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**The glottal stop known as hamza
From extinction to resurgence***
الهمزة : من الانقراض إلى الانبعاث من جديد

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Abstract:

In this paper, the first of a series addressing certain issues relevant to Arabic dialectology in the Maghreb, we propose, in the light of current data from the Algerian Arabic dialect of Sétif (a city in eastern Algeria, 300 km southeast of Algiers), to study the fate of the hamza of Classical Arabic as one aspect of its evolution. To this end, we began with a review of the various stages in the establishment of the Arabic language in North-West Africa. After presenting the phonetic system of the language under study, we turned to the glottal consonant known as hamza. In order to identify the phenomenon of its disappearance in Setifian Arabic, we contrasted a corpus of units from the same language with their corresponding units in Classical Arabic. Since the focus of our work is the resurgence of this consonant after its disappearance, we have concentrated our analysis on a corpus of units that attest to its reappearance, and devoted the fourth chapter to study the nature of this resurgence and the reasons and factors behind its occurrence.

Keywords: Arabic dialectology, Classical Arabic, Dialectal Arabic, Sétif, Hamza.

المخلص:

في هذه المقال، الأول من سلسلة تتناول بعض القضايا ذات الصلة بعلم اللهجات العربية في المغرب العربي، نقترح دراسة مصير الصوت المعروف بالهمزة في العربية الفصحى على ضوء المعطيات الحالية من اللهجة الجزائرية في سطيف (مدينة في شرق الجزائر تقع على بعد 300 كلم جنوب شرق الجزائر العاصمة). ولهذه الغاية، بدأنا باستعراض مختلف مراحل انتشار اللغة العربية في شمال غرب إفريقيا. ثم عرضنا نظام اللهجة الصوتي قيد الدراسة، وانتقلنا إلى التعرف على ظاهرة اختفاء وانبعاث الهمزة فيها عبر مقارنة مجموعة من الكلمات من نفس هذه اللهجة مع ما يقابلها في اللغة العربية الفصحى، و ختمنا بحثنا بدراسة طبيعة هذا الانبعاث من جديد والأسباب والعوامل الكامنة وراء حدوثه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: علم اللهجات العربية، العربية الفصحى، العربية الدارجة، سطيف، الهمزة.

1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, until the advent of Islam, the Arabic language was confined to Arabia, from where it spread, thanks to the expansion of the Mohammedan message, to the borders we know today.

At present, the Arabophone world comprises a vast linguistic area stretching from the Arabian Peninsula to the Atlantic Ocean. It is also the name of a very heterogeneous reality, depending on the substrata of each country where this language has been introduced.

The existence of these indigenous languages that preceded Arabic in these “conquered” territories has created a very diverse dialectological map exhibiting a plethora of dia-

lects¹, some of which are so different from one another that mutual understanding is severely hampered, sometimes to the point of impossibility. This situation would have been irreversible had it not been for the use of a common language (standard Arabic) for teaching and administration, or all those artistic productions (TV series, songs, films, etc.) that have helped to spread certain Middle Eastern dialects.

- In the Maghreb, the process of Arabisation

¹ Without this codified, official, literary Arabic, directly inspired by the language of the Qur'an and spoken nowhere, what would have happened to this area is what happened to the European dialects that gave rise to the modern languages we know today.

began in the 7th century with the arrival of the first Muslim expeditions to the region, which was still under Byzantine rule². This period was marked by events that historians have identified as the main factors in the spread of Arabic in North-West Africa.

-The foundation of Kairouan (the first Muslim urban settlement in the Maghreb) in 669, where Arabic became the primary language of communication and its acquisition a mark of integration for the Africans of the time (Caubet 2002: 75).

-In 789, Fez was founded in what is now Morocco. This city served as a western counterpart to Kairouan, as an economic, scientific and administrative centre, as well as a focal point for the spread of Arabism (Caubet 2002: 75).

-The conquest of the cities of Tlemcen and Constantinople (Caubet 2002: 75).

