

The Rəḥjīta Arabic of Mosul

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The aim of the current study is to introduce a type of *qalta* Arabic common to particular quarters in the Old City of Mosul on the right bank of the Tigris. This variety has emerged as a result of postmigratory interactions of Arab tribes with Mosul Arabic and is characterized by a simplified grammar, with less phonological and morphological features, when compared to the rest of the Tigris family. The discussion introduced henceforth is mainly based on fieldwork data collected on-site in 2023 in Mosul as well as on a text recorded in the speech of a seventy-four-year-old woman and her thirty-five-year-old daughter.

Keywords: Iraqi Arabic, *gəlat/qaltu* Arabic, Tigris family, Mosul Arabic, Rəḥjīta Arabic.

1. Introduction

More than seven decades ago, Blanc in his *Communal Dialects* (1964) made pioneering statements on Mosul Arabic. He subdivided the population in Mosul according to what he labelled *communal affiliation* into Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities (1964: 10). As stated by Blanc (1964: 185, fn. 13), all communities in Mosul speak *qaltu* Arabic with some differences that do not correlate with communal affiliation but rather with differences between quarters.¹ This three-way split of the communities in Mosul differs, according to Blanc, from that he made for Baghdad where Jews and Christians speak a *qaltu* dialect and Muslims a *gəlat* one. Later, Jastrow (2004, 2006, etc.) showed that there are differences between the speech of these three communities.

The present study introduces a type of *qalta* Arabic common to a large segment of the Muslim community in certain quarters on the right side of Mosul, locally named *rəḥta w-jīta* ‘I went and I came’ after the Old Arabic (henceforth: OA) verbs *rāḥa* ‘he went’ and *jā’a* ‘he came’ respectively, abbreviated henceforth as Rəḥjīta. The available historical data, also verbally transmitted, indicate that Rəḥjīta

¹ Blanc surely means with ‘quarters’ those within the historical wall of Mosul in the Old City on the right bank of the Tigris, as the left right of Mosul was on its way to emerge in his time.

Arabic has evolved in stages from Mosul Arabic as a consequence of the large-scale migration movements of Arab tribes to Mosul. Needless to say, connections between the Arab tribes and the local Aramaic-speaking people in Mosul go back to the very early centuries, even before the coming of Islam (al-Ṭāī 2010: 23). The first tribe to arrive in Mosul was the tribe of Xazraj and other tribes like, among others, Taglib, Rabī'a, and Tamīm settled later (al-Bakri 2011: 31).

Actually, migrations of Arab tribes to Mosul, mostly Shāwi, like among others, Baggāra, Ḥyāli, N'ēm, 'Bēd, Mišāhda and 'Gēdāt (Behnstedt 1992; Prochazka 2014, for these tribes) have continued up to modern times, a fact that led some people (Elyas 2013) to fear loss of the local dialects. At the beginning, these tribes resided in the grazing grounds on the outskirts of Mosul, viz. outside the historical wall of the Old City. At a later stage, however, the Old City has expanded and reached the quarters of the newcomers (al-Bakri 2011: 31; Khir 2011: 42-43), resulting in a polydialectal situation where different dialects coexist.

This contact situation pressed the newcomers to gradually level their speech toward the socially more prestigious elements of Mosul Arabic. Yet, it seems that the process of levelling has taken place only partially in these quarters, constructing a new dialect specific to them. It is noteworthy, however, that there are nowadays no more signs of current levelling in the direction of Mosul Arabic due, it seems, to two sociolinguistic factors. First, most, if not all, genuine non-Muslim *qaltu*-speakers have left these quarters, or the country altogether, at an early stage of independent Iraq, as did other minorities elsewhere in the country (Jastrow 2006: 414; Holes 2007: 125). Second, there is today a tendency observable among Rəḥjīta speakers to use their established dialect, or perhaps to switch to the 'manly' *ḡalāt* Arabic, once they come into contact with the speech of the *ḡalāt* population on the outskirts, due no doubt to the fact of being Mosul Arabic usually stigmatized as effeminate, especially at phonological level.

Another point of interest is that Rəḥjīta Arabic itself has always been marginal due to social considerations and societal biases, namely to the lower social status of its Muslim speakers who, from the very beginning, worked in socially underrated sectors such as farming and animal husbandry. Currently, Rəḥjīta Arabic represents the most widespread Muslim dialect on the right bank of the Tigris, both as concerns the number of speakers and the quarters covered, but it has unfortunately been totally excluded from the study of Mosul Arabic. The present study provides a discussion of the main linguistic differences between Rəḥjīta Arabic and Mosul Arabic. The data used in this study are collected from various sources, including face-to-face interviews, phone and recorded interviews with natives in the Old City of Mosul.

