



University
of Glasgow

Investigating phonological variation in the English of Iraqi Arabs in two UK cities: London and Glasgow

Ebtehal Asiry

Supervisors: Prof. Jane Stuart-Smith; Prof. Jennifer Smith

“Language is a key elements in the construction of identity.”

(Fought 2006, p.20)



Ethnic Identity

- Ethnic identity is constituted through sharing certain social features such as race, culture, religion and/or language with others. (Barth 1969)

Ethnic identity in previous sociolinguistic studies

- English variation and change across ethnic communities compared to the majority language (e.g. Labov 1962; 1972; Rampton 1995).
- Multicultural Urban varieties (e.g. Cheshire et al. 2011; Drummond 2013).
- The influence of individuals' social and stylistic practice on their linguistic behaviour within and across ethnic communities (Kirkham 2013; Alam & Stuart-Smith 2011; Alam 2015; Sharma 2011)

Ethnic communities in the UK and the concept of superdiversity

- “ Britain's immigrant and ethnic minority population has conventionally been characterized by large, well-organized African-Caribbean and South Asian communities of citizens originally from Commonwealth countries or formerly colonial territories.....social science research has not caught up with recently emergent demographic and social patterns” (Vertovec 2007).

- Most of the previous sociolinguistic studies have focused on well-established communities.
- Afro-Caribbean and South-Asian communities have occupied central attention in previous sociolinguistic studies.



*Arabs in the UK:
The Hidden minorities*



Arabs in the UK

- Their presence dated back to the 19th century.
- One of the largest ethnic communities in the UK (Nagel 2002, p. 267).
- The estimated number of Arabs in England in 2011 is 700,000 (2011 UK Census).

Yemenis' procession in South Shields on December 6, 1937

<https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/history-south-shields-yemeni-community-9678954>



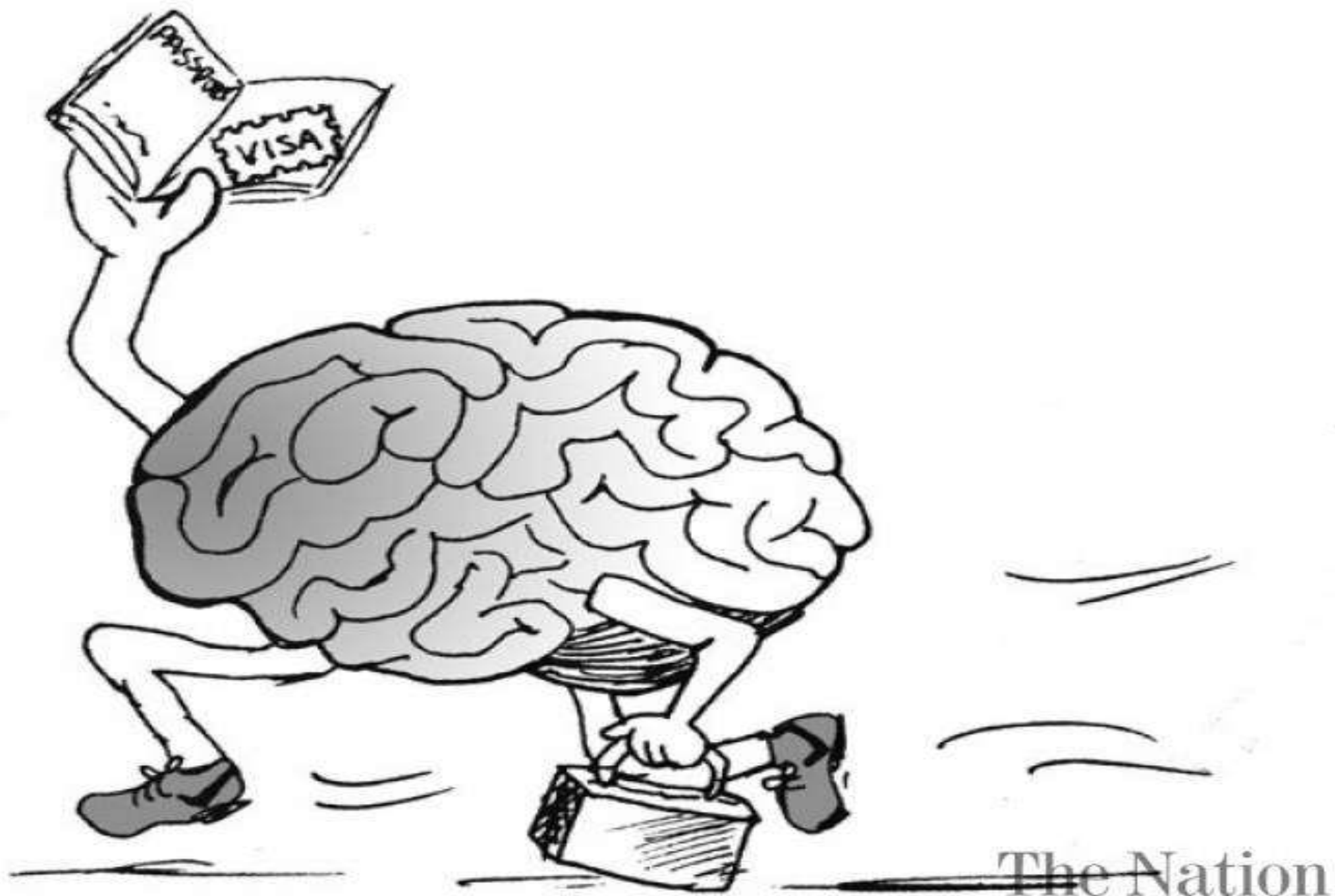
Linguistic research on English of Arabic speakers

