

Consonant Lenition among Speakers of Arabic

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English has become the language of communication in almost all countries particularly for trade, business and educational purposes. English is thus taught as a second or foreign language. Efforts are made to teach the native accent, yet, the teachers who teach are also non-native. Most of the communication that takes place in English in non-native countries is among non-native speakers. Hence, a dialect of English is created which is influenced by the native language of each country. Hundreds of non-native dialects are currently in development. Lenition is a weakening of certain sounds in continuously. The influence of the mother tongue affects the sounds of Arabic speakers while using English. This paper studies examples of lenition from Arabic speech of teacher-student conversations and investigates how far it does or does not affect overall communication. The researcher has analysed selected conversational passages to study consonant lenition in Arabic speech. It was concluded that Iraqi speakers of English do conform to some patterns of lenition, but differ in some patterns from native English speakers. The overall communication is not affected.

Key words: *Lenition, consonants, weakening, native language, speech sounds.*

Introduction

Background of the Study

The use of English is increasing parallel to development in technology and changing means and methods of communication. Almost every country across the globe has felt the need to include English as a foreign or second language in the educational curriculum at all levels. Since proficiency in oral communication is the priority, speaking skill is given maximum focus. However, it is a skill that most learners find difficult. The difficulty begins at the level of English sounds. Sound system varies in every language. Sounds in the mother tongue (MT) of learners are sometimes different from certain sounds in English. Some sounds exist in the MT but not in English and vice versa. Pronunciation in English is a universal



problematic area for learners. There is an attraction regarding the native English dialect. Non-native speakers can become perfect in grammar and vocabulary but acquiring the native dialect is very difficult. One of the chief reasons is that the models before learners are non-native speakers in most cases, including teachers. Sometimes, incorrect grammatical utterances are coupled with strange pronunciation. In such cases it is impossible to understand speech.

It is not necessary that non-native speakers acquire a perfect native dialect. If their speech can be understood clearly, the purpose of communication is very well served. This is called a neutral dialect and it is universally acceptable.

Speech utterances have many aspects like stress, intonation, para-linguistic features like loudness, pauses and so on. Some sounds in English are more affected than others in case of non-native speakers. It has been observed that consonant sounds are affected more than vowel sounds comparatively. Lenition occurs in case of consonant sounds. This paper studies the extent and type of lenition of consonant sounds among Arabic speakers and the extent to which it affects overall speech and communication.

Significance of the Study

If English as an international language has come to stay, there is a need to make communication in English easy and simple. Non-native speakers who study English as a foreign or second language often find it difficult to master the sound system of English. Speakers do not produce sounds in isolation; they are part of continuous speech. As such, they are affected by neighbouring sounds even in case of native speakers. This feature of continuous speech is coupled with problems regarding isolated speech sounds and features like lenition. A study of consonant lenition in Arabic speakers will be useful in understanding the degree to which communication is hampered on its account. It will enable educationists and linguists to devise ways of tackling the problem.

Not only users of Arabic language, but others whose native language resembles Arabic will benefit from this study.

Sample

A list of words isolated from a conversation among teacher and students in an English classroom comprise of the sample. Words that contain strong consonants will be transcribed and analysed. The weakening of the consonant sounds will be marked.



Procedure

The consonant sounds listed from the sample will be studied for effects of lenition. Further, the effect on different consonant sounds will be noted. A summary of the results will be prepared in the conclusion. The researcher will also try to trace the reasons for particular instances of lenition and suggest ways to overcome them.

Limitations

This study is limited to instances of lenition observed among Arabic students learning English as a foreign language. It is limited to words listed during an EFL classroom session in Baghdad University, Iraq. It is limited to a decrease of strength scale. Lenition involves some abstract scale of strength which is distinct from sonority, so it is difficult to unify the 2 scales.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Literature Review

Compared to other features of speech and continuous speech, lenition has not received much attention in EFL / ESL studies and other linguistic research. Yet, there are some remarkable studies which support research of this kind and provide the necessary background knowledge for application of theories.

Bronson B.S. (2004) in his book titled “Phonetically Based Phonology” starts with the hypothesis that phonologies of various languages are determined by phonetic principles. The book examines a number of phonological aspects like assimilation, vowel harmony, vowel reduction, lenition and Obligatory Contour principle.

