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Slips of the tongue: Examples from Qatari Dialect

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There are various abstract units of linguistic performance that linguists hypothesized in order to be able to describe the grammars of languages. These are segments, features, morphemes, words or syntactic categories. Yet, actual speech is not only characterized by these grammatical utterances but there are also ungrammatical utterances, incomplete sentences, restarts, stutterings, hesitations and errors (Boomer and Laver 1968). Therefore, human daily speech is far from being perfect; rather it is intermixed with irregularities and errors of various types. On the top of all the idiosyncrasies, utterances are distorted by spontaneous slips of the tongue. According to Fromkin (1973, 1980) and Stemberger (1983) a slip of the tongue occurs when the speaker's actual utterance differs in some way from the intended utterance. It involves unintentional movement, addition, deletion, blending or substitution of material within an utterance and can be phonological, morphological, lexical or syntactic. It is not the product of intentional ungrammaticality, ignorance or language play. In slips, two linguistic elements interact. "Two segments may change place in a sound exchange and two synonymous words may fuse into one in a blend" (Pfau, 2014:1). Over the past century, slips of the tongue have been examined as scientific evidence within the context of two different traditions: psychological and linguistic. The purpose of this study is to explore slips of the tongue. A qualitative descriptive approach was used to collect and analyze the slips of the tongue of some Qataris.

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