Touat Women's Idiosyncratic Recitation of the Quran:
A Sociophonetic Variation

Dr.Bachir Bouhania
University of Adrar
bouhania@yahoo.fr

ملخص

يتمحور هذا المقال حول ظاهرة سوسيوصوتية في قراءة القرآن النسوية بمنطقة توات بالجنوب الجزائري, و الذي يسمى بالتصحيف. يتمثل هذا التصحيف في إستبدال حرف القرآن بأخرى, مثلا حرف 'خ' بحرف 'ح' و 'أ' بحرف 'ع' و 'ث' بحرف 'س' و حرف 'ذ' بحرف 'ز'. نستطيع أن نقول أن هذا الإستبدال أمر صوتي طبيعي يعتمد على إستعمال الألفون في النطق بالكلمات, لكن الحقيقة هي أن بعض الكلمات لها معنى أخر لم يتم إستبدال الحرف الأصلية بأخرى. يعتمد الباحث على تاريخ الجزائر القديم و الحديث للبحث عن أسباب هذه الظاهرة, و يصل إلى النتيجة أن هذا الإستبدال يمكن أن يكون أثر القراءات القرآنية لسكان منطقة توات اليهود الذين إعتنقوا الإسلام, و أصبحوا أئمة و مقرئين بمساجد المنطقة و الذين تابعوا تحفيظ القرآن بهذه الطريقة الخاطئة للنساء خاصة. يعتمد البحث على تسجيلات أجريت مع عدد من النساء المتمدرسة والغير متمدرسة بمنطقة توات الوسطى, كما تم إستعمال الاستبيانات كسند ثاني للبحث.

Abstract

Touat women present a sociophonetic variation when reciting the verses of the Holy Book. They substitute /ħ,ʕ,s,z/ for CA/MSA phonemes /x,ʔ,θ,ð/, respectively. The most noticeable substitution is that of /ħ/ for /x/ found only in the words 'created', 'creature', etc. Our hypothesis is that, although the natives attend the Quranic schools, 'Zawayas' at an early age (4-5 year), the acquisition/learning of CA/MSA consonants and vowels is impeded by their local phonetic and phonological levels. This may also be due to the fact that most inhabitants are originally sub-Saharans (descendants of former slaves brought from *Bilad-as-Sudan* to the Touat) rather than Arabs. The other probable cause is that some surface level substitutions, /ħ/ for /x/ in particular, are linguistic remnants of ancient times. That is to say that former Touat Jews, who embraced Islam and became Imams, were characterized by an idiosyncratic recitation of the Quran. This last has survived in the speech of old women and is still active nowadays. In the present paper, we analyse and report the results of a field-research undertaken in the south of the Touat i.e.: the Tidikelt. The sample consists of old literate and illiterate women. The techniques of investigation are the questionnaires and the tape-recordings.

Introduction

This paper describes a sociophonetic phenomenon noticed in the speech of old Touat women while reciting the holy verses of the Quran. They alternate /ħ,ʕ,s,z/ (ح,ع,س,ز) with /x,ʔ,θ,ð/ (خ,أ,ث,ذ), respectively. (see annex n°1 for the phonetic symbols)

We contend that this variation is due to various causes, among which the impact of local phonologies on the acquisition/learning of CA/MSA phonemes, the non-Arab origin of the informants, and the impact of old historical events, such as migrations and settlements, on the linguistic behaviour of the natives. To tackle this topic, a sociohistorical description of the area and its inhabitants is necessary.

1. Socio-historical glimpse

The Touat is 1500 kilometers far from the capital-city, Algiers. It is a rural area which principal crop is the date-palms agriculture, the camel- and the sheep-rearing being a secondary source of wealth. The first inhabitants of the Touat are the Berber Zenetes and the Tuaregs; the former used to live in the Ksours (garden-oases) of the Sahara (A. Basset 1937 and P. Laureano 1991) having for principal harvest barley, dates, millet, sorghum, and wheat. The latter are the desert-roaming nomads, also referred to as the 'Mulattamun' (or the veiled) (G.Marçais, 1946) whose livelihood depends largely on camel-rearing. They spoke/speak Zenete and Tamachek, respectively. These varieties of Tamazight are still in use in the Touat, and represent the "Berber substratum" (Heath, 2002) which has an impact on the lexical, phonological, semantic, and syntactic levels of Touat Spoken Arabic (henceforth TSA).

In the past, the Touat played the role of a refuge to the Jews of Cyrenaica and the Fezzan in Libya, to the Zenetes, to the Almoravids, and to the Muslims such as Imam Abdelkarim El-Maghili. Many overpowered dynasties found that the Touat was a suitable hiding place, a safe haven, and a relay to the pursued and the defeated people.