-The establishment of communication routes between these four inland cities and the port cities, which were their natural harbours, led to the Arabisation of the countryside crossed by these routes (Caubet 2002: 75).

-The exodus of the Banu Hilal, Banu Sulaym and Banu Maâqil from eastern to western North Africa.

-The return of Andalusian populations to the Maghreb following the Reconquista, and their settlement in Maghrebi cities.

All these events led to the emergence of what is known as Maghrebi Arabic, a variant with a Berber substratum and adstratum, covering the area from the Atlantic to the eastern borders of present-day Libya³.

In our opinion, the most important thing to be retained from this historical literature on the development of Arabisation is the methodology used to understand this field, in particular its dialectological variation (Cantineau 1937; 1938; 1940) and the innovations of modern languages relative to

Quranic or Classical Arabic, which have taken place in their areas of extension and have ended up as distinctive characteristics that allow them to be classified⁴.

2. Method

In this paper⁵, we aim to study, in the light of current data on an Algerian Arabic variety, in this case that of the city of Sétif (a town in eastern Algeria, located 300 km southeast of Algiers), the fate of the hamza of Classical Arabic as one aspect of its evolution. To do this, we will first study the realisations in this language of a set of Classical Arabic items chosen to show and illustrate specific cases of variation. This corpus collecting and processing method is inspired by W. Marçais (1908: 5-9) and J. Cantineau (1960: 84-85). However, the material we have gathered has proved to be rich enough and more extensive than we might have thought, to allow us to go beyond the simple framework of the comparative application of a verification grid.

We will then go beyond the approach taken by these two linguists, widening it and going beyond their conclusions to study a new configuration of this sound (the hamza) under the influence of recent factors which will be mentioned in due course.

Before getting down to business, it will be necessary, after a brief presentation of the language, to present a phonetic inventory.

⁴ However, it would be interesting to study whether these classifications are still relevant today. After all, they were drawn up at a time which, while not very distant, is nonetheless very different from the present. This leads us to wonder, if only because of the radical changes in the sociolinguistic configuration brought about by independence and the subsequent events and social mutations (departure of the colonists, appropriation of the city by the indigenous population, rural exodus, new cultural and linguistic policies, etc.), whether these classifications might not need to be re-examined in order to see to what extent they have been affected and what the nature of this effect is at the micro-dialectological level, i.e. at the level of a given language.

⁵ This article is the first in a series of studies that we are devoting to a number of issues concerning Arabic dialectology in the Maghreb.

² For elements of understanding of this process of Arabisation of the Berber land, see Chaker (1989).

³ See in particular C. Taine-Cheikh (2000; 2017) for a more detailed presentation of the areas in which Arabic is spoken.

This will serve a dual purpose: firstly, as the system on which our transcription is based, and secondly, as a means of understanding this language and the variety it represents, or more precisely, the points of variation it contains.

This is all the more useful as the academic sources we have been able to access through the various portals available on the Internet do not reveal any work carried out in this direction on the variety under study.

Despite the heterogeneous nature of the population, it has attracted (a mixture of nomadic Arabs, Kabyles and Chaouias)⁶, the town of Sétif, built ex nihilo by the French occupying army on the site of the ruins of ancient Sitifis⁷, is what we can currently call an Arabic-speaking city. This means that the vehicular language for direct contact between strangers is Arabic⁸. An Arabic whose strong distinctive features, especially the phonetic ones, which characterize it⁹, places

⁶ From a historical point of view, this city represents an Arabic-speaking linguistic gap in the Berber-speaking continuum that constitutes the two great Berber-speaking masses of Kabylia and Aurès. A. Basset, cited by Cantineau (1938: 852), had already pointed out that barely 25 km separated Kabylia and the commune of Takitount du Chaouia from the commune of Saint-Arnaud (El Eulma). This led him to conclude that “it is probable that, at some point, an isthmus of Berber dialects separated the Arabic dialects of Sétif, Bordj and Hodna from those of the north of the department: it would be important to know when this isthmus broke”. One only has to look at the linguistic similarities between the Berber speakers of the former “colonial commune mixte” of Takitount and those of the Chaouia region to easily classify them among the latter (Rabdi 2004).