Peter Szigetvari (1999) suggests changes and modifications in the consonant and vocalic position in words beginning with consonants and ending in vocalic sounds. He refers to two theories of consonant lenition proposed by Harris (1997) and Segeral and Scheer (1999). He concludes that skeletal units are VC rather than CV. He also examines consonant clusters that occur in initial position in words. He concludes with a theory for predicting the location and direction of lenition.

Hualde, J., Simonet, M. and Nadeu, M. (2011) have studied the weakening of intervocalic unvoiced plosives in Spanish. The title of their article is “Consonant Lenition and Phonological re-categorisation”. In their sample, most of the intervocalic consonants were fully or partially voiced. Yet, they discovered that the sounds /p/, /t/ and /k/ are more

constricted even when fully voiced, compared to /b/, /d/ and /g/. They conclude that the reason may be phonological re-categorisation.

Kingston J. (2008) in his paper presented at the conference on Laboratory Approaches to Spanish Phonology opines that the objective of consonant lenition is not reduction of articulatory efforts; but lenition reduces the extent to which consonants interfere with the stream of speech. He gives three sound evidences for his assumption. Consonants do not lenite next to open vowels or next to more open consonants, and they lenite more within prosodic constituents.

Bauer L. (2008) in his article 'Lenition Revisited' states that it is difficult to define the word 'lenition'. There are several competing definitions and some of them are incompatible. He sorts out some of the paradoxes and gives a new definition. The new definition conforms to previous definitions and at the same time, avoids some of the problems associated with them. A review of literature shows that lenition is a complicated and complex linguistic concept. Most studies are related to lenition of consonants. Hence, it can be said that lenition of consonants is a common occurrence in most languages.

Theoretical Background

Lenition

Phonologists vary on the importance that they attach to the notion of lenition. Lenition led to the development of some phonological theories such as Natural Phonology, Government and Dependency Phonologies. There are different views about the concept of lenition and the term has undergone several changes throughout the history of phonology. However, there is a general agreement that lenition refers to consonantal change. Some linguists like Donegan and Stampe (1979) and Dressler (1985) consider these consonantal phenomena as parallel to lenition in vowels, but most commonly, lenition is referred to with respect to consonants. The meaning of 'lenition' as it is understood today can be traced back to numerous components which originated at different times and in different places. Hence, it should be borne in mind that phonology is not restricted to one language. The concepts in phonological writings spread across all languages which use different words for the concept of lenition and the words may suggest, imply or connote different shades of meaning. The concept was mainly discussed in French (lenition), and German (leniering) and Italian (lenizione). All these languages have a Latin base. The word 'lenition' in English is consciously borrowed from Latin. It initially referred to all types of change in articulation.

Although linguists differ in the way they perceive lenition, they all agree that lenition means weakening or a set of segmental changes. If lenition implies weakening, it follows that consonants possess strength. Consonants can be arranged on scales of strength. A consonant

is stronger the more it differs from vowels. A consonant becomes weaker the more it resembles a vowel. The notion that lenition is connected with the degree of strength points to the fact that it is a relative relation and that some consonants possess more strength than others. Consonants possess inherent strength or may be positionally endowed with strength. This explains how a segment obtains strength. Different types of segments have different strengths. For example, voiced segments are claimed to be weaker than voiceless segments. Certain phonological environments also lend strength to segments. Perhaps, an inherently strong segment would be extra strong in a stronger environment.

A segment can have static comparative strength or strength shown through dynamic change. This shows how the strength of a segment can be assessed. This is a rather subjective view as the strength of a segment is perceived on the basis of its articulatory, acoustic or even metaphorical properties. The idea is that segments are stronger than those they change into. For example, if plosives spontaneously change into fricatives, then the latter are weaker than plosives.

According to Trask's Dictionary of Historical and Comparative Linguistics, 'lenition (also weakening) is any phonological change in which a segment becomes less consonant-like than previously'. This definition shows that lenition is connected to 'phonological scales' or hierarchies which rank consonants in order of their strength. Such 'strength scales' show the route that a segment will take when it lenites. Lass and Anderson (1975) state that 'lenition may (broadly) be defined as descent down either of the scales'. (1975, 150).

'Lenition' and 'weakening' are universally considered to be synonymous. The weakening of consonants takes place because there is a tendency in human beings to diminish the effort involved in articulation. Those segments which involve more effort are stronger and those which involve lesser effort are weaker.

