A Contrastive Phonological Study of Linking in English and Arabic

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Abstract
The present study is concerned with identifying and contrasting the phonological phenomenon of linking in English and Arabic.This study hypothesizes that there are more differences than similarities concerning this phonological phenomenon between both languages. The hypotheses of the present study are verified through a qualitative analysis of some selected data. The results of the present study shed light on how English and Arabic speakers link words together in the rapid casual speech. The present study concludes that English speakers use [w], [j], [r], or intrusive[r] to avoid the occurrence of two vowels and to make the speech easier. Arabic speakers, on the other hand, use kasrah [ɪ], fat-ha [e], and dhamma [ʊ] to avoid the occurrence of two saakins (iltiqaa al-sakinyian) and to facilitate the connected speech.
Keywords: Linking, English and Arabic, Contrastive Phonology

1.   Introduction
1. 1. Preliminaries
Generally speaking, contrastive studies best work in the area of phonology since there are many noteworthy differences between the phonological systems of different languages. Contrastive phonology, accordingly, focuses on the differences between particular characteristics of the sound systems of some languages (Azevedo, 1981: 7).

Because of its importance for fluent speaking, linking, as an aspect of connected speech, is chosen to be contrastively scrutinized in this study between English and Arabic to identify the difficulties that Iraqi EFL learners may face when speaking in English so as to put forward some relevant pedagogical recommendation.

It is expected that Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in this regard because of the common knowledge which says that each language in the world has a unique sound system. Consequently producing speech sounds connectively is a significant characteristic which distinguishes a language from another. According to Underhill (1994: 58), connected speech involves the flow of sounds that are adjusted by a system of simplifications by means of which phonemes are assembled and modified. Speakers of a language naturally link, not only sounds but also, words together to produce connected speech and to avoid pauses which highly impede the speaker's fluency.

1.2. Statement of the Problem
The non-native speakers of a language encounter difficulties in the process of communication with native speakers because they lack mastering the aspects of connected speech. The phonological phenomenon of linking words together makes the speech more natural and smooth. In this respect, it is expected that English and Arabic have certain differences in both the mechanisms and the sounds that are used to link words together. Several studies have investigated some aspects of connected speech like assimilation, elision, and rhythm while few studies, if ever, have examined linking by means of a contrastive study between English and Arabic. Hence, this study attempts to bridge this gap in the literature through answering the following questions:

1. How does linking work in English; i. e. what are its features, and what particular sounds are used to fulfill it?
2. How does linking work in Arabic; i. e. what are its features, and what particular sounds are used to fulfill it?
3. What are the main differences between English and Arabic as far as linking is concerned?

1.3. Objectives of the Study
The present study aims at achieving the following objectives:
1. Identifying the ways in which linking works in English through pinpointing its features and the sounds used to fulfill it.
2. Identifying the ways in which linking works in Arabic through pinpointing its features and the sounds used to fulfill it.
3. Investigating the main differences between English and Arabic as far as linking is concerned.

1.4. Hypotheses

This study hypothesizes that:

1. In English, linking appears when there are neighbouring words one ends with a vowel and the other begins with a vowel.
2. In Arabic, linking appears when there are neighbouring words one ends with a quiescent and the other begins with a quiescent.
3. Linking is fulfilled by means of different consonants and vowels in the two languages.

1.5. Procedures

In carrying out the present study, the following steps will be followed:

1. Presenting a general survey of linking as a phonological phenomenon in relation to its definition and related concepts both in English and Arabic.
2. Elaborating on the phonological phenomenon of linking with respect to when and how it is applied both in English and Arabic.
3. Contrasting the phonological phenomenon of linking in English with that of Arabic to identify the differences between the two languages in this regard.
4. Introducing the conclusions arrived at in this study.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study lies in the importance of the spoken language since language is basically oral. The present study sheds light on the phonological phenomenon of linking in English and Arabic language to show how speakers of those two languages use linking sounds in rapid casual speech. Thus, it is expected to be of some value to EFL teachers, syllabus designers, textbook-writers as well as students. Those who are interested is contrastive and phonological studies might find this study beneficial to them.