2. Linguistic description of Rəḥjīta Arabic

As indicated above, levelling of linguistic differences within the quarters has taken place only partially due to the aforementioned sociolinguistic factors. The rest of this paper sets out to describe only salient differences in morphological and phonological inventories between Rəḥjīta Arabic and Mosul Arabic. The examples adduced are taken from the text in the chart below. The numbers in the parentheses refer to the numbers of the paragraphs in the text containing the example, e.g. (11).

2.1. Morphological differences

2.1.1. The pronominal suffix *-ta*

A distinctive feature of Rəḥjīta Arabic is the use of the pronominal suffix *-ta* instead of *-tu* to mark the first singular of the perfect, which is often seen as a target of ridicule outside the Rəḥjīta quarters. However, among the younger generation the preference is usually to the more prestigious suffix *-tu*, particularly among those who commute on a regular basis to the heart of the City of Mosul. This tendency is also clearly expressed by speaker (B), when she states in paragraph (11) that “...they elevate their stylistic level and say *jītu*.” The following are a few examples:

Rəḥjīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
<i>arkəb-ta</i>	paragraph (3)	<i>ǧəkəb-tu</i> ‘I got into (the car)’
<i>rəḥ-ta</i>	paragraph (6)	<i>ǧəḥ-tu</i> ‘I went’
<i>raja^c-ta</i>	paragraph (7)	<i>ǧəjə^c-tu</i> ‘I returned’
<i>jī-ta</i>	paragraph (12)	<i>jī-tu</i> ‘I came’
<i>kən-ta</i>	paragraph (20)	<i>kən-tu</i> ‘I was’
<i>daxal-ta</i>	paragraph (25)	<i>daxal-tu</i> ‘I went into’

2.1.2. The pronominal suffix *-nu*

Rəḥjīta Arabic lacks the *-nu* suffix in both perfect and imperfect forms, but it elongates the final vowel, if there is any, which aligns well with the geographically remote dialect of al-Dōr (Hassan 2022: 615). Compare the following forms with their counterparts in al-Dōr Arabic and Mosul Arabic:

Rəh̄jīta Arabic		al-Dōr Arabic	Mosul Arabic
šəftī	paragraph (1)	šəftī	šəftī-nu ‘you [fem.sg.] saw him’
əǧšə‘tū	paragraph (2)	ǧəytū	əǧšə‘tū-nu ‘I saw him’
‘alē	paragraph (2)	‘alē	‘alē-nu ‘on it/him’
‘ma‘ā	paragraph (2)	ma‘ā	ma‘ā-nu ‘with him’

2.1.3. Gender distinction

Another feature in which Rəh̄jīta Arabic differs from other dialects of the Tigris group is that gender distinction in the second singular form is realized by affrication of /k/ to /č/, just as in *ǧəlat* Arabic.

Rəh̄jīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
xəṭab-əč	paragraph (4)	xəṭab-ki ‘he engaged you’ [fem. sg.]
‘amm-əč	paragraph (6)	‘amm-ki ‘your [paternal] uncle’ [fem. sg.]
axūt-əč	paragraph (23)	əxwat-ki ‘your brothers’ [fem. sg.]

In addition to this, the OA /k/ affricates into /č/ to mark the second singular feminine in prepositions. However, such gender marking always co-occurs with the feminine ending *-a*. The following are elicited examples from native speakers in the area:

‘alē-ča ‘on you [fem.sg.]’	bī-ča ‘in you [fem.sg.]’	mən-ča ‘from you [fem.sg.]’
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It is worth mentioning, however, that there is so far no such distinction attested inside the Tigris group, except for some cases in al-Dōr Arabic (Hassan 2022: 618).

2.2. Phonological Differences

2.2.1. Old Arabic /r/

Like in ‘Aqra and Arbīl (Jastrow 1990: 28) and Ba^{cc}āj (Talay 1999: 42), there is no *ǧ*-realization of OA /r/ in Rəh̄jīta Arabic:

Rəh̄jīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
<i>rajjaʿni</i>	paragraph (3)	<i>ǧajjaʿni</i> ‘he drove me back’
<i>yəʿrəf</i>	paragraph (4)	<i>yəʿǧəf</i> ‘he knows’
<i>rəḥta</i>	paragraph (7)	<i>ǧəḥ-tu</i> ‘I went’
<i>əl-ʿəmər</i>	paragraph (9)	<i>əl-ʿəməǧ</i> ‘lifetime, life’
<i>ḥḍəri</i>	paragraph (11)	<i>ḥḍəǧi</i> ‘urban’
<i>rās</i>	paragraph (13)	<i>ǧās</i> ‘head’
<i>ǧēr</i>	paragraph (23)	<i>ǧēǧ</i> ‘another, different’

The retention of the OA apical trill is also observed in Socin’s (1882–1883) texts from Mosul, though there is no satisfactory evidence of their proficiency (Jastrow 2004: 140; 1979: 38, fn. 8; Blanc 1964: 186, fn. 32).