At another level, the Touat was an important passageway for the caravans coming from the Maghrib and Ifriqya (Libya and Tunisia) heading towards *'Bilad-as-Sudan'*. From Bejaia and Tlemcen, or Marrakech and Fez people transited by the Touat to arrive at Gao in Mali or to reach the Niger bend. It was also an important converging point for the Hajjis (pilgrims) travelling to Mecca from Mauritania and West Africa.

The gold-copper-tissue-salt- and ostrich feathers merchants could find the necessary supplies of vegetables, meat and water in the Touat. It was vital to traverse that area to escape the rudeness and hostility of the Sahara. The slave routes also transited by the Touat, where the caravans exchanged or bargained their merchandise for food, cloths, and particularly for salt which was rare in the African markets.

The Touat society is composed of a multiplicity of elements different not only linguistically, but also racially. Those various peoples met on that region since hundreds of years under various circumstances: forced resettlement of the Jews; enslavement of African Sudanese; and the immigration of Arab tribes under the aegis of the Muslim conquests. The need for knowledge of the community's history resides in the fact that history, sometimes, unveils the network ties that induce and account for language change and variation. As E.F.Gautier puts it: "Here and there, it is the past that makes the present intelligible..." (Larnaude, 1949:167) (Translation mine).

The first wave of Jews who reached the Touat consisted of people who fled from Cyrenaica (in Libya) towards the south of Central and Occidental Sahara to escape the punishments of the Roman Emperor Trajan. He ordered their repression and dispersion throughout Africa after the struggles they undertook in Jerusalem. (A.Chouraqui, 1952:23)[1]

---

[1] Gautier (1959:251) says: "The Touat was inhabited since the 2nd century of our era, by Jewish populations that founded flourishing colonies among which the most

By the end of the 5[th]century AD and the beginning of the 6th, the second wave of Jewish migrants headed towards the Sahara from Tingitan Mauritania (area of Tangiers in actual Morocco), where the Byzantines persecuted them and drove them out of their territories. They travelled towards 'Touat Palestine' looking for safety.[1]

In the Touat, they made of Tamentit their capital-city. Those Saharan Jews had power of control over several areas extending from Fenoughil (Tasfaout), to Tamest (Lahmar, Ghermianou, Temassekht), Zaouiat Kounta (Takhfift) and Reggane (Ait-Messaoud, Taourirt) in the middle-Touat; from Bouda (El-Mansour, Ghermali) to Tsabit (Kaberten) and Deldoul (Igosten) in the Touat, and finally to Timimoun (Tahtait) in the Gourara. (cf. Laureano P. 1991)

Many Berber Zenetes embraced Judaism. However, the Jews preferred to live in the Touat without any mixing with the local populations. They had their own social stratum: the Mhadjriya or 'the emigrants'. They were in tight relationship with the other Jewish communities of northern Africa, particularly those of southern Morocco and the Djebel Nefoussa in southern Tunisia. (cf. Attamantiti (manuscript); Mammeri, M. 1984)

The first Arabs who settled on the area (the Baramika, the Guedoua, the Khenafsa, and the Meharza) were banished from Iraq by Caliph Harun Er-Rashid. They established themselves in various places of the Touat in the 10th c. AD. The Bani-Hilal and Bani-Sulaim came from Upper Egypt and invaded the whole North Africa in the 12th c. AD; they reached the Touat in the same period of time. As concerns the Chorfas, they migrated to the Touat in the 16th c. AD coming from the

---

important was, in the 4th century, Tamentit." (Translation mine)
- On page 23, Chouraqui (1952) explains that: "From that epoch -118 AD- dates a new contribution to population of the Jewish colonies of Caesarean Province and, towards the south, through the Sahara, from oasis to oasis, the arrival of the first Jews, probably till Niger." (Translation mine)
[1] Maarouf (1997 :164) adds that: "another local indication, described by Watin, reports a second Jewish emigration wave in that 'Touatian Palestine')

Occidental Maghrib, actual Morocco. (cf. Martin, A. 1906; Laroui A. 1977)

2. Quranic education

During the French colonisation of Algeria (1830-1962), Touat women were not sent to the French formal schools. Hence, most of them are illiterate or less-educated. Yet, it is worth pointing out that, at the age of 4-5 year-old they attended the Quranic classes in the Holy shrines, 'the Zawayas'. They were taught how to write Arabic and some verses of the Holy Book on slates. When they were aged 6-7 year-old, the young girls learnt the basic principles of Arabic grammar as well as long Surahs, 'Holy Chapters of the Quran' (from 'An-Nass' (chapter 114) to 'Al-Mulk' (chapter 67).

Nowadays, an important inequity between the males and the females attending the Quranic schools can be noticed. The number of learners is not identical, for the men are more numerous than the women. As an instance, the following graphs show that the total number of female learners is less important than that of the males. The random sample (n= 44, 17 females and 27 males) is taken from Adrar-city; that is, all the informants are urban dwellers.