- Arabic/English use and proficiency among Arab communities in the UK (Ferguson 2013; Bichani 2015).
- Samant's (2011) ethnographic study on Arab teenagers at Mercer high school in Dearborn.
- The acquisition of English sounds by adult Arabs speaking English as a foreign/ second language (e.g. Aziz 1974; 1976; Flege 1980; Flege & Port 1981; Port & Mitleb 1983; Abdelaal 2017; Olson 2017; Al-Anazi 2018).
- Speech production patterns by English-Arabic bilingual children (Khattab 2002; 2007; 2011).

Why Iraqi Arabs?

- One of the largest Arab communities in the UK (Al- Rasheed 1992).
- They present a clear example of intra-ethnic diversity.





The Nation





helpwing.com



Iraqi Arabs in London

- The second largest Arab community after Egyptians.
- Well-established middle-class community (1960s).
- Recent wave of Iraqi refugees/ asylum seekers (2003)



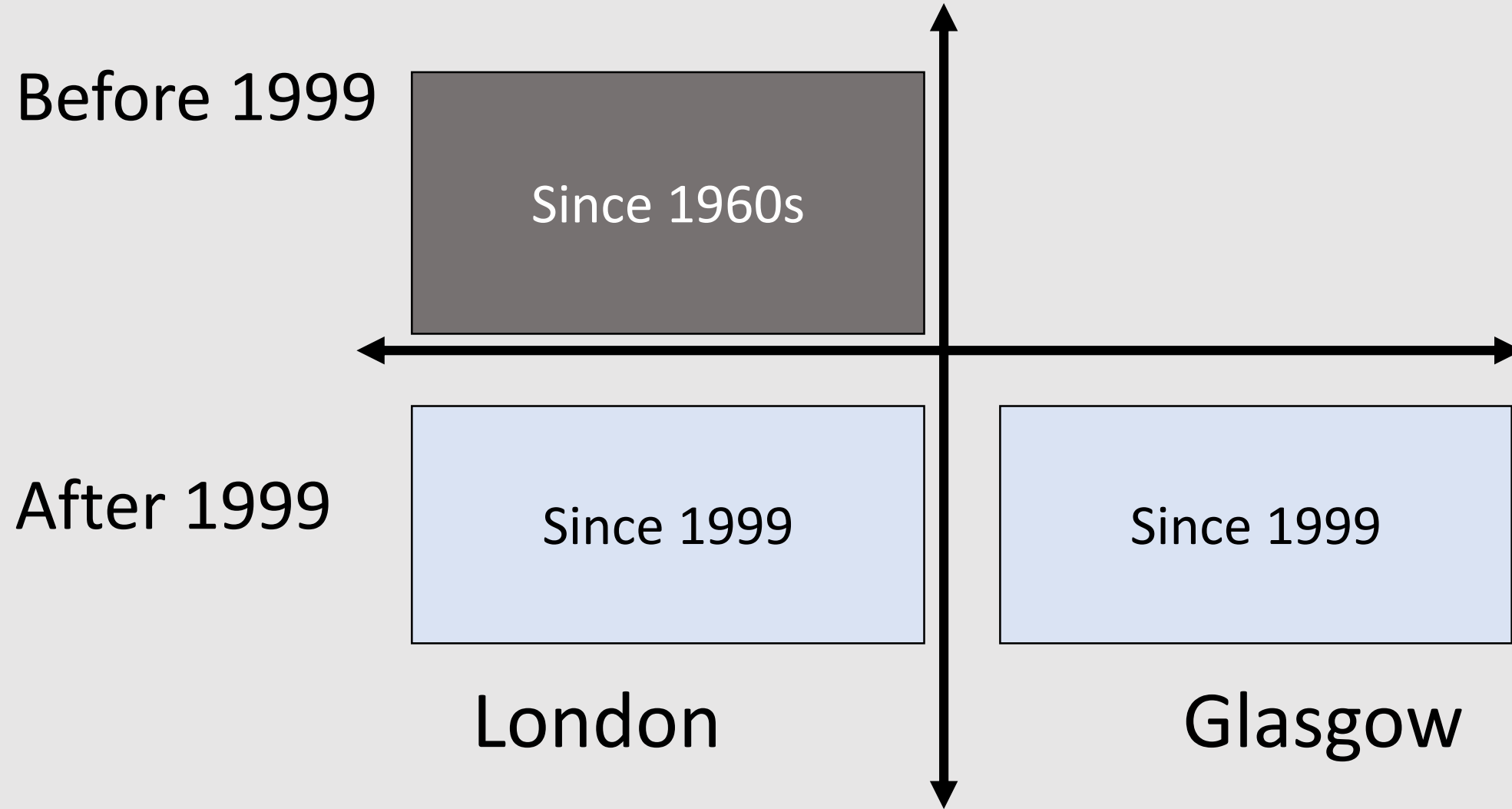
Iraqi Arabs in Glasgow

- A small and recent community (1999)
- Mostly refugees and asylum seekers.



Iraqis in London and Glasgow

Migration history



Research Questions

- What are the phonetic characteristics in Iraqi English as spoken in London and Glasgow?
- Do Iraqi speakers in London and Glasgow share patterns of Iraqi accented English?
- Is Iraqis' sociolinguistic identity influenced by socioeconomic and demographic factors resulting from their migration status and experience in both cities?

Linguistic Variables

- /l/, e.g. *let, hill*
- stops, e.g. /p b t d k g/
- FACE and GOAT vowels

1. /l/ in English and Arabic

English	Arabic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">English /l/ usually has clear and dark /l/ (Wells 1982).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Iraqi Arabic tends to be clear in all word positionsdark /l/ occurs in limited environments (Al-Ani 1970, p.48).

/l/ production in London and Glaswegian English

London	Glasgow
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clear /l/ in word-initial syllables, e.g. <i>light</i>• dark in coda or word final-positions, e.g. <i>Hill</i>• Vocalisation of dark [ɫ] in certain phonetic environments, e.g. <i>people, milk</i>. (Wells 1982, p.259; Cruttenden 2014, p.89).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dark in all positions in the word (Wells 1982, p.11; Stuart- Smith 2004, p.63).• Vocalisation of dark [ɫ] is recently observed in Glasgow (Stuart- Smith et al. 2006).

