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DIALECT CONTACT AND CHANGE IN GAZA CITY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Masters

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September 2013

Abstract

This dissertation examines dialect contact between the indigenous residents of Gaza City and refugees originally from the city of Jaffa, roughly 40km north of the Gaza Strip. The study that follows offers a quantitative sociolinguistic investigation of the outcomes of this contact in the speech of 22 residents of Gaza City. The sample has been divided along the lines of dialect background, biological sex, and has been separated into three age groups corresponding with major life stages in Palestinian history and collective memory. These social categorizations are examined alongside two linguistic variables; the uvular stop (q) and the feminine ending (ah).

Analysis of the data has revealed that for (q) a significant correlation exists with dialect background and gender, with female speakers and speakers of a Jaffa dialect background showing the highest tendencies to favour the glottal [ʔ] realization for (q). For the feminine ending (ah), analysis shows a significant correlation with dialect background and age, with speakers from the elderly generation and speakers of a Jaffa dialect background showing the strongest tendency to favour the raised [e] realization for the feminine ending. Additionally, results suggest that in the speech of indigenous Gazans the feminine ending is not in fact a sociolinguistic variable, maintaining the unraised [a] realization almost categorically. At the same time, a clear tendency is present in the data for speakers of a Jaffa dialect background to use the raised Jaffa variant, [e], but less with each successive generation, possibly suggesting a change in progress towards the loss of this raised urban Palestinian dialect feature as a result of dialect contact.

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude should be extended to my supervisor, Dr. Enam Al-Wer. The study presented below would not have come together without her guidance, encouragement, and support. Since my arrival at Essex she has gone above and beyond as both a supervisor and a friend. My interest in Arabic Sociolinguistics is a direct result of her enthusiasm for her research and her students. This study truly could not have happened without her. Additionally I would like to thank the rest of the faculty and staff in the Department of Language & Linguistics at the University of Essex for their incredible help throughout the past year. A great deal of thanks is also due to my mother and father. They have continually supported my academic ambitions, wherever they may take me, and they have been behind me every step of the way. For that I am truly grateful. I would also like to acknowledge the crucial role that the Seattle based musical group Earth played in the writing stage of this project. Their discography was on a near continual loop throughout the months of July-September and in particular their albums *Angels of Darkness*, *Demons of Light Vols. I & II*, and *The Bees Made Honey in the Lions Skull*.

A number of additional people played key roles in bringing this study to fruition. Without Dr. David Heap's help in locating a sponsor for my visit to Gaza this project never could have left the planning stages. Dr. Mona Al-Farrah, Ayman Nijim, and everyone at Afaq Jadeeda in Nuseirat is owed an immense debt of gratitude for their willingness to allow me to volunteer with them while in Gaza and for aiding me in securing the necessary permissions to enter the Gaza Strip. My fieldwork also never could have happened without Dr. Jamal Al-Shareef, who helped to facilitate my entry and stay in the Gaza Strip and assisted me in locating the informants for this study. His generosity and willingness to help a young researcher like myself is unparalleled. Additionally, the sincerest of thanks go to Muhannad, Akram, and Muhammad, who acted as my research assistants in Gaza City. I am fortunate to have gained such wonderful friends.

Most importantly, to the people that I had the chance to get to know while in the Gaza Strip, I cannot possibly name you all but, thank you. I came to collect samples of speech but you gave me your history, your struggles, your joy and your pain, and truly part of yourselves. I am humbled by your incredible generosity, encouraged by your humanity, and inspired by your steadfastness. I only hope that my work can do it all justice in some minute way.

