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## **THE PROCESS OF ELISION IN ARABIC YAFFII DIALECT AND STANDARD ENGLISH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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### **Abstract:**

*This study describes the phonological process of elision in which the native speakers of Standard English and Arabic Yaffii Dialect tend to delete or elide a sound or sounds from either the original word structure, or the sequence of words, especially at their boundaries. It aims to compare and contrast those two linguistic versions to find out the similar and dissimilar points relevant to the process of elision.*

**Keywords:** English, Yaffii Dialect, Elision, etc.

### **An Introduction:**

One of the linguistic studies concerned with the study of a language is the study of any phenomenon in any language levels: phonological, morphological, syntactic and so on. Recently, much focus has been given to sociolinguistic studies which are concerned with the study of a linguistic phenomenon in a language variety. For this, this study investigates the phonological phenomenon of elision in two linguistic versions adopting the comparative method. The first linguistic version is the Yaffii Dialect which is a variety of Arabic Language spoken in the southern part of Yemen and the second is the standard English. Elision is one of the linguistic phonological phenomena in which a sound or sounds in a word structure or sequence of words are elided to facilitate the production of fast connected speech.

The importance of elision process derives from both semantic and phonological views. Semantically speaking, the omission of a sound or sounds not only effects on the distribution of phonemes with either a word level or word boundaries but also it originally changes the syllabication of a word. Such a change may cause a type of misunderstanding, miscomprehension and confusion with the whole communication process. To speak phonologically, the importance of elision can also be recognized in its effects at the fluency of spoken language. To be fluent, we should occupy all the features of connected speech in our speech such as linking, intonation, stress, elision etc., but the question arisen here is whether the process of elision considered as an aspect of connected speech or not. To have an answer for this question, the previous literature shows that it is sometimes difficult to say that elision, like assimilation, is considered as an aspect of connected speech for elision can be influenced by a sound or sounds within a word especially when it is spoken in isolation. But another view



states that elision is undoubtedly an aspect of connected speech because it is instrumental in keeping an isochronous rhythm whether it occurs with a word or a word boundary.

• **Elision:**

Some linguists describe this phenomenon by the term of 'Hapology' in which a sound or a syllable of a word disappears after or before phonologically similar sound or syllable (Crystal, 2008: 500). Jones (1972) defines elision as "the disappearance of a sound" (230). Ibrahim Anees (1994) adds that such disappearance is occurred to shorten the word phonological structure and to facilitate its pronunciation. Febriyanti (2015) defines the process of elision as a complete disappearance of one or more sounds in a word or phrase as an attempt to make a word or phrase easier to pronounce (cited in Ali et al, 2021:96). That means, the process of elision occurs when speakers leave or delete a phoneme out of pronunciation as an attempt to fasten and get rid of difficulties in speech.

Similarly, Carr (1993) describes elision as the zero realization of phonemes in certain phonological context and adds that elision is as a result of the gradation of phonemes which in its turn leads to the loss of consonants or obscuration of vowels. Roach (2000) and Cruttenden (2008) support this view and they both report that elision is, like assimilation, involved just in fast colloquial speech, and this grants a chance to state that the any change in phoneme realizations results from changing the speed and casualness of speech. Wells (2012) calls the attention of the foreigners to be aware of the fact that when native language users speak to each other, a plenty of phonemes those foreigners might wait to hear are not really pronounced. This may violate the right perception of the intended message sent by the speaker.

Far away from the slight confusion such deletion may cause, elision is received as a general social process. Ali et al. state that "Elision is institutionalized and regarded as a factor of society behavior" (Ali M.,96). That means, occurrence of elision is believed to be various from one language to another and it is real fact that elision differs in context and frequency of appearance in various languages and situations. Similarly, Ladefoged (2006) assumes the nature and incidence of elision to be different from one language to another and thus it is institutionalized and considered a part of culture behavior.

Historically speaking, Ibrahim Anees (1994) states that many language words appeared earlier in long multisyllabic structure with many letters or sounds. But with time passing and the frequent usages, these words had lost part of their syllables or number of their sounds or letters. Skandera & Burleig (2011) talk about the historical elision in parallelism with the contextual elision as two main categories of elision. They describe the former category as the deletion of a sound in a later form of a word whereas that sound was existed in an earlier form of the same word. And the latter category refers to the disappearance of a sound in a word when it is spoken in a compound and a connected speech whereas that sound appears within the word when it is spoken individually.

According to Azofra (2019) "elision is possibly to be lowest in slow watchful speech and greatest in fast eased colloquial forms of speech" (Azofra, 6). Rosa (2002) and Ito (2006) describe that the reasons of elision are no concern to be rooted basically in the people appetite





to reduce expenditure of power. They witness that the global appearance of elision is useable in speech and it can be improved in the wordiness of the speech sign.

In Arabic, Ramadan Abdultwab (1985) describes this phenomenon as *بلى الألفاظ (bala alalfadh)* which is resulted from the persistent usage of these words from generation to generation. This makes those words, especially their final parts, exposed to be elided or clipped as what happens to the paper currency due to the repeated transmit from hand to hand of human users. Crystal (2008) defines the process of elision as “the loss of a vowel, consonant or syllable. Elision commonly occurs in complex consonant clusters in unstressed syllables” (Crystal, 355).

Skandera Paul and Burleigh Peter (2005) mention the linguistic forms more subjected to the process of elision in reporting that the deletion of sound or sounds are frequently taken place with certain grammatical words especially when they occur as weak form in non-prominent position within a context. Such deletion or eliding is normally represented in the phonological form just, but not in the orthographical form of a word or word boundary, except that it can be represented in the spelling of contractions such as “I’ve” for “I have” and “he’s” for “he has”. Roach (2003) describes elision as the process of assimilation in the sense that, elision is a topic that is apparently shown in the description of any language pronunciation for a very long time. It refers to the disappearance of one or more sounds in connected speech which should be available in an individually word pronunciation.

