

Decoding the Impact of Language Contact on Saudi Arabic: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Analysis

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Abstract—Based on the assumption that almost all languages are subject to change due to language contact, this study investigates the impact of language contact on Saudi Arabic, with a focus on lexical, syntactic, and phonological changes driven by foreign labor migration and Saudi students returning from abroad. While existing scholarship has documented pidginization and borrowing in Gulf Arabic, this paper provides a granular analysis of Saudi-specific phenomena, including the adoption of Hindi, Persian, and Turkish lexical items and structural shifts in emergent pidgin varieties. Additionally, it posits the understudied influence of Saudi returnees from Anglophone countries as catalysts for semantic broadening and code-mixing. In doing so, the study is grounded on the social cognitive theory to show the extent to which new varieties have been introduced to Saudi Arabic due to language contact. Findings reveal that lexical borrowing dominates current changes, while phonological and semantic shifts remain marginal but evolving. The study argues that economic globalization and educational mobility are central to these transformations, offering a timely update to frameworks on Arabic dialect evolution. By bridging gaps in prior literature and introducing new sociolinguistic actors, this work contributes to understanding how localized language contact shapes contemporary Arabic varieties.

Index Terms—cross-cultural communication, language contact, pidgins, Saudi Arabic, social cognitive theory

I. INTRODUCTION

As a cosmopolitan country, Saudi Arabia attracts a large number of people from different countries and cultures. The majority of those people come for work and better job opportunities, whereas others come for tourism, particularly religious tourism (Alanazi, 2013). A lot of those people come from non-Arabic-speaking countries, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Nepal, Indonesia, and Malaysia, with different languages (Almathkuri, 2016). Such a multicultural community necessitates a new communication paradigm that manages to absorb all these cultures and languages and incorporate them within a new variety of language that functions to create a successful type of communication among all. In most cases, those people do not have the ability to speak Arabic, the mother tongue of Saudis, nor do they speak English as a lingua franca. However, they tend to use a mix of varieties that is created to facilitate communication and understanding between them and others. This has led to the creation of a new form of cross-cultural communication known as Gulf Pidgin Arabic (Avram, 2014).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an Arabic-speaking country in terms of its linguistic identity (Elyas & Picard, 2018). In other words, Arabic is used for most written and spoken communication in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). Furthermore, the prevalence of Arabic monolingualism is directly linked to the religious and cultural ethos and identity of the original Arabs (Begum & Haque, 2013). Aslam and AbuSa'aleek (2019) assert that language use is the foundation of communication and that the negotiation of a language's structure and meaning determines how it develops. Al-Ahdal (2020) illustrated the importance of language in supporting our comprehension and communication of the meaning of the content. Additionally, according to Alfallaj (2016), language is a social phenomenon that operates in accordance with cultural and societal standards. Nonetheless, English as a lingua franca allows people who speak it to communicate with others. However, this is not the study's primary focus. Instead, it is the exchange of information between individuals who do not speak the same language. Workers, plumbers, shopkeepers, mechanics, craftsmen, masons, painters, electricians, cleaners, sweepers, tailors, technicians, drivers, and others from non-Arabic-speaking countries do not speak the same language, not even English. Thus, the issue is how these employees communicate with Arabic speakers or their counterparts who speak other languages. A new form of cross-cultural communication known as Gulf Pidgin Arabic (GPA) has emerged over the last 40 years or so, and the vast majority of these foreign workers live and work in urban areas that have evolved into both linguistic laboratories and gathering places for people who speak different languages (Avram, 2014).

A. Research Objectives

This study attempts to achieve the following research objectives:

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1. To explore the impact of language contact on Saudi Arabic.
2. To shed light on the way language contact influences Saudi Arabic in terms of the lexical, syntactic, and phonological changes.
3. To show the extent to which language contact creates a new communication paradigm in the Saudi sociolinguistic context.

B. Research Questions

The current study tries to provide answers for the following research questions:

RQ1. To what extent does language contact affect Saudi Arabic?

RQ2. How does language contact influence Saudi Arabic in terms of the lexical, syntactic, and phonological changes?

RQ3. How does language contact create a new communication paradigm in the Saudi sociolinguistic context?