Graphs n°1 and 2 illustrate the discrepancy as regards the number of learners. They show that the category of people born after the independence of the country (45-55 year-old, n=31, 17 F + 14 M) are more numerous than those born before, and have more opportunities to sit for the Quranic classes. The charts do also reveal that the men born during the colonisation (55-65 year-old, n=11; 65-75 year-old, n=02), are more important than the women in attending the Quranic schools (n=00).

Graph n°1 :Males' attendance of Quranic Schools, Adrar-city
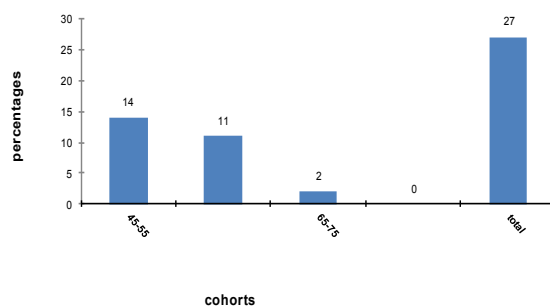
Graph n°2:Females' attendance of Quranic Schools, Adrar city
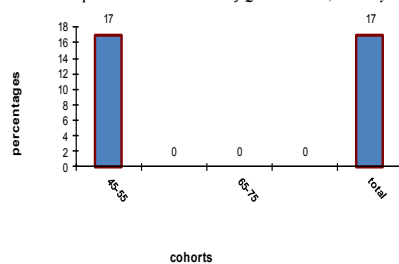
These figures explain the women's miscellaneous recitation of the Quran: they are not or less-educated. Hence, they do not "know" (Haeri, 2000) the standard forms, as most of them do not go to formal schools (Dekkak, 1986:15).

From a sociolinguistic angle, the women are either 'innovative' or 'conservative' (Haeri, 2000:68) in their use of language. Mispronouncing the verses of the Quran gives their recitation a

14

different style compared to that of the males. This sociophonetic variation underlies a sociolinguistic phenomenon, and needs a theoretical background to account for it.

3. Theory and Literature

Around the mid-20th century, *Sociophonetics* emerged as a new linguistic field essentially in the studies of phoneticians (cf. Deshaies-Lafontaine 1974; Dressler & Wodak 1982; Ohala 1990) who tried to give an explanation to phonetic/phonological variation related to dialects, styles of speech and/or human groupings entwined with social structure. Sociophonetics is principally an experimental discipline, which principal scope is to uncover the relationships between phonetic variation and social organization. It uses phonetics as its door to language, language variation, and language change. The theoretical and experimental trends of both phonetics and sociolinguistics are well defined in the following words: "The sociolinguistic need to capture naturalistic situations can preclude replication of studies. At the same time, phoneticians' need for controlled experimentation of studies tend to preclude naturalness. The empirical challenge of Sociophonetics is to take the methodological concerns of both traditions seriously" (Thomas, 2011:03).

3.1 Sociophonetics

The first sociophonetic studies were more phonetic than sociolinguistic and dealt with variations due to gender, geography, social-class and social clique, as well as style. As far as sociophonetic variation is concerned, Foulkes and Docherty (2006: 411) explain that: "In our interpretation, it refers to variable aspects of phonetic or phonological structure in which alternative forms correlate with social factors". In other words, the *Sociophoneticians* work at the crossing point between the 'social' and the 'phonetic' to find the rationale underlying variation due to social stimuli. As such, the

Sociophoneticians "...straddle the divide between sociolinguistics and phonetics" (Jannedy & Hay 2006:2; Foulkes 2005:495)[1].

For Erik Thomas (2011:1), sociophonetics is: "the interface of sociolinguistics and phonetics. Its phonetic aspects are usually limited to practices of modern phonetics, including acoustic and articulatory analysis and speech perception experiments". Yet, *Experimental phonetics* does not deal with the social outcomes of speech, and does not explain how phonetic signals have an impact on the perception of 'social information', and this leads to shifts in perception and misunderstanding of the messages. On the same trend, Hay and Drager (2007: 90) declare that: "Phoneticians are increasingly turning to social variation as something that may hold the key to breakthroughs in the understanding of speech production and perception".

Socially conditioned variation is not only phonetically driven; i.e., it undergoes the effects of internal factors such as the position of the segments (consonants and vowels), but is also socially driven through external factors such as age, ethnicity, gender, and social class. The individual speakers sound different as a consequence of their biological features (the formant frequency F0, the vocal cords, the vocal tract length, etc.), and also because of social reasons such as age, gender, sex, as well as social status.

