

# *Phonetics*

**Fourth lecture**

**Characteristics of letters**

*Ali Jaafar*

*Mohammed Saleh*

**Second stage**

*Department of medical physics*

*Al-Mustaqbal University-College*

**2023- 2024**

## Characteristics of letters

Definition of an adjective: It is the manner given to a letter when pronouncing it, distinguishing it from others.

### Benefits of knowing the characteristics of letters

- Distinguishing common letters in the same output from each other when performing them. For example, the thaa, dhaal, and thaa all come out of the tip of the tongue and the edges of the upper vowels, and no distinction can be made between them except by giving each letter its due attributes.
- - Improving the pronunciation of letters by giving each letter its right and proper noun and description.
- Knowing the strong and weak letters in terms of their adjectives and the resulting knowledge of what is permissible to be assimilated, what is not permissible, what is completely assimilated, and what is incompletely assimilated.

### Attributes are divided into two parts:

1. **Necessary adjectives:** These are adjectives that are part of the same letter and cannot be separated from it at all. Such as arrogance, whispering, and other attributes that we will discuss.
  2. **Incidental adjectives:** These are adjectives that complement the letter and appear to it in certain circumstances and do not affect itself if they are removed from it, such as amplification, thinning, assimilation, extension, concealment, and so on. We will detail these incidental characteristics later
- The number of necessary attributes

The number of necessary attributes

Scholars differed in their number, and the most famous saying is that they are seventeen intransitive adjectives.

### Sections of necessary attributes

The necessary qualities are divided into two parts:

**1. Opposite adjectives:** (the attributes of letters with opposites are as follows):

- ✓ Speaking loudly and its opposite is whispering.
- ✓ Severity and mediocrity, and their opposite is softness.
- ✓ Arrogance and its opposite is arrogance.
- ✓ Closure and its opposite, openness.
- ✓ Humiliation and its opposite are silence.

**the details**

- **Whispering:** Weakness in sounding the letter due to weak reliance on it in the exit and thus the breath flows with it, and its ten letters are: sīn, faā, ha, ha, tha, tha, shin, saad, ta, kaf, and kha.
- **Loudness:** It is the opposite of whispering, and its letters are the rest of the letters of the alphabet after excluding the whispering letters, which are nineteen in number.
- **Shaddah:** It means that the letter adheres to its place because of the strength of its dependence on it in the exit and thus the sound is trapped with it. Its letters are eight: hamza, dal, jim, ba, ta', kaf, qaf, and ta'.
- **Mediation:** It is the characteristic between harshness and softness, in which some of the sound is retained and some of it flows, so it is called moderate. The letters of mediation are: Laam, Nun, Ain, Mim, and Raa.
- **Softness:** This adjective is the opposite of hardness, and its letters are the rest of the letters of the alphabet after excluding the hard letters.
- **Isti'la:** This is when the tip of the tongue rises to the upper palate when pronouncing one of the letters of Isti'la, and thus the sound rises with it. Its letters are: Kha, Dhaad, Saad, Ghain, Ta, Qaf, and Dha.
- **Al-Istafaal:** This is when the tongue lowers from the upper palate to the bottom of the mouth when pronouncing one of the letters of Istafaal. This adjective is the opposite of Istafa'al. Its letters are twenty-two, and they are the remaining letters after the letters of Istafa'al.
- **Occlusion:** It is the occlusion of part of the tongue to the upper palate when pronouncing a letter, so the sound is confined between them. Its letters are: Saad, Daad, Daa, and Daad.
- **Openness:** It is an openness that occurs between the tongue and the upper palate when pronouncing a letter. This characteristic is the opposite of the occlusion characteristic, and its letters are twenty-five, which are the remaining letters after the occlusion letters.
- **The subtlety:** in which the letter depends on the subtlety of the tongue and lip when pronouncing it, and it is grouped in the sentence: fled from lub.

- **Deafness:** This adjective is the opposite of the adjective dhalaqa. It means that the letters of this adjective, which are silent letters, prevent the construction of four-letter words or five-letter words because of their weight on the tongue. The letters of this adjective are twenty-three, excluding the letters dhalaqa.

## 2. Attributes of letters that have no opposite, which are seven:

- ✓ Whistling
- ✓ The letter Qalqalah
- ✓ Soft
- ✓ Declination
- ✓ Refining
- ✓ Outbreak
- ✓ Elongation

### ***the details***

- **Whistling:** It is an extra sound that is produced when pronouncing one of these three letters: the saad, the za'i, and the sīn. The place of its emergence is between the folds and the tip of the tongue. The strongest of them is the sād due to its combination of the two adjectives of loudness and occlusion, then the zaī due to the presence of the loudness adjective, and finally the sīn is the weakest.
- **Qalqalah:** The voice becomes disturbed when pronouncing the letter, so it has a strong tone. There are five letters of Qalqalah: Qaf, Ta, Ba, D, and J.
- **Softness:** It is when the letter comes out easily and effortlessly from its exit, and it is a characteristic of the open sakinah yā' and waw before them.
- **Deviation:** This characteristic occurs when the letter Ra or L deviates from its articulation to a different articulation when pronouncing them.
- **Repetition:** It is the trembling of the tongue when pronouncing the rā'. Repetition is considered an inherent characteristic of it, and the purpose of knowing this characteristic is to avoid it, so that the speaker does not exaggerate it.
- **Spreading:** It is an attribute of the letter Shin, and it means the spread of air inside the mouth when pronouncing the letter Shin.
- **Elongation:** It is a characteristic of the letter dād, in which the sound extends from the beginning of one edge of the tongue to the end of the edge.

- **Ghunnah:** It is a compound sound in the same letter as the letter meem and nun that accompanies them in all their cases. This sound has been described as a delicious, compound sound.
- **Hiddenness:** is the hiddenness of the sound when pronouncing one of the following letters: ha, hamza, waw, and yaa.

### Other characteristics of letters

A sound can acquire new characteristics as a result of the presence of a juxtaposition between two sounds. These characteristics include extension, assimilation, amplification, concealment, and thinning.

### Strong, weak and average adjectives

1. **Strong qualities:** they are loudness, severity, haughtiness, obstinacy, qalqalah, whistling, deviance, and pervasiveness.
2. **Weak qualities:** These are whispering, softness, asking, openness, softness, and concealment.
3. **Intermediate qualities:** mediation (between severity and softness), silence, and gentleness.

- Some divide the attributes into strong and weak, making mediocrity and gentleness among the weak attributes, and silence among the strong attributes.

- The subtle letters are so called because of their elegance, lightness, and speed of pronunciation. Some of them come from the flap of the tongue; they are the rā', the lām, and the nūn, and some of them come from the flap of the lip, which are the fa', the bā', and the meem. They are grouped in the saying of Ibn al-Jazarī, "He fled from the pulp" (and the meaning of this combination is the flight of the ignorant. From the core).