#### • **Yaffii Dialect:**

Yaffii dialect is one of the Yemeni versions of Arabic language. It is spoken colloquially in the region of Yafea situated in the two Yemeni governorates: Abyan governorate and Lahj governorate which are both located in the southern part of Yemen. Yaffii dialect is a colloquial dialect of Arabic language spoken in the daily speech of Yaffii people wherever they live either in their original region or in their travel out of it. Miller (2007: 36) talks about the number of the speakers of Yaffii Dialect in stating that “Yafi contains the second densest population in the southern Yemen out of Aden (175,000 out of the total population, over 18000,000 million)”. Elision is one of the phonological phenomena in Yaffii dialect as it is recognized in various other dialects of either Arabic or other languages. For instance, Ndagi (2016) conducted a study in which the researcher attempted to contrast between the concept of elision in standard Arabic and Nupe version of Nigerian language with a view to identify which between those two linguistic spoken versions is more predisposed to elision. Al-sawaryeh (2016) also conducted a study in which the researcher studied the process of elision in the daily speech of speakers of Dhiban – Alalia, Jordan. This study aimed to identify and investigate the individual segments and the various sorts of syllables which are expected under elision in the Joradian dialect of Arabic language. Abdullah (2020) also conducted a comparative phonological study of elision in standard British English and central Kurdish. Mohsin Ali (2021) studied the phenomena of elision from the point of view of its effect on the comprehension of students studying English in Pakistan.

#### • **Elision in Yaffii Dialect:**

In Yaffii dialect, the process of elision occurs either across the word level or at two or more-word boundaries. This phenomenon has been observed by the researcher while communicating



with other Yaffii dialect speakers and observing their everyday speech. Therefore, this has captured the attention of the researcher to conduct such a comparative study between this Arabic dialect and English. To know the way in which this study presents both the linguistic forms under study, the researcher is going to present the Yaffii dialect words first, and then its equivalent in standard Arabic followed with the equivalent form of English. Following Abdulkawi (2015), this study presents the elision process in Yaffii dialect in three types. The first type presents the elision at the word level, the second presents the elision at two word boundaries and the third presents the elision at more than two words, as follows:

• **Elision at a word level:**

This type of elision occurs when one of the sounds in a word is elided. This can be seen within the Yaffii dialect in the following words:

- **يشتي = يشتي = want or desire**

This is one of the verbs in which one of the sound is deleted in the dialect version where it is originally represented in the standard one. It is obvious that the deleted sound in the dialect word is the sound /و/ = /h/. This deletion may be traced back to two Arabic phonological processes. The first is called **اسكات askat = stop** of the preceding sound /ت/ = /t/ and the second is represented by the weakness of the elided sound /و/.

- **نصف = نصف = half**

After half an hour In this word, it is apparent that the last sound (ف) is elided to facilitate the pronunciation of it with just the two sounds /ص/ = /s/ and /ن/ = /n/. Al Kolaqi (2006) refers to the use of this word in the Yaffii proverb "المودع نص رجال" (331). This proverb is used to refer to the man at the time of his travel faraway of his family describing him in being **semi-man** due to the moments of farewell for his home and family. (331). Commonly, this word is observed in the dialect usage as in **بعد نص ساعة = After half an hour.**

- **جلس = جلس = stayed**

This word is one of the verbs in which one of the sound is elided to appear in the two sounds just (ج) and /س/ = /s/. In this verb, the second sound /ل/ = /l/ is elided not just in the past form of this verb but also in the present and imperative as in **جلس، يجس، جَس** as in **جس أنته** = **stay**, with us in your brother's company, and **يجس عندنا** = **he stays** with us, and **جلس** = **he stayed** with them till morning, respectively.

- **حد = حد = anyone**

This word is one of the nouns in which the sound /أ/ is elided to appear in two sounds just; they are the (ح، د). The dialectical usage of this word can be seen in: **حد جاء اليوم؟ = Has anyone come, today?**

• **Elision in two words:**

This type of elision takes place in a sequence of two words by eliding one sound or more from one word or both two words in that sequence. Abdulkawi (2015) states that such deletion often appears in the sequence of two nouns or the sequence of a noun and a preposition. Some typical examples of such deletion in the dialect usage are as follows:

- **أبو بكر = أبو بكر (proper noun)**

This is one of the compound proper noun composed of two nouns. Prosodically, the first word **أبو** is realized as **mudaf** and the second word **بكر** as **mudaf aleeh**, but the dialectical





usage tends to delete the sound /f/ from the former and the sound /r/ = /r/ from the latter to fuse the two words in one as in **بوبك**. This usage can be seen in the Yaffii proverb **مثل بوبك للعدود**. This proverb is used to refer to the person who does or talks out of his /her business.

- **حدهش = أحد عشر = Eleven**

The Yaffii dialect tends to delete a sound or some sounds from the compound numbers as in this number **حدهش** in which the sound /f/ is elided from the first word and the sound /r/ = /r/ from the second. Such deletion in the dialect happens with the compound numbers starting from **حدهش = eleven**, **اثنا عشر = twelve**, up to **تسعة عشر = nineteen**, in which a sound or more sounds are deleted to pronounce the sequence of these compound numbers as one word. This dialectical usage can be seen in the Yaffii proverb **من فارق أصحابه باع من حدهش**. This proverb is directed to the person who goes faraway his/her company describing him/her as a loser.

- **عشية غد = عشطاد = tomorrow night**

This sequence is originally composed of two words. The **عشية = even**, is its first word from which the sound /ي/ is elided not just but also its whispering sound /ة/ = /t/ is substituted by its counterpart dark sound (ط). The **mudaf aleeh = غده = tomorrow** is its second word in which the dialect substitutes its sound /غ/ into the dark sound /ط/ = /z/. The dialectical usage of this elision can be seen in common Yaffii dialect saying **عشطاد الحناء = ليلة الحناء = tomorrow night**.

