Research on Humanities and Social Sciences
ISSN 2222-1719 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2863 (Online)
Vol 2, No.9, 2012

The Linguistic Effect of Foreign Asian Workers on the Arabic Pidgin in Saudi Arabia

Hussien Albakrawi
University of Tabuk, Department of Basic Studies,University of Tabuk,P.Obox741,Tabuk,Saudi Arabia.
*E-mail of the corresponding author: H_bakrawi@yahoo.com

Abstract
The study aims at investigating the linguistic effect of the Asian workers on Saudi Arabic variety. The study illustrates that the linguistic areas are compatiable with the most universal characteristics of pidgin. Tape-recorded and planned interviews are used to investigate and analyze the collected data. The researcher studies them deeply, then provides with some real examples to give a clear explanation of the linguistic effect of the Asian workers on the Saudi Arabic variety. The study concludes that the Local Saudi Arabic variety is influenced linguistically by the Asian workers in the folloing linguistic areas: lack of inflections, determiner, quantifier, word order, negation copula and verb form and they are complitable with pidgin universals.
Keywords: SAP, SA, Asian workers, diglossia.

1. Introduction

In the early seventies of the last century, due to ever increasing oil wealth, the demand for domestic help, in urban, industrial and agricultural fields, became an opportunity for foreigners to come and work in the Gulf states specially Saudi Arabia. The majority of these foreigners are male. According to a Saudi report on "Migration Information Source" more than seven million imigrants from Asian countries work in Saudi Arabia. Most of these imigrants cannot speak Arabic well. Everyday interaction between Saudis and these imigrants has created a situation in which native speakers of Saudi Arabic have to communicate with these guest workers. Therefore, a simplified form of Arabic has developed as a result of this contact. It is probably reduced variety of Saudi Arabic. The present study uses the term Saudi Pidgin Arabic (SAP) to describe this simplified language. It is worth noting here that, in addition to the indigenous vernacular Saudi Arabic (SA), many other languages, language varieties, and registers are known by these workers play a role in determining the characters of SAP.

2. Literature Review

It is too difficult to state and discuss all of studies that tackled the linguistic dimension of pidgin on the phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic levels, and studies that concern the social and the cultural situations of pidgin and creole languages.

The research which is available on Arabic –based pidgins focus on the African pidgins, primarily Juba Arabic and the creole of (Ki) Nubi in Southern Sudan , Uganda and Kenya, but also varieties spoken in Chad and Nigeria(Owens 1997:125). The term" Gulf Pidgin" was coined by Smart,J., who in 1990 described what he perceived as an emergent pidgin in the interaction between foreign workers and the local population in the Gulf countries.

Smart's Pidginisation in Gulf Arabic 1990 was the first report describing pidginized forms of Arabic in the Gulf States. The description is based on printed material that appeared in certain Gulf newspapers, mainly during the year 1986, and supplemented by personal observations made between 1966 and 1987.In his study, he tries to examine whether or not this language constitutes a true pidgin . He examines the immigrant communities which consist of skilled manual workers, taxi drivers shopkeepers and other unskilled and semiskilled workers. As he mentioned, these are the only published examples of the form that he was aware of until that time.

He describes and analyzes most components of the Gulf Arabic Pidgin on the phonological, morphological and syntactic levels. Morphology and basic syntax have been included under a single heading. He describes the bound forms, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, anomalies, the copula *fi*, tense and aspect markers, demonstratives, possessive, numerals, negations, and adverbs. He claimed that the overuse of demonstrative is connected with those foreigners influence of their mother tongues to convey the force of definite article. He divided verb forms into three kinds, the Y(v)- prefixed type, the unstable type, and the imprefixed type, but he did not explain how GAP expresses tenses.

Ellis (1985: 176) presents a plausible account of simplification as a production strategy. He defines the notion in this respect as a strategy on the part of the learner to ease the burden of using a second language. He adopts a model of

language production suggested by Clark (1977) for native speakers and hypothesizes that "L2 production follows the same pattern as native speaker production".

Roberts and Bresnan (2008) conduct a study on a retained inflectional morphology in pidgins, they say that it's commonly accepted that the process of pidginization leads to a loss of inflectional morphology, but this loss is often not total. Lexifier inflections instead follow a cline of reduction: full retention – partial retention – partial lexicalization – full lexicalization – full loss. This study examines the retention of inflection in 29 languages that reflect a history of pidginization in their development, comparing the morphological richness of pidgins with their respective lexifiers. The result indicates an asymmetry between the retention of inherent and contextual inflections, such that pidgins express fewer grammatical categories via contextual inflection than do their lexifier. The authors suggest that this may reflect a role of markedness (semantic relevance) in the preservation of inflection.

