

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE LETTER 'DHAD' BETWEEN SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS

MUHAMMAD AZAM

AL-IRAQIA UNIVERSITY, BAGHDAD, IRAQ,
EMAIL: muhammd.a.azam@aliraqia.edu.iq, ORCID ID: 0009-0004-9730-1201

PROF.DR. MOHAMMED ABDULLAH SALMAN

AL-IRAQIA UNIVERSITY BAGHDAD, IRAQ, EMAIL: mohammed.abd.salman@aliraqia.edu.iq

DR. HOUTHEFA SALAH ABDOL FATTAH AL KHALIDI

APPLIED SCIENCE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY, JORDAN, EMAIL: halkhalidi@asu.edu.jo

THIKRA AHMED NAYEL

AL-IRAQIA UNIVERSITY, BAGHDAD, IRAQ, EMAIL: thikra.a.nayel@aliraqia.edu.iq

PROF.DR. ASHRAF ABDELRAFEA MOHAMED ELSAYED

AFRO ASIAN UNIVERSITY, SOMALI, EMAIL: ashraf.darafili@aau.edu.so

Abstract: Arab linguists have focused on studying the sounds of letters, exploring their articulation points, characteristics, and how they are pronounced. One of the most prominent sounds that has attracted significant research, and study is the sound of the letter "Dhad". This sound has been a subject of extensive debate. Scholars of Tajweed and Qur'anic recitation have given it special attention, as the issue of correctly pronouncing the "Dhad" is present both among Arabs and others who have not learned how to pronounce it properly. Modern linguists have claimed that the original, classical pronunciation of the "Dhad" has evolved and is no longer used correctly, which is the main reason for this study. The importance of this research lies in addressing the many and varied errors in the pronunciation of the letter "Dhad." this study aims to understand the nature of the errors in this sound, examine claims about its transformation, investigate the correct pronunciation of the classical "Dhad," and determine its proper articulation point and characteristics. The study also seeks to rectify the linguistic mistakes associated with this sound. It should be noted that studies on this topic are abundant, both ancient and modern, and range from those that focus on the specific words containing "Dhad" or "Dha" to those clarifying the rules regarding its articulation and characteristics.

Keywords: Dhad sound, Pronunciation errors, Classical Arabic phonology, Linguistic transformation, Modern vs. classical pronunciation, Linguistic correction.

Chapter One: The Articulation Point of the Letter Dhad

The First Requirement: The Articulation Point - Linguistically and Terminologically

The word (makhraj) in Arabic is a form derived from the root (kharaja), meaning "to exit." This form indicates the source, place, or time of the action¹. (khurooj) means the opposite of (entry), and it refers to the act of exiting or leaving. The verb (kharaja) means "he exited" or "he went out," and the noun (khuroojan) denotes the act or state of leaving. Therefore, (makhraj) refers to the place or point from which something exits or is produced, particularly in the context of speech sounds².

What is meant here is the place, without a doubt. The "makhraj" in this context refers to the place of exit.

The "makhraj" in technical terms, as pointed out by Ibn Jinni, refers to the following: "Know that the sound is an extension that comes from the breath and travels through the throat, mouth, and lips, where it encounters points or locations that alter its continuous and elongated nature. These points are referred to as the places where the sound is

¹ Al-Tamimi, J. M., Kochetov, A., Ben-Ammar, C., & Tahtadjan, T. (2024). Acoustics of guttural fricatives in Arabic, Armenian, and Kurdish: A case in remote data collection. *Laboratory Phonology*, 15(1), 1–40. <https://doi.org/10.16995/labphon.10542>

² Watson, J. C. E., Albark, R., Heselwood, B., & Heselwood, B. (2022). Arabic (Gaza City Arabic). *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 52(1), 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025100322000197>

restricted or modified, and the sound produced at each of these points is called a letter¹. Ibn Jinni here referred to the "makhrāj" as a "mqata", which seems to indicate the point where the sound encounters a restriction during its extension. Some have defined the "makhrāj" as "the place where the letter exits"² or "the location where the letter is generated, similar to how the womb is the place where a fetus develops"³.

The second requirement: The Articulation of the Letter "Dhad" According to the Ancients

The ancient scholars did not agree on the precise articulation point of the letter 'Dhad.' Al-Khalil (Ibn Ahmad) believed that it belongs to the 'shajriyya' (tree-like) letters, stating that the articulation point of the letters 'Jeem,' 'Sheen,' and 'Dhad' is the same, as their starting point is from the top of the mouth, meaning its opening⁴. Siyaweh (Sibawayh) disagrees with this view, saying: 'The articulation point of the letter 'Dhad' is between the edge of the tongue and the molars that lie next to it⁵. Then Sibawayh's followers continued this view. Al-Mubarrad mentioned that the articulation point of the letter 'Dhad' is from the cheek, but he added that some people pronounce it from the right cheek, while others pronounce it from the left cheek⁶. Al-Mubarrad here elaborated on what was mentioned briefly by Sibawayh. It appears that Sibawayh did not specify the right or left molars. Likewise, Ibn Jinni did not make this distinction, but he expressed the articulation point as being from the right or left side, indicating that it requires an effort⁷. It is puzzling that a speaker might have to exert effort to pronounce some letters of their own language. I have tried to pronounce certain letters in other languages without success, even with the presence of a teacher and repeated practice. On the other hand, a speaker of their native language pronounces these letters effortlessly. I wonder whether the pronunciation of the 'Dhad' changed in Ibn Jinni's time to the point that it became something that required effort. Interestingly, Sibawayh also mentioned effort, but in relation to the weak 'Dhad,' which is one of the additional letters beyond the twenty-nine. These weak letters are not considered eloquent and can only be clearly distinguished in face-to-face communication. The 'Dhad' can be pronounced with effort from the right side, or, if you wish, it can be pronounced from the left side, which is easier.⁸