The rest of this study is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the theoretical background and literature pertinent to the current study, as well as reviews some previous studies relevant to the topic at hand. Section 3 offers the methodology of the study, in which data collection, description, and the analytical procedures adopted in this study are provided. Section 4 demonstrates the analysis and results of the study. Section 5 discusses the results obtained from the analysis of the selected data. Section 6 is the conclusion of the study, wherein some recommendations for further research are presented.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Language Contact and Language Change

For a plethora of reasons, languages around the world have been changing constantly since the dawn of time. Arabic has not been exempt from this phenomenon. It has branched into a large number of dialects that are as numerous as the communities and peoples that constitute the Arab world (Bassiouny, 2020). In this work, Saudi Arabic is brought under the spotlight as a case study. The changes that have occurred in this dialect of Arabic as a result of language contact are addressed. According to Ismail (2021), language change is a healthy phenomenon that languages have to go through in order to persist and thrive. If a language does not change, it will become stagnant, and it will fail to satisfy the communicative needs of its speakers. Language change means that new linguistic data are incorporated into the language as often as needed. These data can be in the form of borrowed words, modified grammatical structures, and stretching or narrowing of the meaning of lexical items. The data can even come in the form of abandoning items that have lost their value as useful linguistic material. These changes keep a language up-to-date and an optimal tool of communication.

Language contact is one of the strongest factors that plays a role in language change. Language contact comes into play when two or more linguistic communities, which speak different languages, coexist in the same region. Language contact is more prominent than ever before. It is hard to find a country in which there is no linguistic contact (Sankoff, 2001). This is in part the result of remarkable advancements in the fields of transportation and communication. Today, people are able to travel around the globe in a short period of time with exceptional ease. Language contact can influence languages in different ways. In some cases, the linguistic data of a language in contact would increase noticeably. However, in other cases language contact can render a language extinct after a period of contact with another language. An important distinction is that language contact can lead to change in both languages, in contrast to diglossic situations in which only the lower variety is subject to change (Sayahi, 2007).

There are several processes by which language contact leads to language change. First, it is uncontroversial that languages vary in their prestige. Assume that two languages, A and B, coexist in a single region. It is also assumed that language A is regarded as more prestigious than language B. In this situation, speakers of language B will likely borrow words and structure over time from language A for reasons of prestige (Backus, 2004). The fact that people speaking different languages have different cultures also needs to be considered. There are things and concepts that are unique to each group of people. This means that for the speaker of one language, it is obligatory or, in other terms, more convenient to borrow the relevant word from the other language. Language contact can result in several forms of language change. One evident change is structural convergence (Heath, 1984). Structural convergence, according to Heath (1984), occurs when the structure of one language or the structure of both languages becomes similar to one another.

Another, more prevailing, case of language change as a result of language contact is known as borrowing. When languages come into contact, there is an irresistible temptation to borrow words from each of these languages into the other. According to Heath (1984), borrowing is the partial or full usage of lexical items that are adopted from L2 into L1. Nicolaï and Comrie (2008) argued that borrowing is not simply the process of copying words from one language to another, but it is also the result of this process. If a word is adapted from one language to another, this word is regarded as a borrowing as well as the process of adopting it. Lastly, borrowing is not a bidirectional process in which the speaker can adopt words in L1 as well as in L2. Borrowing occurs only when the L1 speaker adopts items from L2 into his or her native language (Sankoff, 2001).

B. Causes of Language Contact

Tracing the reasons why language contact occurs, one can list many economic and sociopolitical factors. Concerning the economic factors, the search for better economic opportunities has been the greatest force behind the phenomenon of language contact. As a result, if a given language is spoken by an economically strong country or community, it will have an influence on many other languages since the speakers of these languages will come to this area in search of economic prosperity. However, they will end up influencing their L1 and the L2 (Al Amadidhi, 1990). These new workers, in most cases, arrive in their country of destination with zero or meager knowledge of the language spoken by the majority. These workers do their best to learn the new language, but the structure and patterns in their L1 play a large role in the way they produce phrases and sentences in the new language. Over time, the native speakers of the L2 start to adopt the new structures produced by the foreigners as a simpler way of successful communication.

Another phenomenon that is sometimes triggered by economic factors is the expansion of the lexicon. New economic opportunities call for new lexical items. An example of this is provided by Al Amadidhi (1990) in his study of the Qatari dialect of Arabic. In this study he argued that, before the discovery of oil, Qatari people used to depend heavily on fishing. However, when oil was discovered, they started to be involved more and more in this new arena. For that, new lexical items that are related to oil started to seep into the Qatari Arabic. These new lexical items were mostly imported by the foreign workers and technicians who dominated oil production. In short, the strength of the economy of a given region or country triggers language contact as a result of foreign workers seeking better opportunities. It also starts a process of lexical borrowing.