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Phonetic symbols used in this study

IPA symbols are used throughout for phonetic transcription. For the transcription of Arabic examples, the transcription conventions of the Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics (2007) were followed. A list of these is provided below:

Standard Arabic	Transcription
ا	ʾ
ب	b
ت	t
ث	t̪
ج	j
ح	ħ
خ	x
د	d
ذ	d̪
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	ʃ
ص	ʂ
ض	ɖ
ط	t̪
ظ	d̪
ع	ʕ
غ	g̃
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y

Transcription conventions from the Encyclopedia of Arabic Language & Linguistics (Versteegh 2006)

Abbreviations used

MSA – Modern Standard Arabic

PA – Palestinian Arabic

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

PNA – Palestinian National Authority (Fatah)

UNRWA – United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees

* - Underlying form (This is usually the Classical Arabic form)

Introduction

The Gaza Strip represents a complex social, political, and linguistic environment and Gaza City, as the largest urban area and defacto capital, is naturally positioned as a focal point for research being conducted on the besieged territory. It is this focal point which is the subject of the study that follows. A first sociolinguistic foray into the urban chaos of Gaza City represents merely the end of a thread, a thread that will take many years to unravel before the linguistic situation in Gaza City and the wider community of the Gaza Strip will come into clear view. While the work that follows offers a variationist view of sociolinguistics as the starting point in the study of language in Gaza City, it is my belief that the future of this work rests on a transition into linguistic anthropology and a linguistic ethnography of Gaza City.

Residents of Gaza City and the Gaza Strip in a more general sense come from a complex variety of religious, political, social, and linguistic backgrounds and it is only with long term ethnographic fieldwork that it will be possible to determine what categories of social organization are most relevant to the community itself. It is probable that, given the unique place of Gaza City in the historical and political context of the modern Middle East, the standard sociolinguistic categories which have gained prominence through previous linguistic work will have to be redefined and reconsidered in the case of Gaza.

Although the study that follows makes no claims to have redefined every social category necessary to fit the reality of Gaza City, an attempt has been made with the social categories on which the study is built; age, gender, and dialect background, to reconceptualise them in a manner more fitting to the community on which this research focuses. In doing so it is my hope that the study will in some way reflect the uniqueness of the city itself and the position of its residents, my informants, as actors and agents in a much wider theatre of action that stretches far beyond the scope of sociolinguistics. Where possible within the bounds of the study, issues of geography, history, politics, space, and mobility have been examined and it is with an overview of some of these issues that we move forward to examine the case of dialect contact in Gaza City.

CHAPTER 1: SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Before undertaking a linguistic analysis it is necessary to examine the wider social and political environment in which language exists in Gaza City. The Gaza Strip represents a geo-political crossroads, influencing the history, economics, and politics of the wider region and it continues to do so to the present day.

1.2. Social profile

1.2.1. Geographic profile

Lying along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, the Gaza Strip consists of a diverse mix of both urban and semi-rural areas. In addition to Gaza City as the largest population center, Khan Younis and Rafah also serve as important urban areas with smaller but notable urban environments in Jabaliya, Deir Al-Balah, and Nuseirat. The Gaza Strip borders Egypt to its south and Israel to the east and north with the Mediterranean Sea defining its western border. Gazan terrain consists predominantly of rolling plains, which reach sea level at the Mediterranean and rise to 105m above sea level at Gaza's highest point, Abu 'Awdah (CIA).

The city of Gaza lies on the northern third of the Gaza Strip, between Deir Al-Balah and Jabaliya. It is bordered on the west by the Mediterranean Sea and the far eastern reaches of the city are defined by the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel. Gaza City consists of a large collection of urban neighborhoods, spreading out over generations from the area of Gaza's Old City. The areas of Northern & Southern Rimal, Tal El-Hawa, Zaytun, Daraj, Shaja'iyya, and Muxayyam al-Šāṭi', known officially as "Beach Camp" (UNRWA) are of particular importance as the informants who were interviewed as part of this study are residents of these specific neighborhoods.