They also conclude that the reduction of inflection is asymmetric and not always total. Inflections that contribute semantic and grammatical information pertaining to the stem are retained slightly but significantly more than often the word. The process of simplification and reduction are strategies to give some sorts of practical explanation to the difficulties and obstacles of learning a new language in the needed environment. At the same time, they save time and effort.

I concluded that many researchers such as (Bizri 2005, and Avram 2007) studied Arabic Pidgin in Lebanon and Iraq while (Smart 1990, Hobrom 1996, Gomma 2007, Wiswall 2007) are mainly interested in description and analysis of the phonological lexical and syntactic levels of pidgin language in the Gulf states. Alyamanaahi (2007), and Hobrom in 1996 studied the spoken Arabic by Indian workers, while Hobrom followed Smart's categorization. So this study will be different in different levels and dimensions as we will observe in the following parts.

3. Data and Methodology

In this study, the researcher is going to give a brief skitch of Saudi Arabic dialect when using some morphosyntactic aspects which will be shown in part four.

3.1: The subjects

The fieldwork should select a sample that first of all is large enough for the issue investigated and sufficiently varied along dimensions pertinent to this issue: sex, age, level of education, social provenience, etc. The selection of the subjects of study was based on the goal of the study (i.e the aim to obtain data from people in different types of jobs and with different substrate languages). The study focuses on workers from Asian origins rather than other workers. They were selected by approaching different work places and asking the employees if they would like to participate in the project by making interviews in Saudi Arabic variety and being recorded.

3.2 Interviews

The interviews were conducted at the subjects' places of work as what Hubber (1990) suggested that conducting sociolinguistics interviews at the normal surroundings help to reduce the observer paradox. In order to make the situation more relaxed, I gave every subject brief instructions of what we will do, and he only express his opinions which will not be taken into consideration. The only important thing is to continue speaking without pausing. The recorder is operated before beginning the interviews to let the subject gain confidence and relax.

3.3 Data Collection

The present study uses a qualitative approach to investigate the uses of Saudi Arabic variety. The use of the qualitative research methods has contributed to collect data that represent a fairly accurate image spoken in Saudi Arabia. This natural corpus forms the basis for all of the information on the Saudi Arabic variety. Where I still feel that several interpretations while reading the transcripts, I analyzed the interviews according to my understanding while interviews.

4. Discussion and Findings

The researcher identified seven linguistic categories in the new Saudi Arabic variety which he believes that the effect of the Asian workers is very clear. He will study them deeply then provides with some real examples to give a clear explanation of the linguistic effect of the Asian workers on the Saudi Arabic variety.

In this part, I demonstrate that simplification categories are attest in Saudi Arabic variety. This section provides the discussions related to Saudi Arabic variety with supporting examples from my data and provides the findings of this study.

It is difficult to provide all grammatical categories in this study, but instead, I will state and discuss only related grammatical categories with respect to the phenomena found in Saudi Arabic variety and compare similarities and dissimilarities with illustrative examples.

4.1 Lack of Inflections

Various linguists defined pidgins to have simple grammar including lack of inflections. Saudi Arabic variety has evidence that support this notion in number.

In Standard English, nouns have distinct morphological markers (inflections) to indicate plurals (e.g. women, ship), possession (someone's) and, sometimes, object function (her, them, as opposed to she, they).Similarly, Arabic have different types of inflections of these categories.

Saudi Arabic variety chooses different ways of indicating plurality without inflection of the noun form, which is expressed by adding the number infront of the singular form of the noun to indicate plural noun, as well as the singular noun or third masculine singular when it is clear from the context, or using the word *kullu* (English all) to indicate plurality. This will be explained with illustrative examples from Saudi Arabic variety as the following:

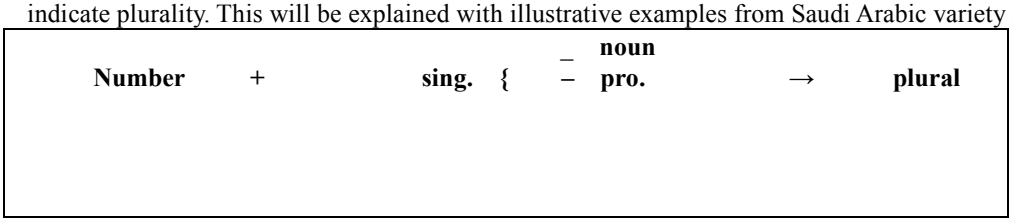

Figure (1)

Figure (1) shows how SAP denotes to plurality without inflections. It uses number in addition to the singular form of the noun.