2.2.2. The *i*-conditioned *ʾimāla*

The *i*-conditioned *ʾimāla* is usually seen as a shibboleth of the Tigris family (Prochazka 2019, 248; Talay 1999: 42; Jastrow 1981: 376, 386). This is indeed the case in the Arabic of al-Dōr (Hassan 2022: 612), Tikrīt (Johnstone 1975: 91), Mosul (Jastrow 1979: 50), but absent from Rəh̄jīta Arabic.

Rəh̄jīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
<i>wāḥəd</i>	paragraph (8)	<i>wēḥəd</i> ‘one’
<i>ḥwās</i>	paragraph (17)	<i>ḥwēs</i> ‘clothes’
<i>sāknīn</i>	paragraph (26)	<i>sēknīn</i> ‘living’
<i>ṭamānīn</i>	paragraph (9)	<i>ṭmēnīn</i> ‘eighty’
<i>jawārəb</i>	paragraph (16)	<i>jwēǧəb</i> ‘socks’

2.2.3. Vowel lowering

The lowering of /ū/ > /ō/ in the vicinity of emphatics and back consonants is absent in the speech of the elderly speaker (B), but sometimes apparent in the speech of the adult daughter (A) as in the form *yəḥkōn* in paragraphs (10, 12, 24), due, of course, to influence by prestigious Mosul Arabic.

Rəh̄jīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
<i>mūṣal</i>	paragraph (7)	<i>mōṣal</i> ‘Mosul’
‘ <i>as-sūq</i>	paragraph (16)	‘ <i>as-sōq</i> ‘to the market’
<i>yrūḥ</i>	paragraph (18)	<i>yġōḥ</i> ‘he goes’
<i>yərja‘ūn</i>	paragraph (19)	<i>yəġja‘ōn</i> ‘they return’

3. Lexical differences

As can be inferred from the text below, there are a few forms that are usually not features of *qeltu* Arabic. According to speaker (B), the form *ḥwās* is unusual for Rəh̄jīta Arabic, and the form *əhdūm* in paragraph (17) is used for ‘clothes.’ The same is true for the *ġalāt* conjunction *lō* ‘or’ in paragraphs (4 and 5) and the particle *tara* ‘otherwise’ in paragraphs (13 and 25) as the counterparts of Mosul Arabic *alla* and *kawi*, respectively. According to my informants, the conjunction *lō* is also heard in Mosul Arabic as well as in Bəh̄zāni and Mērgī Arabic, though being *kawi* the more common form. Further few comments on some remarkable lexical forms in Rəh̄jīta Arabic are given in the footnotes to the text in 4.

4. A text in Rəh̄jīta Arabic

The text in the chart below is in the speech of a seventy-four-year-old Rəh̄jīta female speaker (A) and her thirty-five-year-old daughter (B). Speaker (A) was born and grew up in Bāb əl-Bēḍ, the stronghold of Rəh̄jīta Arabic on the right bank of the Tigris, while her daughter was born in a quarter on the left bank of the Tigris, where Mosul Arabic predominates. This is also why her Rəh̄jīta Arabic is particularly contaminated by Mosul Arabic phonological and morphological forms, as will be shown in the text below.

My Wedding

A: ta‘āly ḥajjīya,² ḥkēli, ḥkēli aššōn at‘arrafti ‘al-ḥajji allā yərḥamu.³ **B:** əl-ḥajji⁴ llā yərḥamu. **A:** wēṣab šaftī awwal marra? **B:** əl-ḥajji kān əbən ‘ammi, əğšə‘tū əb-bāb əl-bēḏ, w-jā mən bāb əl-bēḏ ‘əddna.

A: ‘awwal marra wēṣab əğšə‘tī? **B:** ‘awwal marra ġšə‘tū bəs-saraj xāna.⁵ **A:** ‘aš-kəntəm ‘ad-tə‘mālūn əhnāk?⁶ **B:** kənnā ‘an-nəssawwaq. **A:** w-mənu rajja‘kəm? **B:** huwwa rajja‘ni, ərkəbta ma‘ā bəs-sīyāra w-rajja‘ni.

A: ya‘ni⁷ yə‘rəf ənti xaṭībātu lō-mā-yə‘rəf? **B:** lā lā, yə‘rəf ana xaṭībātu, ‘axadni w-rajja‘ni. **A:** mənu jā ‘ədkəm xaṭabəč awwal marra? **B:** jatt əmmu w-jatt əxtu, ‘awwal marra jō əxūtu w-jā ‘ammu w-ba‘dēn jatt əmmu w-əxtu.