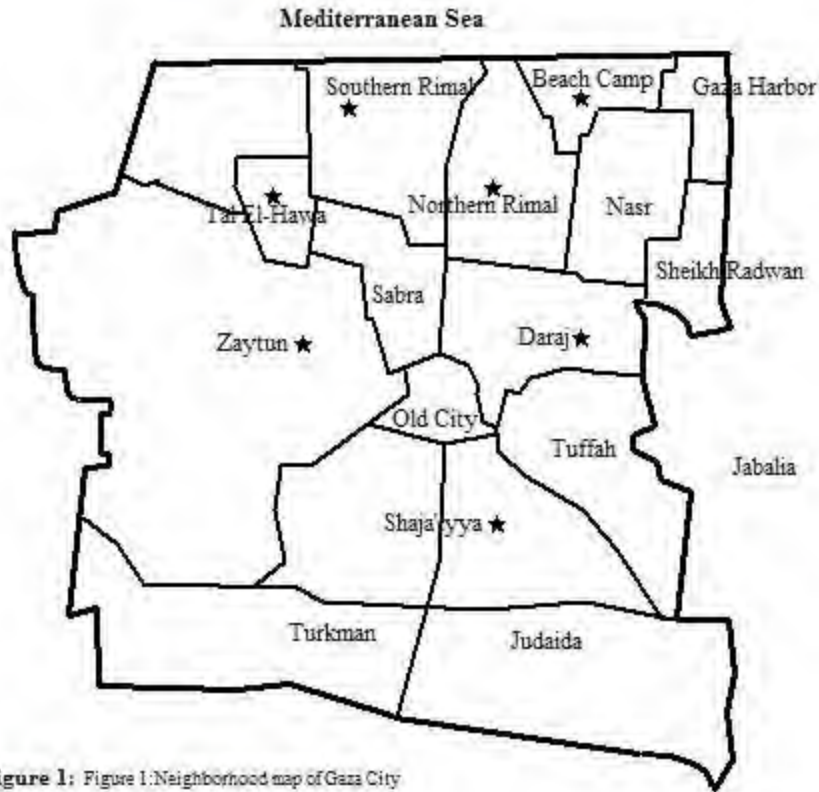


Figure 1: Figure 1:Neighborhood map of Gaza City

1.2.2. Historical profile

Present day Gaza City rests near the site of Tel El-Ajjul, the Ancient Egyptian administrative capital in Canaan until it was conquered by the Philistines and then the Israelites in the 12th and 11th centuries BCE (Kuhrt 1996: 320). Gaza was captured by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE and subjected to a revolving door of control under the Greek, Roman, & Byzantine empires with the eventual conquest of the greater Palestine region by Muslim armies spreading out from the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century (Meyer 1907:43, 74-75). Gaza City was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 16th century and continued relatively unabated until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, where Gaza came under the control of the British Mandate in Palestine (Meyer 1907: 96).

Following the creation of the state of Israel and the ensuing Arab-Israeli War in 1948, Gaza came under the control of Egypt until it was lost during the Six Day War of 1967, in which Israel subsequently occupied Gaza (Morris 2008: 377). Israel maintained a direct military occupation of Gaza until the Oslo Accords in 1993/94 when Gaza came under the control of the newly created Palestinian National Authority (PNA), who assumed administrative control of the

territory (Declaration of Principles 1993). In 2005, Israel removed the remainder of its military forces and settlers from the Gaza Strip but continues to maintain a military occupation of the territory via the air and sea and through the control of crucial border crossings (MFA 2004). Following the election of the Hamas government in 2006 and their ascension to power Israel began a near total blockade of the Gaza Strip, effectively cutting it off from the outside world (United Nations 2012). Following a brief war in November 2012, the blockade of Gaza was loosened on an official level; however a near total closure of Gaza remains.

1.2.3. Political profile

Although not a central focus of this study a very brief comment on the current political makeup of the Gaza Strip is in order. As a result of the 2006 Palestinian elections, in which they won a majority of the vote, the Gaza Strip has been under Hamas control. Following these elections Hamas fought a brief but very intense civil war with its rival, Fatah (PNA), which resulted in the removal of Fatah officials from Gaza and the dismissal of Hamas politicians from their posts in the West Bank government (BBC 2007). This has created a situation in which, collectively, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are represented by two separate governments. However in Gaza, a certain degree of administrative control still rests with Palestinian Authority officials and employees who carry out some of the daily activities of Gazan government ministries. Additionally, Hamas has established a firm security hold in the Gaza Strip, and in particular Gaza City, through a crackdown on fringe groups threatening to upset the delicate political balance between Gaza and Israel and the monopoly on power which Hamas currently holds.