2. Linking in English

This section is intended to provide a theoretical background of the present study. It surveys the meaning of connected speech in general and the phonological phenomenon of linking in general and in English language in particular to provide a theoretical value for the present study.

2. 1. Connected speech

Speaking is not producing sounds in isolation, but it is a continuous stream of connected sounds. This phonological linking makes it possible for speakers of English to speak effortlessly and fluently. Roach (2000:132) states that scientists, many years ago, have made many attempts to design machines that are able to produce speech using pre-recorded words. The speech produced by these machines was quite unnatural since all the words were separated by pauses,the result of which was a practically unintelligible speech. This is because anevident difference is observed between the way machines "speak" and humans do. This is, of course, due to the fact that humans do not produce words in isolation; instead their speech is highly connected.

Trask (1996: 86) defines connected speech as the ordinary spontaneous speech which differs from the production of individual words or phrases in isolation. McMahon (2002: 128), on the same par, points out that the bulk of the segmental phonological processes are characteristic of fast and casual speech, and they are known as connected speech processes (usually abbreviated as CSPs). In comparison with formal, careful speech, Underline (2005: 59) states that connected speech is characterized by faster delivery and less care and attention to precise articulation on the part of the speaker. According to Crystal (2008: 101), connected speech is used in linguistics to denotethe spoken language when studied as a continuous sequence, as in normal utterances and conversations.

Connected speech is characterized by a number of aspects and most, if not all, phonologists agree on the list of the aspects of connected speech. Underhill (2005: 58), for instance, states that connected speech includes rhythm, assimilation, elision, vowel reduction, linking and intrusive sounds, and juncture.

2.2. Linking in English

In rapid casual speech, native speakers of English link words   together leaving no pause between words to make their speech more fluent and spontaneous. This is mainly done through the phenomenon of linking whichis one of the aspects of connected speech in natural languages. Kenworthy (1990: 9) states that people do not generally make pauses between words when they speak, but they move smoothly from one word to the next. Thus, the ability to speak smoothly and to utter connected words easily demands the use of linking.

2. 3. Definitions of Linking in English

The term linking is used in English to refer to one of the aspect of connected speech when either [j], [w], or [r] is inserted between two words in order to produce a smoother flow of speech that does not sound disconnected. Linking in English is defined by Underhill (1994: 65) as the smooth joining of words in connected speech. Of course two words can have a silence between them, but linking is concerned with the way sounds are fused together at word boundaries. Skandera and Burleigh (2005: 159) mention that linking is a transition between sounds or words.

Crystal (2008: 285), on the other hand, mentions that linking is that term which is used in phonology to designate a sound which is put between two linguistic units mainly for obtaining ease of pronunciation. Consequently, Trask (1996: 209) points out that a linking sound is that segment which is absent in words when pronounced in isolation but which is present in other circumstances of casual speech.

2. 4. Types of Linking in English

When a word that ends with a vowel is followed by a word that begins with a vowel, English speakers insert either [j], [w], or [r] to link the two vowels together and avoid any potential gap or pause between the two vowel sounds. Underhill (2005: 47) asserts that the English sounds [j], [w], and [r] share an important characteristic in the stream of speech in that they link two words together, where the first ends with a vowel sound and the second begins with a vowel sound.

2. 4. 1. Linking with [j]

Kelly (2000: 111) explains that when a word ends in [ɪ], [i:], or a diphthong which ends in [ɪ], speakers often produce a [j] to ease the transition to the following vowel sound. Justifying this type of linking, Underhill (2005:67) states that [j] is usedbecause [ɪ] and [i:] form the starting point for the semi-vowel [j]. In this case, the linking glide is represented by [ʲ], as in the following examples:

pay a lot [peɪ ʲ ə lɒt]
my own [maɪʲ əʊn]
see it [si: ʲ ɪt]
they always [ðeɪʲ ɔlwi:z]

2. 4. 2. Linking with [w]

Linking [w] is added when a word ends in [u:], or a diphthong ends with [ʊ] (Kelly, 2000: 112). Underhill (2005: 67) justifies this use of linking [w]by explaining that [ʊ] and [u:] have lip rounding and form the starting point for the bilabial semi-vowel [w]. In this case, the linking glide is represented by the phonetic symbol [ʷ], such as:

blue ink [blʊ ʷ ɪŋk]
now I [naʊ ʷ aɪ]
too easy [tu: ʷ i:zi:]
go out [gaʊ ʷ aʊt]

It should have become evident that linking done by using [w] and [j] is justified by the fact that the sounds which are linked by these semi vowels have a very close mouth gesture when they are produced.These [w] and [j] linking phonemes are produced in a natural way. Thus, the phonemes are not added artificially but they are produced as the natural product of the linking of the realization of last phoneme of the first word and the realization of the first phoneme of the following word.

