A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Lexical and Grammatical Variations in the Dialect of Howarah - Madaba (Jordan)

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the lexical and grammatical variations in the speech of the people of Howarah village-Madaba district with regard to their interaction with three social variables: age, gender, and education. Data were collected from a sample of 48 male and female informants of different age groups, occupations, and educational levels. Two linguistic variables were studied to analyze the linguistic variation. These were the lexical variable which was represented by 50 lexical items and phrases that were found crucial to go over the lexical variation in Howarah dialect, and the grammatical variable which was symbolized by the use of the (ik) morpheme in the derivation of the objective pronoun, when applying the second person feminine singular in the speech of the Howarian people. The (ik) morpheme had three variants in Howarah dialect: the two local variants [ki] and [its] and the non-local Standard Arabic variant [ik].

One of the major findings shows that the speech of Howariis has radically changed due to many social factors, one of which is the social development that influenced Howarah. Another finding points out that the highest rate of use of the local dialect lexical items features the speech of old males and females, followed by the middle-aged males and females, and then the young males. In contrast, young females represented the highest rate among people abandoning the local dialect where they
preferred to use urban dialect. Regarding the local [its] variant, the study has shown that it started to disappear from the linguistic repertoire of the Howari group. The [its] variant was used in 13% by old males and 8% by old females. It was abandoned in favor of the [ik] variant which was dominating the linguistic behaviour of all Howariis.