1.2.4. Economic profile

Due to the political environment the economy of Gaza is severely limited. The continued siege on the coastal territory has created a situation in which a large percentage of the Gazan economy focuses on internal agricultural production. Farmers in the Strip grow a variety of products including olives, citrus fruits, meat, vegetables, and dairy products (CIA). Very limited exports to Israel and a handful of European states have been allowed under special agreements (Gisha 2012), but the majority of Gaza's economic production remains internal. There is a further sector of the Gaza City economy focused around providing services to a small population of foreigners who work for organizations such as the United Nations or the Red Cross. This manifests in lavish hotels and seaside cafes that cater to this expatriate group within Gaza City and to a higher social stratum of Gazan society that is able to afford these services.



Figure 2: Map of the Gaza Strip (BBC)

1.3. City overview

Gaza City is the largest city in the Gaza Strip and serves as an administrative and cultural capital for the besieged territory, hosting a number of Palestinian universities as well as the majority of government ministries and offices. Gaza City has a growing population that today stands at nearly half a million residents (Municipality of Gaza, PCBS). In addition to its collection of traditional city neighborhoods, Šāṭi’ refugee camp, on the shores of the Mediterranean and home to over 80,000 Palestinian refugees, has effectively been incorporated into the fabric of the city although still falling under the administrative purvey of United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). Gaza City is the most populous area of the Gaza Strip and has been cited as being one of the most densely populated pieces of land on earth. (Dumper & Stanley 2007: 156)

1.4. Refugee migration

Following the Arab-Israeli War in 1948 and the creation of the state of Israel a massive influx of roughly 750,000 refugees entered the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. This population has today grown to over 5 million registered Palestinian refugees (UNRWA). The Gaza Strip is home to eight official UNRWA refugee camps and roughly 75% of the population of the Gaza Strip is of a refugee background, although not all of those with a refugee background currently live in UNRWA administered camps (UNRWA). Of those refugees who have settled in the Gaza Strip, most originally hail from areas in historical Palestine, including, but not limited to; Ramle, Lydd, Jaffa, Bir is-Sabi’, and dozens of Palestinian villages surrounding what is now the Gaza Strip which were depopulated or completely destroyed in 1948 (UNRWA).

Camp Name	Population
Jabaliya	110,000
Rafah	104,000
Beach	87,000
Khan Younis	72,000
Nuseirat	66,000
Bureij	34,000
Maghazi	24,000
Deir Al-Balah	21,000

Table 1: Official UNRWA population statistics for the eight Gaza Strip refugee camps (UNRWA)

As previously noted, Gaza City is home to Šāṭi' refugee camp, known officially as "Beach Camp". According to the official UNRWA camp profile for Šāṭi', the majority of its residents were originally from Lydd, Jaffa, and Bir is-Sabi', as well as surrounding villages in those vicinities. Šāṭi' camp in particular has suffered greatly under the Israeli blockade on Gaza, with a large number of its residents working in Gaza's struggling fishing industry which has adversely been affected by the Israeli imposed naval blockade on the Gaza Strip which limits fishing activity off the coast of Gaza (ICRC 2010). In the present study, it is Šāṭi' camp and in particular its residents who are originally from Jaffa, 40km north of Gaza, that play an important role.

1.5. Political events as a catalyst for language contact

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the potential effects of prolonged language contact between distinct but mutually intelligible dialects of Arabic in Gaza City. The catalyst for this contact can be found in the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 and the creation of the state of Israel. The massive refugee influx in Gaza has created a situation of intense and prolonged dialect contact in Gaza City, with refugees from dozens of Palestinian cities and villages now living as residents of Gaza.