I have not seen any of the scholars of Tajweed who disagreed with what the linguists said before them; rather, they followed them. Al-Wasiti said: 'The articulation point of the letter dād is from the extreme edge of the tongue and what is adjacent to it from the molars⁹. This same statement appears in Siraj al-Qari' al-Mubtadi, where it is also mentioned that most people articulate it from the left side, while only a few articulate it from the right side¹⁰. Then I found that Al-Jahiz was the opposite of this, as he said: 'As for the dād, it is only articulated from the right cheek, unless the speaker

¹ Ibn Jinni. (n.d.). *Sirr Sina 'at al-I'rab* [The secret of the art of grammar] (Vol. 1, p. 19).

² Kosim, N., Ali, E. A., Ruhani, N., & Senita, P. (2023). *Analysis of Mispronunciation of Makhārij Al-Hurūf in Arabic Hiwār Learning*. Ta'lim al-'Arabiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab & Kebahasaaraban, 7(2), 205–218. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpba.v7i2.30124>

Siraj al-Qari' al-Mubtadi' wa Tadhkar al-Muqri' al-Muntahi [The lamp of the beginner reader and the reminder for the advanced reader] (Vol. 1, p. 403).

³ Mohamed, Y., Abd Razak, Z., Ismail, T. H. S., Alribdi, N. I., & Hoque, M. (2024). *A systematic review of Arabic phonetic: Hijaiyyah's pronunciation among new learners*. Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v7i2.24173>

Ibn al-Jazari. (n.d.). *Sharh Tayyibat al-Nashr fi al-Qira'at al-'Ashar* [Explanation of Tayyibat al-Nashr in the ten readings] (Vol. 1, p. 229).

⁴ Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad. (n.d.). *Al-'Ayn* (Vol. 1, p. 58).

⁵ Sibawaih ibn Abi Bishr Amr. (2019). *Kitab-e-Sibawaih* الكتاب سيبويه. Mohammed Ameer Hasan, (Vol. 4, p. 433).

Zsiga, E. C., & Nair, R. (2017). Revisiting acoustic correlates of pharyngealization in Jordanian and Moroccan Arabic: Implications for formal representations. *Laboratory Phonology*, 8(1), 1–40. <https://doi.org/10.5334/labphon.65>

⁶ Ibn Jinnī, A. A.-F. 'U. (1993). *Sirr šinā'at al-i'rāb* (H. Hindāwī, Ed.). Dār al-Qalam. (Vol. 1, p. 60).

⁷ Ibn Jinnī, A. A.-F. 'U. (1993). *Sirr šinā'at al-i'rāb* (H. Hindāwī, Ed.). Dār al-Qalam, 1/60.

⁸ (Al-Kitab) by Sibawayh, Volume 4, page 432.

Hajjaj, N. (2025). Arabi is the language of Dhā': Arabic phonetic evolution and the identity of the Arabi (Contemporary Standard Spoken Arabic CSSA). *Mesopotamian Journal of Arabic Language Studies*, 2025, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.58496/MJALS/2025/006>

⁹ Al-Mukmin, A. bin A. al-M. (2002). *Al-kanz fi al-qirā'āt al-'ashr*. Dār al-Shahābah, Volume 1, page 166.

¹⁰ Ibn al-Qāṣih, 'A. i. 'U. (n.d.). *Sirāj al-qāri' al-mubtadī wa-tidhkār al-muqri' i al-muntahā*. al-Maktabah al-Thaqafiyah, page 405.

is left-handed, like Umar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, who would articulate the dād from whichever cheek he desired¹. Perhaps this issue is related to natural disposition or habituation, and nothing else.

The majority of the early scholars agree with Sibawayh's view that its articulation is from the tip of the tongue and the molars. Perhaps Khalil's opinion is not far off when we rely solely on sensory perception. If we pronounce it according to the view of Khalil or Sibawayh, the difference in the sound of the dād is almost indistinguishable. Therefore, it is not unlikely that it has more than one point of articulation. Do they not sometimes mention it from the left side and other times from the right side? Are these not two points of articulation? Let Khalil's view be considered the third. What strengthens this is that we can pronounce the lām from both sides of the cheek and the tip of the tongue, the sound is the same, and its articulation point can accept multiplicity. Perhaps one might question Khalil's statement: 'The jīm, shīn, and dād are shajrī because their origin is from the top of the mouth². Does his saying 'its beginning mean redundancy, implying that its exit is from the tree of the mouth, or does it mean that the beginning of its exit is from the tree of the mouth and extends, such that the exit of these letters has a beginning but may expand, each according to its own?