2. 4. 3. Linking [r]

Dealing with linking and intrusive [r], Kelly (2008:111) finds it important to distinguish between two types of accents: 'rhotic' and 'non-rhotic' accents of English language saying that some accents of English are described as rhotic, which means that English [r] is pronounced wherever it is orthographically present as in car [kɑ:r] or carve [kɑ:v]. So that, "the notion of linking [r] is redundant in rhotic varieties of English that typically pronounce all "r" sounds occurring in the spelling form"(Underhile, 2005: 66).

While in non-rhotic accents, Kelly (2008: 111) states that [r] is pronounced in initial position as in red [red] and in medial position when it is preceded and followed by a vowel as in barrel [bærəl], but not at the final position as in car [kɑ:] or when it is followed by a consonant as in carve [kɑ:v]. In such positions, it is vocalized (turned into a vowel) and not pronounced unless another vowel follows.

The mainly rhotic communities in the English-speaking world are: Canada; India; Ireland; south-western England; Scotland; the northern and western states of the US apart from the Boston area and New York City; Barbados. While the mainly non-rhotic communities in the English-speaking world are: Black Africa; Australia; the Caribbean, except for Barbados; England apart, in the main, from the south-west; New Zealand; South Africa; the southern states, the Boston area of New England, and New York City vernacular speech; and Black English Vernacular in the US; Wales (Web source 1).

In non-rhotic accents of English, Kelly (2008: 111) points out that when a word end in a written "r" and it is followed by a word begins with a vowel sound, speakers with non-rhotic accents often use the sound [r] to link the preceding vowel to the following one.

In English, the most prominent example is the so-called linking [r]. Skandera and Burleigh (2005: 58) states that "a sound that is absent sound in a word when that word is pronounced in isolation, but present in the same word in certain phonetic environments in connected speech-usually for ease of pronunciation- is called a linking sound".

Roach (2000: 144), also, states that the most familiar case of linking is the use of linking [r]. He explains that [r] sound does not occur in syllable-final position in non-rhotic accent, but when the spelling of a word suggests a final "r", and a word beginning with a vowel follows, the usual pronunciation is to pronounce the sound [r]. For example:

Here   [hɪə]   but   here are [hɪərə]
Four   [fɔ:]   but   four eggs   [fɔ:regz] Roach (ibid.)

McCully (2009: 174) gives a reason for the name of "linking [r]" as a phonological phenomenon saying that it is called linking [r] "since one of its functions is precisely to link a syllable-final vowel with the vowel of a following syllable in a different word".

2. 4. 4. Intrusive [r]

Intrusion means adding an additional sound between two other sounds. Where two vowel sounds meet and there is no written letter r, speakers with non-rhotic accents will introduce [r] sound in order to ease the transition between the two vowels . This happens when a word ends in one of the English vowel and this word is followed by a word begins with another vowel. Speakers with non-rhotic accents will link the two vowels by adding the sound [r] between them, this [r] sound is called intrusive [r]. Clear examples of this phenomenon are given by Kelly (2008: 118) where (r) refers to linking [r]:

- media(r)exploitation   /mi:diə(r)ekspləreɪʃn/
- The sofa(r)in the catalogue.   /səʊfə(r)ɪn/

Other examples are given by Roach (2000: 144):

- Formula A   /fɔ:mjələ(r)eɪ/
- Australia all out   /ɒstreliə(r)ɔ:laʊt/
- Media event   /mi:diə(r)ɪvent/

Underhill (1994: 66) explains that intrusive [r] refers to a [r] sound which is inserted by an English speaker between two words where the first ends in [ə] or [ɔ:] and the following word begins with a vowel sound.