- **أسم الله = اسم الله = the name of Allah**

This sequence is originally composed of two words but the dialect tends to combine them in one word with eliding some sounds. That is, the initial sound /أ/ is elided from the first word not just but also the /س/ = /s/ sound is substituted by its brother sound /ص/ = /s/ to be dark before the name of Allah almighty. In the second word, the sound /أ/ is elided from the name of Allah Almighty. The dialect commonly uses this created compound word when, for example, someone tumbles, the others say this word as in **صممه عليك** that means, they mention the name of Allah with the aim of praying for Allah's keep for that tumbled one. Another usage is when a child coughs; his/her mum says this sequence **صممه عليك** to pray him/her for recovery.

- **هذا الحين = الآن = now or at this moment**

This sequence is originally composed of two words but the dialect combines it in one-word form through deleting some sounds. That is, the initial sound /ه/ = /h/ is elided from the first word and the initial sound /أ/ is also elided from the second word to get the compound word **الحين** to refer to the time of speaking. Al-Kholaqi (2007) states the Arabic poetic lines by the famous poets, Yahia Omer Al Yaffii, and Salem Ali Al- Mahboosh, respectively, in which this compound word **الحين = now** or at this moment, is obviously used to refer to the moment of talking:

(170) على صفاء ود من **الحين** لا بكره \*\*\* والقات والشاذلي ما بيننا مسكوب

ها بعد **الحين** ريات ان لي جناح آطير \*\*\* واسرح إلى الأرض واعجب يوم أناوي (25)

- **بسرعة = بسرعة = quickly**

The dialect tends to fuse the Arabic preposition /ب/ with the following nominal word = **سرعة = quickness** to create the compound word **بسرعة = quickly** after deleting the second sound /ر/ = /r/ and the final sound /ة/ = /t/ from the second word to mean quickly. Bin Qaleb (2007)



mentions this usage in the Arabic folk Yaffii poetry, by the common poet named Abdurab Bin Abdurab Al-saadi, that is

سكري قال ما ذه السنة \*\*\* باحليان كنه كثر  
(169) أن كشحته بيرجع بسع \*\*\* وان لسمته تكعيب وقر )  
- (any auxiliary verb) = عاد شيء؟ = عاشي؟

This elided word in the dialect is originally composed of two words. The elision is recognised in the deletion of the sound /d/ = /d/ from the first additional verb word عاد = auxiliary verb and the sound / ʔ/ from the negative word شيء = anything which in its turn makes the whole sequence to be in the interrogative form. The dialect also uses the additional verb عاد, after eliding its last sound /d/ = /d/, in combination with the interrogative verb عاشي without the hmz sound / ʔ/. This can be seen as in the sequences: عاشي سرحت المدرسة؟ = Did you go to school? and عاشي تتزوج؟ = will you marry?

#### • Elision at more than two words:

This type occurs when deletion of a sound or more sounds takes place in sequences of more than two words. Typical examples of such type of elision in the Yaffii dialect are as follows:

- لا بأس عليك = Nofear on you سعليك

This sequence is originally composed of three words لا بأس عليك but the dialect combines them in one compound word سعليك. This is commonly used to assure the addressee that there is no fear on him/her. The elision happens within this sequence is different from those mentioned above, because it is recognized by the deletion of whole initial negative word لا = no, not just sounds, from one hand. And another deletion happens for the first two sounds / ʔ, ʔ/ of the second word بأس = fear, from the other hand. This usage is also recognised in various Yemeni dialects not just in the Yaffii dialect.

- ما هو إلا أو ما هي إلا = just he/she is

The dialect combines the original structure of three words into one compound word adopting the process of eliding whole syllable or sequence of sounds. This elision can be seen by the deletion of the second sound / ʔ/ or / ʔ/ from the second word هو = he or هي = she, respectively, and the deletion of the first sound / ʔ/ and the third sound / ʔ/ from the last word إلا. The usage of the dialect for this created word can be seen in the common proverb: والصاحب الجيد والفضل ماهر نامة that means, the obtainment of the real strong friend is an achievement but it is regret to obtain the coward friend. Al- Kholaqi (2012) also mentions the same dialectal usage on the tongue of the common Yaffii tribal poet Rajh Bin Heethm who says:

(124) وماهل منها كثر المواجه \*\*\* وعاد الوقت هذا مد باعه

- ما عاد إلا = just معلأ

The dialect creates this compound word معلأ phonologically and orthographically by the deletion of the sound / ʔ/ = /a/ from the first negative word ما = no and the two sounds / ʔ/ = /a/ and /d/ = /d/ from the second verb word عاد = there is, and the sound / ʔ/ = /a/ from the last word إلا. Semantically, this created word is used to negate the declarative sentence. This can be seen as in the sequence: معلأ المدير هناك = there is the manager just and معلأ قليل معهم = they have just little.

- ما بعد إلا = there is/are just مابعلأ





This sequence consists of three words. The first is the negative word ما = **no**, the second word is the time adverb word بعد = **after** and the third word is the word لا = **just**. It seems that the dialect usage elides the third sound /د/ = /d/ from the second word and the first sound /ا/ = /a/ from the last word to create this compound word مابعدا. The dialectical usage of this word can be seen as in the sequence: مابعدا اثنين رجال = **there are just** two men. This usage can appear as an answer for inquiry about the arrival of some persons or things.