⁷ By royal order of February 11, 1847, which stated in its first article that “a European town will be created in the Sétif camp, which will take the name of Sétif.

⁸ However, once contact has been established, it is very common for communication to be established in Kabyle if an affinity is found.

⁹ The g-sound pronunciation of the qaf of Classical Arabic, as opposed to the dull q pronunciation (or ƙ, k, ʾ) of sedentary speakers, and the preservation of interdental (Taine-Cheikh 2000; 2017).

its variety in the Bedouin type, typical of the highlands¹⁰, which, by virtue of some features, would be included in type B of the Cantineau’s classification (1938), that of the “small nomads, almost entirely sedentary (like those of the Chécliff plain)”, to use the words of Catherine Taine-Cheikh (2017: 4).

3. Results

3.1. Phonetic inventory

3.1.1. Vowels

The vowel system of the speech under study takes the form of a low oral triptych¹¹

a
u i

which is opposed by a counterpart of vowels with the same place of articulation, but of a longer duration:

ā
ū ī

The timbre of these vowels can experience alterations in the chain, but which do not go beyond the combinatorial phonetic framework:

- [a]/[ā] in contact with an emphatic¹² are pronounced [ɑ]/[ā] (back vowel)¹³: [kræ] “rental, he rented” vs [brɑ] “he has healed”; [zār] “he paid a devotional visit” vs [zæd] “he added, he was born”; [ʃlāt] “prayer” vs [slæh] “weapon”;
- [u]/[ū] are closed or shortened in contact with an emphatic or an uvular: [ʃūg]

¹⁰ It should be noted, however, that the Arabic spoken by the Setifians shows a number of developments in relation to the “Bedouin” standard, but given the limitations of this work, we will leave it to future studies to draw the necessary conclusions.

¹¹ This system has remained the same, from Semitic to current Arabic dialects, including ancient Arabic (Cantineau 1960: 91).

¹² See Lacey (2013) for a detailed review of the notion of emphasis, particularly in Arabic.

¹³ Chaker (1996) makes the same analysis for Kabyle dialect in the following terms: “De même, dans ces deux unités lexicales, la voyelle médiane, très fortement postériorisée et ouverte (à noter en fait [ɑ], [ɑdɑ:r] résulte directement de l’influence de la consonne emphatique précédente”.

- “souk” vs [suq], [ḍolm] “injustice” vs [ḍolm], [ṣoṛra] “navel” vs [surra], [koṛh] “hatred” vs [koṛh], [moxx] “brain” vs [muxx], [xobz] “bread” vs [xobz];
- [i] is opened after an emphatic: [šreṭ]¹⁴ “esparto rope”;
 - Long vowels are shortened in certain contexts: before a gemine: [ngūl] “I say” vs [ngol-lək] “I tell you”; before another long, accented vowel: [kāyən] “there is” vs [kaynīn] “there is” (+ pl.);
 - Short vowels are ultra-shortened before a gemine: [mṛacc] “watering can”.

Next to this triptych, there is a silent [ə], corresponding in particular to [a] or [i] of Classical Arabic, for certain forms and in certain contexts:

<i>bərd</i>	vs	<i>bard</i>	“cold”
<i>bəddəl</i>	vs	<i>baddala</i>	“to change, he changed”
<i>xarəḡ</i>	vs	<i>xariḡ</i>	“going out, out of”

All these questions concerning the vowel system would require a separate study. It is not necessary for the remainder of this work. They have been touched on here only for illustrative purposes, and in-depth examination will be reserved for a future article.