The speakers monitor their language styles according to their own identity, or according to the identity they want to reflect[2], or to position themselves within the layers of social hierarchy (cf. Schilling-Estes 2001 and 2002 for style-shifting or "phonostylistics"). They build their identities, and help constructing that of their society. This accounts for the fact that subtle and fine phonetic details become part

---

[1] Paul Foulkes (2005) says: "Sociophonetics is also used to refer to phonetically-oriented research in variationist sociolinguistics" (p: 495)

[2] Hay et al. (1999) say about speaking styles that they are the *"individual speakers'* creative and proactive deployment of various elements in their repertoires" (Hay et al. 1999).

-Johnstone (2007) says that style plays a "stance-taking" role during the speakers' use of style as a marker of identity and social structure.

of the child's language acquisition and internalized grammar; they help him categorise society and better the transmission of his messages.

3.2 Sociolinguistics

As a functional linguistic field and a "bottom-up"[1] discipline in favour of fieldwork techniques such as surveys and interviews, Sociolinguistics tries to give a cause for the social factors which either facilitate or inhibit speech perception and production. Sociolinguistics, from another side, circumscribes the study by delimiting both the variables and the *speech community* where variation occurs. It endeavours to find explanations to language structure, and language variation and change.

Sociolinguists (Labov 1966 and 1972; Trudgill 1986 and 2000; Johnstone 2000) give importance to the samples and the sampling techniques used in gathering the data. They always look for '*typical*' or '*representative*' speakers who yield significant results, particularly when 'stylistic' variation is concerned. Most of the time, the sociolinguists use convenience samples rather than random ones. Yet, they depend on *stratified* samples in which social class, age groups, sex and ethnic groups are often represented.

Various sociolinguistic/variationist and phonetic/phonological studies (such as the Northern Cities Chain Shift, cf. Labov 1972, 1994 & 2001) were undertaken, since social categories were found to co-vary with phonetic variants (Hay & Drager, 2007: 93). Sociolinguists found themselves short of explanations about the features that pattern phonetic variation, but the most important conclusion drawn out of their research studies is that: absence and/or presence of phonetic

---

[1] A « bottom-up » technique : « starts with a survey that yields a large amount of data, after which researchers construct a hypothesis that best matches the data » (Thomas, 2011 :02)

variants are revealing social traits.[1] Jannedy and Hay (2006:1) confirm this claim and state: "… a primary goal of the analyst is to document the ways in which variation in the speech stream indexes social meaning". In other words, the question is about how speakers vary their speech in a way that reflects both linguistic and social implications through the use of fine phonetic details. In the case under study, the question would be: "do TSA female speakers vary their recitation of the Quran to reflect a social attitude?" To answer this query, it is necessary to have a look at TSA phonetics.

4. TSA phonetic system

TSA is a Saharan Arabic dialect with relatively heavy Berber Zenete influences. It is a rural=bedouin language variety characterised by a frequent use of velar stop /g/. Under the pressure of the many north Algerian Arabic dialects brought by the internal migrants, it is on its route to become a sedentary=urban variety (cf. Benrabah 2007; Miller 2004 and 2007).

Among TSA vocalic characteristics is the substitution of [øː] for CA long /uu/. Unrounding TSA long /uu/ does not entail any "favourable consonant be adjacent, either labial /b, f, m/ or a velar/uvular obstruent /k, g, q, x, ɣ/, a pharyngeal /ħ, ʕ/, or a pharyngealised alveolar /ṭ, ḍ, ṣ, ẓ, r/"(Heath, 2002:192) as it is the case for Moroccan Saharan Arabic. It is centralised to [øː] independently of the phonetic environment and context of adjoining Cs. The next examples illustrate this fact:

[ʃhøːd] 'witnesses', [ʒøːʒ] 'two', [bdøːr] 'seeds', [xrøːʒ] 'exit', [ħødøːd] 'frontiers', [maʕløːm] 'known', [mæħsøːb] 'that is;

---

[1] Bayard et al. (2001) argue that "Listeners assign different personality traits, such as friendliness or reliability to speakers of different dialects" (Cited in Hay & Drager, 2007:96)."

counted', [maxlø:q] 'creature, created', [maljø:n] 'million', [maʕø:n] 'vessel', [ngø:l] 'I say', [saʒʕø:kəm] 'we encourage you', [nxaznø:h] 'we store it', [nxallø:ha] 'we leave it', [ndirø:ha] 'we do it'. [ljø:m] 'today', [dak lmaxlø:q] 'that person', [tʃø:f] 'you see', [jəffahmø:h] 'they understand him', [jdirø:h] 'they do it', [ngølø:h] 'we say it', [jəddø:həm] 'they take them', [jatˌtˌalʕø:] 'they go up', [wəldø:] 'his son', [əddø:la] 'the republic', [ntʃø:ma] 'you, plur.', [ngø:l] ' I say', [wənsəʒʕø:kəm] 'and we encourage you' [nsamʕø:ha] 'we hear it', [xrø:ʒ] 'exit'.