Examples: (1) - sittah ʃahar kalaːʂ
Six month finish
-After six months.
Intended meaning: baʕd sitt aʃhur

4.2 Tense

As what Den Besten (1987) stated of Chinese pidgin English and Hottentot pidgin Dutch, and Sebba (1997) of MP and Vitnamese pidgin English that tenses are expressed externally by time adverbials. SAP is also express as these varieties as well. This can be shown in the following:

Example: (2) - - tadriːb awwal ʃwayy
Practice first little
- I practiced a little.
Intended meaning: awwal tadarrabt ʃwayy

Example 2 shows that SAP use the word *awwal* (English in the past) to refer to an adverb expressing the past tense externally.

4.3 Determiner

SA like other Arabic dialects do not use indefinite article, while the definite article is *al* (English the). Demonstratives in SA must agree with the nouns they precede in gender and number. Possession suffixes are commonly used in SA rather than analytic ones.

Various pidginists like,Hymes (1971),and Gilbert (1981), etc. (see the theoretical framework, determiners, 47), studied different pidgins and claimed that they lack definite article. SAP is also compatible what they claimed. It omits the definite article which identifies the noun, except for some formulaic utterances as in *ʔlhamdu lilla:h* (English thank God). I will illustrate omitting this in the following:

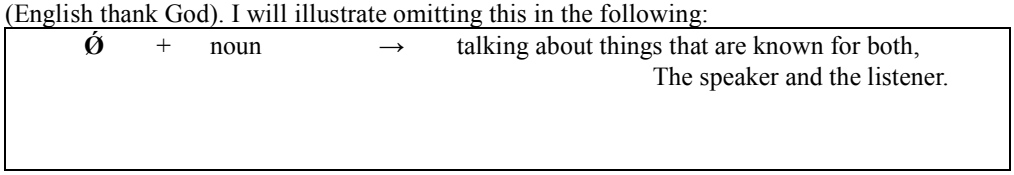

Figure (2)

Example: (4) tadʒrubah xalaːʂ
Experiment finish
-The experiment finished.
Intended meaning: attadʒrubah xallaʂat

Figure (2) shows that SAP usually omit the definite article. This is also shown in Examples 4. The definite article *al* (English the) has two kinds of pronunciation, explicit like *alqamar* (English the moon), and implicit like *affams* (English the sun). This is known in Arabic as (*al* ɑlqɑmɑryyɑh and *al affamsyyah*).

SAP also uses pronouns to work as a definite article as what occurred in MP. Usually the used pronouns are the third person masculine pronoun (hu:). This can be explained in figure (3) in the following:

pro. + **noun** → **def. article**

Figure (3)

Example: (5) hu: kɑbi:r kɑbi:r hɑ:dɑ xɑmsɑh sɑnɑh
he old old this five year
- The old is five years.

Intended meaning: ɑlkb:r ʕumruh xɑms sɑnɑwɑ:t

In example 5, the pronoun *hu:* works as a definite article.

4.3 Quantifiers

There are two kinds of quantifiers, numerals and non-numerals. This study will discuss only numerals, (cardinals and ordinals).

4.3.1 Numerals

Numerals have two kinds in SA, cardinals which constitute a subclass of nouns and modify only count nouns, and ordinals which are derived from cardinals. Unfortunately, I did not find enough relevant literature of numerals in general, that may be due to the fact that the Arabic numeral system differs from other languages. In other words, most of the languages treat numerals as one bare form without a complex inflection system. In English, for example, the numerals one, two, three etc. are used for both genders. In contrast, Arabic language is rich of morphemes in nouns, verbs, etc. SAP uses a reduced form of these numerals. Now, this can be explained as to provide the used form of the numerals in SA followed by its counterpart SAP supporting that with illustrative examples.

4.3.2 Cardinals: **(1-2)** wɑhid , θne:n

	-masc.	wahid	θne:n
+			
Noun	- fem.	Wahdah	θnte:n

Figure(4)

Example: (6) wɑ:ħid (one. Masc.) e.g. qɑlɑm wɑ:ħid
Pen(masc.) one (masc.)