3.1.2. Consonants¹⁵

FRICATIVES

bilabial	[m]
dental	[n]
interdentals	[d], [t], [ḍ]
labiodentals	[v], [f]
vibrant	[r], [ṛ]
sibilants	[z], [s], [ʒ], [š]
laterals	[l], [ɭ]
palatals	[ʒ], [š]
velar	[ŋ]

¹⁴ As well as for the Kabyle [i] (Idem).

¹⁵ The subscribed point marks emphasis or pharyngealization; The underscore marks spirantization; The superscript [w] marks labiovelarization; Conditional or contextual realizations, particularly in a pharyngealized environment, are not mentioned in this inventory. We have, for example, for a word like [ššwab], chosen to mark only the phonological pharyngealized [š], the emphatic pronunciation [b] of [b] being context-induced. Idem for [m] in [šum].

uvulars	[ḡ], [x]
pharyngals	[ʔ], [h]
laryngeal	[h]
OCCLUSIVES	
bilabials	[b], [p], [b]
dentals	[d], [t], [ḍ], [ṭ]
velars	[g], [k]
uvular	[q]
laryngeal	[ʔ]

LABIO-VELARS

bilabials	[b ^w], [p ^w], [m ^w]
labiodental	[f ^w]
velars	[g ^w], [k ^w]
uvular	[q ^w]

AFFRICATES

palatals	[ḡ], [č]
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3.2. The glottal occlusive consonant¹⁶

With the exception of the interjection *’ahha’* *’ah*¹⁶ “no: negative answer to a closed question”, already noted by Marçais (1908: 5) for rural Oranais speakers, it is traditionally¹⁷ considered that the glottal ʔ (also known as The glottal stop or glottal plosive; *hamza* همزة in Arabic, or simply glottal occlusive consonant as advocated by Cantineau (1960: 77), is not attested in the dialect of Sétif, which thus joins the other Maghrebi dialects (MD) on one of the most important points where the evolution¹⁸ of the latter is expressed in relation to Classical Arabic (CA). This means that if in CA, we have an indefinite word such as *ašl* أصل which is opposed to its definite counterpart *al-’ašl* الأصل, thus positing the existence of a radical consonant ʔ (attested in all the syllabic posi-

¹⁶ With the different timbres that the vowel [a] can take on depending on the intonation. Kabyle has a short variant *aha’* “no!” reported by Chaker (1984: 86).

¹⁷ I use the adverb “traditionally” to contrast this situation with the various innovations we’ll see later.

¹⁸ It may be that this is not a question of evolution but of a feature inherited from the languages of the first Arabic-speaking populations to arrive in north-west Africa in the eleventh century.

tions that any consonant can assume), in MD we would have the forms *aʃl* vs *l-aʃl*¹⁹ which clearly show the disappearance of the hamza in the definite, the initial vowel in the indefinite being no more than a simple vowel attack. Moreover, this phenomenon does not affect only one grammatical category nor is it reserved to a single position in the word; it manifests itself everywhere wherever the *hamza* occurs, i.e. either in the initial, final or medial position.

In the initial position, we can cite several examples²⁰ of this development, which affects all categories of the lexicon (nouns, verbs, grammatical) and manifests itself in different ways:

- Disappearance of the consonant ' with retention of an initial vowel as a vocalic onset or in a prosthetic function after the definite article

Class. Arab.	Arab. spoken in Sétif	
<i>al-'ism</i>	<i>asm/lasm</i>	"noun"
<i>al-'arnab</i> ²¹	<i>arnab/larnab</i>	"rabbit"
<i>al-'ahadd</i>	<i>lhadd</i> ²²	"Sunday"
<i>al-'itnayn</i>	<i>lātnīn</i>	"Monday"
<i>al-'arbi 'ā'</i>	<i>larāb 'a</i>	"Wednesday"
<i>al-'awwal</i>	<i>lāwwāl</i> ²³	"first"

¹⁹ William Marçais, in his work cited above, provides a useful explanation of this point and gives a good presentation-classification.

²⁰ Some of which are borrowed from Marçais for comparative purposes.