The third requirement: The Articulation of the Letter "Dhad" According to Modern Scholars

There is no doubt that the pronunciation of the letter "Dhad" in ancient times differs from its pronunciation among modern Arabs, with variations depending on the region. For instance, the people of Iraq pronounce it as "Zha", while the people of Egypt pronounce it as a thick "Dal". Others pronounce it differently as well. There seems to be no room for further research in this area, as it is evident from sensory observation that speakers differ in their articulation of this letter. However, the issue is not to be ignored due to its obviousness. Instead, the matter of study arises from whether there is a standard or criterion to refer to. This criterion could involve whether the ancient pronunciation of "Dhad" is still used by some Arabs today, even if they must make an effort, or if it is pronounced in some regions with strength but without being natural. The method for concluding this matter has been suggested by Dr. Hossam Al-Naimee, who proposed the idea of comparing the "Dhad" as described by ancient scholars with the "Dhad" pronounced by contemporary readers, using this comparison as a standard of judgment.³

Perhaps the first to raise the issue of the transformation of some letters, including the letter "Dhad," was Brugstreser, who mentioned that the ancient pronunciation of "Dhad" is different from the way Bedouins pronounce it now, due to a change in its articulation point⁴. This statement is correct, but it is not considered relevant in our research because, as previously mentioned, the consideration is not based on the pronunciation of the Bedouins. I don't think anyone would disagree with this. The proper standard, however, is the pronunciation of the reciters, as explained earlier. Dr. Muhammad Hassan Jabal mentioned that he pronounces it and teaches his students according to the ancient description exactly. Furthermore, this pronunciation was endorsed by the renowned Quranic scholar Sheikh Ibrahim Shahat al-Samnudi, who regarded it as the correct pronunciation in front of a group of distinguished scholars.⁵

Bragstrasser argued that the old sound of the letter Dhad is similar to the applied L sound based on two pieces of evidence:

1. The first is that the Andalusians used to pronounce it this way, and therefore the Spanish replaced it with (LD) in borrowed words in their language.
2. The second is the evidence that the sound of the Dhad was close to the L sound in ancient pronunciation, as mentioned by Al-Zamakhshari, who stated that some Arabs say "al-Tajaa" instead of "Iztajaa" (meaning "to lie down").⁶ This argument is flawed and refutable. As for the claim that the ancient Dhad was like the pronounced Lām (Lam al-Muṭabaqa, or "the applied L"), there is no evidence or support for it. The fact that the Spanish pronounce this sound the way they do does not mean it is identical or even very close. For instance, the English today pronounce the Arabic "ḥā" (ح) as "h," but this does not imply the letter is identical to the "h" sound. They pronounce it this way simply because it is the closest sound in their language to our Arabic "ḥ," and the same applies to the Spanish and others.

¹ al-Jāhiz. (1968). *al-Bayān wa-al-tabyīn* (‘A. al-S. M. Hārūn). Maktabat al-Khānjī, (Vol. 1, p. 62).

² Al-Farahidi, K. i. A. (n.d.). *Kitāb al-‘ayn*. Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah. (Vol. 1, p. 58).

Brik, A., Halim, Z., & Abid, N. (2015). Automatic speech recognition for Qur’anic recitation: A review. *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur’an and Hadith Studies*, 13(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22321969-12340024>

³ Khitam, A. K. (2019). Phonological dimension of the Arabic words: The intimate relation between sound and meaning in the Arabic words. *Arabi Journal of Arabic Studies*, 4(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.24865/ajas.v4i1.147>

⁴ Al-Tamimi, J., & Khattab, G. (2018). Acoustic correlates of pharyngealization in Arabic: A cross-dialectal study. *Journal of Phonetics*, 71, 306–325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2018.09.005>

⁵ Hamdan, G., & Amayreh, M. (2019). Phonological processes in the production of Arabic emphatic consonants by Jordanian children. *Clinical Linguistics & Phonetics*, 33(1-2), 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699206.2018.1523996>

⁶ Al-Ani, S. H. (2020). The Arabic sound system: Phonetics, phonology, and historical change. *Lingua*, 239, 102793. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2020.102793>

Moreover, Sibawayh explicitly stated that "if it weren't for the 'iṭbāq' (the applied articulation), the ṭā' would have become a dāl, the ṣād would have become a sīn, the zā' would have become a dhāl, and the ḍād would have disappeared from speech altogether, because there is no other sound in its place¹. Sibawayh's statement that the ḍād would disappear from speech if it weren't for the "iṭbāq" (the applied articulation), because there is no other sound in its place, directly refutes the claim of Bergsträsser. Indeed, the ḍād extends due to its soft quality and may seem to connect with the place of articulation of the Lām², but this does not support the claim that they are identical. Therefore, there is no valid argument in Bergsträsser's claim.