A: ē. **B:** ē, w-šārat əl-xəṭba, w-jābūli əl-ḥalaqa, w-jābūli n-nišān.⁸ **A:** w-ə‘malti zawāj lō-lā? **B:** lā, w-

A: Come Ḥajjīya, tell me, tell me how did you met my father, may God have mercy upon him?

B: The Ḥajji, may God have mercy upon him. **A:**

Where did you see him for the first time? **B:**

The Ḥajji was my cousin [on my father's side], I saw him in Bāb il-Bēḏ, and he came from Bāb əl-Bēḏ to us.

A: Where did you see him for the first time? **B:** I saw him for the first time in Saraj Xāna. **A:** What did you [both] do there? **B:** We were shopping.

A: And who brought you back home? **B:** He

brought me back home. I got into the car with him and he brought me back home.

A: Did he know that you were his fiancée or not? **B:** No, no, he knew I was his fiancée. He picked me up and drove me back. **A:** Who came first to engage you? **B:** His mother came, and his sister came. First, his brothers came and his uncle came, and later his mother and sister came.

A: Yes. **B:** Yes. And then the engagement took place. And they brought me the engagement ring. And they brought me the Nišān. **A:** And

² A female pilgrim to Mecca.

³ A polite phrase said when mentioning a deceased person.

⁴ A male pilgrim to Mecca.

⁵ A quarter in the Old City of Mosul.

⁶ The form *əhnāk* is rarely used in Mosul Arabic, where *hnūk* predominates.

⁷ A pan-Iraqi continuative that usually introduces an assertion.

⁸ According to Woodhead and Beene (1967: 475), *nišān* is a personal gift sent to a girl, the acceptance of which implies the consent to marriage.

<p>ə'məlna lələt ḥanna,⁹ wa-xadni ba'dēn rəḥna 'aš-šəmāl, w-raja'na mn-əš-šəmāl əb-bēt ahlu.</p> <p>A: mənū lə-kān sākən əb-bēt jəddu. B: əḥna qa'adna b-baḥadna, rəḥta 'ala bētna 'ana w-'amməč azhar.</p> <p>A: ē. B: bēt əb-baḥadna, w-rəḥta 'a-bēt ahli rəḥta zərta 'ənd ahli 'ašš tīyām, wa-būya 'ṭāni¹⁰ haddīya 'ēn māl abul-xamsa, w-jō əxūti w-kəl-man 'aṭāni haddīya, w-rāḥ ṭala' 'ala šəglu, 'allā yərḥamu.</p> <p>A: 'allā yərḥamu. B: w-rəḥta 'ana l-bēt 'ahli, w-bēt axūya¹¹ 'azamūni, w-rəḥta 'ala-bēt axūya b-mūšəl əj-jədīda, w-raja'ta mən mūšəl əj-jədīda, rajja'ni axūya 'ala-bēt 'ahli, w-jō 'ahli 'məlnāləm 'azīma, w-ə'məlnā l-'arḥa' 'ayyām,¹² w-jō j-jamā'a...</p> <p>A: ḥāy suwāləf 'ahal qabəl əl-'arḥa' tīyām. B: ē, qabəl kānət arḥa' tīyām w-nīšān w-lələt ḥanna. A: hassa xtəšarnāha nīšān w-zaffa¹³ b-yōm wāḥəd. B: w-zafni 'a-s-sūlāf¹⁴ bəš-šəmāl, w-raja'ta mnəš-šəmāl, rajja'ni 'a-bēt ahlu.</p>	<p>did you then get married or not? B: No, and then we had a Ḥinna night. And after that he took me to the north [of Iraq]. And we came back from the north to his family's house.</p> <p>A: Who lived in my grandfather's house? B: We lived alone. I went to our house with your uncle Azhar. A: Yes. B: [We had] a house of our own. And I went to my family's house, I visited my family for ten days. And my father gave me a gift, an eye amulet. And my brothers came and each of them gave me a gift. And he went [then] to his work, may God have mercy upon him.</p> <p>And I A: May God have mercy upon him. B: went to my family's house. And my brother's family invited me [for a meal]. And I went to my brother's house in New Mosul. And I came back from New Mosul. My brother brought me back to my family's house. And my family came, we invited them [for a meal]. And we did the Four Days. And a group [of people] came...</p> <p>A: These are the habits of people in the past, the four days. B: Yes, in the past there were the Four days, Nīšān, and a Ḥinna night. A: Nowadays, we reduced it, Nīšān and Zaffa in one day. B: And he escorted me to Sūlāf in the</p>
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⁹ Cf. Grigore (2012: 21) for this stage of wedding.