Lenition refers to synchronic as well as diachronic sound changes. Lenition occurs more readily the faster or more casual the speech. Lenition is scalar. Theo Vennemann's diction (cited in Hyman 1975: 165) says that "A segment X is said to be weaker than a segment Y if Y goes through an X stage on its way to zero." Thus, lenition is progressive along a dimension of weakness.

Weakening is one type of lenition. The other type of lenition is sonority increasing or markedness decreasing. Lenition patterns often involve chain shifts and a diachronic gradual erosion of stops into more reduced consonants, ultimately culminating in elision. Harris states that lenition is loss of phonological material.

On the basis of the above discussion, we can sum up that lenition is a process of weakening of consonants. This implies that consonants possess some kind of strength, that some consonants are stronger than others. The weakening takes place in a particular direction and if voiceless stops lenite to voice stops, it cannot happen the other way round. Consonants can go on weakening and the last stage is deletion. Hence, lenition means segmental change or even loss of phonological elements.

Types of Lenition

Lenition includes a group of processes listed by Kirchner (2001). They are as follows:

Degemination: There are some words with double consonants like *sitting*, *passing*, *attend*, *assist*, *supply* and *suggest*. In all these words, the double consonant is treated as single in order to save the articulatory effort. This is called degemination. Historically, most languages have degeminated their geminates.

Chomsky and Halle (1997) state that geminates arise in intermediate representations due to the operation of earlier rules. For example, in words like *subdue*, *abduct*, *absorb*, *subtract*, the final consonant of the prefix has a different value for a coronal than initial consonant of a stem. There are phonetically no prefix-final and stem-initial consonantal clusters agreeing in coronality. Hence, the two consonants will have to be completely assimilated and consequently degeminated.

However, in spite of similar conditions, degemination cannot take place in a word like *illustrious*. In this word, the stress on the second syllable demands that both the consonants are articulated with strength. This is a case of creating a geminate. Some other examples are *illegal*, *irresponsible*. This shows that degemination does not always take place in every word with certain prefixes.

De-aspiration: In English, voiceless stops /p/, /t/ and /k/ are aspirated when they are followed immediately by vowel sounds. For example, the initial sounds in the words *pat*, *cat* and *tap* are aspirated.

These same sounds can occur in final positions in a word, like *rat*, *map* and *lack*. In these words, the stops are not released. Hence, there is no aspiration. Similarly, in words like *act* or *apt*, they are part of a final cluster and the stops are not released as they are followed by other stops of the same category. In these words also, there is no aspiration.

It can be concluded that if voiceless stops occur in positions where the stops are not released, they are not aspirated.



Another interesting word is paper. In this word, the voiceless plosive /p/ occurs twice. The first syllable is stressed. It is the onset syllable, hence it is aspirated. The second time, /p/ occurs in an unstressed position so it is not aspirated. These are instances of de-aspiration. It reduces the duration.

The aspirate /h/ is also a basic sound in English. /h/ as an aspirated sound occurs only in stressed and initial positions. The initial /h/ may be lost in an unstressed syllable, in a word like *historic* although it is clearly pronounced in the word *history* where it is in the initial and stressed position.

In general, languages dislike hiatus that is two adjacent vowels across a syllable boundary in the surface structure. In the word *behave*, the glottal /h/ is flanked by vowels on both sides but it is pronounced because it is the onset of a syllable and also in a stressed position. In similar intervocalic position in the word *vehicle*, it is deleted in spite of the hiatus because it is in an unstressed position.

Lenition means that a consonant is spoken without a stop of the flow of air, that is with breath or aspirated. Hence, lenition is sometimes referred to as aspiration. It is to be noted that a /p/ is still a /p/ although it is aspirated.

Voicing: The consonant cluster /t/ does not occur as an onset in English. In words like *atlast* or *butler*, /t/ occurs in syllable final positions. In this position it is likely to be voiced and it changes to /d/.

/t/ is also likely to be voiced in intervocalic positions in words like *butter*, *better* or *beautiful*. In these 3 words, the stress is on the first syllable. In an unvoiced position, the /t/ gets voiced. It is not lenited in a word like 'botanical' because it occurs in the stressed position, although it is intervocalic. So it can be said that /t/ is voiced in an intervocalic position, if it is not in the stressed position.

Voicing of /t/ is also not observed in the words *otter* or *settee* in spite of intervocalic positions where the stress is on the first syllable. In both these words, /t/ is the syllable onset but in an unstressed position.