Collins and Mees (2003: 87) comment on this phenomenon saying that intrusive [r] is often considered by English people as 'lazy' or 'uneducated' speech. Similarly, Roach(2000:144) mentions that some English speakers and teachers regard this type of pronunciation as incorrect or sub-standard pronunciation, but it is undoubtedly widespread since it comes to meet a natural need for ease of production.

Thus, the only difference between linking and intrusive [r] lies in the spelling: with inking /r/, there is an (r) letter at the end of the word's spelling form, while with the intrusive [r] there is no (r) letter in the spelling form (Underhill, 1994: 66).

2. 5. The significance of Linking in English

Generally speaking, English speakers link words together to avoid hiatus which is defined by Skandera and Burleigh (2005: 157) as "the articulatory break, or gap, between two consecutive vowels belonging to different syllables or words linked through the insertion of an additional sound".

Words are not pronounced in their citation form or in isolation, but instead they are pronounced rapidly and fluently. Giegerich (1985: 249) states that a citation form is that form of speech that is, to say the least, idealized to a certain extent.

Thus, speakers of English use linking sounds to facilitate the speech between words to avoid gaps and to be more fluent. Underhill (2005: 67) points out that the intrusive sound may not be distinctly heard especially where the overall vowel sequence is fairly relaxed. Nevertheless, the pronunciation of linking sounds is noticeable in all sorts of recorded material of the pronunciation of native speakers of English, and it has great value as a learning device to help learners of English to use smooth linking of words in continuous speech.

3. Linking in Arabic

This section is intended to be that part of the theoretical background of the present study which surveys the phonological phenomenon of linking in Arabic to familiarize the reader with that subject.

3.1. Introduction

Arabic is a member of the Semitic language family. Semitic languages are marked by a limited vocalic system and a rich consonantal system. The phonological phenomenon of linking is present in Arabic for the ease of pronunciation**.**

3. 2. Types of Linking in Arabic

Phonological linking in Arabic can be best represented by the phonological phenomenon of "iltiqa ul sakinein", (literally: the meeting of two *quiescent* sounds). This phenomenon causes hiatus in the Arabic speech so that Arabic speakers try to avoid it by linking the two words together by adding a short vowel between the two quiescent sounds.

Obied (2003:7) explains that "iltiqa ul sakinein" causes slurred speech so that Arabic speakers try to avoid it either by omission or by linking (tahreek) via adding a vowel mark (haraka) between the two *quiescent* sounds to avoid the slurred speech. Thus, Arabic speakers use linking sounds such as kasrah [i] which is very common, fat-ha [e], and dhamma [ʊ]. The following are examples of linking by adding kasrah [i], fat-ha [e], and dhamma [ʊ] respectively to avoid the occurance of two quiescent sounds:

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ (Al-Hujurat: 14)   (The desert Arabs say)

وَمِنَ النَّاس (Al-Baqara: 8)   (Of the people)

وَعَصَوُا الرسول (Al Nisaa:42)   (and disobey the apostle)

Linking can be achieved, also, by introducing the glottal stop [ʔ] before the word with initial vowel because in Arabic, no word or syllable begins with a vowel. So that, Arabic speakers insert [ʔ] to make their pronunciation easier.

3. 2. 1. Linking of Two Saakins

The occurrence of two *quiescent* sounds (two saakin sounds) one following the other (iltiqa ul sakinein) is very common in Arabic. To prevent such an occurrence, an Arabic phonological rule states that if two *quiescent* sounds meet each other one occurs at the end of a word and the other at the beginning of the following word, this occurrence will be avoided either by omission or by insertion (i. e. linking). Omission occurs when the "madd" sound is dropped so as to prevent two saakins from meeting. It is worth mentioning that "madd" sounds are long vowel sounds which are represented by yaa [ii], alif [aa], and waaw [uu].

Omission is not the concern of this study, it will, therefore, not be explained. What is important in the present study is the phenomenon of insertion (i. e.) inserting sounds to link two *quiescent* sounds together.