¹⁰ In Mosul Arabic the form ta'āni is used instead of 'aṭāni where emphatic /t/ is realized as dental /t/.

¹¹ Intended meaning 'my brother's family.'

¹² A celebration that lasts four days.

¹³ Escorting the bride or the bridegroom on the wedding night (Woodhead and Beene 1967: 204).

¹⁴ A summer resort in north Iraq.

A: ʾənsīti kān ʃadīqu hamm ʔalaʿ maʿākəm. **B:** ʃadīqu ʔalaʿ maʿāna, ʾətzawwajna sawa, huwwa w-ʃadīqu əbən rəyāḏ əš-šāhīn, ʾalla yəṭṭī ʔōlt əl-ʿəmər,¹⁵ w-rajaʿna mnəš-šəmāl, w-kəll-man rāḥ ʿala-bētū, w-əḥbəlta w-jəbta məḏar, w-baʿdēn ʃār ʿəmər məḏar sana, w-əḥbəlta jəbta maha, w-rāḥat əmmi jahhəzətni ləl-walad, w-jābūli hadīya dahab jaraš, həmma jābūli jaraš.

A: yōm, ēmati ʔhawwalna ʿal-qādəsiya.¹⁶ **B:** ʾəṭhawwalna ʿal-qādəsiya sant əl-xamsa w-ṭamānīn, ʾənti jīti sant əl-wāḥəd w-təsʿīn, w-fahad jā ʔalāt w-ṭamānīn, w-maha wāḥəd w-ṭamānīn, w-maha daxalət kəlliya.

A: ʾahal bāb əl-bēḏ kamm lahja yəḥkōn? **B:** lahja wəḥda bər-rəḥta w-jīta, mā- yəḥkūn gēr lahja. **A:** w-bēt əš-šāhīn lēš mā-yəḥkōn rəḥta w-jīta? **B:** bass ʿəndəm əḥna nqūl rəḥta, həmma yqūlūn kī-rəḥtu,¹⁷ yaʿni šwayya yḥarfūha l-kəlma.

A: hā ḥḏəri? **B:** ē, w-əḥna nqūl tara w-həmma yqūlūn kawī, ē həmma yqūlūn kawī, mənnəm yqūlūn kawī w-mənnəm yqūlūn tara, yqūlūn jīta, bass marrāt ʿa-yṭaqfūn nafəshəm yqūlūn jītu, hāy əl-lahja māl bāb əl-bēḏ, lahja ʿammīya, mən bāb əl-

north. And I came back from the north, he brought me to his family's house.

A: You forgot [to mention] that his friend went with you. **B:** His friend went with us. We got married on the same day. He and his friend, the son of Rəyāḏ əš-šāhīn, may God give him long life. And we came back from the north. And everyone went home. And I became pregnant and I got Məḏar. After that, Məḏar turned one year old, and I became pregnant and got Maha. And my mother prepared me for a male child. And they gave me a gift, a golden bell. They brought me a bell.

A: Mama, when did we move to al-Qadisiya? **B:** We moved to al-Qadisiya in eighty-five, you were born in ninety-one, and Fahad was born in eighty-three, and Maha in eighty-one, and Maha entered the college.

A: How many dialects do people speak in Bāb əl-Bēḏ? **B:** One dialect, the rəḥta w-jīta [dialect]. They do not speak another dialect. **A:** And why do not Bēt əš-šāhīn speak rəḥta w-jīta [dialect]? **B:** But we say rəḥta, they say kī-rəḥtu. That is, they change the word a little bit.

A: Aha, an urban [dialect]? **B:** Yes. And we say tara, and they say kawī. Yes, they say kawī. Some of them say kawī and some say tara. They say jīta, they elevate their stylistic level and say jītu. That is the dialect of Bāb əl-Bēḏ, a

¹⁵ A God-wish common to all Iraqi Arabic dialects.

¹⁶ A quarter on the left side of the City of Mosul.

¹⁷ Interestingly, the prefix kə- is a hallmark of Christian (Hassan 2024: 8) and Yazidi Arabic (Jastrow 1981: 374) in northeast Mosul, which usually marks the imperfect tense.