In much the same way that the events of 1948 can be viewed as the catalyst that led to the present degree of language contact in Gaza City, restrictions of freedom of movement and the continued blockade of Gaza can be seen as political factors which aid in maintaining that contact. Restrictions on travel, even with recent changes as a result of the 2011 Egyptian revolution which have opened the Rafah Crossing to civilian passage, create a situation in which the vast majority of Gazan Palestinians have little hope of ever leaving the Gaza Strip. Although a select number of Gazans are able to seek employment or education outside of Gaza, their stateless persona creates a situation in which after receiving degrees or work outside of Gaza their options for continued or permanent immigration are limited. Those Gazans who were able to leave Gaza are also often brought back due to family commitments to those who remain in the Strip. Further immigration into Gaza can be noted by an influx of Palestinians who were born to Gazan families that had been living in the Gulf countries, as well as immigration to Gaza by Palestinians who were residents of the villages surrounding Gaza which were depopulated or destroyed in 1948. For a variety of complex reasons, a number of Palestinians are drawn to return or immigrate to Gaza despite the harsh reality of life in the territory today.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

2.1. Introduction

Various sampling methods have been developed over the course of sociolinguistic research, from the early years of random sampling methodologies to more recent moves towards judgment sampling as a means to locate informants for study. Labov puts forward the notion that, “A truly representative sample of the speech community must be based on a random sample in which each one of several million speakers has an equal chance of being selected” (Labov 2001: 38). However, Milroy and Gordon point to an acute problem that Labov himself was not able to avoid, that at the moment that researchers begin to exclude speakers for various legitimate reasons the status of the sample as being statistically “random” fades away (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 25)

Although early sociolinguistic work focused on some form of random sampling as a primary method because of its potential to provide a representative sample of the speech community, more recent work has moved towards quota or judgement sampling as a primary means of locating and classifying informants (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 30). Judgment sampling alleviates some of the methodological shortcomings of the random sampling method while allowing the researcher to target specific groups within a community for study. Judgement sampling also helps to establish the limitations of the speech community as well as those of the study itself by identifying what groups are under/over represented and providing a clear view of the representativeness of the sample (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 25-29). It is judgement sampling which has been adopted in the present study to develop the best possible sample for this first attempt at studying the language situation of Gaza City.

2.2. The sample

The sample which comprises this study is drawn from speakers who are currently residents of Gaza City. A sample of 10 females and 12 males was drawn for investigation from a larger corpus of 39 speakers. Within this sample group of 22 speakers, 7 are refugees originally from the city of Jaffa, 40 km north of Gaza City, and now itself a suburb of the modern Israeli city of Tel Aviv. Within this subset of Jaffa speakers, all but two were born and raised in the Gaza Strip, with the oldest two female speakers having been born in their native Jaffa and expelled during

the ethnic cleansing which took place in 1948. The remaining 15 speakers are all of indigenous Gazan heritage and were born and raised in Gaza City.

Age Gender	Gazans		Jaffans	
	M	F	M	F
17-39	3	3	2	1
40-64	3	3	2	0
65+	2	1	0	2
	8	7	4	3
Total	15		7	
Grand Total	22			

Table 2: Speaker demographics

A target quota was set to have at least two speakers filling each cell by age, gender, and dialect background. However, due to the challenging research environment in Gaza City, two cells within the Jaffa subset of speakers remain empty. I was unable to locate refugee males from the elderly age group and refugee women in the middle aged group for interviews. The latter shortcoming as it relates to female speakers reflects an acute problem of conducting research within a conservative Middle Eastern community. In many cases it was not socially acceptable for me, as a foreign-male researcher, to sit with women to conduct interviews. In Gazan society, as is the case in wider Middle Eastern society more generally, the interaction between men and women is typically limited to some extent to that between close family members.