²¹ Although in Sétif, the most commonly used form is *rinuba* "rabbit" / *rrinuba* (+ def.) vs *ranib/rranib* "rabbits". There is also a variant *niruba/nirub* (with tension on the initial consonant in the definite form).

²² For the names of the days of the week, the indefinite form, which is used in a few expressions, is very rare compared to the definite form. For example, it is used, in an expression like *tnīn u tlāta* "Monday and Tuesday", *sābt u ḥadd* "Saturday and Sunday".

²³ The *l* of *lāwwāl* no longer functions as a definite marker, that it does not oppose its absence; it has been lexicalised and is part of the root of words with a "lunar" initial, such as *lxāmās* "fifth", *l'āšer* "tenth". For other ordinal adjectives, lexicalisation is expressed by the retention of the

<i>al-'amāna</i>	<i>amāna/lamāna</i>	"deposit" ²⁴
<i>al-'imām</i>	<i>imām/limām</i>	"imam"
<i>al-'ahmar</i>	<i>aḥmaṭ²⁵/laḥmar</i>	"red"

- Disappearance of the first syllable (' + vowel)

<i>'iblis</i>	<i>blīs</i>	"Satan"
<i>'ibra</i>	<i>bra</i>	"needle"
<i>'istixbār</i>	<i>stixbār</i>	"prelude to a song"
<i>'amāra</i>	<i>māra</i>	"scar, mark, trace"
<i>'adār</i>	<i>dār</i>	"he did"
<i>'a ṭa</i>	<i>ṭa</i>	"he gave"
<i>'oṣbo</i>	<i>ṣb^wə</i>	"finger"
<i>'asad</i>	<i>ṣayd²⁶</i>	"lion"
<i>'aktar</i>	<i>ktar</i>	"more"
<i>'aqall</i>	<i>qall</i>	"less"
<i>'ila</i>	<i>l</i>	"to, towards"

- Disappearance of the consonant ' and its replacement by a semi-vowel *w* or *y*

<i>'udun</i>	<i>wdānn</i>	"ear"
<i>'ams</i>	<i>āmās/yāmās²⁷</i>	"yesterday"
<i>'ay ṣay</i>	<i>wāš</i>	"what"
<i>'ayn</i>	<i>wīn</i>	"when"

In the medial position, the disappearance of the hamza is:

- Compensated by a vocal lengthening

geminate "solar" initial: *ttāni* "second", *ttālāt* "third", *rrābā* "fourth", etc. up to ten.

²⁴ Unlike *māra*, the noun *amāna* retains its initial *a*, probably to compensate for the loss of a radical. Thus, the original verb *āmana* "to believe someone" is a reading of a verb *'a'mana* which had two glottal radicals followed by a consonant whose second *hamza* is deleted with lengthening of the first syllable: *'āmana* (Cantineau 1960: 82-83).

²⁵ Unlike its suburbs or its region in general (for example El Ouricia, Ain El Hedjar, Bougaâ etc.), where it is the variant *ḥmarṛ* that we find, the city of Sétif has maintained the initial *a* in a prosthetic function for names of color. On the other hand, in the same context, for a personal name like *Aḥmed*, the fall is total and gives *Ḥmædd*.

²⁶ The emphasis of the *s* seems to us to be of "expressive" origin here, like that of the *b* of *laḥḥa*.

²⁷ The retention of initial vowels seems to be prosthetic in the face of this short radical. For Marçais, the initial vowel to which the *hamza* was reduced was retained because it carried the accent (Marçais 1908: 19). This example also illustrates well the case where the *hamza*, when it carries the accent, can give rise to a semi-vowel (*Ibid*: 20).

