

## Language Variation in Nassiriyah Speech Community: A Sociolinguistic Study

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### Abstract:

*The study aims primarily at investigating the existence of some systematic difference among speakers in Nassiriyah speech community in their use of certain linguistic variables in association with chosen social variables. Nassiriyah is the center of Thi-Qar Governorate, a town which lies in the south of Iraq . It is about 375 km south of Baghdad and 110 south of Al-Muthanna. Thi-Qar Governorate includes a number of towns, villages and geographically contains some deserts, marshes and the river Euphrates passes within the town of Nassiriyah. The present study shows the impact of the interaction between chosen linguistic variables with three social variables; namely the speaker's age, sex and region. The sample of the study includes 48 informants belonging to four parts of the town. It is mainly appointed to give us a board picture of patterns of variation in the town. The procedure which is followed in the elicitation and manipulation of the data as well as the interpretation of the final results is that of the quantitative method.*

**Key words:** Language Variation, Sociolinguistics, Iraqi Arabic

## **Introduction**

Language is regarded as one of the most interesting social phenomena, though some linguists consider it as a form of social behaviour. Because “Speech allows us to communicate with each other at a much more sophisticated level than would otherwise be possible, and since communication is a social activity” (Hudson 1980:107), therefore, we can say that speech has a social effect. It is worth mentioning that human communities are not socially homogenous and that they are linguistically heterogeneous. Generally speaking, sociolinguistic studies on language variation and the process of language change are different from dialectology studies. Dialectology studies stress the geographical aspects and they do not focus on the social background of the speaker. Spolsky (1998:28) maintains that “Dialectology is the search for spatially and geographically determined difference in various aspects of language”. In fact, the development in sociolinguistic research has begun with Labov’s work (1961-1966). The present study deals with language variation in Nassiriyah Iraqi Arabic. This variety is characterized by certain features that distinguish it from other varieties of Iraqi Arabic. It is believed that there is linguistic variation in the speech of the people in the town of Nassiriyah. It has been noticed that there are some other social factors such as the speaker’s age, sex, and region which interact with the linguistic variables which, as a result, are influencing the language variation.

## **The Aims of the study**

The present study aims at conducting an investigation which attempts to demonstrate the existence of some systematic differences among the speakers in their use of certain linguistic variables in accordance with certain social variables in Nassiriyah speech community. The social variables chosen are

the speaker's age, sex, and the region. The selection of these variables has been done as one of the outcomes of two pilot studies which have been conducted on the speakers in addition to the direct observation. Furthermore, the correlation and interrelation between the social variables and the chosen linguistic variables is also taken into consideration. The study is devoted to the following markedly noticed phonological variables in Nassiriyah speech community.

1-The /k/ variable has two variants; [k] and [ʃ]. The [k] variants is standard while [ʃ] is stigmatized (non – standard), as in: /kilma/ and /ʃilma/ (word).

2- The /dʒ/ variable has also two variants; [dʒ] and [j]. [dʒ] is more prestigious than [j] in Al-Nassiriyah speech community as in: /dʒibit/ and /jibit/ (I brought)

3-The /q/ variables which has two variants [q] and [g]. [q] is standard while [g] is stigmatized (non – standard), as in: /qebil/ and /gebul/ (before this time)

4- The /en/ variable which has two recognized variants namely [en] and [Ø]. [en] is one of the linguistic markers of the speech style of Nassiriyah speech community. as in: /ʔdʒi:b/ /ʔdʒiben/ (I bring)

### **The Hypotheses of the study**

The study hypothesizes that the use of some variants of each of these variables is linked to the social contact of Nassiriyah Iraqi Arabic. Female informants tend to use certain variants more than male informants do. On the other hand, certain variants are expected to be chosen by male informants more than the female informants. This is especially represented in the case of the choice of marked / unmarked (standard / stigmatized) variants. Male informants are expected to use more standard variants than the female informants. Furthermore, informants belonging to different areas are

expected to be differing in the choice of the variants. An informant belonging to a socially high status is expected to use more standard variants than an informant who belongs to a lower social status. Age could also be an effective factor in this respect.