As such, a number of various methods were developed to attempt to mitigate this issue and locate informants for interviews. The primary method in this regard relates to the youngest age group of female speakers in the study. In the case of the indigenous Gazan women, a group of local university students were enlisted to assist me in the research. These students were all of an indigenous Gazan background and the interviews conducted with young and middle aged indigenous Gazan women reflect interviews conducted with the family members of my research assistants. In these situations it was possible to allow the research assistants to interview their female relatives on my behalf while I remained in a different part of the home speaking with other, male members, of the family.

Additionally, through the help of a local academic it was possible to locate a small group of female university students of both Gazan and Jaffan backgrounds who were willing to sit with me for interviews. These interviews were conducted at the university itself which offered a unique environment where I could sit with women close to my own age group and have a casual and candid discussion about issues relevant to their lives in Gaza. It is worth noting that, while all of the interviews conducted as part of this study were enlightening, the chance to sit with these young women was a unique opportunity and the quality of the data from these interviews reflects this.

Although as previously mentioned, sitting with women for interviews is not socially acceptable in Gaza City some leeway exists in regards to conducting interviews with older women. The social barriers that prevented me from conducting interviews with younger women fell away as the informants grew in age. Because of this, it was possible to sit with a number of elderly women of both Jaffan and indigenous Gazan background to conduct interviews, always in the presence of close family and friends, who assisted in carrying out the interviews.

2.3. The researcher and the interview

The researcher in this study is an American male. I am not a member of the community within which this study was conducted and had no prior ties to the community itself. This posed a number of methodological challenges to conducting research. As mentioned previously, some of these challenges were alleviated by the help of local academics who were able to point me in the direction of informants, as well as providing local university students who would serve as my research assistants during fieldwork. Having local students with me to conduct interviews made it possible for me to easily enter the homes and lives of my informants through having effectively been “vouched for” by both a local university professor as well as family members of those individuals that I wished to interview (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 32,75).

While early interviews reflect a certain degree of formality due to a new research environment and the acclimation of the research assistants to conducting interviews, the researcher attempted to alleviate as much of the perceived formality as possible. Interviews were conducted with informants at times and places most convenient to them and informants were allowed and encouraged to direct the discussions with minimal interference from the researcher

or assistants wherever possible. Additionally, regarding the ever persistent issue of Arabic diglossia (Ferguson 1959), which can affect the mode of speech used in the interviews, those more highly educated informants who possess a faculty in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) did occasionally favor that form of speech over their own native dialect. However, due to a fairly sizable corpus of 39 speakers it was possible to select as part of the sample those speakers who utilized their native dialect over MSA, regardless of their educational background.

It was also possible in many instances to work around the issue of diglossia through encouraging informants to speak in their native dialect. The researcher himself, although not a speaker of the dialect of Gaza, does have faculty in Palestinian Arabic (PA) (specifically the dialect of Jerusalem). Because of this it was possible to encourage informants to speak casually being that the researcher had a greater ability PA than in MSA. This method yielded positive results, with the majority of speakers using their native dialect and providing samples of casual speech. Additionally, it was made known to the informants that an aspect of the study was on the dialects of Arabic spoken in Gaza. An early concern was that disclosing this information may raise the formality level of the interview, a side effect of alerting informants that their speech was an object of study (see Meyerhoff 2006: 30). However this was not the case and in the end their knowledge of my work on the dialect provided me not only with crucial samples of casual speech but also with insightful commentary on the dialects spoken in Gaza by Palestinians of different backgrounds. Additional challenges faced by the researcher as they relate to interviewing female informants have been addressed above.

The sociolinguistic interview, a method of data collection made prominent in earlier studies, was utilized as part of the present study. Milroy and Gordon note that, “The key, in addition to locating cooperative speakers, is preparing topics that the participants will eagerly discuss at length” (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 60). A number of pre-planned topics for discussion were developed to be used as part of the interviews. However, many of those topics were discarded because they, in reality, did not reflect everyday aspects of Gazan life and altered the focus of the interview towards its common western interpretation as a clearly defined and formal speech event (Milroy and Gordon 2003:61). In addition, some lines of questioning that have proved to yield informative results in earlier sociolinguistic studies were discarded or entirely avoided in the present study. A primary example of this is the “danger of death” question (Labov

1972: 93), which was not a question that as a researcher I felt could reasonably be posed to a community experiencing continual war as a reality of life. In many cases, the same types of narrative and stories that Labov was able to elicit through this question came through in my own interviews by asking about experiences living through the recent military operations conducted in the Gaza Strip, without the potential backlash caused by posing what could be considered a naïve or insensitive question.