As for the sociopolitical factors, they lie in the assumption that politics and social factors are essential sources for language change. Language is a dynamic system that is always changing to adapt to new social, political, technological, and economic developments (Khafaga, 2023). The Arabic language, particularly the regional varieties of the language known as 'Saudi Arabic,' has changed significantly in the Saudi Arabian setting. The kingdom's changing sociopolitical environment is reflected in these changes. Every stage of Saudi Arabia's evolution, from tribal customs to fast industrialization, from oil wealth to globalization, and from conservative standards to social transformation, has left linguistic imprints. Globalization, in particular the Kingdom's greater engagement with the West, notably the United States, has been one of the most important sociopolitical forces. These days, English is a language of opportunity and prestige that is frequently connected to commerce, education, and modernity. Furthermore, throughout the course of history, there are examples of political systems that ban the use of certain languages. For example, Atatürk of early post-Ottoman Turkey ordered that the writing system of the country be changed from Arabic to Latin. He also ordered all lexical items of Arabic origin to be removed and replaced with new ones that were more Turkish.

C. Language Contact in Saudi Arabia and Languages in Contact With Saudi Arabic

Since oil was discovered, Saudi Arabia has become a haven for many individuals, mostly from Asia, looking for improved employment prospects. Usually, these laborers are from Asian nations like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and others. It is inevitable that they will employ their original languages or lexical components from their native languages because they typically know little to no Arabic. This is one of the main ways that Saudi Arabic interacts with these languages. According to AlRawi et al. (2022), many languages have interacted with Saudi Arabic as a result of the diversity of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia. It can be noticed that when it comes to their impact on Saudi Arabic, the languages used by Indian employees rank highest. The large Indian population in Saudi Arabia is the cause of this. Another significant demographic in Saudi Arabia is made up of Pakistani workers, who have a significant influence on Saudi Arabic. Khan (2012) argues that although the number of Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia is constantly growing, it was projected to be over 1.5 million as of 2012. There are other foreigners in Saudi Arabia besides Indians and Pakistanis. There are numerous additional nationalities in Saudi Arabia, but the majorities come from Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines (Dawn Media Group, 2013, Para. 15). Because these employees speak a variety of languages, all of them are considered to be in a linguistic contact scenario with Saudi Arabic.

D. The Role of Saudis Returning From Other Countries

Saudis returning from other countries like the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia, and so forth, likely play a role in changing Saudi Arabic, which has been heretofore overlooked. In 2005, the government of Saudi Arabia initiated the Abdul Aziz Scholarship Program that allows thousands of Saudis to study at universities around the world. According to the Saudi Press Agency (2013), the Minister of Higher Education stated that the number of students who have benefited from this program to date has reached 148,229 individuals. As far as I know, there has not been any research that has addressed this form of contact, but one can be certain that this faction of the society is regarded as the elite of the educated people, and everyone else aspires to resemble them in one way or another. The fact that there is no literature on the issue does not stop one from postulating on the possible influence that these students have on the society in general and the language in particular. Noticeably, many of those who study abroad, particularly in the United States, tend to code-mix and borrow words from English, especially when it comes to things that are typically Western. I predict that with time, many of these lexical items will seep into the body of Saudi Arabic.

E. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

A strong foundation for comprehending language contact and evolution in Saudi Arabia is offered by Bandura's (1977a, 1977b, 1986) social cognitive theory (SCT). How people choose, acquire, and use languages is influenced by observational learning, self-efficacy, and the mutual interaction of behavioral, contextual, and personal factors. SCT encompasses the social and cognitive dynamics underlying a variety of activities, including dialectal convergence, code switching, intergenerational language shift, and media-mediated foreign language acquisition. Bandura (1986) created the psychological framework, which highlights the significance of modeling, imitation, and observational learning in human behavior. By including a cognitive component, it departs from conventional behaviorist theories by claiming that individuals actively understand and affect their surroundings rather than only being passive recipients of inputs (Khafaga, 2024). Behaviorism and cognitive psychology are connected by Bandura's (2003) social cognitive theory, which emphasizes three main factors: the social setting in which learning occurs, the part that self-beliefs, particularly self-efficacy, play, and the dynamic interplay of environment, behavior, and person. Reconciling with Bandura, LaMort (2019) argues that the social cognitive theory is entirely concerned with the contextual environment in which interaction occurs. For LaMort (2019), the context has an effective role in the process of learning behavior change and, therefore, contributes to language change that emerges as a consequence of language contact.