As for what was quoted from Al-Zamakhshari, it is worth examining. Al-Zamakhshari said: 'It has been reported that ittaja' is used in place of idhtaja', and it is as strange as taja'³. Looking at Al-Zamakhshari's words, he seems to be discussing assimilation (idgham). You can say iftala from du'a (to lie down), which is transformed into idhtaja', and the ṭa here is a shift from tā. You can also say idhrab (to strike), where the tā has been replaced by ḍād. Both of these forms are common in Arabic. Al-Zamakhshari's use of 'it has been reported' suggests that these two forms are less frequent, and the speaker is unknown. The two variations mentioned are the transformation of the ḍād into tā as in 'ittaḡa' or the transformation of ḍād into lām as in 'aḍja'. What is curious in the statement by Bergsträsser is that, even though Al-Zamakhshari weakened both forms and considered 'aḍja' to be stranger than 'ittaḡa', he made the stranger form, where the ḍād is turned into lām, closer to the sound than the form where the ḍād is transformed into tā. Is this not just an assumption? If he had cited this statement to support the idea that the ḍād is similar to the tā, it would have been more reasonable. What supports this view is that this shift is still seen today. This is why Dr. Ghanem Qudori Al-Hamd mentioned that the articulation point defined by Sibawayh for the ḍād is no longer accurate for the pronunciation of the ḍād today, leading to the placing of the ḍād in the same articulation point as the tā, ṭā, and dāl⁴. Then, even if we accept this, isn't it a strange language? Many of the Arabic dialects, which are more famous than this one, did not adhere to the principle of substituting with the closest articulation point. Do you not see that they replace the lām with a mīm despite the distance between their articulation points, as in the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) 'Laysa min ambar amṣiyām fi amsafir' (Not from a better fasting in a journey)?⁵ What was mentioned is not evidence strong enough to support this claim. It can be said that they did not turn it into a lām because of the proximity of its articulation point to the lām, but rather because it is closer to the letter that follows it, which is the ṭā'. However, it is a rare dialect, as al-Zamakhshari explicitly stated. Could it be strange except due to the deviation of the Arabic ear from this change, unlike what became common in their language? The truth is that the phonetic similarity between the proper ḍād and the zā' is what matters. Therefore, al-Qurtubi narrated from Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' (d. 154) what he heard from several scholars about the impermissibility of praying behind someone who cannot distinguish between the ḍād and the zā'⁶. This similarity is indicated by the numerous works authored by the ancients to distinguish between the ḍād and the zā'. This compilation of works shows the strong phonetic similarity between the two letters, to the point of confusion. Some have mentioned that fifty works were counted in the effort to distinguish between the ḍād and the zā'⁷. The text you provided is discussing the sound of the Arabic letter (ḍād) and its historical changes. According to some modern scholars, like Dr. Kamal Bashir, the original sound of ḍād as described by Sibawayh and other scholars of Tajweed has diminished and merged with other sounds over time. Dr. Bashir based his view on two main points:

1. This sound has not been heard as articulated by all those who described it. It is well-established that linguistic sounds cannot be accurately understood merely through description. The differing expressions of previous scholars in describing the sound indicate that they had different interpretations of its boundaries and how it was pronounced. Understanding it in its true form depends on hearing it, and this is the missing criterion. In the absence of this auditory reference, there is a possibility of error or confusion in its application.

¹Mashaqba, B., Daoud, A., Zuraiq, W., & Huneety, A. (2022). *Acquisition of emphatic consonants by Ammani Arabic-speaking children*. *Language Acquisition*, 29(4), 441–456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10489223.2022.2049600>

²Kalaldeh, R., & Al-Shdaifat, A. (2019). *The influence of emphatic /dʕ/ on Modern Standard Arabic vowels: An acoustic analysis*. *Lingua Posnaniensis*, 61(1). <https://doi.org/10.2478/linpo-2019-0003>

³Al-Zamakhsharī. (n.d.). *Al-Mufaṣṣal* (p. 555).

Mashaqba, B., Daoud, A., Zuraiq, W., & Huneety, A. (2022). *Acquisition of emphatic consonants by Ammani Arabic-speaking children*. *Language Acquisition*, 29(4), 441–456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10489223.2022.2049600>

⁴Al-Deaibes, A., & Aldamen, B. (2023). Arabic emphatic consonants as produced by English speakers: An acoustic study. *Heliyon*, 9(6), e16627. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e16627>

⁵(The Musnad of al-Shafi'i) - Volume 1, Page 157. (The Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal) - Volume 5, Page 434.

⁶Jaber, A., Omari, O., & Al-Jarrah, R. (2023). Emphasis spread: The domain and trigger. *Heliyon*, 9(7), e17476. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e17476>

⁷Tavvasohi, A., Bahrani, B., & Kulikov, V. (2023). VOT in Qatari Arabic emphatic stops. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 53(4), 934–951. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025100321000457>

2. The pronunciation, according to the descriptions of the ancients, is highly difficult because it is an oscillating description that tends to shift the characteristics of the sound toward the traits of other sounds, particularly the (dhaa) and They describe it as soft, thus resembling the (dhaa) and lateral, thus blending with the (laam).¹

It can be said that this claim is not fully accepted, as this pronunciation has been passed down by reciters from their teachers through numerous chains, all of which are consistent with each other. Thus, our understanding of this letter is precise and based on auditory transmission, not merely on descriptive accounts. Moreover, these reciters articulate it according to the description found in classical texts, as attested by both real-life practice and the testimony of expert reciters. As for the claim that pronouncing it in the manner described by the early scholars is particularly difficult, this statement is somewhat exaggerated. Indeed, it is not among the easiest letters to pronounce. Still, its fluidity on the tongues of those raised in an Arabic-speaking environment, along with the customary practice of articulating it, renders it a pliant and manageable letter. It is free from affectation and far from being confused with other letters. Therefore, it can be concluded that there has not been a significant change in the proper articulation of the (daad) letter.²

Chapter Two: Characteristics of the Letter "Dhad

The first requirement: Definition of "Sifah" (Attribute) in Linguistic and Technical Terms

The term "attribute" (ṣifah) in the linguistic sense comes from the root "wāw-ṣād-fā'." According to Ibn Faris:

"The root letters wāw, ṣād, and fā' point to a single fundamental meaning, which is the embellishment or characterization of something. To describe (waṣaftuhu) is to attribute a specific quality that is inherent to the thing."³ Alternatively, it is defined as: "the state or condition that characterizes something, reflecting its adornment and description."⁴ In technical terminology (istiṣlāḥan), an attribute (ṣifah) refers to a temporary quality or characteristic of a letter when it is articulated from its point of origin (makhrāj), such as "voiced" (jahr), "voiceless" (hams), and so on.⁵

The qualities of the letters are numerous, and the classical scholars described the letter ḍād as a voiced, soft, applied, high, elongated, and solid letter. All of these qualities were mentioned by Sibawayh, as will be explained, except for the characteristic of being "solid" (iṣmāt).