- ما عادي شي = **there is nothing**

The dialect usage combines the three-word sequence ما عادي شي to create this compound word ماعادي شي = **there is nothing** by eliding the sound /ا/ = /a/ from the negative word ما = **no** and the sound /د/ = /d/ from the past verb عاد and keeping the nominal indefinite word شي = **thing**, as it is. The dialect uses this as a negative answer for a question introduced by the interrogative dialectical word شي = **auxiliary verb**, in place of the standard interrogative word هل, as in the sequence: شي معكم بن؟ = **Do** you have coffee? which is negatively replied by لا ماعادي شي = **No** we don't.

#### • **Elision in English:**

Connected speech is characterized by some pronunciation features such as, assimilation, linking and elision. This research focuses on the last feature which is elision. As a feature of connected speech, elision is regarded as one of the most important topics in English phonology. Elision is obviously recognized by the omission of certain sounds in certain phonological contexts. For instance, the deletion of the /t/ sound from the first word in the sequence: "last day" which is phonemically transcribed as /la:s dei/. In this context, Schane (1973:52) describes elision as one of the phonological process, particularly syllabic structure process, in which certain phonemes are elided in certain contexts forming different syllabic structures as a result of such eliding. Salih (2012) goes in line with Schane about the process of elision stating that it is a "phonological process that affects the original syllabic structure of words" (Salih, 100).

According to Jones (1984:133) elision means deletion of a sound in fast or connected speech which once exists in precise speech. Also, Dalton and Seidlhofer (cit. in Dolezelova, 2008: 38) refers to the process of elision as a way of "pronunciation simplification" in connected speech. They added that elision can occur when a vowel or consonant which would be present in a carefully pronounced version is left out. Finch (2000) states that "elision is common in casual speech styles, mostly at word boundaries" (Finch, 46). To Clark and Yallop (1990) the phenomenon of elision is "common in all languages" (Finch, 90). They assert the occurrence of elision mostly in rapid colloquial speech, especially by native speakers for the purpose of language economy (90). Roach (2000) talks about the real effect the process of elision causes on the syllabic structure and the number of sounds when it is applied in connected or fast speech compared within the careful and slow speech. His typical example to elaborate this effect is very clear in the fast pronunciation of the sequence "she looked particularly interesting" which should be normally transcribed as /ʃilukt pətɪkjələli intərəstɪŋ/ within 27 sounds, while in rapid speech, the number of this sequence sounds are reduced to 20 sounds as in /ʃilukt pətɪkli intɪstɪŋ/. Nasrulloh et.al. (2019:792) add that not just elision as a phonological feature of pronunciation but also assimilation, dissimilation, reduction, linking



etc. result in a change in the original syllabic structure of words and this may cause a type of miscomprehension, misunderstand and confusion in the listening process.

• **Types of English Elision:**

Based on the word position of the elided sound, phonologists present the process of sound elision in three main types; they are as follows:

**1- Aphaeresis Elision**

It is the type of elision in which the initial sound of a word is elided. For instance, Nasrulloh et.al (2019) state the deletion of the initial unstressed sound /h/ at the words '**his**' and '**her**' while pronouncing the sequence "he handled her**his** hat" /hi: handld ərlz hat/ (792).

**2- Apocope Elision**

It is the type of elision in which the final sound of a word disappears. For instance, Peter Roach (2009) states the deletion of /v/ sound at the preposition 'of' when it is followed by a consonant sound as in the sequence "waste of money" /weist ə mʌni/ (114).

**3- Aphaesis Elision**

It is the type of elision in which the weak vowel sound is elided from the original word structure. Peter Roach also displays the three words: "potato", "tomato", and "today" (114) in which the loss of the unstressed vowel sound /ə/ after the consonant sounds /p, t, t/ in these three words, respectively, is recognized as a good example of this type of elision. Roach (2009) expounds that the deletion of such vowel sound can be traced back to the aspiration of the initial plosive sound at the beginning of each word which in its turn takes up the whole of the middle portion of the syllable.

Another classification of elision in English is based on the kind of sound which is elided. There are four types of elision; they are as follows:

**1- Elision of Consonants :**

Consonant sounds refer to the sounds, while their articulation, there is "obstruction for the lung airflow" caused by the contact made by the articulators of speech (Mathews, 2007:74). Roach (2000:142-143) states that the elision of consonant sounds in English commonly takes place in rapid speech when the speaker wants to facilitate the pronunciation of consonant clusters either at the beginning or at the end of a syllable. The common consonants to be elided are as follows:

**- the alveolar consonant /t/ and /d/**

The sounds /t/ and /d/ are alveolar plosive consonant sounds. /t/ is voiceless but /d/ is voiced. Both sounds can appear "initially, medially and finally" within the syllable structure (Roach 2000:32-33). Finch describes these sounds as the "commonest elided consonants in English" (Finch, 46). These two consonants can be recognized as elided sounds in the following contexts:

i) When /t/ and /d/ appear between two consonants as the following table shows:





Sequence	Transcription		Reason of eliding
	Original	Elided	
Aspects	/æspekts/	/æspeks/	/t/ is elided for it comes between /k/ and /s/
the next day	/ðə 'nekst 'deɪ/,	/ðə 'neks 'deɪ/,	/t/ is elided for it comes between /s/ and /d/
the last car	/ðə 'la:st 'kɑ:/,	/ðə 'la:s 'kɑ:/,	/t/ is elided for it comes between /s/ and /k/
hold the dog	/'həʊld ðə 'dɒg/,	/'həʊl ðə 'dɒg/,	/d/ is elided for it comes between /l/ and /ð/
send Frank a card	/send 'fræŋk ə 'kɑ:d/.	/sen 'fræŋk ə 'kɑ:d/.	/d/ is elided for it comes between /n/ and /f/

(Gimson 1970:238)

- ii) When the final /t/ of a word is clustered with the initial /t/ or /d/ of a following word, the sequence of /tt/ or /td/ is elided into /t/ or /d/, as the following table shows:

Sequence	Transcription		Reason of eliding
	Original	Elided	
We ought to visit him.	/'wi o:t tə 'vɪzɪt 'ɪm/	/'wi o:tə 'vɪzɪt 'ɪm/	/t/ of 'ought' is elided for it is clustered with the initial /t/ of 'to'
We want to leave.	/wi 'wɒnt tə 'li:v/	/wi 'wɒntə 'li:v/	/t/ of 'want' is elided for it is clustered with the initial /t/ of 'to'
What do you want?	/wɒt də ju: wɒnt/?	/wɒdə ju: wɒnt/?	/t/ of 'what' is elided for it is clustered with the initial /d/ of do

Gimson, (1970 : 299)

- iii) The final /t/ or /d/ is elided when they are not only preceded by any of the affricates /tʃ/, /dʒ/ or the plosives /p/, /b/, /k/, /g/, but also clustered with an initial consonant of the following word. The examples in the following table shows the /t/ and /d/ elision.



Sequence	Transcription		Reason of eliding
	Original	Elided	
Fetches me	/fɛʃt mi/	/fɛʃ mi/	The past tense /t/ is elided for it is preceded by the affricate /tʃ/ and linked with the initial consonant /m/ of the word 'me'
Begged one	/bɛgd wʌn/	/bɛg wʌn/	The past tense /d/ is elided for it is preceded by the plosive /g/ and linked with the initial consonant /w/ of the word 'one'
Liked jam	/laɪkt dʒæm/	/laɪk dʒæm/	The past tense /t/ is elided for it is preceded by the plosive /k/ and linked with the initial consonant /dʒ/ of the word 'jam'

(Gimson, 1970: 298)

These examples show clearly the elision of the past tense /t/ or /d/ phonologically, but this deletion semantically causes a type of confusion. Such confusion can be traced back to the inability of the listener to realize whether the tense of the verb is present or past. According to Gimson (1970: 298) and Collins and Mees (2013: 127) /t/ or /d/ is not elided when it is linked with a word initiated by the consonant /h/ as in the sequences: "smoked **h**erring" /sməʊk**th**erɪŋ/ and "worked **h**ard" /wɜ:k**th**a:d/. Also, /t/ or /d/ is not elided when it is preceded by /n/ or /l/ even if it is followed by a consonant as in the sequences: "spent **t**ime" /spɛnt**t**aɪm/ and "walt Disney" /wɔ:l**t** dɪzni/. Conversely, Yule (2006) states that when /d/ is preceded by the nasals /n/ or /m/, /d/ is elided as in the sequence: "you and **d** me" /ju: ʌn mɪ/ (49).

#### - Elision of dental fricative /θ/ and /ð/

The sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are dental fricatives: /θ/ is voiceless but /ð/ is voiced. Skandera & Burleigh, (2005) state that /θ/ and /ð/ are commonly elided in these words: "months" /mʌn**s**/, "clothes" /kləʊ**z**/ and 'sixths' /sɪk**s**/ (95). Collins & Mees, (2013) report that /θ/ is not elided in some ordinal numbers, but instead, it is possible to elide the preceding consonant as in the deletion of the preceding /f/ in "fifth" /fɪf**θ**/ becomes /fɪ**θ**/ and in "twelfth" /twɛlf**θ**/ becomes /twɛl**θ**/ (127). Moreover, Denham and Lobeck (2013) argue that in the word 'sixths' /sɪks**θ**s/, the final three consonants /s/, /θ/ and /s/ are all fricatives occupying the coda position. Therefore, it is possible to elide both the final two sounds /θ/ and /s/ together and the word 'sixths' can be pronounced /sɪk**s**/. Also, in the word 'fifths', the finals /f/, /θ/ and /s/ are fricatives in the coda position, so the word 'fifths' has three alternative pronunciations in rapid





speech: it can be pronounced /fifθ/ after eliding the /s/ sound just, it can also be pronounced /fifs/ after eliding the sound /θ/ just and it can be pronounced /fis/ after eliding the sounds /f/ and /θ/ together (117). For this, Denham and Lobeck conclude that when the coda position is occupied by two or three fricatives, it is possible to elide one or two of them.

**- Elision of velar plosive /k/**

The consonant sound /k/ is a velar plosive voiceless sounds. Based on the statements of Collins and Mees (2013, p. 127) and Gimson (1970: 298), this sound is elided when it is the middle sound in a combination of three consonant clusters provided that the preceding sound is /s/ and the following sound is /t/ as in these sequences: "masked gunman" /ma:skt gʌnmən/ becomes /ma:st gʌnmən/ and "they asked us" /ðei a:skt əs/ becomes /ðei a:st əs/.

**- Elision of Velar /ʃ/**

The sound /ʃ/ is velar lateral voiced sound. Gimson (1970) refers to the possibility of eliding this sound when it is preceded by the back rounded vowel /ɔ:/ because this vowel has the same resonance as the velar /ʃ/. Gimson gives these words as good examples on the deletion of the velar /ʃ/ in these contexts: "always" /ɔ:lweiz/ becomes /ɔ:weiz/, "alright" /ɔ:lrait/ becomes /ɔ:rait/, "although" /ɔ:lðəʊ/ becomes /ɔ:ðəʊ/ and "already" /ɔ:lredi/ becomes /ɔ:redi/ (238).

**- Elision of labio-dental fricative /v/**

The consonant /v/ is labiodental fricative voiced sound. Roach (2009) mentions the loss of the final consonant /v/ when it is clustered with a consonant sound of the following word as in "lots of them" /lɒts əv ðəm/ becomes /lɒts ə ðəm/, "waste of money" /weist əv mʌni/ becomes /weist ə mʌni/ (114). Collins and Mees (2013) refers to the elision of /v/ from the verbs: "have", "give", "leave" etc. when it is followed by /m/ sound as in "give me a chance" /gɪv mi ə tʃa:ns/ becomes /gɪ mi ə tʃa:ns/, "do you have my number?" /du: ju hæv mai nʌmbə/? becomes /du: ju hæ mai nʌmbə/? and "leave me alone" /li:v mi ə ləʊn/ becomes /li: mi ə ləʊn/, respectively (128).