F. Related Studies

When addressing the issue of language contact and its impact on Saudi Arabic, one has to give credit to the pioneer of this domain, Smart (1990), who provided a firsthand account of the influence of European and Indian technicians on Gulf Arabic. In his 1990 work, which is regarded as the first work on language contact and its impact on Arabic, Smart explained the effect of pidginization on Gulf Arabic. The only drawback of this work is that it was focused on data that Smart extracted from newspapers, but he also referred to personal observations that he made between the years of 1966 and 1987. During his stay in Oman as a teacher, Smart started to realize the emergence of a new variety of Arabic. He ascribed this emergence to the presence of workers from Europe and India as well as to the advent of published newspapers. Smart, in his paper, discussed the different components of language that are subject to change, including phonology, morphology, and syntax. Among the changes that Smart (1990) came to realize was the overuse of demonstratives, which he linked to the influence the L1 of foreigners had on the way they speak Gulf Arabic. In other words, he argued that speakers of L2 tend to follow the patterning system of their L1, and he added that this process normally affects only the lower variety.

Another significant work that dealt more closely with the issue is Albakrawi's (2012) study about the effect Asian workers had on Saudi Arabic Pidgin. In this study, Albakrawi gathered data by recording excerpts from random conversations held by Asian workers and Saudis. He also conducted one-on-one interviews to enable him to address certain issues. In his analysis of the data, he looked into the syntax, phonology, semantics, and morphology of the constructions that these workers produced. He came to a number of conclusions that are addressed in the discussion in the coming sections. Al-Azraqi's (2010) study is another remarkable work that enriches the debate on this topic. In addition to one-on-one interviews, Al-Azraqi paid attention to media outlets like TV, radio, and newspapers in collecting her data. Her findings were very similar to those of Albakrawi (2012). For example, she argued that, as a result of pidginization, inflection and definiteness are widely discarded. Moreover, the use of demonstratives and pronouns is noticeably manipulated. In a further study on language contact in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Boyle (2012) argued that language contact in the UAE is very dramatic, to the extent that it triggered a process of nativization.

Additionally, Gomma (2007) carried out a sociolinguistic study in the Saudi context to characterize and examine Arabic Pidgin, which is spoken by Indian workers and Saudi Arabic speakers. He looked at the conditions that led to the emergence of this condensed form of Saudi Arabic as a linguistic phenomenon. Additionally, it aimed to situate Saudi Arabian Arabic Pidgin within the theoretical and historical contexts of pidgin languages. Albaqawi and Oakes (2019) compiled and analyzed a transcribed spoken GPA corpus to examine the impact of duration of stay in the Gulf on the GPA of foreign expat female speakers. They offered a quantitative analysis of linguistic variance in GPA based on five morpho-syntactic traits that are connected to the length of stay in the Gulf. Alshbiel's (2021) study identified the barriers that foreign students in Jordan face when trying to speak Arabic. He learned about the cultural, educational, and physiological problems that the foreign students faced. He continued by characterizing the physiological problems as being shyness, insecurity, and a fear of public speaking. Major educational problems include the absence of a suitable learning environment for Arabic speakers and the failure to plan classes where students can practice speaking the language. Cultural challenges are also linked to the lack of community involvement in language learning and the lack of an appropriate setting for speaking Arabic.

Although there are some previous studies that discussed the extent to which language contact influences Arabic in general and Saudi Arabic in particular, this study is anticipated to contribute to the sociolinguistic context in Saudi Arabia by reporting new sociolinguistic factors that might prove useful in bridging the gap in previous literature, particularly in terms of the lexical, phonological, and semantic changes emerging due to language contact.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study is basically qualitative. In addition to offering empirical evidence to support generalizability, this enables a thorough cognitive and sociolinguistic examination of language contact phenomena. Such a qualitative approach involves a tripartite combination of cognitive linguistics to examine how conceptualizations and mental images affect language use in contact, sociolinguistics to study how social factors affect and reflect language interaction phenomena, and language contact theory (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988) to recognize lexical and structural alterations brought on by interaction.

B. Data

The collected data constitutes a long list of borrowed words that were observed and recorded by the researcher, as well as a number of statements by foreigners living in Saudi Arabia, and are collected by conducting interviews with these foreigners. The researcher, who is a native speaker of Arabic, closely observed the speakers of the language as they engaged in oral communication in their mother tongue in a variety of social contexts in order to get the necessary data. The study's data collection sites were chosen to make sure that speakers from various social and professional backgrounds could be easily reached.

