

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Summary of findings

This study sets out to investigate the existence of English loanwords in Iraqi Arabic dialect and to show the reasons and consequences of borrowing English words on Arabic language, in particular the Iraqi Arabic dialect. The investigation aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Are users of the Iraqi Arabic dialect aware of the form of English loanwords?
2. Are users of the Iraqi Arabic dialect able to provide equivalents in Arabic to a given list of English loanwords?
3. Why do Iraqi Arab people use (English) loanwords?

The methods used to collect the data for this study are audio recordings of a picture naming exercise and a questionnaire. One of the problems discovered during data gathering is that participants do not like to be recorded on tape. Instead, they preferred to write their responses down. However, with much persuasion, the study was able to get twenty participants to record their responses on the first group of picture naming exercise. The responses revealed that the phonological production of the English loanwords can be one of the important factors that influenced the emergence of English loanwords into Iraqi Arabic dialect.

In summary the analysis of the data obtained from this study revealed some interesting observations. These findings are summarized below based on how they have answered the research questions above.

5.1 Research Question 1: Are users of the Iraqi Arabic dialect aware of the form of English loanwords?

In this study Iraqi Arabic speakers have borrowed 85% of the listed English loanwords into their Iraqi Arabic dialect. During borrowing from English, new sounds which only exist in English were produced by Iraqi Arabic speakers either as it is produced in English or by substitution with Arabic sounds. Thus new sounds are introduced into the colloquial Arabic particularly the Iraqi Arabic dialect such as /p/, /ŋ/, /g/ and //l/. This importation of English sounds allows for easier integration of English loanwords into the Iraqi dialect.

Evidence of similar finding was previously reported in Haugen (1950, in Appel and Mysken, 2005) who found that loanwords are imported with degrees of phonological substitution. Based on this finding, Haugen (1953, in Heah, 1989) classified loanwords into unassimilated, partly assimilated and wholly assimilated in terms of the oral production of loanwords.

Some of the Arabic equivalents tended to be explanatory of the given English loanwords. Others are produced as they are produced in English but with Arabic transcription. In other words, some participants produce the loanwords orally as they are in English but using their Arabic sounds that are able to produce the same pronunciation. This group of words was analyzed using the types of

loanwords, loan blends and loan shifts identified in Haugen (1950, in Appel and Mysken, 2005). Thus this current study reveals the existence of a group of both loanwords and loan shifts in the Iraqi Arabic dialect. Mostly the borrowed items are common nouns which are used to designate some new items or concepts which do not have equivalents in the recessive language as also evidenced in Andrews, (1999).

5.2 Research Question 2: Are users of the Iraqi Arabic dialect able to provide equivalents in Arabic to a given list of English loanwords ?

From all the above findings it is undeniable that a large number of English loanwords have been integrated into the Iraqi Arabic dialect as part of the colloquial use. They are gradually becoming fully absorbed into the dialect and will eventually become the only expression used by individuals instead of the Arabic equivalent. This will gradually affect the individuals' knowledge of Arabic as being the mother tongue that unites all Arabs and the language of the holy book 'Qur'an'. Although some of the borrowed English loanwords do have equivalents in Arabic, Iraqi speakers prefer to use the English loanwords instead. It is also noted that these findings are parallel to previous discussions of similar consequences of the phenomena of borrowing highlighted by Matras, (2000 in Croft 2000) and Aitcheson (2001).

5.3 Research Question 3: Why do Iraqi Arab people use English loanwords?

The Iraqi Arabic speakers who participated in this study demonstrated that they are more frequently using English loanwords as if they are part of their dialect. What it also indicated is that this practice has affected their ability to give equivalents in Arabic, especially among the younger group of participants who

are less proficient in Arabic than the older generation. However, this conclusion should be taken with caution as the participants of this study are Iraqis who have been living in Malaysia and the situation might be different with Iraqi Arabic dialect speakers in Iraq.

It is also noted that the preference to use English loanwords is also due to the fact that some of the English loanwords are easier to use compared to their Arabic equivalent in terms of simplicity and economy of words as some English words need more than one word in Arabic to be explained. In addition to that some of the borrowed words are scientific expressions which can not be explained in Arabic and therefore it would be more accurate to use the English loanwords.

Analysis of the data from the questionnaire indicated that 64% of the participants preferred to use English loanwords no matter whether they have Arabic equivalents or not and 22% of the participants use English loanwords when there is no equivalent and only 14% of the participants use the English loanwords because they had learnt them through their everyday interactions. These results provide further evidence that even casual contact of two languages can lead to borrowing of non-basic vocabulary (Thomason and Kaufman, 1989 cited in Croft, 2000).

5.4 Recommendations

This study is confined to the borrowing of English loanwords into the Iraqi Arabic dialect. Further investigations can be done on the borrowing of words from other

languages besides English such as French, Turkish, and Persian. It would be useful for Iraqi Arabic speakers and colloquial Arabic speakers in general to be aware of the loanwords that exist in their dialect. Most colloquial Arabic speakers are not aware of the loanwords that exist in their dialects. Consequently, they are not aware of the influence of the loanwords on their dialects. The more the borrowing of words the bigger the gap will be between the standard Arabic and colloquial Arabic which is used in everyday language. At the same time, Arabic dialects are affected by different languages thus dialects will differ from one another more with the increasing amount of loanwords from which they borrow such as English, French and Turkish.

The phenomena of borrowing can be further investigated from the perspective of both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspect. This can be done by studying the impact of age, scientific level, occupation and migration on the individual in regards to borrowing of words from other languages. The affect of borrowing on colloquial Arabic can also be investigated by focusing on the younger generation as a consequence of being relocated, through migration or other reasons, into linguistic environments different and far from their own homeland.

5.5 Conclusion

The study of the affect of the borrowing from English to Arabic dialects especially Iraqi Arabic dialect is an on going process as the two languages are in constant or increasing contact especially through occupation or the use of English in education and communication for those who live in foreign countries.

In general, the study has shed some light on a group of English loanwords which exist in the Iraqi Arabic dialect. These words provided the basis for the discussions on the reasons and consequences behind their borrowing into the Iraqi Arabic dialect. It pointed out that the phonological production of the words among other factors had played great role in the assimilation of these English loanwords into the Iraqi Arabic dialect. Some of these words were borrowed and integrated into the Iraqi Arabic dialect without the awareness of its speakers that these words are loanwords. It is hoped that this study will be helpful for other researchers who are interested in Arabic language with regards to the phenomena of borrowing.