**- Elision of glottal fricative /h/**

The sound /h/ is glottal fricative voiceless sound. Collins & Mees, (2013) states that the sound /h/ is elided in the weak forms of functional words as in "I think he will have told her" /ai θɪŋk hi wɪl hæv təʊld hə/ becomes /ai θɪŋk i wɪl əv təʊld ə/ (127).

**2- Elision of Vowels:**

Unlike consonants, vowel sounds are produced without any obstruction for the airflow at some points in the vocal tract (Finch, 2000:37). The elision of a vowel is based on the weak and unstressed syllable. In English, Roach(2009) mentions that "the most frequently occurring vowel in English is /ə/, which is always associated with weak syllables" (65). He asserts that not all weak syllables include the halfway central vowel /ə/. For being in weak syllabic structure, the schwa /ə/ is expected to be elided in the two following contexts:

**- Elision of the initial vowel /ə/**

Gimson (1975: 297) and Roach (2000:77) confirm the deletion of the initial schwa /ə/ if one of the continuant consonants /l/ and /n/ follows and a word-final consonant precedes. A good example of the deletion of /ə/ in these contexts is in the sequences: "not alone" /nɒt ələʊn/ becomes /nɒt ləʊn/, and "get another" /get ənəðə/ becomes /get nʌðə/. It is obvious that the compensation for the loss of /ə/ is made by the syllabicity of the continuant /l/ in the



first sequence and /n/ in the second. Gimson and Roach also add that the word initial schwa /ə/ may be coalesced with the preceding vowel in causal rapid speech as in "try again" /traɪ əgen/ becomes /traɪ gen/.

**- Elision of the medial vowel /ə/**

Roach (2000: 142) and Skandera and Burleigh (2005: 95–96), report that the schwa /ə/ in unstressed syllable of polysyllabic words is elided when /ə/ is preceded by one of the plosive sounds /p, t, k/ either this unstressed syllable comes before or after stressed syllable. For example, the schwa /ə/ is elided in these words: "today" /tə'deɪ/ becomes /tʰ'deɪ/, "potato" /pə'tetəʊ/ becomes /pʰ'tetəʊ/, "tomato" /tə'ma:təʊ/ becomes /tʰ'ma:təʊ/. As compensation for such elision, there will be aspiration of the release of air in the production of the preceding plosive.

But in disyllabic words, the elision of /ə/ is common whenever it is followed by the alveolar sounds /l/, /n/ or the velar sound /r/. As compensation for the vowel /ə/ as the nucleus of the syllable, those sounds /l/, /n/ or /r/ become syllabic to keep the number of syllables as they are, with just moving in the syllable boundary. Peter Roach (2000) list a number of disyllabic words in which the vowel /ə/ is elided and at the same time compensated by the following syllabic consonant sounds /l/, /n/; these words are: "cattle" /kætəl/ becomes /kætɫ/, "bottle" /bɒtəl/ becomes /bɒtɫ/, "trouble" /trʌbəl/ becomes /trʌbɫ/, "tunnel" /tʌnəl/ becomes /tʌnɫ/, "pedal" /pedəl/ becomes /pedɫ/, "tonight" /tənaɪt/ becomes /tɳaɪt/, "threaten" /θretən/ becomes /θretɳ/, "seven" /sevən/ becomes /sevɳ/, "correct" /kərekt/ becomes /kɾekt/ and "hungary" /hʌŋgəri/ becomes /hʌŋgɾi/ (86–90). Skandera & Burleigh (2005) and Giegerich (1995) support the deletion of the vowel /ə/ in such context stating that "elision of schwa /ə/ is common especially before sonorant consonants and such consonants have ability to be syllabic" (cited in Salman, 2009: 26). That is, those sonorant sounds can occupy the peak of the syllable in cases where the vowel /ə/ is elided.

Furthermore, Gimson (1975) adds that schwa /ə/ "may be elided if it is followed by linking /r/ and word initial vowel" as in the connected sequences: "after awhile" /aftər əwail/ becomes /aftɾəwail/ and 'father and son' /fa:ðər ən sʌn/ becomes /fa:ðɾənsʌn/ (297). Lodge (2009) names such a phonological process of vowel elision "as syncope or syncope" (157). Davenport & Hannas (2005) indicate that a vowel sound can be elided in certain words such as geography /dʒi:əgrafi/ /dʒɒgrafi/, and also affirm that in English casual speech, the unstressed schwa /ə/ or the front short vowel /ɪ/ is elided in the middle of words when the preceding vowel is stressed as in: 'victory' /vɪktəri/ becomes /vɪktri/, 'easily' /i:zili/ becomes /i:zli/ and 'finally' /faɪnəli/ becomes /faɪnli/ (29).

**3- Elision of a Whole Syllable:**

Far away from the elision of a sound or sounds from the original syllable structure, sometimes elision can be involved in the deletion of a whole syllable of polysyllabic words. To know the nature of the elided syllable, Skandera and Burleigh (2005) describe the elided whole syllable as the unstressed syllable which particularly contains a consonant that is repeated in the following syllable of the same word. Whereas, Gimson, (19970) and Crystal (2008: 247) view that when there is separated consonant, a whole syllable may be elided. The following table shows the words in which a whole syllable is elided.





Word	Transcription		The elided syllable
	Original	Elided	
Particularly	/pə.tik.ju.lə.li/	/pə.tik.ju.li/.	The elided syllable is the fourth syllable /lə/.
Probably	/prɒ.bə.bli	/prɒ.bli/.	The elided syllable is the second syllable /bə/.
February	/feb.ru.ər.i/	/feb.ər.i/.	The elided syllable is the second syllable /ru/.
Literary	/lit.ər.ər.i/	/lit.ər.i/.	The elided syllable is the second syllable /ər/.