<p><i>bēḏ lə-ḥadd bēt ahli nafs əl-lahja, mən tətla‘in bāb əl-bēḏ xazraj¹⁸ təqəlb əl-mōja gēr ḥaki gāl w-gəlat, əl-xazraj yqūlūn gāl w-gənnna.</i></p> <p>A: <i>həmma əl-əbyūt əs-sākna ‘aš-šārə‘ əb-bāb əl-bēḏ lahjathəm rəḥta w-jīta, əlli bəḏ-ḏahar mā-yəḥkōn rəḥta w-jīta. B:</i> <i>əl-bəḏ-ḏahar wara bēt ahli mətəl bāb jdīd¹⁹ yəḥkūn ḥḏəri.</i></p> <p>A: <i>ē. B:</i> <i>bāb əl-bēḏ lahjatəm təxtələf ‘an jamī‘ ahl əl-mūšəl, māku mətəl lahjat bāb əl-bēḏ ‘abad, ya‘ni wēšəb təmši yqəllək ənti mn-ahal bāb əl-bēḏ, ‘ahl əl-məšāhda lahjatəm šəkəl, ‘ahl əl-xazraj lahjatəm šəkəl, ‘ahl rās əj-jādda lahjatəm šəkəl.</i></p> <p>B: <i>bass bāb əl-bēḏ lahja wəḥda mā-tətgayyar ‘abad, ysammūha rəḥta w-jīta, hassa təla‘ hāda l-mūdēl²⁰ rəḥtu w-jītu, əḥna nqūl akalna w-əšrəbna w-raja‘na w-jīna w-jatt ‘əndi əmmi w-jatt ‘əndi əxti, w-rəḥta ‘as-sūq w-əssawaqta w-jīta, wa-kān əllā yuḥəbb əl-muḥsənīn.²¹</i></p> <p>A: <i>yōḥ, mənu kān yəssawwaqəlkəm mən kəntəm əzḡār? B:</i> <i>əmmi əllā yərḥamha təssawwaqənnna, wa-būya yəštarīnna w-ərrūḥ ‘al-xayyāṭa w-mā-nqūl əḥwās, əhdūm ətxayyəṭənnna lə-ḥwās ətxayyəṭənnna lə-hdūm, w-təštarīnna w-ətlabəsna,</i></p>	<p>colloquial dialect. The same dialect [is spoken] from Bāb əl-Bēḏ to my family’s house. When you leave Bāb əl-Bēḏ, the Xazraj switch over to <i>gāl</i> and <i>gəlat</i>. The Xazraj say <i>gāl</i> and <i>gənnna</i>.</p> <p>A: [People] in houses located directly on the street in Bāb əl-Bēḏ speak <i>rəḥta</i> and <i>jīta</i>, but those behind do not speak <i>rəḥta</i> and <i>jīta</i>. B: Those behind my family’ house speak just like Bāb Jdīd, they speak an urban dialect.</p> <p>A: Yes. B: The dialect of Bāb əl-Bēḏ differ from all [dialects] of the people in Mosul. There is no dialect like that of Bāb əl-Bēḏ. That is, no matter where you are, one says to you that you are from Bāb əl-Bēḏ. Məšāhda has a different dialect, Xazraj has a different dialect, Rās əj-Jādda has a different dialect.</p> <p>B: But Bāb əl-Bēḏ has one dialect, it does not change. They call it <i>rəḥta</i> and <i>jīta</i>. Now we have the new tendency of <i>rəḥtu</i> and <i>jītu</i>. We say we ate and drank, and we came back, and my mother came to me, and my sister came to me, and I went to the market, and I shopped and came back, and Allah loves the gooddoers.</p> <p>A: Mama, who did the shopping for you when you were little? B: My mother, may God have mercy upon her, does the shopping for us. And my father buys for us, and we go to the female tailor and she sews the dresses for us. We do</p>
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¹⁸ A quarter close to Bāb əl-Bēḏ named after the tribe Xazraj.

¹⁹ A quarter in the Old City of Mosul.

²⁰ English ‘model.’

²¹ A classicism common to all Iraqi Arabic dialects.