Flapping: Unvoiced consonants are lenited and voiced in certain positions. If they are lenited further along the scale, the effect is flapping. Flapping means reduction of a stop to a flap. When stops like /t/ and /d/ occur intervocalically, they are flapped. Examples are words like *water* or *party*.



However, /t/ is not flapped in words like *return* or *Saturn* because it is the syllable onset and also occurs in a stressed position.

If /t/ or /d/ are word final across word boundaries, they are flapped. This is observed in the phrases *hit her*, *had it*, *sit on*, *met him*.

In the phrases *hot soup*, *had them*, *mat finish*, *sight-seeing* they are word final across word boundaries yet they are not flapped. This is because in these instances, they are followed by fricative sounds. It can be concluded that the stops /t/ and /d/ will not be flapped when they are followed by fricatives.

Spirantization: In this phonological process, a plosive sound becomes a fricative sound at the same place of articulation. Examples of spirantization are found in Germanic languages where there is a shift from /p/ to /f/. In English, words like *cat*, *right* are spirantized. The tongue moves to the same position but does not make contact with the soft palette and the resulting sound is *sh* in *print*. Similarly, the final stop in the phrase *don't you* becomes *donchu*.

The exceptions to this process are unaffricated stops. They never lenite to strident fricatives like /s/ or /f/.

Spirantization and flapping cannot happen at initial positions.

Approximants: They are consonant sounds made by slightly narrowing the vocal tract, while still allowing a smooth flow of air. They are intermediates between vowels and consonants. Liquids and glides (/l/, /j/ and /w/) are included in this category.

The intrusive /r/ in English appears only after non-high vowels. After high vowels, we find the intruding glides as in words like *pure* and *sure*.

Debuccalization: this is a sound change in which an oral consonant loses its place of articulation, moving it to the glottis. This is a sub-type of lenition often found word initially in Kananda, word finally in Burmese and intervocalically in English. (e.g. *litter*). American English speakers debuccalize /t / to a glottal stop in word final position before another consonant.

Examples-

Get ready - /geʔredi/

Not much - /noʔmʌt

In Sanskrit, /k/ becomes /h/ every time it occurs in the final position. A word like *kamas* is pronounced as *kamah*. It is represented by two dots like a colon and is called visarga.

Before syllabic /n/ following /l/, /n/, /r/ or a vowel, t is debuccalized. Examples are *Milton*, *Martin*, *cotton* and *mountain*.

In these words, /t/ may also be nasally released.

We have other examples of /t/ or /d/ shifting to nasal positions, like *redden*, *sadden*, *late night*, in these words the stops /t/ and /d/ shift to the nasal position.

Deletion: The ultimate form of lenition is deletion. In the process of weakening gradually, a consonant sound may get deleted completely.

Every consonant does not move along the scale until it is deleted. It may stop at the voicing stage or be flapped. Thus, deletion of every consonant does not take place as a result of lenition.

Methodology

Sample

A list of words isolated from a conversation among a teacher and students in an English classroom comprise of the sample. Words that contain strong consonants will be transcribed and analysed. The weakening of the consonant sounds will be marked.

Limitations

This study is limited to instances of lenition observed among Arabic students learning English as a foreign language. It is limited to words listed during an EFL classroom session in Baghdad University, Iraq. It is limited to decrease of strength scale. Lenition involves some abstract scale of strength which is distinct from sonority so it is difficult to unify the 2 scales. The study is limited to voiced and unvoiced plosives in English /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/ and /g/.

Procedure

Step 1 – Selection of 25 words from a classroom interaction consisting of voiced and unvoiced plosives in English occurring in continuous speech

Step 2 – Identification of lenition

Step 3 – Observations

Step 4 – Calculation of percentage of each type

Step 6 – Conclusion

The consonant sounds listed from the sample will be studied for effects of lenition. Further, the effect on different consonant sounds will be noted. A summary of the results will be

prepared in the conclusion. The researcher will also try to trace the reasons for particular instances of lenition and suggest ways to overcome them.

Data Analysis

Extract

Teacher: Students, today we are going to study about **Constructivism**. It explains how learning takes place.

Student 1: Teacher, can you explain what it means?

Teacher: Children construct knowledge. To construct means to arrange something in a proper structure. It is a systematic arrangement. You must have seen a mason constructing a wall. He uses bricks to build the wall. What according to you are the building blocks for knowledge?