One of the ways of avoiding the occurrence of two *quiescent* sounds is "AL- Tahreek" by using "harakaat". Phonetically speaking, "harakaat" are short vowel sounds. They are represented by kasrah [ɪ] for yaa, fat-ha [e] for alif, and dhamma [ʊ] for waaw. When "hamzat ul wasl" is preceded by sukoon (a consonant sound), there will be three options based on the context [Abu Ali AL- Farisi cited in (Kadhim, 1981: 177)]. These options are represented by three types of linking "saakins" as explained below.

3. 2. 1. 1. Linking with Kasrah (ِ) [ɪ]

This type of linking is very common in Arabic. It takes place when "hamzat ul wasl" is preceded by any sakin sounds but not madd sounds. In this case, "hamzat ul wasl" is followed by another saakin sound, those two sounds will be pronounced with kasrah [ɪ] [Sibawayh cited in (Haaron, 1966:154)]. Thus, when a word ending with *quiescent* sound is followed by a word starting with "hamzat ul wasl" which, in turn, is followed by another *quiescent* sound, the two *quiescent* sounds will be pronounced with a "kasra" [ɪ] between them. In other words, when two *quiescent* sounds come together, the first takes a "kasrah" [ɪ] as in:

- Waqaalat-i-mra'atun   وَقَالَتِ امْرَأَة (a woman said) (Al-Qasas: 9)
- An-i-drib   أَن اضْرِب   (to hit) (Ash-Shu'ara: 63)
- khuth-i-lafwa   خُذِ الْعَفْوَ   (Forgive) (Al-A'raaf: 199)
- qul-i-ndhiru   قُلِ انظُرُوا   (behold) (Yunus: 101)

3. 2. 1. 2. Linking with Fat-ha (َ) [e]

When "hamzat ul wasl" is preceded by the preposition "min" (مِنْ) (meaning: from) and followed by sakin sound, then the "noon" is pronounced with fat-ha as in:

Min-a-aljinnati   مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ (Al-Nas Surah: 6)

Famin-a-llahi   فَمِنَ اللهِ   (AL-Nisaa Surah: 79)

Linking with fat-ha also takes place when the word "Allah" follows. This occurs to reserve the magnification of the word Allah as in:

Alf lammiim-a-allah   أَلـمَ الله   (A. L. M. Allah) (AaL-Imran: 1-2)

3. 2. 1. 3. Linking with Dhamma (ُ) [u]

When "hamzat ul wasl" is preceded by the pluralizing *quiescent* "waaw" or when the "hamzat ul wasl" is preceded by the pluralizing *quiescent* "meem", then the "waaw" and the "meem" are pronounced with "dhamma" [u] as in:

Ishtaraw-u-ldalalata   اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلَالَة (bought misguidance) (AL-Baqara: 16)

Fatamanw-u-lmaut   فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْت   (then invoke death) (AL-Baqara Surah: 94).

This "waw" is called "waw al-leen" (واو اللين) and it is originally not followed by a vowel (sakina) but dhamma is added to avoid the meeting of two *quiescent* sounds.

Examples of the pluralizing *quiescent* "meem" are the following:

Ilaykum-u-leemaana   إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ (Al-Hujurat: 7)

Alaykum-u-siyaam   عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ (AL-Baqara: 183)

3. 2. 2. Insertion of glottal stop [ʔ]

In Classical Arabic syllable structure, all vowels must be preceded by only one consonant and can be followed by up to two consonants, and this can be illustrated by the formula CV(C)(C). Arabic speakers introduce hamza [ʔ] before the vowel sound. This hamza [ʔ] is named by [AL Khaleel cited in (Magzomi and Al-Samarai, 1980:57)] as facilitator hamza. It means that it facilitates the pronunciation.

Catford (2001: 15) points out that it is difficult for Arabic speakers not to pronounce [ʔ] before every word-initial vowel. This means that they use the glottal stop to make their pronunciation easier. Similarly, Ryding (2005: 35) states that in Arabic no word or syllable starts with a vowel. If a word appears to start with a vowel, such as (ʔislaam: Islam "إسلام") or (ʔumma: Nation "أمة") or (ʔAbadan: never "أبداً"), what is actually heard is a vowel preceded by a glottal stop (hamza). Thus, words in Arabic do not begin with a vowel, this is why 'alif' in the initial position carries "hamza" which is pronounced as a glottal stop[ʔ].