<p>w-‘ala kəll ‘id əhdūm šəkəl w-xayyāta ətχayyətənna.</p> <p>B: w-abūya llā yərḥama kān yāxədnə ‘ala-bāta,²² w- yəštari təkramīn²³ əl-əhdəya w-əl-jawārəb, kəlla abūya kān yəštariinna huwwa. A: jəddu allā yərḥama sā‘a šqad kān yəṭla‘ ‘aš-šəgəl. B: ‘abūya kān ləmmən yəšalli ş-şəbəḥ yəṭla‘ ‘aš-šəgəl, w-‘ammi ‘əmar mən əl-xamsa yəṭla‘, yrūḥ ‘ala bāb əs-sarāy.²⁴</p> <p>A: ēmati yərja‘ūn? B: ‘abūya mā-yərja‘, kān yəštəgəl maqāwəl, mā-yərja‘ ləl-mağrəb ləmma yḥəlūn əl-‘əmmāl wara ‘aḏān əl-‘aşər, ‘ammi ‘əmmar kān yəṭla‘ bəl-xamsa w-yərja‘ bəl-‘aşra.</p> <p>A: mənū kān yāxədkəm ‘alas-sūq ‘as-sīnama? B: nəḥna mā-kənna rriḥ ‘as-sīnama, mā-yəqbalūn ərrūḥ ‘as-sīnama ‘ēb əs-sīnama. A: ya‘ni ma-kān marrētəm ‘as-sīnama? B: lā, waqt əl-əkbərna baqa rriḥ bala ḥəss la-halna ‘as-sīnama, nənjəmə‘ nəḥna l-banāt w-təji ‘amməti. A: ya‘ni ma‘a ‘ammətəč. B: ma‘a ‘amməti, ‘amməti tāxədnə, ərrūḥ ‘as-sīnama, ē.</p>	<p>not say əḥwās, she sews the əhdūm for us. She buys for us and dresses us. And every feast we get different dresses, and a female tailor sews for us.</p> <p>B: And my father, may God have mercy upon him, used to take us to Bāta and he buys shoes and socks. My father bought all this for us. A: At what time did my grandfather used to go to work? B: My father would go to work after the morning prayer. And my uncle Omar would go at five [in the morning]. He goes to Bāb əs- Sarāy.</p> <p>A: When did they come back [from work]? B: My father does not come back; he was a contractor. He did not come back until sunset when the workers get off, after the call to afternoon prayer. My uncle Omar would go at five and would come back at ten.</p> <p>A: Who took you to the market [or to] the cinema? B: We did not use to go to the cinema. They did not agree that we go to the cinema. A cinema [is considered] a shame. A: Does this mean that you never were in the cinema? B: No, when we grew up, we went to the cinema without knowledge of our family. We girls meet and my aunt comes. A: This means you were with your aunt. B: With my aunt. My aunt would take us, we went to the cinema, yes.</p>
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²² A large shoe company which had in the past a branch in Mosul.

²³ A polite expression to the interlocutor when mentioning things that are considered religiously or culturally forbidden or unclean.

²⁴ A quarter on the right side of Mosul.

<p>A: ē. B: w-ṭalāl allā yərḥamu marrāt yfattanna mā-ynazzanna. A: ē. B: w-hāy hīya, šaku baʿad, w-kanna rrūḥ lā-bēt ʿammatač ʿalliya, marrāt təzəmna, w-azhar mā-kān yxallīna nəṭlaʿ bāb əl-ḥōš.</p> <p>A: hā yaʿni ayyām mā-kənti əmzawwaja kənti təṭlaʿīn maʿa ʿammatač? B: ē, mən kənta bənət kənət ḥərrīti šwayya azyad, mən əzzawwajna dōla bēt ʿammi mətʿašbīn mā-yxallūn əl-ḥərma təṭlaʿ.</p> <p>A: yaʿni təštərīn maʿa ʿammatač? B: ē, maʿa ʿamməti, ē maʿa ʿamməti aṭlaʿ, əmmi mā-kān yšəḥla təṭlaʿ, ʿənda wlādʿənda šəḡəl wa-būya mā-yxallīha.</p> <p>A: bala ḥəss axūtəč. B: bala ḥəss axūti nəṭlaʿ, ʿaxūti b-šəḡəlḥəm, ʿāxəḍ ʿammatač w-ərrūḥ.</p> <p>A: sīnama sūq. B: sīnama sūq, bis-sana marra martēn, xō mū²⁵-kəll mā-yəji fəlm ərrūḥ ʿalē. A: kəll mā-yəji fəlm əjdīd. B: kəll sana marra kəll santēn marra, mā-rrūḥ azyad, bəz-zawājāt kən yʿəzmūnna ʿənd əl-aḡawāt,²⁶ zawājāt ərrūḥ ʿəndəm, w-həmma yəjūn ʿədna.</p> <p>A: ē kəntəm jīrān. B: jīrān w-nasāba, əḥna w-bēt ḥamandi w-bēt šāhīn. A: kəll wāḥəd yəḥki laḥjətu šəkəl. B: lā lā. A: əl-aḡawāt əšwayya... B: lā lā əl-aḡawāt nəfəs ḥakīna, mā-ʿəndəm ḡər ḥaki. A: bala</p>	<p>A: Yes. B: And Ṭalāl, may God have mercy upon him, would take us around [in his car], but he did not let us get out [of the car]. A: Yes. B: That it is. What else is there? And we used to go to your aunt ʿAlliya. Sometimes she invites us. And your uncle Azhar would not even let us go as far as the yard door.</p> <p>A: Aha, this means before you got married you used to go out with your aunt? B: Yes. When I was virgin, I had a little more freedom. But when I got married, my husband’s family are strict and they do not let a woman to go out.</p> <p>A: This mean you go shopping with you aunt? B: Yes, with my aunt. Yes, I go out with my aunt. My mother was not able to go out, she had children, she had homework, my father did not let her [go out].</p> <p>A: Cinema [or] market. B: Cinema [or] market. One or two times a year. Not every time when a film is released, we go [to watch it]. A: Every time when a new film is released. B: Every one year, every two years one time, no more. In weddings, the Aḡawāt would invite us, we would go to their weddings, and they come to us.</p> <p>A: Yes, you were neighbors. B: Neighbors and relatives by marriage, we and Bēt Ḥamandi and Bēt Šāhīn. A: Every one speaks his dialect in a different way. B: No, no. A: The Aḡawāt a little</p>
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²⁵ The negative marker mū is never used in ‘pure’ Mosul Arabic.