Cardinals in SA (*wa:ħid*, *waħdah*, *θne:n, θnte:n*) identical in gender to the nouns they modify. The singular or dual noun is usually said without mentioning the cardinal, because it is already mentioned as suffixes and if it is said, it comes after the noun for intensification. Whereas, in SAP, cardinals (one- two) are pre-position and only masculine in all their forms (singular and compound.). This can be shown in the following:

Ex

wɑ:hid (masc. sing.) + noun -(masc.) - (fem.)
θne:n (masc.two) + noun -(masc.) - (fem.)

one letter(masc. Intended meaning: ħɑrf wɑ:ħid

In Example7, we notice that SAP use one consistent form of *wa:hid* for all genders.

4.4 Word Order:

In general, pidgins have no strict word order, but they prefer SVO, OSV, or VOS. While Arabic is flexible with regard to the linear order of words in a sentence. The VSO word order is the main (canonical) order in SA. However, other word orders are also common in the language. The SVO order is used in equational sentences, newspaper

headlines, or when the subject needs to be emphasized. In addition, the VOS order occurs mainly if the subject is a pronominal suffix that can not stand by itself and has to be attached (cliticized) to the end of the verb.(Hobrom, 1996: 13). SA word order is often violated in SAP. Other word orders in addition to the previous ones, e.g. OVS, OSV, and SOV are also reported. However, they usually prefer SVO as to be equational sentence and sometimes they change the verb into a noun. The following are SAP illustrative examples:

Figure (6): S + V + O

Example: (8) ʔanɑ nɑddɑf mɑlɑ:bis
I clean clothes
- I clean my clothes. Intended meaning: ʔanɑ ɑnɑḍḍif mɑlɑ:bsi

The abovementioned example show that SAP is compatible with pidgins' preffered word order. It is also flexible, since it concentrates on the context for its interpretation.

When collecting my data, I used to be an interviewer who asks questions. The interviewees usually answer my questions only. For this reason, I did not get enough data dealing with how SAP organizes the question word order.

4.5 Negation:

Theoreticians claimed that negation system is expressed by a separate word in the majority of known pidgins and creoles. This phenomenon is also available in SAP as well.

In SA, there are different particles used for negation like *la:* and *ma*. The word *la:* is mostly used with imperatives (English don't), and sometimes used for answering questions as *no*. Whereas *ma* is commonly used for perfect, imperfect, verbal constructions as well as pseudo-verbs. Other parts of speech like nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, particles and prepositional phrases are negated by *ma* + pro; which agrees with its subject + NP, AdjP, VP,…

Example: (9) Ali mɑ hu: ħɑ:ɔir ɑlmuħɑ:ɔɑrɑh
noun masc. Neg. part. he attending the lecture
- Ali will not attend the lecture.

In addition to *la:* which only used for answering questions negatively, SPA use one consistent form for all negations *ma fi:*.

My interpretation of the usage of *ma fi:* as a negative particle is either adding the copula *fi:* to the negator *ma*, then generalizing this rule in all uses, or borrowing this phrase *ma fi:* from the Arabic *ma fi:h* which is used as existential exponent meaning *there is/are no,* with deleting the last consonant.

4.6 The Copula

In SAP, however, another word *fi:* is used to function as a copula which has a reduced infection. It is one consistent form doesn't agree with its subject in number, person, gender or tense, since Ferguson (1972) defined the copula "which functions to mark tense and distinguish between stative and non stative predicates (cf. e.g. the discussion in Ferguson 1972). Smart (1990) in his study of GAP, he opposed Ferguson's claim that one of simplicity notions of pidgins is the absence of copula as a putative substantive universal of pidginization. According to data of SPA, I support Smart's argument of opposing Ferguson's claim. The following are illustrative examples from SAP:

Example: (10) ʔanɑ fi: sɑfɑr rɑmɑdɑ:n
I cop. Traveling Ramadan
- I will travel in Ramadan. Intended meaning: ɑbʁɑ ɑsɑ:fir fi: rɑmɑɔ-ɑ:n

Moaily(2008) stated that the copula *fi:* of UPA is only occurs in the present tense, whereas past and future tenses are expressed by time adverbials like *awwal* for the past tense, and *ba:de:n*, *bukrah* are used for future. In contrast, I found that the copula *fi:* is used for all tenses in addition to particular time adverbials of the particular tense like *awwal* with the past, *ba:de:n* with the future and *alhi:n* for present tense.