### **The significance of the study**

The study aims primarily at conducting an investigation which attempts to demonstrate the existence of some systematic differences among informants in their use of certain linguistic variables. The study will be helpful to examine the distribution and the use of some phonological variables in Nassiriyah speech community. It would also explain the effect of the social variables; namely the speaker's age, sex and the region on the choice of the standard and non -standard variants. It explains the extent to which the male and female informants vary in their use of some linguistic variables.

### **Language variation**

The present study aims at providing an image of the impact of some social factors on the linguistic variation in Nassiriyah speech community. It is necessary to have a clear picture of the domain of the language variation, simply because it consists of a fundamental aspect in sociolinguistic studies. The language we use in everyday life is remarkably varied. Every language is product of change and continues to change as it is used. Wardhaugh (1986:5) states that "when we look closely at any language, we will discover time and time again that there is considerable internal variation, and that speakers make constant use of the many different possibilities offered to them". Language, therefore, has to be studied in its social context with reference to many parameters such as age, sex and the region of the speaker. Language variation has been drawing linguists'

attention for a long time. Variation in language is stated to be associated with performance which can neither be a direct reflection of competence nor “constitute the actual subject matter of linguistics” (Chomsky, 1965:4) For Chomsky, studying competence is more important than studying performance. Labov (1972:188) also states that language has many ‘alternative ways of saying the same thing’ though language variation is stated to be existing in the speech of the same group or the community. It will be seen from the above that language variation is the result of two notions: it can either be the result of the dialect mixture or free variation.

### **The sociolinguistic study of language**

Pride (1971:1-2) states that “the study of language as a part of culture and society is a task that defies neat delimitation”. This is partly because the area of sociolinguistics is very wide for most, if not all, social sciences involving social psychology, sociology, social anthropology and anthropology.

This point of view shows how important is the studies on the social behavior of language. What’s important is that linguists must concern themselves not only with language and linguistics in the theoretical aspect but also should study real languages and social interactions. This interest in the social character of language has helped linguists to understand language on experimental grounds such as studying language in contextual frameworks. Thus, “sociolinguistics connects itself with a range of problems extending all the way from face –to-face ‘encounter’ or ‘speech event’ to the large ‘speech community’ Pride (1971:5). He maintains that the study of ‘speech community’ has attracted more attention than ‘speech event.’

## **Language and dialects**

Although many sociolinguists have studied “dialects”, their definition has been approximately similar. Wardhaugh (1986:22) defines this term “dialect” as “a collection of attributes (phonetic, phonological, syntactic, morphological and semantic) that make one group of speakers noticeably different from another group of speakers of the same language”. While Spolsky (1998:92 ) says that “dialect refers to varieties which are grammatically (and perhaps lexically) as well as phonologically different from other varieties” Hudson (1980:30) states that word dialect was borrowed from Greek and the meaning of the word is also translated into language or dialect. He tries to distinguish between language and dialect, and from a linguistic point of view, language is larger than a dialect from a size difference. In addition, language is also including more items than a dialect, simply because we may refer to language as a standard one among many other languages. Concerning language and dialect, one of the most important points is the case of prestige. He (1980:32) states that “a language having prestige which a dialect lacks”. It seems that our use of variety depends on the use of prestige of the speakers. Furthermore, one of the interesting things is that some people refer to non – standard varieties as dialects or mere dialects but, the term dialect refers to any variety of language. According to this definition, all the speakers of a community speak a dialect of the native language.

Labov (2010) argues that the idea that members of speech community share norms about the selection of varieties is important”. According of these views, we conclude that dialect is a variety of language which is characterized by systematic differences in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary from other varieties of the same language.

## **Methods of classifying dialects**

Generally speaking, language has various dialects. All dialects are equally correct, complex and logical. Some linguists state that if there is a correct method to speak a language and the correct method is reflected in the standard, we predict that through time the standard will be unchanging. It should be noted that there are many factors which play an important role to note the dialects as related to the notion of prestige within a society (Kirswell 2010b). In other words, the standard dialect is the dialect that is associated with prestige in the society. But this does not mean that all people must speak the standard variety. We can conclude the dialects are concerned with the identity and also with the sense of the community. It is worthy to say that learning the speech patterns of another dialect may need a lot of training. However, in a society, standard dialects can be called prestige dialects, i.e. that these dialects are not stigmatized in the society in which they are spoken. Concerning the ways of classifying dialects, there are two major sources of language variation. These are geography and social class.