The second requirement: The characteristics of the letter "Ḍād" among the ancients

Sibawayh mentioned five attributes for the letter ḍād, which are:

1. **Voicing:** Sibawayh mentioned the voiced letters and included ḍād among them. He defined it as: "A letter that has full reliance at its articulation point and prevents the breath from flowing with it until the reliance is completed, at which point the sound is released⁶."
2. **Laxness:** Sibawayh mentioned that lax sounds are those in which the airflow continues when the sound is articulated. He illustrated this with two words: tass and inqaḍa⁷. Therefore, ḍād is universally considered by ancient linguists and reciters to be a lax sound without dispute⁸. (The meaning of "lax" is that it is a sound with weak reliance when pronounced, allowing the sound to flow with it. It is weaker than the strong sounds. Don't you notice that when

¹ Al-Tamimi, J., & Khattab, G. (2018). Acoustic correlates of pharyngealization in Arabic: A cross-dialectal study. *Journal of Phonetics*, 71, 306–325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2018.09.005>

² Kalaldehy, R., & Al-Shdaifat, A. (2019). The influence of emphatic /dʕ/ on Modern Standard Arabic vowels: An acoustic analysis. *Lingua Posnaniensis*, 61(1). <https://doi.org/10.2478/linpo-2019-0003>

Jihad M. Hamdan & Rose Fowler Al-Hawamdeh. (2020). The Arabic /dʕ/ revisited: A critical review. *KEMANUSIAAN: The Asian Journal of Humanities*, 27(2), 17–38. <https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2020.27.2.2>

³ Ibn Fāris al-Qazwīnī, A. (1999). *Muʿjam maqāyīs al-lughah*. Dār al-Jīl, (Vol. 6, p. 115).

⁴ Al-Zabīdī, M. ibn M. M. (1965). *Tāj al-ʿArūs* (Vol. 24, p. 461).

⁵ Muḥaysin, M. M. M. S. (1997). *Al-Hādī sharḥ Ṭayyibat al-nashr fī al-qirāʾāt al-ʿashr*. Dār al-Jīl, (1/92).

⁶ Sibawaih ibn Abi Bishr Amr. (2019). *Kitāb-e-Sibawaih* الكتاب كتاب سيوييه. Mohammed Ameer Hasan. (Vol. 4, p.434).

Al-Tamimi, J., & Khattab, G. (2018). Acoustic correlates of pharyngealization in Arabic: A cross-dialectal study. *Journal of Phonetics*, 71, 306–325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2018.09.005>

⁷ Kalaldehy, R., & Al-Shdaifat, A. (2019). The influence of emphatic /dʕ/ on Modern Standard Arabic vowels: An acoustic analysis. *Lingua Posnaniensis*, 61(1). <https://doi.org/10.2478/linpo-2019-0003>

⁸ Youssef, I. (2021). *Contrastive feature typologies of Arabic consonant reflexes*. *Languages*, 6(3), 141. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages6030141>

Kulikov, D., Skitsa, M., & Al-Tamimi, J. (2023). Acoustic correlates of emphatic stops in Qatari Arabic: A voice onset time and spectral analysis. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 53(2), 155–172. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.10863.56485/2>

you say: (as) or (ash), the breath and sound flow with them? Similarly, with its other counterparts. It is called "lax" because laxness means softness, and softness is the opposite of strength.)¹

3. **Applicability:** It means the opposite of opening. Sibawayh did not define it, but he mentioned that opening (everything other than that of the letters; because you do not close your tongue for any of them, you raise it to the upper palate)²This is an explanation of the emphatic pronunciation, which is the elevation of the tongue to the upper palate. The meaning of the emphatic pronunciation is then (the emphatic pronunciation of a group - i.e. a whole - of the tongue to the upper palate when pronouncing the letter and the sound being confined between them, and that is why it is called emphatic)³. Ibn Al-Jazari mentioned it and counted it among the letters that are medium in terms of emphasis. He explained the reason for the name by saying that (a part of the tongue is pressed together with the wind at the palate when pronouncing it, while it is elevated in the mouth).⁴

4. **Elevation:** Sibawayh mentioned in the section on "what cannot be tilted" that the letter "Dh" prevents tilting, so it is not pronounced as "dāmin" with an elevation. He explained that this is because it is one of the **elevated** letters that reach the upper palate⁵. This term, elevation, refers to the process where these letters rise and reach the higher part of the mouth. Therefore, **elevation** means the connection of the tongue to the upper palate when pronouncing the letter.⁶

5. **Extension:** Sibawayh mentioned **extension** when he said: "The "Dh" has extended due to its softness until it connects with the articulation of the "Lam"⁷. Extension refers to the elongation of the sound from the beginning of one side of the tongue to the other. There is only one letter that exhibits this characteristic, which is the "Dh".⁸

6. **Al-Ismat (Immobility):** The letter (Dhad) is one of the **"mutually immobile"** letters, which is the opposite of the **"slippery"** letters like (far min lab), and it is called silent because it is heavy to speak with and difficult, so there is no word in the speech of the Arabs that is a quadrilateral or quintiliteral word built from silent letters except for rare words and it was said that they are not from their speech.⁹