4.7 The verb form

Many scholars concluded that most of pidgins have reduced verb inflections and tense is expressed externally. Also, SAP has the same notion.

I will follow Smart (1990) classification of GAP. SAP use three types of derivations that express the verb. First, the Y (v) prefixed is derived from the 3rd masc singular imperfect of the verb. Second, they use the noun and time adverbials to indicate verbal sentence. Finally, they use imprefixed type of verb which is simply the imperfect stem of the verb with deletion of the prefix that precedes the stem when it is voweled, although there are some exceptions of this. The word order is also, inconsistent. This can be explained in the following:

Sub. Noun Pro.	**(opt.)**	**+**	**imperfect verb(present)**	**+**	**time adv. (opt.)**	**→**	**past**

Figure (7)

Example: (11) min ɑfʁɑ:nistɑ:n yidʒi
from Afghanistan come
- I came from Afghanistan

Intended meaning: dʒi:t min ɑfʁɑ:nistɑ:n

In SAP, they prefer nominal sentence. They usually switch the verb into a noun. This will be illustrated in the following:

Sub(opt.)	**+**	**infinitive (noun)**	**+**	**time adv. (opt.)**	**→past**

Figure (8)

Example: (12) ʂalli masdʒid bɑ:de:n maŋgaryyah no:m
pray mosque then cook sleeping
-I pray in the mosque then I eat and sleep.

Intended meaning: ɑʂalli bɑlmasdʒid wbɑʕde:n ɑ:kil wʔnɑ:m

Finally, the third type is the imprefixed form of the verb. SAP usually uses the imprefixed form of the verb when the third letter of the verb is voweled as:

(Y + C + V + …)	→	**(Ǿ + C + V + …)**

Figure (9)

Examples: (13) tɑdri:b ɑwwɑl ʃwɑyy
practice first little
- At first, I practiced a little. Intended meaning: ɑwwɑl tidɑrrɑbt ʃwɑyy

5. Conclusion

The findings answer the research question. Local Saudi Arabic variety is influenced linguistically by the foreign Asian workers in Saudi Arabia.Table (1) below illustrates the influenced linguistic areas and compatible with the most universal characterisctics of pidgin:

Number	Category	Include	Found in the local Saudi Arabic variety and compatible with universals of pidgin	Note
1	Lack of Inflections	Number	✓	
2	Determiner	article	✓	
3	Quantifier	1- Cardinals 2-Ordinals	✓	

4	Word order		✓	
5	Negation	Sentence	✓	
6	Copula	Copula	×	
7	The verb form	1- Perfective 2- Imperfective	✓	

References

Avram, A.(2007), "A Romanian Arabic Prepidgin", presentation at the Colloquium on Peripheral Arabic Dialects at the University of Bucharest, 18-20 May 2007.

Bizri, F (2005),"Le Pidgin Madam, unnouveau Pidgin arabe", *La Linguistique, 41:53*-66.

Clark, R. (1977), "In Search of Beache-la Mar", *Te Reo*, 22, 3-64.

Ellis, R. (1985). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University press.
Ferguson, C. (1971). *Absence of copula and the notion of simplicity: a study of normal speech, baby talk, foreigner talk, and pidgins', in Hymes.* New York: Macmillan.

Gilbert, G. (ed) (1981). *Pidgin and creole languages. Selected essays by Hugo Schuchardt.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobrom, A.(1996), *"An Analysis of the Arabic Pidgin Spoken by Indian Workers in Saudi Arabia*", *MA dissertation*, Kansas University.

Hymes, D.(1971). *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moaily, M. (2008). "*A data-based Description of Urdu Pidgin Arab*ic", *MA Dissertation*, Newcastle University.

Roberts, S. and Bresnan, J. (2008**),** "Retained Inflectional Morphology in Pidgins: A typological Study," *Linguistic Typology*, 12:269-302.

Sebba, M (1997). *Contact Languages.* New York: Palgrave Puplishers Ltd.

Smart, J. (1990), "Pidginization in Gulf Arabic: a First Report", *Anthropological Linguistics,* 32,(1-2),84-118.

Wiswall, A. (2007), "*Gulf Pidgin: An expanded analysis",* Unpublished pro-seminar paper of June 3, 2007.