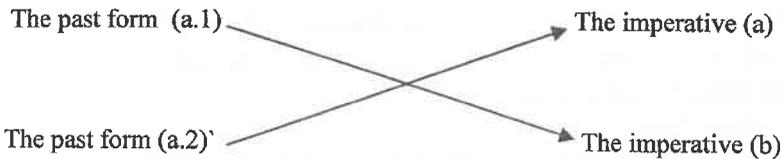

The past form (a.1)   The imperative (a)

The past form (a.2)`   The imperative (b)

Figure (1) the Imperative forms of the verb

The examples in (a) have the syllable patterns [yi] as in [yi.lis] and [iy] as in [ħi.riy]. These two syllable patterns are considered as unacceptable syllable patterns in standard Arabic due to the existence of the glide /y/ preceded or followed by the vowel /i/ which results into difficulty in the articulation of the syllable.

3.3. The Present form

To derive the present form from the triconsonantal past tense form, the morpheme [ya] is added. With the attachment of [ya] as a prefix added to the triconsonantal word, vowels which are added as infixes through a process of affixation are inflected to cope with the change in the aspect and the structure of the word. Consider

a.	dʒalasa	yadʒ.lis	yiy.lis	yii.lis
	ħa.ra. dʒa	yaħ.ridʒ yiħ.riy.		
b.	dʒa.ra. ħa	yadʒ.raħ	yiy.riħ	yii.riħ
	ħa. dʒa.la	yaħ. dʒal	yiħ.yil	
c.	ħa.dʒa.ra	yaħ.yur	yiħ.yir	

What the above examples show is that: there is a change in the morphological and phonological structure of the verb form. In Standard Arabic, [ya] is attached to the word to indicate the aspect of the verb form: the present. However, this [ya] has

been changed to [yi] in Hadhrami dialect. The change of [ya] to [yi] has led to another change: the three types of the vowels"i.e., the infixes that indicate the morphological structure of the verb forms" have been replaced by [i]. This can be illustrated by the following rule:

{a, u, i}(i.e.; the ifixes) → {i}/yi# [where (yi) is the morpheme of present aspect]

4. Discussion

The aim of any phonological or phonetic variability (assimilation, epenthesis, replacement etc...) in any language moves toward facilitating ease of articulation and perception. When [y] replaces [dʒ] in many contexts in Hadhrami verb forms, the reason to do this is to facilitate ease of articulation. [dʒ] needs a greater effort than [y] production. /dʒ/ is produced when the middle of the tongue contacts the middle of the hard palate (Anis, 1975: 77). However, with /dʒ/ articulation the air is obstructed at a certain point in the oral cavity resulting into an explosion . In contrast, /y/ needs less effort in articulation since air moves out of the mouth with no obstruction. This is the main reason distinguishing /dʒ/ from /y/.

/y/ replacing /dʒ/ in Hadhrami dialect results into:

1.   Morphological change

The impact of [y] replacement on the morphological structure of the verb form is obvious. Arabic tends to construct its words through a process of infixation. The basic elements in the construction of word structure are vowels. The triconsonantal word is constructed by the addition of vowels within the root of the word. To derive the past tense form of the triconsonantal root (dʒ.l.s), vowels are infixed. Consider

Root	past (SA)	past (SA)	past (H.D)
dʒ.l.s.	dʒa.la.sa	dʒa.las	ylas

As shown above, with [y] replacing [dʒ] the word structure has been completely changed. There is no longer that structure of the verb form in Standard Arabic. This morphological change goes side by side with the phonological change.

2.   Phonological Change

The phonological change that can be seen in the structure of / ylas/ is as follows:

1.   Two consonants are in succession. This is known as consonant cluster. The onset position of the verb form has been filled with two consonants, which is not allowed in Standard Arabic. Catford (1988: 208) confirms this by saying, "Arabic admits no consonant cluster."

2.   A case of re-syllabification can be observed here. The word, which once consistsed of two syllables, has been reduced to constitute one syllable with the stress placed on the second sound of the onset rather than the first one.

3.   "ħi.riy" the imperative form in Hadhrami dialect consists of an unacceptable syllable type in Arabic. "iy" is rather unacceptable syllable in Arabic. When such a syllable does occur in a word, Arabic tries to overcome this unacceptability by omission then compensation by lengthening. (Safaa, 2005: 50- 51). This then will be considered as follows:

ħi.riy → ħi.rii

Similarly, to overcome the unacceptability of /iy/ syllable in the present form yiylis and yiy.riħ, the second /y/ has been dropped and was compensated by lengthening the vowel /i/, consider:

$$yiy.lis \rightarrow yii.lis$$
$$yiy\ riħ \rightarrow yii.riħ$$

5. Conclusion

In this study, the researcher deals with /y/ replacing /dʒ/. This replacement results in a change in the phonological and morphological structure of the verb forms: the past, the imperative and the preset in Hadhrami dialect. The main reason for such phonological variability is to facilitate ease of articulation. However, the change the verb form undergoes in Hadhrami dialect leads to a sort of difficulty. The genitival case in Hadhrami dialect is unmarked in contrast to standard Arabic; /i/ replaces /a/ in most if not all positions of the verb form. /a/ in standard Arabic is the unmarked vowel used because of its ease of articulation while /i/ is considered as the

most difficult vowel to articulate. Moreover, /y/ replacing /dʒ/ results into establishing a syllable type unacceptable in standard Arabic. [iy] in standard Arabic is the most difficult syllable type. The transition period to move from /i/ to /y/ needs a great effort of articulation that is supposed to be difficult.

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