Student: Experiences?

Teacher: Good. You are right. From where do we get experiences?

Student: We get experiences through our sense organs.

Teacher: Very good. Our experiences enable us to form concepts in mind. Every time a concept is created, it gets fixed in the brain. It is called a schema.

Student: But we learn so many concepts in life. Then the brain must be containing thousands of schemas.

Teacher: Yes. But every time a new schema is not created. If a new schema is related to another previous one, it fits into the same one. Then all schemas get linked to each other.

Student: Oh! Interesting!

Teacher: Just as a mason places a line of bricks first, then another on top of it, we build new concepts upon previous concepts. That is called previous knowledge.

Student: Is there a definite number of schemas that can be formed in the brain? Or a maximum limit?

Teacher: No. Our brain has tremendous capacity.

Student: This means that knowledge is constructed by using concepts.

Teacher: Correct. Students must be given opportunities to construct knowledge. Teachers must create a learning environment in the classroom.

Student: How?

Teacher: By assigning activities and providing teaching aids.

Student: Hence, the role of a teacher will change in this method.

Teacher: Right. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator. There is less teaching and more learning. Can you tell me any other difference in a conventional class and a constructivist class?

Student: Constructivism is learner centred. In a conventional classroom, the teacher is more important.

Teacher: Yes. So I think now all of you have understood constructivism.

Students: Yes teacher. Thank you.

Table 1: Table showing the analysis of selected words from the point of view of lenition

Word	Lenition type	Comments	Iraqi variations
Students	/t/ in the onset syllable is lenited, not followed by aspiration. /d/ at onset of second syllable not flapped	Initial /t/ not aspirated because it appears in a cluster. /d/ not flapped in spite of being intervocalic because stress is on first syllable The last /t/ becomes nasalised so there is debuccalization	Conform to pattern
today	flapping	/t/ not aspirated because stress is on second syllable /d/ is voiced in this word because it is intervocalic	Aspirate initial /t/ because they put equal stress on both syllables
study	De-aspiration of /t/ but no flapping of /d/ in spite of it being intervocalic	Lenition of /t/ on account of consonant cluster in onset syllable.	Conform to pattern
teacher	De-aspiration	Native speaker's aspirate the sound /t/ as it occurs in the onset stressed syllable.	Iraqi speakers de-aspirate it because they put equal stress on both the syllables in this word.
constructivism	aspiration	The natural primary stress is on the second syllable. Yet the first /k/ is slightly aspirated because it has secondary stress.	Iraqi speakers put a slight aspiration after the initial /k/ because it is in the onset position.
Takes	De-aspiration No flapping	The initial /t/ should be followed by aspiration. The plosive /k/ is	However, Iraqi speakers fail to aspirate initial /t/ because they

		spirantized and becomes a fricative	pronounce the word 'takes' very quickly and without stress in continuous speech.
proper	De-aspiration	The /p/ sound at the beginning of the second syllable is not aspirated because the first syllable is stressed. No flipping of second /p/ in spite of being intervocalic	Iraqi speakers mostly put equal stress on both syllables but they do not aspirate incorrectly. The result is lenition
structure	debuccalization	Because of the preceding /s/ and following /r/ sound, the /t/ in the initial consonant cluster loses its place of articulation	Conform to pattern
systematic	De-aspiration	The /t/ in the second syllable is not aspirated because the stress is on the third syllable. There is lenition of /t/.	Iraqi speakers tend to aspirate both the /t/ sounds in this word because they lengthen the following vowels and take a long time to pronounce this word.
arrangement	degemination	The double 'r' is reduced to single /r/	Conform to pattern
linked to each other			
blocks	De-aspiration of final /k/	The final /k/ is de-aspirated because the stop is not released.	Conform to pattern
going to study	deletion	The last /g/ in 'going' is flanked by nasal /n/ and immediately	Conform to pattern

		followed by /t/. It tends to get completely deleted. No aspiration of /t/ because it is a structure word in this phrase.	
systematic arrangement			
concepts	De-aspiration	The first syllable is not aspirated because the stress is on the second syllable.	Iraqi speakers do not aspirate the syllable, not because of the stress shift but because they put equal stress on both syllables. There is a lenition all the same.
learning takes place	Deletion	Deletion of /g/ preceded by nasal and followed by /t/ /t/ is aspirated as it gets important position in the utterance	Iraqis say the three words together very quickly missing the aspiration after /t/
capacity	aspiration	Aspiration after /p/ is necessary but not after initial /k/.	Iraqi speakers aspirate both /k/ and /p/
correct	No degemination in spite of double 'r'	The word occurs in isolation with full stress. No aspiration after first /k/ because second syllable is stressed. No aspiration after last /k/ because the stop is not released.	Conform to pattern
opportunities	degemination	Normally, there is degemination in this	But Iraqi speakers pronounce the

