Chapter 17

Introductory Remarks on the Corpus

The following collection of texts comes from six speakers from the Ṣeru-Zariwaw region. For the better understanding of some of the features and variation in pronunciation their socio-linguistic background is provided. Following are also the rules for transcription of the text-level phenomena not contained in Phonology.

17.1 Notes on the Speakers

17.1.1 Speaker A
This is the main consultant for texts, as well as for the information on the Zariwaw region and its history. He is a man in his seventies living in Sweden, in the suburbs of Stockholm. Most of his life he spent in the town of Diyana, but has also lived in a number of locations in northern Iraq, as well as in Urmi in Iran before coming to Sweden in the 1990s. Beyond his competence in CDZ, he is well conversant with Iraqi Arabic and Kurdish. His linguistic awareness appears to be high in identifying features of particular varieties of NENA and Kurdish.

17.1.2 Speaker B
This is the main consultant for the grammar questionnaire and elicited vocabulary. She is a woman in her fifties living in London since 1976. Her parents coming from Targawar and Margawar (the father) and Marbishu (the mother) moved to Diyana where the speaker was born and raised. Back in Iraq, she worked as an Arabic teacher in a primary school and her speech has been to a certain extent influenced by Arabic, mainly in vocabulary, but also in the pronunciation of some of the emphatics. Next to this, she is fluent in English, Kurdish and Modern Persian. Her dialect can be regarded as a Diyana variety, but she is well aware of the linguistic features of the northern group.

17.1.3 Speaker C
This is one of the consultants providing mainly grammatical and lexical data obtained by elicitation. He is an educated man in his fifties living in London. Although his father is from Harir, he inherited the speech of his mother from
Zariwaw. His exposure to the language of liturgy influenced the pronunciation of some words. Otherwise, however, he is well aware of many characteristic features and lexemes of CDZ.

17.1.4 Speaker D
This is one of the consultants for texts and vocabulary. She is a woman in her late sixties living in Sweden, where she came in 1990s. She lived most of her life in Diyana, but her mother was from Ṣeru and, similarly to speaker E, her speech reveals at times some features of the Christian Urmi cluster, such as the occasional pronunciation of /w/ as [v] and a tendency for suprasegmental emphasis.

17.1.5 Speaker E
This is the main consultant for the Ṣeru-type variety. She is a woman in her fifties born of parents from Ṣeru. Most of her life she spent in Diyana but moved to the suburbs of Stockholm several years ago. Together with her husband (born in Harire-Batase) she is the main source of information about the village of Ṣeru and its history. Although their variety is influenced by Arabic and other NENA dialects, important information was provided on the speech of their ancestors from Ṣeru.

17.1.6 Speaker F
This is one of the consultants for the text, as well as the grammar questionnaire. His speech is of a Diyana variety, influenced to some extent by the liturgical language. This speaker has been recorder by Prof. G. Khan, to whom I am grateful for allowing me access to this data.

17.2 Notes on the Transcription and Translation Method of the Texts

17.2.1 The Discourse Unit
The numbered divisions of the texts do not correspond exactly to sentences or intonation groups but rather to a discourse unit which could be defined as a passage. Smaller than a paragraph, but often containing up to several sentences, the passage is characterised by a particular topic and thus often related to a particular single event. It is worthy of note that many cases of stress dislocation, especially of the nuclear stress, are to be found at the end of a passage (cf. § 2.8.3).