In the next sections, we focus on the variation that characterises women's speech with a particular attention to their recitation of the Quran. This linguistic phenomenon illustrates a sociophonetic variation, and is describable of stylistic variation in the speech of a particular group of people, i.e.: old Touat women. It is at the meeting point of two scientific disciplines: phonetics and sociolinguistics.

5. Samples and Methods

The female participants are twelve old women (n=12) who live in Aoulef, capital-city of the Tidikelt in Southern Touat. Some of them were born during the French colonisation; others after the independence of the country in 1962. The majority did not have any formal education. Nonetheless, some of them attended the Quranic schools. Hence, they are illiterate (n=6) or less-educated (n=6). Their sample breakdowns as follows:

Women	
Level/ Age	45 year-old and more
Educated	00

Less educated	06
Uneducated	06
Total	12

Different techniques are used in this research, among which the interviews, the questionnaires, and the tape-recorder. The old women could see the tape-recorder working. They recited the verses of the Quran which contained the consonants /ɣ/, /x/, and /ʔ/. They also filled the questionnaires with the help of a student from the department of English of the University of Adrar. The questionnaires concerned the misreading [tasħif] (Baalabaki, 2006) of the Quran and the mispronunciation of the aforementioned consonants.

Thanks to the questionnaires, the researcher avoids talking to women who live in a traditional and conservative society. It is worth noting that the questionnaires are given to the participants after the tape-recordings are done. In the next section, we deal with the details of the women's recitation of the Quran.

6. The results

The next tables give an account of the verses of the Quran which were recited by the women. The phonetic realizations of the phonemes /ð,x,ɣ,ʔ/ (أ، غ، خ، ذ) and their respective surface variants are also reported. We can notice that the variants are found in several Surahs and verses.

<u>-/x/→[ħ]</u>

The Surah(s): verse(s)	The variant realisations
Thunder (13:18)	[ʔam ʒaʕalu: lilla:hi ʃuraka:ʔa ħalaqu: kaħalqihi] أم جعلوا لله شركاء <u>حلقوا كحلقه</u>

The Mercy-giving (55:03)	[ħalaqa lʔinsa:na ʕallamahu lbaja:n]
The Mercy-giving (55: 12)	خَلَق الأنسان علمه البيان
	[ħalaqa lʔinsa:na minṣalṣɑ:lin kalfaxxa:r]
	خَلَق الأنسان من صلصال كالفخار

The words where the variation occurs are:

-/xalaqu:/➔   [ħalaqu:]   'they   created';   and /xalqihi/➔[ħalqihi] ' His creation'.

One can notice that the velar consonant /x/ is not realized as pharyngeal [ħ] in the word [kalfaxxa:r] where it is geminated. It is also worth noting that, all throughout the research data, this variant pronunciation of /x/ as [ħ] is found only in the verb /xalaqa/ `He created` and its derivatives in the women's recitation of the Quran.

From a semantic standpoint, the substitution of [ħ] for /x/, particularly in the verb /xalaqa/ (خلق←خَلَق), creates a discrepancy as the meaning is corrupted. For example, instead of saying "He created the man..." they would say *"He shaved the man" خلق الإنسان ➔ خَلَق الإنسان, and instead of "He created the man from clay..." they would say *"He shaved the man from clay". (خلق الأنسان من طين ➔ خَلَق الأنسان من طين)

According to Moscati et al. (1969: 75), the rare cases where [ħ] substitutes for /x/ are found in Hebrew, e.g.: ħamsa ← xamsa خمسة ➔ حمسة'five'. To account for this substitution in TSA, the history of the Touat tells us that the Jews lived in here for centuries. They were scattered around Timimoun in the north (Gourara), the Middle-Touat (Reggane), and the Tidikelt (Aoulef) in the south. Their social position

evolved thanks to commerce in gold and, most particularly in salt and water. When the Muslims got hold of the Touat, the Jews were spared death by paying a tribute `dimma`; through time they became allied of some Muslim leaders, and their powerful social position enabled them to be `Imams` and to lead the prayers for some times. (cf. Saadallah, 2005:79 ff).

This substitution, then, may be a linguistic relic of the former settlers who, if not exiled in Mali and Niger after their persecution by Imam Abdelkarim El-Maghili, embraced Islam and integrated the Arabo-muslim society of the Touat (cf. Moqaddem M.M, 2002; Oliel, J.1994). This recitation is, therefore, an artefact of a long tradition in the Touat area, particularly in the Tidikelt, based on a wrong pronunciation and leading to the tasHif 'misreading' of the Holy verses. Yet, this assertion needs a further research and a more accurate data basis to draw definite conclusions.