C. Procedures

The analytical procedures adopted in this study consist of three stages. The first stage is mainly concerned with data collection, which is conducted by close observation and interviews with many foreigners living and working in Saudi Arabia. The second stage comprises the classification of the collected data into three levels: lexical, phonological, and semantic, to identify how language contact influences Saudi Arabic in terms of these three linguistic levels. The third stage constitutes the discussion of the lexical, phonological, and semantic changes resulting from language contact. The three stages are incorporated to highlight the extent to which language contact serves to create a new paradigm of communication in Saudi Arabic.

IV. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As mentioned earlier in this paper, language contact leads inevitably to language change. In this section, data are provided and analyzed that prove that Saudi Arabic has been changing as a result of being in contact with a number of other languages.

A. Lexical Changes: The Process of Borrowing

Borrowing is the process of adopting lexical items from another language into a native language. Saudis have been adopting many words from many other languages. These words are usually names of things that are not originally Saudi, things that are mostly imported, or things that foreigners in Saudi Arabia use. The data below contain a number of lexical items that have been adopted in Saudi colloquial Arabic. These lexical items come from different languages, as explained in the data.

TABLE 1
SOME BORROWED WORDS IN SAUDI ARABIC WITH IPA, MEANINGS, AND ORIGINS

Arabic Word	IPA	Meaning (English)	Origin	Arabic Word	IPA	Meaning (English)	Origin
بازار	ba.za:r	market	Persian	سمكري	samakri	tinsmith	Turkish
بقشه	baqʃa	bundle	Persian	شاكوش	ʃa:ku:ʃ	hammer	Turkish
بيرق	bajriq	flag	Persian	شال	ʃa:l	shawl	Persian
بلكونه او بلكون	balko:na	balcony	Persian	شطرنج	ʃatʁanʒ	chess	Persian
بيجاما	bija:ma:	pajamas	Persian	شيشه	ʃi:ʃa	hookah	Persian/Turkish
بلكي	bilki:	maybe	Turkish	طربوش	tʁabu:ʃ	fez	Turkish
بخت	baxt	luck	Persian	طرشي	tʁuʃi	pickle	Persian
بويه	bo:ja	paint	Turkish	فيشار	fiʃa:r	popcorn	Persian
خانة او خان	xa:n / xa:na	inn / house	Persian	فتجان	finnʒa:n	cup	Aramaic
الفندق	alfunduq	hotel	Latin/English/Turkish	فهلو	fahalwa	cleverness	Persian
خوش	xo:ʃ	nice / good	Persian	فوطه	fu:tʁa	towel	Turkish
درايزين	dara:bzɪn	railing	Turkish	كشك	kuʃk	kiosk	Persian
طابور	tʁa:bu:r	queue	Turkish	كشكول	kuʃku:l	notebook	Persian
طاسة	tʁa:sa	bowl	Persian	كفته	kifta	meatball	Persian
طشت	tʁaʃt	basin	Persian	كمر	kamar	belt	Persian
فهرس	fahras	index	Persian	جلاص	gla:s	glass	English
كريك	kri:k	scoop	Turkish	بريد	bari:d	bread	Greek
او ميزاب مرزاب	mi:za:b / marza:b	gutter / spout	Persian	كوت	ku:t	coat	English
كمر	kamar	belt	Persian	جاكيت	ʒa:kit	jacket	English
جمرك	ʒumruk	customs	Turkish	سي اي	'e:si:	air conditioner	English
كانون	ka:nu:n	stove	Persian	هوز	hawz	hose	English
دوغري	duyri:	straight	Turkish	باغه	ba:ya	plastic sheet	Turkish
مهرجان	mihraʒa:n	festival	Persian	بفته	bafta	white cloth	Turkish
بعدين	baʃdajn	later	Mixed (Arabic-Persian)	بس	bas	enough / stop	Hindi
بوسه	bu:sa	kiss	Persian	بهار	baha:r	spices	Hindi
تمبل	timbal	lazy	Persian	تتن	titin	tobacco	Persian
تنورة	tannu:ra	skirt	Turkish	تجوري	tʒu:ri	safe / vault	Hindi
شرفش	ʃarʃaf	bed sheet	Persian	توله	tu:la	weight unit (India)	Hindi
باندجان	ba:ðindʒa:n	eggplant	Persian	تاوه	ta:wa	frying pan	Hindi
برغل	buryul	bulgur	Turkish	شوريا	ʃu:r.ba	soup	Turkish/ Persian
برنامج	barna:maʒ	program	Persian	خاشوقه	xaʃu:qa	spoon	Turkish
برواز	barwa:z	frame	Persian	خيشه	xi:ʃa	cloth bag	Turkish
بسبوسة	basbu:sa	semolina dessert	Uncertain	دربيل	darbi:l	telescope / binoculars	Turkish
بقسامط	baqʃama:t	rusk / dry bread	Turkish	دروازه	darwa:za	gate / door	Turkish
بنج	binʒ	anesthetic	Hindi	دريشه	dari:ʃa	window	Persian
بهلوان	bahlawa:n	acrobat	Persian	دسته	dasta	bundle	Persian/Turkish
بوز	bu:z	pout / lips	Turkish	ديرم	di:ram	pomegranate dye	Persian
تخته	taxta	blackboard	Turkish	زوليه	zo:lija	carpet	Persian
تفتة	tafta	taffeta	Persian	سرسري	sarsari:	unemployed	Persian
تكاية	takajja	cushion	Turkish	سروال	sarwa:l	trousers	Turkish/Persian
تمباك	tanba:k	tobacco	Hindi	شيرة	ʃi:ra	sugar syrup	Aramaic
جلة	ʒulla	iron ball	Turkish	طرمبة	tʁumba	pump	Turkish/Italian
جنزير	ʒanzir	chain	Persian	غرشه	ʒarʃa	water jar	Persian
دادة	da:da	nanny	Turkish	قوطني	yu:tʁi	tin can	Turkish
دهليز	dahli:z	hallway	Persian	كندرة	kundara	shoe	Persian/Turkish
زنزانة	zanza:na	prison cell	Persian	موتر	mo:tir	car	Turkish
زير	zi:r	water jar	Persian	درزن	darʒan	dozen	English
سادة	sa:da	plain	Persian	واير	wa:jar	wire	English
سمسار	simsar	broker	Persian				