Hayes et al. (2004: 17) conclude that Arabic permits the more difficult sounds and disallows the easier. That is, speakers of Arabic find it difficult to pronounce words or syllables with initial vowels, while they find it easier to pronounce words or syllables with initial consonants. Odden (2005: 161) continues the explanation stating that Arabic has the vowels [ɪ, a, u] as well as pharyngealized vowels [ʕɪ, ʕa, ʕu] which are derived by an assimilation instance from a pharyngealized consonant.

Ryding (2005: 25) states that the Arabic sound system has six vowels, three of them are long which are[i:], [u:] ,and [ɑ:]; the other three are short vowels which are and [ɪ], [ʊ], and [e]. Long vowels are represented by letters, ʔalif for [ɑ:], waaw for [u:], and yaaʔ for [i:]. Short vowels are represented by "vowel marks" (Harakaat) which are fat-ha for [e], dhamma for [ʊ], and karsrah for [ɪ].

Odden (2005: 247) asserts that consonants can also be inserted. The main cause of consonant insertion is the avoidance of initial vowels or vowel sequences. In Arabic all syllables begin with a consonant, and if a word has no underlying initial consonant a glottal stop is inserted.

Thus, the Arabic word (الولد al-walad), for example, is pronounced as [ʔalwalad] which means "the boy" in English.In other words, no initial consonant cluster is allowed in Arabic, and no syllable begins with a vowel. Thus, there are CV, CVV, CVC, CVCC, CVVC, and CVVCC syllable structures in Arabic (Abu- Shihab, 2010).

3.3. The significance of linking in Arabic

A well-known rule in Arabic is that Arabic speakers do not begin with *quiescent* sound (silent) and do not stop on mutaharik sound (with haraka). This is why they avoid the occurrence of two *quiescent* sounds to be fluent in their pronunciation. Aboud(1988) states that Arabic speakers avoid the occurrence of two *quiescent* sounds to make their pronunciation smoother, particularly in Quranic Tajweed.

4. Contrastive Analysis
4.1 Introduction

This section aims at introducing and conducting a contrastive analysis followed in the present study to achieve its aim and to verify its hypotheses whether or not there are similarities between English and Arabic in relation to the phonological phenomenon of linking. It is also intended to identify the differences between English and Arabic in the same regard.

4. 2 The similarities between English and Arabic

As far as the phonological phenomenon of linking in English and Arabic is concerned, the present study has figured out the following similarities:
1. In both languages, the phonological phenomenon of linking is used in rapid causal speech.
2. Speakers of both languages use linking to avoid hiatus and, as a consequence, to make their pronunciation fluent and natural. Thus, in both languages, there are certain sounds that are added to the pronunciation to facilitate producing an uninterrupted speech which is achieved via linking words together by using certain sounds.
3. The phonological phenomenon of linking, in both English and Arabic, is not phonemic because it does not change the meaning of the words to which the chosen sounds are added.

4. 3 The differences between English and Arabic

Concerning the differences between English and Arabic with regard to the phonological phenomenon of linking, the present study has figured out the following points:
1. Vowel to vowel linking (V-V) occurs in English frequently when a word ends in a vowel is followed by a word which begins with a vowel. In this case, English speakers insert or introduce linking sounds. These linking sounds can either be [j], [w], [r] (whether linking or intrusive), and this verifies the first

hypothesis that reads "in English, linking appears when there are neighbouring words one ends with a vowel and the other begins with a vowel". While in Arabic, vowel to vowel linking (V-V) does not occur because Arabic words and syllables do not begin with vowels.

2. Consonant to consonant linking (C-C) occurs frequently in Arabic. This phenomenon is one of the cases of "Iltiqaa Al-Saakinayn". Arabic speakers do not allow the meeting of two saakins, therefore, they link those two *quiescent* sounds by introducing short vowels which are either [ɪ], [e], or [ʊ].