-/ʔ/→[ʕ]

The Surah(s): verse(s)	The variant realisations
Ya-Sin (36:01)	[ja:si:n walqurʕa:ni lħaki:m] يس و *القرعان* الحكيم
The Mercy-giving (55:1-2)	[ʔarraħma:n ʕallama lqurʕa:n] الرحمن علم *القرعان*
Glory to Your Lord in the Highest (87:06)	[sanuqriʕuka fala: tansa:] *سنقرعك* فلا تنسى

The variants are found in the following words:

-/lqurʔa:ni/→[lqurʕa:ni] 'the Quran';

-/sanuqriʔuka/→[sanuqriʕuka] 'We will teach you'.

Both pronunciations are found in everyday speech of the illiterate and less-educated women's as part of their "cultural" borrowings. For instance, they say: [naqra lqurʕæ:n] 'I read the Quran' and [natʕallam lqiræʕa] 'I learn reading '.

While reciting the Quran, the change from /ʔ/ to [ʕ] in the word 'Quran' does not have any semantic consequence; whereas, in the phrase [sanuqriʕuka] the meaning is not 'We will teach you' but *"We will *ring* you" سنقرئك ➔ سنقرعك

-/ʔ/ + /ð/ + /x/+/ɣ/ ➔[ʕ] +[z] + [ħ]

The Surah(s): verse(s)	The variant realisations
Glory to Your Lord in the Highest (87:02)	-[sabbiħ ʔisma rabbika ʔalʔaʕla llazi: ħalaqa fasawwa] سبح إسم ربكالأعلى *الزي* *حلق* فسوى
The Clot (or Read!) (96:01-02)	-[ʔiqraʕ bismi: rabbika llazi: ħalaq] إقراء بسم لبك *الزي* *حلق*
Dawn (113:02)	-[min ʃarri ma: ħalaq wa min ʃarri ʕa:siqin ʔiza: waqab] من شر ما *حلق* و من شر *عاسق* *أزا* وقب

The variant pronunciations are found in:

-/ʔiqraʔ/ ➔[ʔiqraʕ] 'Read!'

-/llaði:/ ➔ [llazi:] 'who'

-/xalaq/➔[ħalaq] 'He created'

-/ɣa:siqin/➔[ʕa:siqin] 'Sunset', and

23

-/ʔiða:/→ [ʔiza:] 'if'.

In the verse of 'The Clot', three variant pronunciations are used. The substitution of [ʕ] for /ʔ/ is found in word-medial and word-final positions: [lqurʕæ:n] 'the Quran' and [ʔiqraʕ] 'Read!' but not in initial-position, as in [ʔisma] `His name`. Yet, and as already stated above, the verb /ʔiqraʔ/ 'read' becomes 'ring' if [ʕ] substitutes for /ʕ/.

The surface realisation of [z] for /ð/ is characteristic of TSA, especially that of the most southern parts of the Touat area such as Aoulef, Aqabli and Tit in the Tidikelt. We can find the discrepancy of this pronunciation in the Surah "Al Nass", as in:

[qul ʔaʕu:zu birabbi nna:s] ← /qul ʔaʕu:ðu birabbi nna:s/

In CA, the meaning of the verb [ʔaʕu:zu] is (أعوز)'I require', while the verb [ʔaʕu:ðu] (أعوذ) is 'I seek refuge'. As such, the substitution of [z] for /ð/ in the Quran changes the semantic value of the verses and the Surahs, and leads to a complete tasHif of the Quran.

In this verse, the change from velar /ɣ/ to pharyngeal /ʕ/ in the word /ɣa:siqin/ `Sunset` → [ʕa:siqin] completely alters the meaning of the word for `Sunset`, which becomes a meaningless item.

On the other hand, the substitution of [ħ] for /x/ is found in the verb 'to create', only. This alternation confirms that the substitution of pharyngeal [ħ] for velar /x/ takes place in one word of the Quran, i.e.: `create` and its derivatives `creation` and `creature`. At this level, two questions impose themselves; the first would be "is this substitution

incidental or purposeful?" The second is "if this substitution is incidental, why does not it take place in all words containing the consonant /x/?"

c) The Results of the Questionnaires

The questionnaires of the women give various causes to their mispronunciations. Among these:

-Most of them are illiterate and learn the Quran through listening, only. So, they learn it the way it is taught to them; hence they are not responsible for these mispronunciations.

-The women argue that they do not have any opportunity to correct their mistakes. Socially, they think that their recitation of the Quran is right, since they find the same pronunciations in their own mother-tongue.

-More than that, the women think that since they are illiterate or less-educated, they do not respect the standard forms of the text as they do not evaluate them as neither right nor wrong. They do not correct their pronunciation of /x,ɣ,ʔ/ as they do not consider it a false phonetic realisation.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

Although it seems to be a surface trend, both men's and women's allophonic variation can be the starting point of a sound change which can lead to dialectal variation (cf. Ohala, 1997). Under the impact of social and/or psychological factors, sound changes may take place in one word, and then spread to others in the lexicon in an unpredictable way. At the final end, these sound changes would characterise the whole community's speech. Consequently, it is of paramount importance to study the Touat females' social and phonetic phenomenon of the variable and idiosyncratic recitation of the Quran; it

may be the tip of the iceberg which hides a vast and wide sociolinguistic change in progress.