This is just a small sample of the plethora of lexical items that have made their way into the lexicon of Saudi Arabic, mainly as a result of the presence of foreign workers. As indicated in Table 1, numerous words come to be used in Saudi Arabic as a result of language contact. The table shows that there are so many languages from which these words are borrowed, including Persian, Turkish, Hindi, Aramaic, English, and Greek. These new borrowed words now enrich the Saudi Arabic lexicon in a way that creates a new paradigm of communication or pidginization in the context of Saudi Arabic.

B. The Nature of Pidginization in Saudi Arabic

The term 'pidgin' refers to a simplified form of communication that is like a language but usually is a mixture of more than one language; it can also be a simplified version of a given language. Usually, this occurs as the result of two or more groups of people who speak different languages coexisting in the same region, where they have to forge a way to communicate with each other (AlRojaie, 2023). There are a number of things that characterize pidgin language. First of all, no one speaks a pidgin as a native language. Actually, a pidgin becomes a creole language when it develops a number of native speakers. Another characteristic is the fact that pidgin usually imports its lexicon from one language, and it adopts its syntax from the other language in contact (Thompson, 2013).

In Saudi Arabia, a pidgin that has been used extensively as a means of communication with foreigners who have problems mastering Arabic is thriving remarkably. The use of this pidgin is not confined to adults but has spread to very young infants due to the growing numbers of babysitters who speak nothing but pidgin with these infants. This leads to the prediction that, sometime in the future, these kids might end up speaking this pidgin as a second native language, making the current pidgin language a Creole language. Linguists such as Albakrawi (2012) have identified a number of features that characterize this pidgin. These features are discussed below. Word order in this pidgin is slightly different from that of Arabic in one major aspect. Arabic favors the use of verb-subject-object (VSO) order but also allows subject-verb-object (SVO). In the pidgin, the use of SVO is predominant.

The element *fi*, while formally derived from Arabic existential usage, does not encode tense directly. Instead, it functions as a semantically light copula that combines with verbal predicates whose temporal reference is pragmatically or adverbially specified. As seen in examples (1-2) with *ams* ("yesterday") and *bukra* ("tomorrow"), the same verbal form is used to express past and future depending on contextual cues.

1. ?ana fi ?iġī ams
1SG in IMPV2MS.come yesterday

Intended meaning: 'I came yesterday.'

2. ?ana fi jimfi bukra
1SG in IMPV.2MS.go tomorrow

Intended meaning 'I will go tomorrow.'

Determiners—including definite articles and quantifiers—are typically deleted in this pidgin, following a common pidgin pattern of simplification as shown in example 3. This mirrors findings from Saudi and Gulf varieties, where reduced noun phrases without *al-* are systematically attested.