<i>ra'y</i>	<i>rāy</i>	"opinion"
<i>fa'</i>	<i>fāl</i>	"presage"
<i>mu'min</i>	<i>mūmān</i>	"believer"
<i>dī'b</i>	<i>dīb</i>	"jackal, wolf"
<i>sa'ala</i>	<i>sāl</i> ²⁸	"to question"

- Compensated or replaced by a semi-vowel:

<i>mā'ida</i>	<i>māyda</i>	"low table"
<i>mal'ān</i>	<i>mālyān</i>	"full"
<i>malā'a</i>	<i>mlāya</i>	"women's veil" ²⁹
<i>taṭā'aba</i>	<i>ttāwāb</i>	"to yawn"
<i>fu'ād</i>	<i>fuwwād</i>	"Fouad (person's name)"
<i>la'ama</i>	<i>lāyām</i>	"gather, collect"
<i>su'āl</i>	<i>swāl</i>	"question"
<i>fu'ād</i>	<i>ff'ād</i>	"viscera" ³⁰

These phenomena affect both simple and compound words:

<i>minn'ayn</i>	<i>mnīn</i>	"from where"
<i>minn'ayn</i>	<i>mnīn</i>	"from where"
<i>ila'ayn</i>	<i>lwīn</i>	"whereto"
<i>ibnu'ādām</i>	<i>bnādām</i>	"human being" ³¹
<i>'awwala'ams</i>	<i>wāllāmnāmās</i>	"the day before yesterday"

In the final position, although it seems, as Marçais (1908: 8) concluded, that the glottal consonant have purely and simply disappeared in all cases from dialectal usage,

<i>xabba'a</i>	<i>xabba</i>	"he hid"
<i>samā'</i>	<i>sma</i>	"sky"
<i>dawā'</i>	<i>dwa</i>	"medicine"
<i>šifā'</i>	<i>ššfa</i>	"healing, recovery"
<i>labu'a</i>	<i>laḥḥa</i>	"lioness"

there remain, however, a few examples where it has been replaced or compensated by a semi-vowel³².

<i>bakka'</i>	<i>bekkay</i> ³³	"weeper, crybaby, whinger"
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²⁸ This lengthening is due, in our view, to the meeting of the two short [a] of *sa'ala* after the disappearance of the glottal consonant.

²⁹ Worn especially in eastern Algeria.

³⁰ Unlike *Fu'ad* (a person's name that evolved into *Fuwwad*), the same name, as a common noun, evolved into *ff'ad*. This is the rule for labial articulation sounds followed by *u*: *mus* vs *mmwas* "knife(s)", *futa* vs *ff'att* "towel(s)".

³¹ (lit. son of Adam).

³² Marçais (1902: 21) reported for the dialect of Tlemcen such a case with *bennay* vs *banna'* "mason".

³³ Apart from this rare case of *bekkay*, the dialect under study has a good number of occurrences built on the same *cc'l'c'ay* agential noun pattern - a

<i>daw'</i>	<i>daww</i> ³⁴	"light"
<i>šay'</i>	<i>šiy</i>	"thing ; fortune (wealth)"
<i>qay'</i>	<i>qayy</i>	"vomit"

4. After weakening and disappearance, re-appearance

So far, there is nothing special in the evolution³⁵ of *hamza* in our language, nothing that has not already been reported for other Maghrebi dialects (Cantineau 1960: 76-85; Marçais 1908: 5-9).

Moreover, this phenomenon of *hamza* lenition is not a new fact in Arabic. It has been noted by Arabic grammarians as a dialectal variant attested since the pre-Islamic period, and its "realisation in glottal attack was rather characteristic of Bedouin tribes, such as *Tamīm*, while sedentary tribes, such as *Quraj* (In Mecca), transform it into a long vowel in the imperfect tense: *ja'kulu* → *jākulu*" (Ouerhani 2009: 77). In his *Traité de philologie arabe*, Henry Fleisch devotes about twenty pages to it (98-116). With many references to the works of the first Arabist grammarians (Sibawayhi, Ibn Ya'īš, az-Zamahšari, etc.), he shows us how this phonetic phenomenon required a great effort of improvement of the Arabic writing in order to mark it at the level of spelling, giving rise to a profusion of forms determined by the place and the environment of the *hamza* in the word. This is despite the fact that, as we also learn from this work (p. 100), the first transcription of the Quran

fairly productive pattern, moreover, with triconsonantals - without any attested classical finale ' correspondents, from which they would be the evolution. We can cite for instance: *kerray* "tenant" from the root *kry*; *ferray* "who meddles in what does not concern him" from the root *fry*. This leads us to believe that the correspondence between *bekkay* and *bakka'* is may be nothing more than a morphological coincidence.