The third requirement: The characteristics of the letter "Dād" according to the modern scholars

What concerns us from the characteristics of (Dhad) according to modern scholars are those traits that they claim have changed or the additions they have made in this area. As for those outside this scope, we are not concerned with them in this study. For example, the characteristic of being mute, I did not find anyone among the modernists who said that it was transformed; that is because the letters that the modernists claimed that the letter "Dād" was transformed into are all mute and are not among the letters of fluency. Similarly, I have not found any modern scholars who have referred to the characteristic of (highness), because when (Dhad) transforms into the articulation points of (Tā) or (Zā), both also have the characteristic of highness. Likewise, if we say that it transforms into the articulation of the emphatic (Dāl), I believe, they have not mentioned these two characteristics. Now, let us turn to the remaining characteristics of (Dhad) according to modern scholars, which are four:

1. The scholars agree that the modern letter **Dād** is a voiced consonant, in line with the views of early linguists. Ibrahim Anis states: "The voiced consonants in the Arabic language, as demonstrated by modern experiments, are thirteen (b, j, d, dh, r, z, ḍ, ẓ, ʿ, gh, l, m, n), in addition to all the vowel sounds."¹⁰ However, they also suggest that the

¹ Ibn al-Jazari, S. A.-D. A. A.-K. M. (2013). *Al-tamhīd fī 'ilm al-tajwīd*. "Introduction to the Science of Tajweed," p. 88.

² Sibawaih ibn Abi Bishr Amr. (2019). *Kitab-e-Sibawaih* الكتاب كتاب سيبويه. Mohammed Ameer Hasan vol. 4, p.436.

Mashaqba, B., Daoud, A., Zuraq, W., & Huneety, A. (2022). Acquisition of emphatic consonants by Ammani Arabic-speaking children. *Language Acquisition*, 29(4), 441–456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10489223.2022.2049600>

³ Hidayat al-Qari ila Tajweed Kalam al-Bari "The Guide for the Reader in Perfecting the Recitation of the Word of the Creator," Vol. 1, p. 82.

⁴ Ibn al-Jazari, S. A.-D. A. A.-K. M. (2013). *Al-tamhīd fī 'ilm al-tajwīd*. Turath ,p. 90.

⁵ Sibawaih ibn Abi Bishr Amr. (2019). *Kitab-e-Sibawaih* الكتاب كتاب سيبويه. Mohammed Ameer Hasan, Vol. 4, p. 129.

⁶ Al-Mukmin, A. bin A. al-M. (2002). *Al-kanz fī al-qirā'āt al-'ashr*. Dār al-Shahābah. Vol. 1, p. 169.

⁷ Sibawaih ibn Abi Bishr Amr. (2019). *Kitab-e-Sibawaih* الكتاب كتاب سيبويه. Mohammed Ameer Hasan. Vol. 4, p. 457.

⁸ Al-Hadi Sharh Tuhfat al-Nashr 1/96" – "Al-Hadi's Explanation of Tuhfat al-Nashr," Vol. 1, p. 96.

⁹ Broselow, E., & Finer, D. (2020). Voicing and emphasis in Arabic coronal stops: Evidence for phonological compensation. *Journal of Phonetics*, 82, 100989. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2020.100989>

¹⁰ Al-Fayyumi, A. (2009). *Al-Aswat al-Lughawiyah: Zawahir 'ilm al-aswat fi al-Qur'an al-Karim*. al-Maktabah al-Azhariyah lil-Turath.p. 21.

Kulikov, D., et al. (2023). Acoustic correlates of emphatic stops in Qatari Arabic: A voice onset time and spectral analysis. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 53(2), 155–172. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025100322000203>

Ḍād has an unvoiced counterpart. Kamal Bishr notes: "It is the voiced counterpart of the letter **Ṭā'** with the only difference being that **Ṭā'** is unvoiced, while **Ḍād** is voiced."¹

2. The modern scholars agree with the early linguists in affirming the characteristic of **Itbaq** (emphatic articulation) for the letter **Ḍād**. Ahmad Mukhtar Omar defines Itbaq and lists its corresponding letters as follows: "Itbaq is characterized by the slight raising of the back of the tongue upwards towards the palate, with a slight backward movement towards the back wall of the throat. This process in Arabic accompanies the pronunciation of the letters **Ṣād**, **Ḍād**, and **Ẓā'**². However, the disagreement between early and modern scholars regarding the characteristic of Itbaq (emphatic articulation) lies in the presence of an open counterpart for the letter **Ḍād**. Sibawayh previously stated: "Without **Itbaq**, the letter **Ṭā'** would become **Dāl**, **Ṣād**, would become **Sīn**, and **Ẓā'** would become **Dhāl**. As for **Ḍād**, it would entirely disappear from the language because nothing else occupies its articulation point³. In contrast, modern scholars assert the existence of an **open counterpart** for the letter **Ḍād**, which they identify as the sound of **Dāl**. Ibrahim Anis states: "Linguistic experiments demonstrate that the emphatic sound, whose open counterpart is **Dāl**, is the **Ḍād** as it is pronounced today."⁴

3. Modern scholars consider the letter **Ḍād** to be a **plosive (shadīd)** consonant. The term "plosive" means that the letter is articulated with a strong contact at its point of articulation, blocking the airflow completely and preventing the sound from flowing during its pronunciation⁵. They believe that the characteristic of **continuance (rikhaawah)** in the letter **Ḍād** has changed from what it used to be. Bergsträsser notes that it is now considered a **plosive (shadīd)** sound, whereas it was described as **continuant (rakhw)** by early scholars⁶. Dr. Ibrahim Anis argues that the modern **Ḍād** is a **plosive (shadīd)** and **voiced (majhūr)** sound. He imagines the pronunciation of the **old Ḍād** as an intermediate stage, combining some of the plosiveness of the modern **Ḍād** with some of the continuance (**rikhaawah**) of the **Ẓā'**⁷.