3. ?ana fi ?akl ?aʃa
1SG in eat.PERF dinner

'I'm eating dinner.'

In Arabic, nouns like *?aʃa* 'dinner' typically require the definite article /*?al-*/ in most natural contexts. A native speaker of Arabic would normally say /*?al-?aʃa*/ rather than *?aʃa*/ in isolation. The same applies to the noun *bɛ:t* 'home' in example 4, which would usually appear as /*?al-bɛ:t*/. However, in the pidgin variety, these nouns systematically occur without determiners—reflecting a broader trend of article omission common to pidgin and contact languages.

4. ?ana fi ruħ bɛ:t
1SG in IMPV.2MS.go house

Intended meaning: 'I'm going to the house.'

The lack of tense and articles is probably the result of imposing the syntactic structures of the native languages of these foreigners on the Arabic syntax. One major characteristic of this pidgin is the fact that it is very economic. For example, it does not use inflections in most cases. This is illustrated in the following example.

5. ?itnēn rɪʒāl

6. two man

7. Intended meaning: 'two men'

In Example 5, the canonical Arabic dual suffix is notably absent from the noun "man." This omission highlights a key structural simplification in the pidgin variety. Furthermore, the example illustrates a shift in word order: while Arabic typically places modifiers (such as numerals) after the noun they modify, here the numeral "two" precedes the noun. This reversal reflects influence from substrate languages or contact-induced restructuring (Ryding, 2005; Avram, 2014). Another example of this sort is provided below.

8. tala:ta seyara
three car

Intended meaning: 'three cars'

In Example 6, where the numeral *tala:ta* 'three' precedes the singular noun *seyara* 'car', without the expected plural morphology or agreement. In Standard Arabic, this construction would require the noun to be plural and in the genitive case (*thalāthu sayyārātin*), but in the pidginized variety, both agreement and plural marking are omitted.

C. Phonological Changes

Phonologically speaking, Saudi Arabic has been influenced by speakers of other languages, but the impact of this influence has not been as noticeable as the impact on the lexicon. There are few cases that embody these phonological changes. These cases are discussed below.

First, the word /kellah/ is the original form used to mean “all of it.” After the advent of foreign workers, this form has changed to become /kulluh/. I attribute this change to a mispronunciation that has been normalized. There are, however, some Saudi Arabic native speakers who still use the original form, but a big faction has switched to using /kuluh/.

Second, the verb /naam/ “sleep” is the original form that was uncontested until a few decades ago. A new way of pronouncing this form has emerged recently as a result of mispronunciation as mentioned above. The new form is /noom/.

Third, the form /mafih/, meaning “there is no,” has changed to /mafi/. This change is triggered by articulatory simplification that led to the deletion of the final glottal fricative /h/. This is also a direct impact of the linguistic contact with speakers of other languages.

In brief, the phonology of Saudi Arabic has not changed dramatically as a result of language contact with speakers of other languages, and the changes that have occurred have not yet spread among all Saudi Arabic speakers.

D. Semantic Changes

The semantics of Saudi Arabic has proven to be even more resistant to change as a result of language contact than the phonology. There are, nevertheless, cases of semantic change, such as the following two cases.

The use of /seferi/, which originally meant something related to travelling. The meaning of this word has broadened and now includes “to-go,” as in when someone orders a meal from a restaurant “to-go”.

The word /fi/ (‘in’) has undergone notable semantic broadening in contact varieties of Arabic, particularly in the speech of non-Saudis. It is frequently reanalyzed as expressing possession, functioning similarly to “has” in English. For instance, in Example 7, *hādā fī mux kabīr* (‘this one has a big brain’) conveys the meaning ‘This person is brilliant’—a usage not attested in native Saudi Arabic but common in simplified or pidginized forms.

9. *hādā fī mux kabīr*

10. this has brain big

‘This person is brilliant.’

While *fī* displays a wide range of extended uses in contact varieties of Arabic, the two examples discussed here suffice to illustrate the breadth of its semantic flexibility. Due to space limitations, a fuller inventory of its functions is left for future work.

V. DISCUSSION

The above analysis demonstrates that one prominent and noticeable aspect of a language contact situation is the sharing of lexicon. Each of these languages has a distinct sociolinguistic perspective because in the Saudi Arabic speech community, Urdu, English, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic coexist side by side while fulfilling diverse sociolinguistic functions. One is utilized in a particular set of social situations, while the other is utilized in a completely different one. As a result of giving these languages important responsibilities, there has been a significant amount of linguistic fusion between them. The creation of a new paradigm of communication has been made possible by this linguistic fusion.