### **Geography**

One of the main factors in dialect diversity is geography, and the study of regional dialects is within the domain of linguistic variation. Spolsky (1998:28) declares that “geographical difference continues to provide grist for the sociolinguistic mill, but studies have become more complex as the influence of other factors has been accepted.” It is important to see that classifying regional variation proceeds similarly to the work in historical linguistics. In other words, people use isoglosses in dialect research in order to mark the regions or sometimes they tend to drop their /r/. Spolsky (1998:30) states that “the kind of differences in a patterns of variation that are produced by geographical or spatial isolation are regularly transformed into

powerful mechanism, for asserting and recognize social differences.”

### **Social class**

The second major factor in language variation is the social class. It is important to bear in mind that social class plays an important role in dialects. As far as Labov's in New York city, he showed that people in the middle class exhibit a large difference between whether they drop /r/ or produce it. Labov also stated that the social class plays the main role in classifying the dialects. Labov emphasized that “upper class group produce /r/ regularly, in both careful and casual speech” (Labov 1972:55). Labov concludes that the speakers were more comfortable with their social class as reflected in their speech.

### **The selection of informants**

The selection of the informants relies upon one of two kinds of sampling: random sampling and judgment sampling. The research resorts to random selection of informants from name list, such as in elector register. Although this type can be criticized even within its own lights as a judgment sample but it is suitable for studies of linguistic variation in urban centers (Milroy, 1987:26). In using the second type of sampling, the informants are identified first, and then they are stratified with the social variables. It is worth to say that such method is suitable in cases of small – scale studies. Sankoff (1980:52) states that “the literature, as well as our own experience would suggest that even for quite complex communities samples of more than about 150 individual tend to redundant, bringing increasing data – handling problems with diminishing analytical returns it is crucial, however that the sample be well chosen, and representative of all social subsections about which one which is to generalize”. In a random sample everyone in the population to be sampled has an equal chance of being selected. In contrast, in judgment sample, the investigator choose the

subjects according to a set of criteria such as sex, age social class, education, etc. It is worth nothing that a judgment sample is obviously less adequate than a random sample. Milroy (1987:26) states that “a good judgment sample needs to be based on some kind of defensible theoretical framework: in other words, the researcher needs to be able to demonstrate that his or her judgment is rational and well motivated.” The selection of the informants for this study took place depending on many factors and parameters such as the time or residence and the social factors which have been chosen. On this basis four areas of the town of Nassiriyah have been chosen for investigation. They are Baghdad Street, Al-Mansoriyah, Edara-Mahiliyah and Al-Sharqiyah. The choice of these areas is done taking geography and welfare into consideration. The first two areas lie on the western side of the river Euphrates, which separates the town into two parts, while the other two lie on the eastern side of the river. Inhabitants of the first and the third areas are considered to be better in welfare compared to those of the other two areas.

### **The collection of data**

Since the objective of the present study has been carefully set and the type of informants to be approached has been selected, the next step is to collect reliable and appropriate data. This empirical study consists of tape – recorder casual spontaneous speech of 48 informants in Nassiriyah speech community. The data was collect from four areas and over a period of more than three months. The recording sessions were generally of the type of conversational speech events rather than interviews. It has been noticed that the informants were family members, relatives or friends were invited to attend the recording session. The data collected from each informant covers about half an hour. This includes the time of the whole session, and the average time for the speech of the informants is about 25 minutes. Most of the topics are of interest to the informants

such as marriage, smoking and social relationship. Furthermore, it has also been found that recording without being observed is not an easy task. As a matter of fact, some informants were so co-operative but sometimes the research had to tend to cancel the recording because either recording was not clear or the informants were artificial in speaking. Thus, collecting data from other informants was little more difficult. For instance, it has been noticed that some informants especially female avoided using words as far as possible in presence of the research, therefore, in few cases the research's wife participated in conducting the interviews with a number of female informants either in the research's presence or absence. The technique employed in the collection of data is mainly dependent upon the informal interviews of the informants with a smooth transition from one topic to another. As stated earlier, such a technique has enabled us to gain access to a natural and unmonitored type of speech. The interview, then, is "a clearly defined and quite common speech event to which formal or careful speech is appropriate" (Milroy, 1980:24).