4. Modern scholars believe that the modern **Ḍād** does not have an **elongation (istiṭālah)**. They consider it the emphatic counterpart of **Dāl**. Ibrahim Anis states: "Linguistic experiments demonstrate that the emphatic sound, whose open counterpart is **Dāl**, is the **Ḍād** as it is pronounced today."⁸ The change in the place of articulation (mukhraj) necessarily leads to the absence of this characteristic, because the early scholars stated that this particular feature (elongation or continuance) is exclusive to **Ḍād** alone⁹.

You mentioned: "Perhaps the presence of **Ḍād** with the characteristics discussed by modern scholars is common and widespread, but this presence does not serve as a conclusive proof or argument for the transformation of the letter. Indeed, pronouncing it in the manner described by early scholars is not impossible. In fact, there is definitive evidence observable today of the pronunciation as described by the early scholars. For example, on YouTube, we can see Sheikh Ayman Suwayd pronouncing the **Ḍād** with clear *isti'lā'* (elevated), *majhūr* (voiced), *iṭbāq* (emphatic), *rakhw* (continuant), and *istiṭālah* (elongation) qualities, just as it was established by the early scholars. It is also important to adhere to the standard set by the Qur'anic readers, as their method in this matter is the determining factor¹⁰, not the dialects of people. Allah knows best."

CONCLUSION

¹ Al-Tamimi, J., & Khattab, G. (2018). Acoustic correlates of pharyngealization in Arabic: A cross-dialectal study. *Journal of Phonetics*, 71, 306–325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2018.09.005>

² Omar, A. M. (1976). *Dirasat al-sawt al-lughawi*. 'Alam al-Kutub.p. 125.

³ Sibawaih ibn Abi Bishr Amr. (2019). *Kitab-e-Sibawaih* الكتاب كتاب سيبويه. Mohammed Ameer Hasan, Vol. 4, p. 436).

⁴ Al-Fayyumi, A. (2009). *Al-Aswat al-Lughawiyah: Zawahir 'ilm al-aswat fi al-Qur'an al-Karim*. al-Maktabah al-Azhariyah lil-Turath.p. 63.

⁵ Jazri, M. B. M. (1985). *AT-TAMHID FI 'ILMI TAJWID* التمهيد في علم تجويد. Maktabah Al-Ma'arif.p. 87

⁶ Abābinah, Y. (2006). *Taṭawwur al-muṣṭalah al-naḥwī al-Baṣṭī min Sibawayh ḥattā al-Zamakhsharī* (1st ed.). 'Ālam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī'. p. 18.

⁷ Fayyumi, A. A. (2009). *'Ilm Al-aswat Al-lughawiyah: Zawahir 'ilm Al-aswat Fi Al-Qur'an Al-Karim : Al-fasl Al-sawti, Al-lafzah Al-markaziyah, Al-istifham Al-khabari, Al-khabar Al-istifhami, Zahirat Istihdar Al-surah*. al-Maktabah al-Azhariyah lil-Turath pp. 48-49.

⁸ Fayyumi, A. A. (2009). *'Ilm Al-aswat Al-lughawiyah: Zawahir 'ilm Al-aswat Fi Al-Qur'an Al-Karim : Al-fasl Al-sawti, Al-lafzah Al-markaziyah, Al-istifham Al-khabari, Al-khabar Al-istifhami, Zahirat Istihdar Al-surah*. al-Maktabah al-Azhariyah lil-Turath.p. 63.

⁹ AL HADI "SHARH TAIBAT AL NASHIR FI AL QIRAT AL ASHIR WAL KASHIF AN EILAL AL QIRAT WA TAWJIHAHA" – "شرح طيبة النشر في القراءات العشر والكشف عن علل القراءات وتوجيهها". (2025). Dar ul bayan arabi.vol. 1, p. 96.

¹⁰ Salim, A. (2015). *Aṣwāt al- 'Arabiyyah bayna al-taḥawwul wa al-thabāt*. Dar al-Nahda al-Arabiyyah. (p. 29).