2) Stops in English and Arabic

English	Arabic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voiceless stops /p t k/, voiced stops /b d g/• Voiceless stops: aspirated and fall in the long lag region.• Voiced stops: partially voiced and have short lag except in inter-vocalic positions, e.g. leader. (Cruttenden 2014, p.164).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voiceless stops /t, k/, Voiced stops /b d g/ (Mustafawi 2018, p.12).• Voiceless stops: less aspirated and fall in the short lag region.• Voiced stops: show voicing and are prevoiced.(Al-Ani 1970; Khattab 2002, p. 213; Al-Anazi 2017, p.33).

Regional variation in the production of English stops

London	Glasgow
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voiceless stops: long duration of aspiration (long lag) (Cruttenden 2014, p.182).• Voiced stops: partially voiced (Cruttenden 2014, p.164).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voiceless stops: shorter duration of aspiration (Stuart- Smith et al. 2015).• Voiced stops: more voicing than London stops (Stuart- Smith et al. 2015).

3) FACE and GOAT vowels

London	Glasgow
<ul style="list-style-type: none">On a continuum from RP to Cockney realisations e.g. [eɪ]-[ʌɪ]-[aɪ] for FACE and [əʊ]-[ʌʊ]-[aʊ] for GOAT) (Wells 1982).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">monophthongal FACE [e:] and GOAT [o:] variants. (Stuart- Smith 2004, p.59).

Iraqi Arabic Vowel inventories

- Spoken Iraqi Arabic has three short vowels /i/, /u/, /a/ and five long vowels /i:/, /u:/, /a:/, /e:/, /o:/ (Hassan 1981; Al-Siraih 2013; Mohammed 2018).
- The diphthongs [ɛi] and [ʌʊ] exist in Standard Arabic (e.g. /bɛit/ and /lʌʊn/) but are replaced by pure long vowels in Spoken Iraqi (Aziz 1974; p.69).

Sample

- First- generation females.
- Range in age from 40 to 65.
- have arrived in the UK after the age of 18.

Place of residence	London		Glasgow
Migration history	Before 1999	After 1999	After 1999
Length of residence	58- 19 Years	18- 8 Years	18- 8 Years

Data elicitation

- English:
 - picture-naming task
 - word-list task
 - Semi-structured sociolinguistic interview
- Arabic:
 - word-list task
 - Semi-structured sociolinguistic interview
- Audio recordings
- In a quiet public place (e.g. mosque) or participant's house.

Materials

- /l/
 - monosyllabic words
 - initial/ final positions
 - controlling for vowel quality.
- Stops
 - monosyllabic words
 - initial position
 - controlling for the vowel quality).
- FACE and GOAT vowels
 - monosyllabic words
 - preceding and following segment.

Predictions

1) /l/

- /l/ should overall be fairly clear in Arabic-accented English (F2, Carter and Local 2007).
- But darker in Glasgow than London in both word-positions.
- And more l-vocalisation in London than Glasgow.

Predictions

2) VOT in stops

- Voiceless stops:
 - less aspiration and shorter VOT in Arabic-accented English.
 - longer duration of VOT and aspiration in London than Glasgow.
- Voiced stops:
 - Pre-voiced in Arabic-accented English.
 - more voicing in Glasgow than London.

Predictions

3) FACE and GOAT vowels

- Monophthongal realisations of FACE and GOAT are expected in Glasgow.
- Diphthongal realisations of FACE and GOAT vowels are expected in London.
- Given the absence of [eɪ] and [aʊ] in Spoken Iraqi Arabic, it is possible to observe monophthongal realisations of these vowels among London Iraqi speakers.

Predictions

- Socioeconomic and demographic differences resulting from participants' migration status and experience is expected to influence their sociolinguistic identity.

Thank you



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