The results also show that non-Arab employees attempt to deduce meaning from context. They make predictions. But it appears that this kind of approach is ineffective. Every word sample used in this study demonstrates how important it is to seek assistance from friends or another person in order to resolve a miscommunication. The results further clarify that Gulf Pidgin Arabic was developed to facilitate communication between Arabs and non-Arabs in order to prevent misunderstandings. This result is consistent with a number of previous investigations (Smart, 1990; Gomma, 2007; Ferguson, 1968; Avram, 2014; Al-Azraqi, 2020). According to Al-Azraqi (2020), the language spoken by Asian immigrants who are not Arab in the southwestern Saudi Arabian city of Abha is distinguished by three grammatical categories: pronouns, definiteness, and predication. It concentrates on a pidgin that is primarily used. “Refunctionalization,” “generalization,” and “neutralization” were the labels used to characterize these three forms of multifunctionality. Arabic pidgins were used by Asian migrants in the Arabian Gulf states (Albaqawi, 2016). Migration in the Gulf region is the primary driver of conventionalization within GPA, according to the linguistic data and the analysis of the social context.

Furthermore, Smart (1990) confirmed that pidgin was created in the Sultanate of Oman between 1966 and 1968 while teaching Arabic to workers at oil companies. This simplified form of Arabic was already in use on the rigs at the time and was used for communication between the native Arab personnel and the foreign (European and Indian) supervisors and technicians. Additionally, Gomma (2007) examined and documented Arabic Pidgin, which is spoken by Indian employees and Saudi Arabic speakers in the Saudi environment. He looked at the conditions that led to the emergence of this condensed form of Saudi Arabic as a linguistic phenomenon.

In light of the results of the current study, non-Arab Saudi Arabian workers' use of pidgin Arabic provides some relief from the lack of a common language for contact, even though it is still insufficient for two-way communication. The nature of language as we know it is dynamic; it is always changing and developing. This reconciles with Elyas and Mahboob's (2021) and Elyas et al.'s (2021) argument that an interlanguage is likely to develop given the ongoing culture of interaction between Arabs and non-Arabs, particularly with technology helping language users. Each participant in this study had a smartphone, and with a little encouragement and incentive from their employers, they can use language learning apps to learn Arabic, lowering the language barrier with the natives. This is true even though the

non-Arab worker base included in this study is occasionally not educated enough to learn a language using the traditional pen-and-paper method, which is the trend worldwide.

It is analytically demonstrated that a complex interaction of sociopolitical factors shapes the evolution of the Saudi Arabic language. Every element has played a part in the language's dynamic growth, from the effects of globalization and modernization to educational reform, digital media, gender inclusiveness, and regional identity. These cultural as well as linguistic shifts are indicative of Saudi society's larger evolution. The future of Saudi Arabia's language will surely reflect the struggles and victories of its singular sociopolitical journey as it strives to strike a balance between tradition and modernization.

VI. CONCLUSION

Language contact has a significant and complex effect on Saudi Arabic. English is progressively influencing Saudi Arabic and English dialects through vocabulary, usage standards, education, media, migration, and urbanization. According to the cognitive sociolinguistic theory, speakers process, modify, and use these effects in accordance with internalized language models, pragmatic objectives, and identity concerns. Despite the practical benefits of English, Saudi society and its speakers must strike a careful balance between modernization and linguistic-cultural integrity. In addition to structural study, understanding this dynamic necessitates knowledge of social motivations, policy aspects, and mental processes. The analysis shows that the low variety of Arabic in Saudi Arabia has been changing in part due to the advent of foreign workers. These changes primarily have impacted the lexicon. Many lexical items have become part of the everyday communication of speakers of Saudi Arabic through the process of word borrowing. Another likely source of language change via language contact was also posited: Saudi students returning from abroad. Furthermore, morphology has been impacted, but to a lesser extent. It is relevant mainly in the pidgin that has been forged to bridge the gap between native speakers of Saudi Arabic and speakers of other languages who live in Saudi Arabia. Also, the area showing the least amount of change is phonology and semantics. Minor changes have been noticed, but these changes have not yet spread to the extent that they have become a norm for all Saudi Arabic speakers. Crucially, the process of language change is a long process, and the linguistic contact situation is relatively recent. That is the main reason change has not been great in many areas of the language. However, it is anticipated that the impact of this linguistic situation will become crystal clear in the future. Therefore, further studies are recommended to address the various lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological changes that occurred due to language contact in Saudi Arabic and beyond.

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