In early interviews, an attempt was made at developing a general picture of the social networks of the informants through questioning regarding their interactions with other people in their communities, neighboring cities, and their friends and family in other areas of the Gaza Strip. However, this type of questioning was abandoned early in the fieldwork because it was met with suspicion by informants. Although in the eyes of outsiders to this community this suspicion may appear to be misplaced, there is a serious concern about intelligence officers, internal and external, attempting to collect information about Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. This is a concern with a factual basis in a long history of local Gazans cooperating with the Israeli intelligence agency and passing information in exchange for easier treatment and monetary gain (Ayyoub 2013, Dawber 2013). Because of this, my presence was often initially met with suspicion and prying questions regarding friends and family yielded negative results.

Because of these issues, a number of general questions were developed as talking points for informants based on their unique backgrounds and life experiences. To provide brief examples of these: elderly informants were generally asked their memories of life before the 1948 war and the refugee migration out of historical Palestine, middle aged informants often recounted their experiences during the Six Day War in 1967 or their work as laborers inside of Israel, and the youngest generation regularly provided moving stories of their lives during the Second Palestinian Intifada or the most recent wars in Gaza. In addition, other topics of discussion focused on Palestinian cuisine, the family, Palestinian wedding traditions, the history of Gaza City, social life in Gaza, and the social differences between the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Many of the questions, particularly those relating to the personal experiences of war, elicited emotional and politically charged responses with little attention to paid to the actual speech being used. These instances highlighted the ability of emotional reactions to serve as methods through which casual speech can be observed and analysed (Milroy and Gordon 2003:

65). Additionally, even questions relating to cuisine or wedding customs, which seem benign on the surface level, elicited responses that highlight the changing nature of Gazan society as a result of the overt political conflict in the Gaza Strip. These responses, while providing the data necessary for linguistic analysis also offered an insightful view into the wider effect of protracted political conflict as it affects multiple layers of social and cultural life.

The goal in each interview was to collect at least 30 minutes of casual speech. However this was not always a possibility and categorically determining the length of the interview proved to be close to impossible (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 58). As such, the simple goal was set to obtain as much data from each informant as possible but to continually gauge their level of comfort with the interview environment and to end or alter the interview if the situation warranted. Because of this, interview length varied from as few as 10-15 minutes to lengthier interviews that were closer to an hour. The majority of interviews averaged between 15-30 minutes in length. Additionally, at times the recorder was turned off or the topic of discussion was changed at the request of the informant without question. While the researcher posed a series of questions to each informant, every effort was made to allow the informants themselves direct the discussion with minimal interference from the researcher, except in the case of follow up questions or to gain additional demographic information about the informants themselves.

2.4. The fieldwork

The period of fieldwork which yielded the data in this study took place in the month of May, 2013. The majority of the interviews were conducted in the homes of the informants, often with other family and friends present, as well as the three local university students who acted as research assistants. A foreign researcher proved to be an often unheard of sight in Gaza City, and as a result the presence of the researcher attracted a significant amount of attention from the local community. What began as a small interview with one informant, research assistants, and another family member often in the end resulted in a group of onlookers and relatives who were interested in what was being said and what purpose brought me to Gaza. The attention paid by the community to my presence and research, however, often yielded additional interviews with other family members or neighbors, who were more willing to speak with me after watching the interviews which had been conducted with friends or loved ones. This attention also created a situation reminiscent of the “friend of a friend” approach (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 32, 75)

wherein I had conducted interviews with certain members of the community and although the researcher always remained an outsider, the local community was aware of my presence and the purpose of my research and was thus extremely welcoming and open with me, agreeing to further interviews.