### **Application of the quantitative analysis**

The manipulation of the data is regarded as one of the most important and decisive steps, simply because the type of the results gained could be decided by the way the data is handled. Since the main aim of the present study is to discover sociolinguistic patterns of language variation in Nassiriyah speech community, each linguistic variable was examined separately. The scores of the tokens are also changed to percentages. The percentage score of the variants of the four linguistic variables are employed in order to show the patterns of language variation towards Nassiriyah speech community. The first step in data manipulation is the use of computer – aided text analysis package (see Milroy1987: & Abdul-Hassan 1997). In fact, this step makes the researcher analyze the sociolinguistic data more accurate and reliable . OCP (Oxford

concordance programme) has also been adopted as a major tool for data analysis. The sociolinguistic data has been fed into a computer. In addition to that, the OCP has been implemented so as to conduct a full concordance of the data of each linguistic variable. The next step of the data manipulation is the use of statistics. Results of the present study are shown in two ways: exploratory and confirmatory (Milroy, 1987:138). The first involves the use of various kinds of tables and graphs which explain the numbers while the second refers to the use of statistics by the application of a statistical test namely the t-test. The choice of the statistical test is determined by the nature of the data and the aims of the study. These statistical tests are used in order to check whether the incidence of sociolinguistic patterns found are statistically significant or not. To this extent, the (T.test) is used to show particular value which is called (probability value) (p). It is used as a criterion of checking the significance of the difference between two sets of scorers. The validity level is for instance set at (0.01). If p is less than or equal to (0.01) ( $p < 0.01$ ) therefore the patterns of difference are significant. Another widely familiar statistical package is the OXSTAT. It has been adopted in the statistical analysis of the sociolinguistic data. It is also used in this study so as to check the validity of the cross-sections among the social variables such as speaker's age and sex. The output of such statistical tests has enabled us to provide an account of the various relationships between the social and the linguistic variables. The most important point to be mentioned here is that the researcher has to be as objective as possible. The manipulation of the data should depend upon the actual choice of the standard \ stigmatized variants not on what the researcher thinks or believes (see Abdul-Hassan, 1988: 27) .

### **Linguistic variables**

From a social point of view, "a phonological variable may be more or less than a phoneme, but it will be associated with

particular lexical set or group of words in which phonetic variation has been observed to occur, when that variation can be related to social variables or to other linguistic variables ” (Trudgill, 1992:50). However, the selection of linguistic variables is affected by some other social variables such as the speaker’s age, sex and region. Four linguistic variables have been chosen. They are /k/, /dʒ/, /q/, and /en/ which describe some aspects of the variation in Nassiriyah speech community. The following is a description of the linguistic variables and their variants.

### **The / k / variable**

The /k/ variables is one of the main linguistic variables to be identified and described in Arabic (Abdul-Hassan1988).The /k/ variables has two variants, [k] and [tʃ]. First of all, the variation between [k] and [tʃ] is very common in Iraqi Arabic and consequently in Nassiriyah speech community. The [k] variant is standard while [tʃ] is non- standard (stigmatized). Table (I) below shows some examples of the use of this variable.

**Table (1) Examples of the use of the variants of the /k/ variable**

No	The use of [k]	The use of [ tʃ ]	Meaning
1	/kƏbi:r/	/tʃibi:r/	“ large ”
2	/ kalb /	/tʃalib/	“ dog”
3	/kilma/	/tʃilma/	“word”
4	/mʌkan/	/mitʃan/	“place”
5	/kiʔib/	/tʃiʔib/	“lie”

The native [k] is a voiceless velar stop while the urban [tʃ] is a voiceless alveo-palatal affricate. In fact, the two variants are also employed in many other neighbouring dialects such as the gulf dialects (Johnstone,1967). The [tʃ] variant is more frequently used in Nassiriyah speech community than the [k] variant. The percentage score on the [tʃ] variant was employed in the data analysis as the index score. It is important to stress that the two variants took place in all phonological contexts:

initially, medially and finally. These two variants are employed in free variation. It is clear that the use of this or that variant gives an indication to the listener about some aspects of the speaker's social status, sex, and place of residence. (Al-Seady, 1998:9).The analysis of the data showed differences among the speaker's groups in the use of the two variants, namely [k] and [tʃ].