		word.	double /p/ sound because they tend to stress the first syllable instead of the third
facilitator	aspiration	Fourth syllable is stressed hence /t/ is aspirated. Second /t/ is not aspirated because no stress on the syllable	Sometimes conform to pattern and sometimes aspirate both /t/s because they tend to stress both the syllables equally
difference	degemination	The double /f/ is lenited because stress is on first syllable	Conform to pattern
centred	aspiration	/t/ is flanked by consonants on both sides yet it is aspirated because /r/ is not pronounced	Iraqi speakers stress both syllables and pronounce the /r/ so miss the aspiration
important	debuccalisation	Nasal sound is sandwiched between two 't's. Both lose their place of articulation and are nasalised. Particularly because the stress is on the second syllable	Conform to pattern
activities	No aspiration flapping	As part of cluster, /k/ is not released and remains unaspirated. /t/ is released but no aspiration because the syllable is not stressed and is pronounced quickly. The second /t/ is flapped as it is intervocalic.	Conform to pattern

understood	spirantisation	Final /d/ often becomes /t/ because of the position. No aspiration of /t/ because stress is on the first syllable as it is a compound word.	Conform to pattern
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Observations

Lenition is bound to be there in natural speech. Lenition as it takes place in the speech of native speakers is studied, categorised and documented. However, those who use Arabic as a native language cannot always pick up the correct sound system and pronunciation of native English speakers. Native Arabic speakers tend to lengthen certain syllables or pronounce certain words / phrases very quickly. Hence, the lenition patterns also differ. They sometimes conform to the patterns of native English speakers and sometimes do not. In case of non-conformity the following features are observed:

- Iraqis either put stress on the wrong syllable or they put equal stress on two syllables. This leads to unnecessary aspiration of unvoiced plosives, especially when they occur in unstressed syllables. Sometimes they de-aspirate unvoiced plosives for the same reason.
- Speed of pronouncing a particular word or phrase is a common habit. If they say a word quickly, they miss an aspiration; if they are too slow, they aspirate the wrong sounds.
- They fail to degeminate repeated sounds in some words because they put a lot of stress on the syllables especially when they are in the onset position.
- They conform to native patterns when it comes to debuccalization, flapping and spirantization.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above discussion it can be concluded that lenition is affected by certain features, which are as follows:

- Position – the position of a segment in the word decides what kind of lenition is likely to take place and where.
- Speech rate – faster the speech, greater are the chances of lenition.
- Coda – lenition depends on whether the segment appears in coda position or whether it is onset or final position.
- Register – if a consonant lenites in some context at a given rate or register of speech, it also lenites in that context at all faster rates or more casual registers of speech.



Broadly speaking, there are three important areas in the mouth where consonant sounds are produced; at the lips (labial sounds), at the teeth (dental sounds), and at the velum.

- Group 1- b,p,m,f
- Group 2 - d,n,t,l,s
- Group 3 – k,g

Whenever there are two sounds in the same group coming together, lenition is blocked. Iraqis whose native language is Arabic conform to most of these patterns excluding a few variations that take place on account of the nature of their mother tongue.

Change in patterns of Spirantization, debuccalization or flapping or aspiration or non-aspiration of syllables does not make the language sound unintelligible. Hence it can be concluded that lenition patterns among Iraqi users of English does not affect overall communication. However, it must be borne in mind that besides lenition of selected plosives, the principle functions in other areas as well. Besides lenition, other aspects of language also affect communication.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Influence of native language is primarily responsible for change in lenition patterns in case of second or foreign language learners. In addition, the teachers also share the same native language and are not native English speakers. Hence, they may be perfectly intelligible to each other but if they fail to develop a neutral accent, they may not be understood by all and sundry across the world. Exposing learners to audio clips of native English speakers can help to solve the problem. Pronunciation should be taught by using native models rather than artificial ones. Studies in all areas of lenition can be a fruitful venture for researchers.



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