³⁴ In this case, the gemination of *w* in *daww* and *y* in *šiy* is, in our opinion, the reminiscence of the disappeared glottal consonant being replaced by a semi-vowel.

³⁵ In oriental languages, this evolution of *hamza* towards the complete collapse into vernacular language is not so radical (Cantineau 1960: 84).

(*Corpus* of Abu Bakr), in accordance with the place of its genesis (Mecca and Medina), made the choice of a phonetic transcription that ignored this weak consonant.

Concerning modern Arabic dialects, the fate of this glottal has been well summarized by Cantineau (1960: 84) from weakening to the transition to *w* or *y* in the oriental dialects, to total weakening in the Maghreb, leading to its pure and simple disappearance.

However, the data in our corpus reveal trends that deserve to be taken into account: the *ʾ*, thought to have disappeared, reappears, thereby acquiring the phonemic status of a consonant in its own right. What Marçais (1908: 6) described as a difference in register between the vernacular and the literary language, in the use or non-use of this variant, has become more pronounced and is now taking on a new dimension, particularly in the dialect under study, which affects all registers and is due to a number of factors:

4.1. School or education in general

Since the general education was provided in Classical Arabic, and its spread in all socio-professional spheres was encouraged by all means, it is natural that lexical neologism in general (innovation, borrowing, etc.) took place essentially under the pressure of this strong Arabisation presence. Thus, alongside dialectal words, which normally evolved according to the above-mentioned cases, classical variants were integrated, often in opposition to the former, to the point of forming minimal pairs with them:

masʾala “mathematics problem” beside *msāla* “case, question”

qirāʾa “reading (school activity)” beside *qʾrāya* “reading, studies”

In addition to these paired units, other words from the scholarly language, for which the dialect has no modern equivalent, are adopted:

muʾāmaṛa “plot”, *ʾustād* “professor”, *ʾuslūb* “style”, *muʾtamār* “congress”;

There are also those that have lost their ‘normal’ dialectal form in current generations:

lʾislām “Islam” instead of *lislām*

ʾaddān “he (the muezzin) made his call to

prayer” instead of *ddānn*

4.2. Post-independence political and cultural orientation

The cultural and educational policies defined and implemented by the government since independence have also had a strong influence on linguistic practices³⁶. This means encouraging the broadcasting of artistic productions (television series, songs, films, etc.) brought from Arab countries. This openness will be reflected in the personal names, where the proper names introduced by the Middle Eastern television’s series will tend to reintroduce this consonant without necessarily putting it in competition with the dialectal zero (with no possible dialectal variation, except perhaps for some finales)³⁷ *ʾabd ʾəl ʾilāh*, *luʾayy*, *ʾabdərṛa ʾūf*, *wāʾəl*, *wiʾām*, *ʾumayma*³⁸.

Whereas before, in the first decades of independence, we had for example *Ḥmādd* for *Aḥmed*, *Fuwwād* for *Fuʾād*, from now on it is *Aḥmed* and *Fuʾād* which are used. Young people no longer seem to “know/recognise” *Fuwwād*, and *Ḥmādd* would sound like an old man’s name, old-fashioned to a young

³⁶ There are some very interesting sociolinguistic and micro-sociolinguistic issues to be addressed here, for those wishing to study the impact on Algerian speech of the introduction of literary Arabic by schools, and of standard Arabic and Middle Eastern varieties by the media.