### **The /dʒ/ variable**

The /dʒ/ variable has two variants, [dʒ] and [j]. The native [dʒ] is a voiced alveo- palatal affricate while the variant [j] is a palatal frictionless continuant. Here, it is more important to indicate that [dʒ] is more prestigious than [j] in Nassiriyah speech community. The other point to be mentioned here is that the two variants occur in all phonological context and in contiguity of front and back vowels (Johnstone, 1967:10). These two variants are also employed in free variation. Therefore, in Nassiriyah Iraqi Arabic, and other neighbouring dialects, the two variants are employed interchangeably in lexical items which belong to colloquial repertoire. Table (2) below shows some instances where the variants of these variables are being used in Nassiriyah speech community.

**Table (2) Examples of the use of the variants of the /dʒ/ variable**

No	The use of [dʒ]	The use of [j]	Meaning
1	/dʒibit/	/jibit/	"I brought"
2	/radʒdʒal/	/rajjal/	"man"
3	//dʒidi:d/	/jidi:d/	"new"
4	/wƏdʒih/	/wƏjih/	"face"
5	/ʔdzƏt/	/ʔjƏt/	"she came/has come"

The implementation of the t-test on the percentage of the four areas speakers showed that the speakers from each area differ in the main value of the percentage scores.

### **The /q/ variable**

This sociolinguistic variable has two main variants, [q] and [g]. [q] is a voiceless uvular unaspirated stop consonants while [g] is a voiced uvular stop (Al-Ani, 1978:104). It is worth pointing here that [q] is considered as the prestigious variant (standard) while [g] is stigmatized (non-standard). On the other hand, [q] is also regarded as one of the most worth studying sounds in Arabic simply because it is associated with Modern Standard Arabic. It has various variants in the Arabic speaking world (see Ingham 1982 & Abdul-Hassan1988). The analysis of data showed that [g] is more frequently used than [q] in Nassiriyah speech community. It seems likely that this variable is affected by many social factors such as the speaker's age and sex. Table (3) below shows some examples which illustrate the use of this linguistic variable in Nassiriyah speech community.

**Table (3) Examples of the use of the variants of the /q/ variable**

No	The use of [ q ]	The use of [ g ]	Meaning
1	/qƏlib/	/gƏlab/	“heart”
2	/qaal/	/gaal/	“ He said”
3	/quwwƏ/	/guwwƏ/	“strength”
4	/qƏhwƏ/	/gƏhwƏ/	“coffee”
5	/qebil/	/gebul/	“before this time “

It is worth noting that the / q / variable has another variant, namely [ dz ] as in /dzili:l/ and /q?lil/ “little”. This variant is rarely used in Nassiriyah speech community. It is used in some rural dialects and also in the eastern part of the southern region and by uneducated speakers (Ingham1976). It is important to indicate that the / q / variable occurs in some words which are borrowed from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) such as /qaws/ “bow” & /qa:non/ law.

### **The /en /variable**

In Nassiriyah speech community, the use of / en / variable states some variation in its phonetic value. This sociolinguistic

variable has two variants [en] and [Ø]. The [en] is considered as a variable which is used in Nassiriyah dialect. As a result, this variable is stigmatized / marked and mainly associated with the distinction among the speech styles of four areas in Nassiriyah speech community. The native [en] is a voiced alveo-dental nasal which is used by most of the female speakers than male in Nassiriyah speech community. On the other hand, the output of the statistical test (T-test) has enable us to supply an account of the various relationships between this linguistic variable and other social ones has shown some instances of the use of this sociolinguistic variable in Nassiriyah speech community .Table (4) below shows the use of [en] variable in Nassiriyah speech community.