   Those linking sounds are represented by kasrah [ɪ], fat-ha [e], and dhamma [ʊ]. This verifies the second hypothesis that reads "in Arabic, linking appears when there are neighbouring words one ends with a quiescent and the other begins with a quiescent". In English, on the other hand, there is no consonant to consonant linking.

3. In English the linking sounds are classified as approximant consonant sounds, while in Arabic they are mainly vowels. This verifies the third hypothesis that reads "linking is fulfilled by means of different consonants and vowels in the two languages".

4. Linking sounds in English are [j], [w], and [r]. While, linking sounds in Arabic are [ɪ], [e], and [ʊ]. In that way, the linking sounds in English are consonant sounds while in Arabic are vowel sounds.

5. The phenomenon of linking in English is concerned with phonology only, while in Arabic it is concerned with phonology as well as morphology. In English, the use of linking sound is determined by another sound as the use of [j] after [iː], or a diphthong which finishes in [ɪ] and the use of [w] after [uː], or a diphthong which finishes with [ʊ]. On the other hand, in Arabic the use of linking sounds can be determined phonologically as in the use of kasrah [ɪ] and morphologically as in the use of fat-ha after the preposition "from" (مِنْ) or the use of dhamma [ʊ] after the pluralizing silent (saakin) "waaw" or after the pluralizing silent (saakin) "meem".

6. One of the noticeable differences between linking in English and linking in Arabic (Iltiqaa Al Sakinyian) is that linking in Arabic is reflected in the written form, while linking in English is not. Thus, linking in English is added phonologically only, while linking in Arabic (iliqaa al sakinyian) is added phonologically as well as orthographically.

5.   Conclusion

This section sums up the theoretical background and the findings of the present study by presenting its conclusions and offering some pedagogical recommendations.

5. 1. Conclusions

The present study asserts the fact all the phonological phenomena could be universal since language itself is universal but to discover these phonological phenomenon more investigations are needed.

   There are a number of differences in the way words are pronounced in isolation and in the rapid casual speech. This is of course due to the fact that speech is continues, spontaneous, and connected. Connected speech, as Underhill's (2005: 68) remark, comprises a system that is on the whole "regular" and "predictable". Thus, the idea of connected speech is not random but it is covered by rules and regularities.

   As far as the phonological phenomenon of linking is concerned, the two languages, English and Arabic, are similar in the way of linking words by the fact that they insert a sound between two words for the purpose of fluent speech.

   Owing to the fact that each language has its own phonological system, speakers of English and Arabic use the phonological phenomenon of linking in rapid casual speech differently and they use different linking sounds in different situations and contexts.

   English speakers use [w], [j], [r], or intrusive[r] to avoid the occurrence of two vowels and to make the speech easier. Arabic speakers, on the other hand, use kasrah [ɪ], fat-ha [e], and dhamma [ʊ] to avoid the occurrence of two *quiescent* sounds (iltiqaa al-sakinyian) and to facilitate the connected speech. So, that the linking sounds in English are consonant sounds, while in Arabic are vowel sounds.

   It is worth pointing out that linking in English is reflected phonologically only while linking in Arabic (iltiqaa al sakinyian) is reflected phonologically as well as orthographically.

   Setting asides, all the types and the rules of linking in both languages, it is useful to point out that practice in making linking between words is useful and valuable. Learners of any language should, therefore, be aware of the difficulties that they will meet in listening to connected speech if they do not know the phonological phenomenon of linking of that language.

5. 2. Recommendations

Based on the data and information provided in the present study, Iraqi EFL learners need to take into account and draw their attention to both the differences and similarities between linking as a phonological phenomenon in English and Arabic. A theoretical and practical solution is offered in the present study. The theoretical

solution advocates making learners aware of linking in English and in Arabic whereas the practical solution provides similarities and differences to train learners how to link words in connected speech in both languages, English and Arabic. In conclusion, further empirical studies investigating pedagogical implications concerning the phonological phenomenon of linking based on the proposed theoretical and practical solutions are necessary and recommended.

The researchers of the present study encourage speakers of other languages, who are interested in this subject, to look into their own languages and make similar contrastive phonological study in order to verify the universal nature of the phonological phenomenon of linking.

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