³⁷ For example, *alāʾ*, *ʾalāʾ*, which, unlike proper nouns such as *wafa*, *hana*, *sana*, which have the same *ʾaCāʾ* pattern, have not experienced this disappearance in their final, thus escaping this phenomenon which also affects all common nouns with a glottal final. In our opinion, this could be explained on a semantic level: *ʾala* “lazy, idle, living at the expense of, burden” and *ʾala* “machine, tool” are pejorative enough not to go into this form.

³⁸ However, even in this context, we can have a very modern proper noun such as *mūman* instead of *muʾman*. This preservation of the dialectal form is perhaps due to the age of this word as a noun and adjective meaning “believer, pious” and to its strong religious connotations.

person.

But as long as they do not produce derivational families, they will function as brand names pronounced as they are (as for those containing the foreign sounds p / v or x), but not destructuring the system.

On the other hand, a word like *mu'āmaṛa* "plot" is not an isolated entity; it has a normal inflectional morphology (plural *mu'āmaṛāt*, definite *lmu'āmaṛa*) and a derivational morphology that gives it a related verbal *t'āmaṛ* "to plot" which in turn is normally conjugated *t'āmaṛat*, *t'āmaṛtu*, *tāt'āmaṛ*, etc. This formation of a derivational and inflectional family is an important and real step in the confirmation of borrowed forms and their definitive integration. However, the retention of this reintroduced consonant concerns much more the medial position, a comfortable place where even in dialectal forms, its disappearance has not been total (compensatory lengthening (*taxfif*), appearance of a semi-vowel (*ibdal*)), or initial position, where it acts as a prosthesis in short radicals³⁹, such as *'imla* "dictation" which has kept the initial *hamza* bearing the accent and lost the final.

This leads us to conclude that, over and above the morpho-phonological rules that govern their operation, it is much more sociolinguistic factors that determine these developments, since these innovations are socially confined to certain sectors with a high level of neologisms, and to a certain class (having attended public schools in independent Algeria, or having access to information through the Arabic-language media).

5. Conclusion

We said earlier that this language is one of the least favored of descriptive linguistics studies. This does not mean that the fate of the most other languages is any different. We know of only a few. On the basis of this observation, we thought that the best way to introduce the study of this language would be to subject it to a classification grid (in

this case, D. Caubet's questionnaire, cited in the bibliography). We had to give up because we noticed from the beginning that the examination of these features revealed realities which went beyond the framework of the said grid and did not necessarily follow its regularity for all the points. In fact, the features of several types can be mixed together in one type or those of the same type can exclude each other.

We have therefore decided to avoid the problem of the validity of the criteria for this questionnaire, or more generally of this approach to dialectology, and to direct our research in a much more descriptive direction, as in the early days of Arabic dialectology in North-West Africa (detailed studies or simply notes on features which we feel require a special approach because of their originality or discriminatory nature), adding elements of sociolinguistic interpretation.

Among these is the *hamza* - a consonant that has almost completely disappeared from modern dialects, notably Maghrebi dialects, if it ever existed there at all, unlike in Quranic or Classical Arabic, or even Standard Arabic, where it has a certain phonological status.

This work has thus enabled us to test the data of our language, unknown to Arabic dialectology, in order to verify how this weakening took place. On the other hand, we have brought to light a second phase in this evolutionary process: the reappearance of the same *hamza*, thought to have disappeared, in the Maghreb dialects, as a "resurgence" induced, among other things, by the introduction of standard Arabic into everyday life after several centuries of a completely different sociolinguistic configuration.

Given the limitations of this work, it could be useful to carry out other multidisciplinary studies on this subject, this time with a much larger corpus, with a more diverse public in terms of age, cultural level, gender, etc., but above all to ensure that we follow step by step this phenomenon of dialect evolution and the constraints, especially political and linguistic, that determine it.

³⁹ Unlike long radicals such as *stixbār* "prelude", *stidṛāk* "catching up", *štimā'* "meeting" vs *istixbār*, *istidṛāk*, *ištimā'* in classical Arabic.

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