²⁶ A last name designating a big family in the Old City of Mosul, particularly in Bāb əl-Bēḍ.

<p>aš-šōn lahjāt. B: bass ət-tu. A: ət-tu. B: ət-tu w-əl-kawi.</p> <p>A: hassa bēt ‘ammati yəḥkōn ġēr lahja. B: ‘ə‘rābi yəḥkūn ‘ahal xazraj, ‘ə‘yāla kānət xazraj. A: ē, ya‘ni həmma ‘ašīra w-kəll waḥəd yəḥki lahja šəkəl. B: əl-aġawāt əs-sāknīn əb-xazraj yəḥkūn ġāl w-gənnā, w-əs-sāknīn bāb əl-bēḍ yəḥkūn mətənnā, walla nafs əl-‘ašīra, əlli qā‘dīn əb-bāb əl-bēḍ kəlləm ḥakīhəm nafs əl-ḥaki.</p> <p>A: ēmati daxalti madrasa w-ēmati baṭṭalti mnəl-madrasa? B: daxalta madrasa bəs-sant əs-səttā w-xamsīn w-baṭṭalta mən-madrasa bəs-sant əs-səttīn.</p> <p>A: ya‘ni ənti muwālīdək əšqad? B: ‘ana muwālīdi xamsīn, ‘ana b-šaff tälət w-baṭṭalōni ahli mnəl-madrasa, w-jā əbən ‘ammi xaṭabni.</p> <p>A: lēš baṭṭalti? B: baṭṭalta yəmma mašākəl šārat w-əl-bətt kānət mən-təkbar ybaṭṭlūha mnəl-madrasa, yzawjūha, yfaynūn ḥaḍḥa w-yzawjūha, mā-xallōni akamməl madrasa, zawwajōni ‘aṭōni la-bən ‘ammi.</p> <p>A: ‘ənti zawwajti mā-zġayra. B: kənta maxṭūba ‘ala-bən ‘ammi l-lāx, əl-ḥamdu ləl-lā ‘ala kəlli ḥāl.</p>	<p>bit... B: No, no, the Aġawāt speak just like we do, they do not have another dialect. A: Which [different] dialects? B: Only the [suffix]-tu. A: The [suffix] -tu. B: The [suffix] -tu and kawi.</p> <p>A: Now, my aunt’s family speak a different dialect. B: People in the Xazraj quarter speak rural, her husband’s family come from Xazraj.</p> <p>A: Yes, this means they are from the same tribe, but still speak different dialects. B: The Aġawāt who live in Xazraj speak ġāl and gənnā, and those who live in Bāb əl-Bēḍ speak just like we do. All those who live in Bāb əl-Bēḍ speak the same [dialect].</p> <p>A: When did you go to school and when did you leave the school? B: I went to school in fifty-six, and I left it in sixty. A: So, when were you born? I was born in [nineteen] fifty. I was in the third grade and my family let me leave the school. And my cousin came and has engaged me.</p> <p>A: Why did you leave the school? B: I left the school because there were problems, and when a girl became [physically] mature, they let her leave the school, they marry her, they gave her hell. They did not let me continue my school; they gave me to my paternal cousin. A: You weren't little when you got married. B: I was engaged to my other cousin. Thank God anyway.</p>
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5. Conclusion

This paper introduced the Rəḥjīta Arabic of the large Muslim community in the Old City of Mosul on the right bank of the Tigris, known locally as *rəḥta w-jīta* dialect. It has been readily apparent from the

examples given throughout this paper that Rəh̄jīta Arabic is enjoying a special position in the Tigris region. It lacks the most salient phonological and morphological features that are usually considered hallmarks of this area, a fact that clearly detach it from the rest of the Tigris family, especially when compared to Mosul Arabic.

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