Gimson (19970: 238)

#### 4- Historical Elision:

Apart from the elision of certain sounds in certain context, Collins and Mees (2013) state that certain sounds in cluster combination of some English words are permanently elided either in their individual pronunciation or in connected speech although their matching letters are available in their spelling forms, such as: "/k/ in 'know' /nəʊ/, /b/ in 'komb' /kəʊm/, /t/ in 'whistle' /wɪs.l/, /w/ in 'wrong' /rɒŋ/ and 'write' /raɪt/, and /t/ in 'listen' /lɪs.ən/ and 'fasten' /fa:sən/ (123). Gussmann (2002) confirms that such instances, in which there are silent consonants; reflect the earlier pronunciation and they have no longer been pronounced even in careful speech (18).

#### • Contrastive Analysis:

The main aim of this research is to compare and contrast between the Arabic language with special focus on Arabic Yaffii Dialect and standard English language in order to get whether the process of elision is a feature of these linguistic versions, first. Second, this research tried to display the similarities and differences between those two linguistic versions in relation to the phonological process of elision. Based on the previous description of the elision phenomenon, the researcher found that the process of elision is a feature of both Yaffii dialect, subjected under study as a typical example of Arabic language, and standard English language. The following discussion and analysis shows what is different and similar between the two linguistics versions in accordance with the nature of the elision.

#### • Elision of Consonants:

It is an obvious fact that the consonants sound /t/ and /d/ are the most elided sounds in English rapid speech. This elision takes place when those consonants appear in sequences of two or more constant clusters as in mostly in "mostly" /mousli / and "handsome" /hansəm/ (Gimson (1975:297) and Collins & Mees (2008:118). Similary, in Arabic Yaffii dialect, the causal and



colloquial usages tend to elide the consonant /d/ as in the interrogative word *عاشي؟ = عاد شي؟ = any auxiliary verb?*, the assertive words *معلّا = ما عاد ألا = except that* and *مابعلّا = ما بعد إلا = there is/are just* (Abdulwai, 2015:473). It seems that the /d/ sound is elided in the three examples to facilitate the pronunciation of the sequences in one compound word. Conversely, the elision of /t/ is not clearly recognized in Yaffii dialect, although, Abdulkwi mention the assimilation of /ة/ = /t/ into its dark consonant counterpart /ط/ = /z/ as in the word *عشية غد = tomorrow night* (Abdulkwi, 2015:468).

In both versions, English and Yaffii dialect, the deletion of the consonant /h/ is commonly recognized. English elides the initial glottal consonant /h/ in the function words such as the pronoun forms: he, him, her etc., when they occur medial in connected rapid speech. In Yaffii dialect the speakers tend to elide the sound /هـ/ = /h/ from the attentive administrative pronoun *هذه = هذا = this*. In standard Arabic, the similar deletion of /هـ/ = /h/ is realized in the following qur'anic Ayaah: *قال تعالى (من ذا الذي يشفع عنده)*. Al-Yemeni (2002:572) also mentions the deletion of /هـ/ = /h/ in the Arabic words: *شفهه = lip* and *عضه = bite* and *سنه = mark*. As a result, these words become *شفه* and *سنه*, respectively.

In English, Collins and Mees, (2008:121) the dental fricatives consonants, /ð/ and /θ/ can be elided in certain words such as "months"/ mʌns / and "clothes"/ kləʊz/, respectively. In Yaffii Arabic, those consonants are not elided. The only example the researcher could find is in the Yaffii Arabic sequence: *منذ مدة = منذ مدة = since a while*, in which the consonant /ذ/ = /ð/ is elided from the first word of that sequence. Such deletion helps to make the pronunciation so easy and fast in the Arabic context.

The deletion of the velar lateral consonant /l/ is recognized in some words as: "walk, talk, calm, half etc", in which the sound /l/ is preceded by the back rounded vowel /ɔ:/ because this vowel has the same resonance as the velar /l/ Gimson (1970: 238). In the colloquial usage of the Yaffii dialect, Abdulkawi refers to the deletion of the sound /ل/ = /l/ in the Arabic verb *جلس = sit down*, in which the second sound /ل/ is elided not just in the past form of this verb but also in the present and imperative as in *جس، يجس، جس = sat down, sits down, sit down*, respectively.

In English rapid speech, native speakers tend to elide the labiodental fricative /v/ from the preposition 'of' when it is followed by a word initiated by a consonant sound (Roach 2009:114). Collins and Mees (2013:128) also mentions to the elision of /v/ from the verbs: 'have', 'give', 'leave' etc. when it is followed by nasal consonant /m/. In Arabic, the Yaffii dialect elides the sound /ف/ = /v/ and /f/ in the word *نصف = نصف* (Abdulkwi, 2015: 466).

The final velar consonant /r/ in English connected speech is elided if it is followed an initial consonant sound as in "his father travelled" in which the consonant /r/ is deleted, because the following word initiated by the consonant sound /t/. Similarly, in Arabic Yaffii dialect, the sound /ر/ = /r/ is elided in these words: *أبو بكر = أبو بكر = Abo Bakr* and *أحد = حدش*. In the first, the sound /ر/ = /r/ is elided from the the second word of the proper compound name *بكر = بكر = Bakr* and it is also elided from the second word of the compound number *عشر = عشر* (Abdulkwi, 2015:468). The velar plosive /k/ is elided in English when it comes as the middle sound in a combination of three consonant clusters in which the first sound /s/, and the last is /t/ as in the sequence 'masked gunman' /ma:skt ɡʌnmən/ becomes /ma:st ɡʌnmən/ (Collins and Mees (2013:127) and Gimson (1970: 298). Skandera & Burleigh





(2005: 95) declares that the velar consonant /k/ is permanently recognized elided in some words such as "know" /nəʊ/, and "knee" /ni:/ in which the /k/ sound is followed by the nasal fricative consonant /n/. Conversely, the Arabic consonant /ك/ = /k/ is not elided in Yaffii Dialect.