**Table (4) Examples of the use of the variants of the /en/ variable**

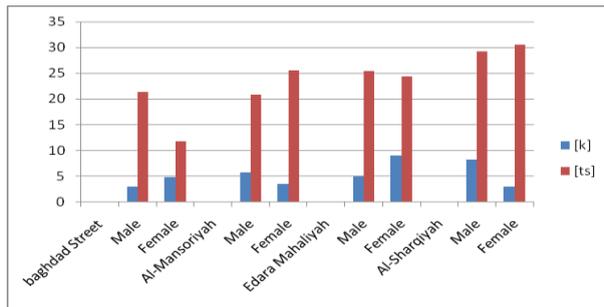
No	The use of [en]	The use of [Ø]	Meaning
1	/ʔdʒiben/	/ʔdʒib/	“I bring”
2	/ʔgumen/	/ʔgu:m/	“I get up ”
3	/ʔgu:len/	/ʔgu:l/	“I say ”
4	/ʔroHen/	/ʔroH/	“I go”
5	/ʔxafen/	/ʔxaf/	“I fear ”

### **Data Manipulation**

The implementation of the t-test on the percentage scores of the four areas in Nassiriyah community,  $p < 0.01$ , stated that the female informants have chosen more non-standard and less standard variants than males do. It is worthy to say that such differences among percentage scores of the informants from different areas could be interpreted in terms of social, cultural and educational aspects of the area on the choice of variants by the informants. Table (5) and graph (1) below illustrate the results obtained as far as the /k/ variable is concerned.

**Table (5) Mean values of the /k/ variable**

Area	Sex	M. value of [k]	M. value of [tʃ]
Baghdad street	M	3	21.40
	F	4.80	11.80
Al-Mansoriyah	M	5.80	20.80
	F	3.60	25.60
Edara-Mahiliyah	M	5	25.40
	F	9	24.40
Al-Sharqiyah	M	8.20	29.20
	F	3	30.60

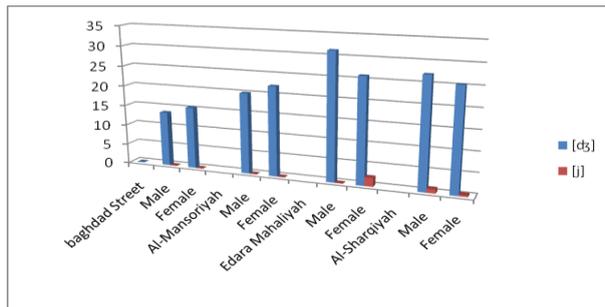


**Graph (1) Mean Values of the /k/ variable**

Generally speaking, the informants in the four areas tend to use the [dʒ] variant more than the [j] variant in Nassiriyah speech community. The sex of informant was found to be interacting with other social variables in the choice of the variants of this sociolinguistic variable,  $p < 0.01$ . The female informants in these areas tend to use the [dz] variant more frequently than the [j] variant. This can be explained by the fact that females are generally more status-conscious. The female informants avoid using stigmatized variant in their speech. They, therefore, try to use these forms of speech which are associated with the social prestige. Table (6) and graph (2) below show the main values of / dʒ/ variable in Nassiriyah speech community.

**Table (6) Mean values of the /dʒ/ variable**

Area	Sex	M. value of [dʒ]	M. value of [j]
Baghdad street	M	13.60	0
	F	15.40	0
Al-Mansoriyah	M	20	0
	F	22.20	0
Edara-Mahiliyah	M	31.40	0
	F	26	2.20
Al-Sharqiyah	M	27.20	1
	F	25.40	0.40

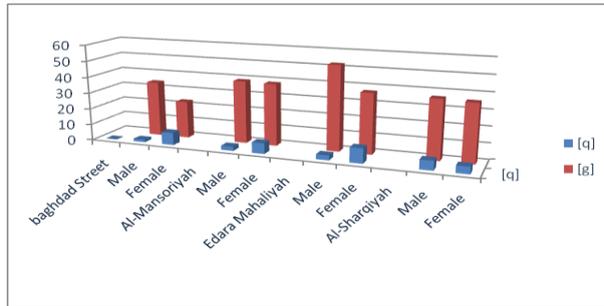


**Figure (2) Mean values of the /dʒ/ variable**

It was also found that the female informants have chosen more standard variants than the male informants. The implementation of the t- test showed that the age plays the main role in making a difference in the choice of either of the two variants of this sociolinguistic variable,  $p < 0.01$ . Table (7) and graph (3) below illustrate the mean values of / q / variable in Nassiriyah speech community.