TSA female's recitation of the Quran is dictated by a will to reflect their social identities and solidarity with or distance from the groups (e.g. Trudgill 1986), as well as to the social networks to which they belong (e.g. Milroy 1987, Eckert 2000). Our assumption is that old TSA women recite the Quran and vary the pronunciation of certain words and consonants to maintain a particular social image.

It may also be due to the fact that women are "innovative" (Haeri, 2000:68), since as illiterate women, they do not 'know' (Haeri, 2000) standard forms. Therefore, they innovate, and use other markers and linguistic features. This variation is also a marker of genderlect styles, for it sets off the females' speech from that of the males.

From another angle, one needs to ask an important question in relation to the substitution of [ħ] for /x/ in the words `create, creation, creature`; a substitution which is not found in other words containing the same consonant. One may ask why this change would take place in that word and not in others.

The fact that the Jews lived with the Arabo-muslims on the same area for centuries, became `Imams`, and substituted [ħ] for /x/ in their own mother-tongue, Hebrew, leads us to suppose that this change is a linguistic "fossilized" mispronunciation, carried on by the 'illiterate' women. But the fact that this mispronunciation still exists nowadays leads us also to wonder why the actual Quranic teachers do not correct it, as it is not only a mispronunciation but is also a complete change of meaning of one of the most sacred verses of the Quran.

References

- Attamantiti, Mohamed Ben Abdelkrim, Summary about the History of Tamantit and Touat, manuscript in Zawyat Al-Bakri, Tamentit, page1 recto.

-Baalabaki, R.2006. Visual Influences on Arabic Linguistic Sciences. *The Medieval History Journal* 9:36.

-Basset ,A.1937. 'Les Ksours berbérophones du Gourara'. *Revue Africaine*, n°81.

-Chouraqui, A. 1952. *Les juifs d'Afrique du nord*. Paris: PUF.

-Dekkak M, 1986, *Linguistic and Cultural Change and its Affects on Social Mobility*, in Etudes et Recherches en Linguistique et Sociolinguistique, n°7, Oran, Algeria.

-Deshaies-Lafontaine, D.1974. *A Socio-phonetic study of a Québec French community: Trois-Rivières*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University College, London.

-Dressler, W. U., & Wodak, R. (1982). Sociophonological methods in the study of sociolinguistic variation in Viennese German. *Language in Society* 11:339–370.

-Eckert, P. 2000. Linguistic variation as social practice. Oxford: Blackwell.

-Foulkes, P. 2005. Sociophonetics. In K.Brown (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics (2nd ed.)*.Elsevier: Amsterdam.

-Foulkes, P. & G.Docherty.2006. The social life of phonetics and phonology. *Journal of Phonetics* 34: 409-438.

-Gautier, E.F. 1908. *Sahara algérien*. Librairie Armand Colin : Paris.

-Haeri, N. 2000. "Form and Ideology: Arabic Sociolinguistics and beyond". *Annual Revue of Anthropology* 29:61-87.

-Hay, J. & K.Drager. 2007. Sociophonetics. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36: 89-103.

-Heath, J. 2002, Muslim and Jewish dialects of Moroccan Arabic. *Arabic linguistics series*, Clive Holes (ed.). Routledge Curzon.

-Jannedy, S. J. Hay. 2006. Modelling sociophonetic variation. *Journal of Phonetics 34*. Elsevier Ltd. pp: i-iv.

-Johnstone, B. 2000. *Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford university Press.

-Labov, W.1966. *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Washington, D.C: Center for Applied Linguistics.

-Labov, W.1972. *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

-Labov, W.1974. 'Linguistic Change as a Form of Communication'. In A.Silverstein (ed.) *Human communication: Theoretical Explorations*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

-Labov, W. 1994. Internal Factors. In *Principles of linguistic changes*, Vol. 1. Oxford: Blackwell

-Labov, W.2001. Social Factors. In *Principles of linguistic changes*, Vol. 2. Oxford: Blackwell.

-Larnaude, M. 1949. Emile-Félix Gautier (1864-1940). *Revue Africaine*, n°85.

-Laroui, A. 1977. The History of the Maghrib: An Interpretive Essay. Translated by R.Manheim, Princeton University Press: Princeton, USA.

-Laureano P. 1991. *Sahara: jardin méconnu*. Collection Larousse, printed in Italy.

-Maarouf N. 1997. 'L'Imaginaire historiographique entre conjectures et réalités, ou le problème des sources: à propos de l'établissement humain en milieu Saharien'. *Insanyat* 2.

-Mammeri, M. 1984. *L'Ahellil du Gourara*. Les Editions de la MSH : Paris.