### • Elision of Vowel:

In English, the most elided vowel is the schwa /ə/ when it comes in the following contexts:

- 1- When it is preceded by /p, t, k/ in multisyllabic words as in 'today' /tə'deɪ/ becomes /t<sup>h</sup>'deɪ/, 'potato' /pə'tetəʊ/ becomes /p<sup>h</sup>'tetəʊ/, 'tomato' /tə'ma:təʊ/ becomes /t<sup>h</sup>'ma:təʊ/ (Roach 2000:142) and (Skandera and Burleigh, 2005: 95–96).
- 2- When it is followed by the fricative sounds /l/, /n/ or the velar sound /r/ as in 'cattle' /kæt.əl/ becomes /kæt.l/, 'bottle' /bɒt.əl/ becomes /bɒt.l/, 'threaten' /θret.ən/ becomes /θret.n/, and 'correct' /kə.rekt/ becomes /kɾ.ekt/ (ibid: 142-43) and (ibid: 95–96).

In Arabic, the standard rule confirms the deletion of the primary vowel letters (ا، و، ي)، in the middle of the words in certain contexts. Nahir (1998 :273) refers to the deletion of the middle vowel /ا/ = /æ/ in the verb يخاف = **fear** and the deletion of the middle vowel /و/ in the verb يقول، when these presented verbs are preceded by the particle لم = **did not** as in لم يخف = **didn't fear** and لم يقل = **did not say**, respectively. Al-Yemeni (2002) also shows the deletion of the middle vowel /ي/ in the word المستقرنين to become المستقرن. But the Yaffii dialect usage violates this rule and keeps these vowel letters in such context. That means, the Yaffii dialect may not elide the primary vowels. (605).

Similarly, standard Arabic elides the final vowel in certain contexts. Al-Yemeni (2002: 606) states the deletion of the final long vowel /ا/ in the word ما when it is attached to an interrogative word as in في ما؟ = **in which?** becomes فيم and على ما؟ = **on which?** becomes علام. It is obvious that the long vowel /ا/ is deleted in the previous verbs but compensated by its short vowel represented by Fatah. Aziz (1988 :118/273) refers to the elision of the final weak vowels /و، ي/ in the verbs امس = **stayed** last night, to become امس and قبل = **before** to become قبل in the sequence من قبل، respectively.

Although, Yaffii dialect does not elide the vowel sound in the present verb preceded by the particle لم = **did not** or what the dialect uses to substitute it such as the negative particles لا، ما = **not**. That is, it is very clear in the sequence: لم يقول الحقيقة، the long vowel /و/ is kept in the colloquial Yaffii speech but in standard Arabic is elided to become لم يقل الحقيقة = **he did not say the truth**. However, it is recognized that Yaffii dialect tends to elide the final vowel /ا/ in the negative word ما، when it is combined in the dialectical negative compound word ما معاشي = **there is nothing** (Abdulkwi, 2015: 473).

### - Elision of Whole Syllable:

With reference to the elision of part of a word, it is found that the elision of one whole syllable is a feature of English language. Crystal, (2008:247) refers to the elision of a whole syllable from a word structure especially when there is a separated consonant as the second syllable /rə/ is elided in the word "library" = /laɪbrə ri / becomes /laɪbri / and the second syllable /bə/ is also elided in the word "probably" /probəbli/ becomes /probli/. In Arabic Yaffii Dialect, although Arabic language to which Yaffii Dialect is affiliated, is not characterized by syllable division in the structure of its words, the deletion of whole word from the standard sequence is



recognized in the deletion of the whole negative particle لا in the dialectal created sequence: لا بأس عليك = **No fear on you**, with the deletion of other sounds from the neighboring words of the same sequence. This deletion is subsumed to resemble the deletion of the whole syllable in the English word "particularly" /pə.tik.ju.lə.li/ which becomes /pə.tik.ju.li/.

### • Conclusions

The present study aims to investigate the process of elision in both Arabic Yaffii dialect and English in order to compare and contrast between those two linguistic versions. Therefore, the researcher has made these conclusions based on the previous discussion and analysis done through the study. They are as follows:

- The phenomenon of elision is a feature of both Arabic Yaffii dialect and English.
- The phenomenon of elision occurs in rapid connected speech.
- The speakers of both Arabic Yaffii dialect and English tend to elide certain sounds in their speech for speaking fluently and easily.
- Elision is recognized as a simplification strategy of fast speech in both versions.
- Both consonants and vowels in both linguistic versions under study are subjected for the process of elision. In English, consonants are more elided than vowels but in Arabic vowel sounds are more elided than consonants particularly the three weak vowels.
- Elision in English occurs either in coda or onset part of an English syllable but it is recognized more in coda.
- Elision in Arabic Yaffii dialect occurs at word level, or at word boundaries of two or more words but at word boundaries is more recognized.
- In English, the most elided consonants sounds are the alveolar plosive /t/ and /d/ and the schwa /ə/ is the vowel sounds to be mostly elided.
- In Arabic, the glottal stop h̤ (ء) is the most elided consonant sound and the weak vowels are the most elided vowels.
- Elision of a whole syllable or word is found in English clearly but not obviously in Arabic Yaffii dialect.

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**To Cite the Article:** *Qasem, Ali. "The Process of Elision in Arabic Yaffii Dialect and Standard English: A Comparative Study" Literary Cognizance, V-2 (September, 2024): 118-136. Web.*