**Table (7) Mean values of the /q/ variable**

Area	Sex	M. value of [q]	M. value of [g]
Baghdad street	M.	1.60	34.20
	F.	7.60	23
Al-Mansoriyah	M.	2.60	38.80
	F.	6.60	38.40
Edara-Mahiliyah	M.	3	52.40
	F.	9.20	37.20
Al-Sharqiyah	M.	5.80	36.60
	F.	4.40	35.80

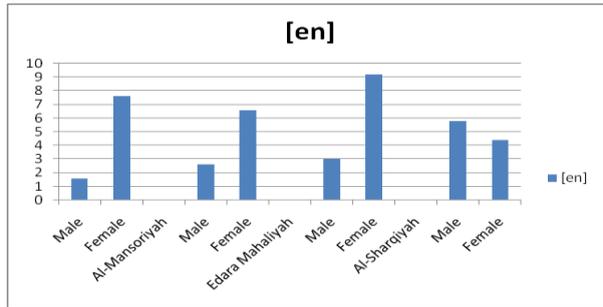


**Graph (3) Meanvalues of the /q/ variable**

Regarding the choice of [en] variant in this area, the t- test proved,  $p < 0.01$ , that the female informants have chosen more [en] variant than male informants. Moreover, it can also be seen that this variant was more frequently employed by the female informants in this area simply because it is one of the features of the female speech style. As for the interaction of the age with the choice of this variable, the implementation of the t- test produced expected results. It was found that the differences between the two sets of the informants was not valid,  $p > 0.01$ . It was also stated that the impact of the age variable is less than the impact of the sex informants on the choice of this variable. Table (8) and graph (4) below show the mean values of /en/ variable in Nassiriyah speech community.

**Table (8) Mean values of the /en/ variable**

Area	Sex	M. value of /en/
Baghdad street	M.	4.40
	F.	5
Al-Mansoriyah	M.	4.60
	F.	4.80
Edara-Mahiliyah	M.	6
	F.	9.40
Al-Sharqiyyah	M.	6
	F.	8.20



**Graph (4) Mean values of the /en/ variable**

## Conclusions

The results of the analysis of the data have shown an image about the existence of a pattern of a sociolinguistic variation in the speech of Nassiriyah speech community. Moreover, the present study has arrived at the following results. We infer from the analysis of data that the speaker's sex, age and region interact together with the impact of other social variables. i.e on the choice of one variant or another. The distribution of the variants of the linguistic variables which have been investigated point out that a linguistic change is in progress towards the Iraqi Arabic dialect. This change takes place among the male informants more than the female informants. The male informants have shown more tendency to change towards Iraqi Arabic variants than the female informants. In fact, the use of this or that variant gives an indication about the speaker's social status, sex and age, though the use of free variation in Nassiriyah Iraqi Arabic goes in harmony with the sex of the informant and also the place of residence. This proves that the informants 'attitudes' are to be taken into consideration when attempting to investigate or tackle a topic which is related to Nassiriyah Iraqi Arabic. As related to dialect geography in Nassiriyah there are two main varieties. The first is spoken at the city center and by educated informants in informal situations and the illiterate dialect which is spoken by village dwellers in formal and informal situations.

Furthermore, the Modern Standard Arabic variety as used by Nassiriyah educated informants reveals high education. It is nearer to standard and begins the high variety. We can say that these cases of sex differentiation where men are somewhat in the lead of the linguistic change. This has also been shown by Labove (1972) in Martha's Vineyard study, Abdul-Hassan (1988) study on Iraqi Arabic, Ingham (2006) on East Arabian dialects and Kirswell (2010).

The study of language variation in Nassiriyah has shown that the choice of standard / stigmatized variants is affected by other social variables such as the sex and the region of the speaker. These differences are in rating among the male informants in the choice of these variants.

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