-Marçais, G. 1946.*La Berbèrie Musulmane et l'Orient au Moyen-âge*. Aubier : Paris.

- Martin, A.G.P. 1906. *Aux Frontières du Maroc: Les Oasis Sahariennes*. Paris.

-Milroy, J.1987. *Language and Social Networks* (2dn ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

-Moqaddem M.M, 2002. *El-Imam Ben Abdelkrim el-Maghili* (in Arabic), El-Djazair Kitab, Oran.

-Ohala, J.J.1990. 'There is no interface between phonetics and phonology: a personal view'. *Journal of Phonetics* 18:153-171.

-Ohala J.J. 1997. "Phonetics in Phonology". Proceedings of the 4th Seoul International Conference on Linguistics [SICOL], 11-15 August 1997, pp:92-97.

-Oliel, J.1994. *Les Juifs au Sahara: Le Touat au Moyen-Âge*. CNRS-Histoire, France.

- Saadallah, F. 2005. Yahoud Al-Jazair (The Jews of Algeria). Vol.1. Dar Qortoba, Algeria.

-Schilling-Estes, N. 2001. Investigating stylistic variation. In *The Handbook of Language variation and Change*, ed. JK Chambers, P Trudgill, N Schilling-Estes, pp.375-401. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

-Trudgill, P. 1986. *Dialects in Contact*. Oxford: Blackwell.

-Trudgill, P. 2000 [1995]. *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to language and Society,* 4th edition. Penguin Books.

Annex n°1

List of Phonetic symbols

-Consonants

Stops

/ʔ/: [ʔadda:n] 'Muezzin, call for prayer' (ﺀ)

/b/: [blæ:ħ] 'dried dates' (ب)

/t/: [tga:la] 'children' (ت)

/ţ/: [ţejja:ɽa] 'a plane' (ط)

/d/: [dagla] 'Degla, date' (د)

/ḑ/: [ḑɑb] 'lizard' (ض)

/k/: [kla:m] 'speech' (ك)

/g/: [gæ:di] 'finished' (ڧ)

/q/: [balʕqɑɬ] 'slowly, wisely' (ق)

Spirants

/f/: [fajda] 'interest' (ف)

/θ/: [[θawr] 'bull' (ث)

/ð/: [ði:b] 'wolf' (ذ)

/s/: [sanawa:ts] 'years' (س)

/ş/: [bşɑl] 'onion' (ص)

/z/: [zma:n] 'time' (ز)

/ẓ/: [ẓfɑ:r] 'nail' (ظ)

/ʃ/: [ʃaft] 'I saw' (ش)

/ʒ/: [ʒdø:d] 'grand-parents' (ج)

/χ/: [dʒxø:l] 'come in' (خ)

/ɣ/: [ɣubra] 'dust' (غ)

/ħ/: [lħæmd] 'praise' (ح)

/ʕ/: [ʕand] 'at' (ع)

/h/: [ha:ni] 'at peace' (ﻩ)

Nasals

/m/: msa:jal 'bosses' (م)

/n/: na:s 'people' (ن)

Flaps

/r/: [ri:ħ] 'wind' (ر)

/ɽ/: [[qaɽţɑ:ş] 'the paper' (ر)

Contoids

Laterals

/l/: [li:l] 'night' (ل)

/ɬ/: [(ʔa)ɬɬɑ:h] 'God' (ل)

Glides

/j/: [jgad] 'is able to' (ي)

/w/: [dʒwa:m] 'eternity' (و)

[p]:[sɪmpəl] 'Fr. Simple'   [v]:[vila:ʒ] 'village'

[ɴ]:[saɴqu:] 'bracelet, Zenete'   [ŋ]:[gaŋga] 'Ganga,

instrument of music'

-Short Vowels   *Long Vowels*

/a/:[lga] 'he found'   /aa/:[tla:ti:n] 'thirty'

/i/: [edgi] 'wooden plate'   /ii/:[ri:ħ] 'wind'

/u/:[ustæ:z] 'teacher'   /uu/:[ʕqu:ba] 'destiny'

Diphtongs

/aj/:[ʕajn] 'eye'

/aw/: [[fawd̪a] 'trouble'

*Vocoid*s

Short   *Long*

[ɑ]:[xl̪ɑʂ] ' was paid'   [ɑ:]: [bɑ:qi] 'left'

[æ]:[ʒmæʕa] 'group; gathering'   [æ:]:[simæ:na] 'week'

[e]:[edgi] 'wooden plate'   [e:]: [qɑ:ʔema] 'list'

[ø]:[ħødø:d] 'frontier'   [ø:]:[nø:ʕ] 'type'

[o]: [bobo] 'shirt'   [o:]:[kɑɽt̪o:na] 'paper bag'

[ə]:[[maʃa:kəl] 'troubles'