1. The place of articulation for the letter **Ḍād** according to the early scholars is not universally agreed upon in terms of its apparent articulation. However, if we interpret al-Khalil's statement as referring to the broadness of the articulation of **Ḍād**, this could be a reasonable explanation, and what he described might only refer to the beginning of the articulation point. Therefore, the view of the early scholars suggests that the articulation of **Ḍād** occurs between the front edge of the tongue and the molar teeth.
2. The pronunciation of the original sounds of the language should not be forced; rather, it should be natural and easy, consistent with the speaker's natural disposition. Forced articulation indicates a departure from the natural language and its inherent characteristics, which suggests a development or change in the pronunciation of **Ḍād**.
3. It is not unlikely that **Ḍād** has more than one articulation point. At times, it may be articulated from the edge of the tongue near the right molars, at other times near the left, and perhaps it could even begin from the tip of the tongue, as seen in the pronunciation of the letter **Lām**.
4. The standard criterion for determining whether **Ḍād** has undergone a transformation is whether the old sound of **Ḍād** is still pronounced by some Arabs today, even if it is forced. The judgment process involves comparing the **Ḍād** as described by the early scholars with the one pronounced by the readers of the Qur'an.
5. Claims of the transformation of the letter **Ḍād**, as argued by scholars like Bergsträsser, Kamal Bishr, and others, cannot be substantiated, because the classical pronunciation, as described by the early scholars, is still evident today, as confirmed by Dr. Muhammad Hassan Hassan Jabal.
6. The sound closest to **Ḍād** is **Zā'**, which explains the numerous studies dedicated to the differences and similarities between the letters **Ḍād** and **Zā'**.
7. Those who pronounce the old, classical **Ḍād** among the Qur'anic reciters did not rely solely on written descriptions but also transmitted the pronunciation orally from their teachers through numerous methods.
8. The early scholars described **Ḍād** as a voiced, continuant, emphatic, elevated, elongated, and solid sound.
9. Modern scholars agree with the early scholars on the characterization of **Ḍād** as a solid, elevated, and voiced sound. However, they propose that **Ḍād** has an unvoiced counterpart, which is **Ṭā'**. They also agree that **Ḍād** is emphatic but disagree with the early scholars on its open counterpart, suggesting it is **Dāl** (ذ).
10. Modern scholars believe that the characteristic of **continuance (rikhaawah)** in **Ḍād** has changed over time. Some argue that it is now a plosive, while others suggest that it lies between the continuant and the plosive sounds.
11. Modern scholars also reject the characteristic of **elongation (istīṭālah)** in **Ḍād**, stating that its articulation point has changed, and that **elongation** was a feature exclusive to the old **Ḍād**.
12. While the modern description of **Ḍād** fits the characteristics discussed, this widespread occurrence does not serve as definitive proof for its transformation, as pronouncing it according to the early descriptions is not impossible. In fact, definitive evidence exists, such as in YouTube videos where Sheikh Ayman Suwayd clearly articulates **Ḍād** with all the characteristics described by the early scholars: elevated, voiced, emphatic, continuant, and elongated. This confirms the correctness of the classical description

REFERENCES

1. Al-Ani, S. H. (2020). The Arabic sound system: Phonetics, phonology, and historical change. *Lingua*, 239, 102793. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2020.102793>
2. Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad. (n.d.). *Al-ʿAyn* (Vol. 1, p. 58). Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah.
3. Al-Tamimi, J. M., Kochetov, A., Ben-Ammar, C., & Tahtadjian, T. (2024). Acoustics of guttural fricatives in Arabic, Armenian, and Kurdish: A case in remote data collection. *Laboratory Phonology*, 15(1), 1–40. <https://doi.org/10.16995/labphon.10542>
4. Al-Tamimi, J., & Khattab, G. (2018). Acoustic correlates of pharyngealization in Arabic: A cross-dialectal study. *Journal of Phonetics*, 71, 306–325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2018.09.005>
5. Brik, A., Halim, Z., & Abid, N. (2015). Automatic speech recognition for Qur'anic recitation: A review. *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, 13(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22321969-12340024>
6. Hajjaj, N. (2025). Arabi is the language of Ḍāḥ: Arabic phonetic evolution and the identity of the Arabi (Contemporary Standard Spoken Arabic CSSA). *Mesopotamian Journal of Arabic Language Studies*, 2025, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.58496/MJALS/2025/006>
7. Hamdan, G., & Amayreh, M. (2019). Phonological processes in the production of Arabic emphatic consonants by Jordanian children. *Clinical Linguistics & Phonetics*, 33(1-2), 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699206.2018.1523996>
8. Ibn Jinnī, A. A.-F. 'U. (1993). *Sirr ṣinā'at al-i'rāb* (H. Hindāwī, Ed.; Vol. 1, p. 60). Dār al-Qalam.
9. Ibn al-Jazari. (n.d.). *Sharḥ Ṭayyibat al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-ʿAshar* (Vol. 1, p. 229).
10. Ibn al-Qāṣih, 'A. i. 'U. (n.d.). *Sirāj al-qāri' al-mubtadī wa-tadhkār al-muqri' al-muntahā* (p. 405). al-Maktabah al-Thaqafiyah.

11. Kosim, N., Ali, E. A., Ruhani, N., & Senita, P. (2023). Analysis of mispronunciation of makhārij al-ḥurūf in Arabic Hīwār learning. *Ta'lim al-ʿArabiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab & Kebahasaaraban*, 7(2), 205–218. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpba.v7i2.30124>
12. Mohamed, Y., Abd Razak, Z., Ismail, T. H. S., Alribdi, N. I., & Hoque, M. (2024). A systematic review of Arabic phonetic: Hijaīyyah's pronunciation among new learners. *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v7i2.24173>
13. Sībawayh. (n.d.). *Al-Kitāb* (Vol. 4, p. 433).
14. Watson, J. C. E., Almbark, R., Heselwood, B., & Heselwood, B. (2022). Arabic (Gaza City Arabic). *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 52(1), 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025100322000197>
15. Zsiga, E. C., & Nair, R. (2017). Revisiting acoustic correlates of pharyngealization in Jordanian and Moroccan Arabic: Implications for formal representations. *Laboratory Phonology*, 8(1), 1–40. <https://doi.org/10.5334/labphon.65>