2.5. Issues of access

Obtaining access to Gaza City as a research site presented a number of unique and sizable challenges that had to be overcome before research could begin. It was not until the Egyptian revolution of 2011, which deposed former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, that a foreigner could realistically gain entry to the Gaza Strip for research. Even after the 2011 Egyptian revolution, physically securing entry to the Gaza Strip presents an immense challenge. The Kerem Shalom crossing between Gaza and Israel is limited to commercial traffic and the Erez Crossing in northern Gaza is restricted to human rights workers, journalists, and Palestinians with prior coordination with Israeli authorities to leave Gaza. At the time of the fieldwork Rafah Crossing in southern Gaza remained the only access point to the Gaza Strip for a foreign researcher. Although Rafah now operates for civilian traffic, it is still subject to frequent closures and restrictions. The exit of the researcher from the Gaza Strip was almost delayed by a weeklong closure at Rafah in response to the kidnapping of Egyptian soldiers at the end of May 2013. As a result, the border remained closed and thousands of Palestinians were trapped on both sides of the crossing (Egypt Independent). Even at the time of writing, Rafah Crossing remains only intermittently open due to severe political unrest in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula (Knell 2013).

To obtain the proper clearance to conduct linguistic research in Gaza it was necessary for the researcher to obtain an official invitation from an organization inside of the Gaza Strip who was willing to act as a sponsor on the researcher's behalf. In the case of the present study, this invitation came from a local non-governmental organization (NGO) operating in one of the eight refugee camps in the Gaza Strip. In addition to the research being presented here, the researcher volunteered with the NGO as an English teacher and intern helping to draft publications and grant proposals. Even after securing the required internal invitation, a lengthy series of paperwork was necessary to receive official permission from Egyptian authorities to utilize their side of the Rafah Crossing. Furthermore, upon arrival at the border it was necessary that the researcher's entry to Gaza itself be coordinated with the organization who issued the invitation as

well as the Ministry of Foreigners Affairs, Ministry of Interior, and local security authorities. Even after entering Gaza, fieldwork could not begin until the researcher received proper clearance from the Palestinian Ministry of Interior and had the necessary permits to allow the researcher's stay in Gaza City for the duration of the fieldwork period.

In addition to these challenges, Gaza City itself is a sprawling urban center with a complex social and political makeup that necessarily affected the research. Religious background, political affiliations, and familial background all had an effect on my ability as a researcher to conduct interviews. Perhaps the most pressing issue to the fieldwork itself was that of familial background. Given the complexity of Gaza City and the long history of displacement, migration, and immigration in Gaza, it was of immense importance to collect accurate demographic information on the family and dialect backgrounds of the informants in the study. Reliable information in this regard was absolutely crucial to ensuring the validity and reliability of the data collected and great care was taken during fieldwork to note the backgrounds of all informants in the study.

2.6. The urban, rural, sedentary, and Bedouin

Before moving forward to a discussion of the variables and data of the study, a brief comment is necessary on issues of terminology as they relate to the present research. In the study of Arabic linguistics it is often the case that the spoken dialects are classified as being of a typically urban, rural, sedentary, or Bedouin variety. A plethora of terms have been applied to describe what is in effect not a true manifestation of specific dialect types that only occur in urbanized as opposed to rural areas, or in sedentary as opposed to Bedouin communities. In reality, most dialects of Arabic contain features that are akin to both types, the Sedentary and Bedouin. These terms are used in this dissertation, as in Arabic linguistics in general, for the purpose of general classification where such classification is useful. So in this sense, when the present study presents the dialect of Jaffa as being of an urban stock or that of Gaza City as being of a more Bedouin variety, thereby I do not imply that either dialect contains features exclusive to these norms¹.

¹ Britain (2009) provides a thorough discussion on the unhelpfulness of creating an urban-rural dichotomy. Additionally, Cadore (1992) provides a useful overview of the linguistic differentiation that is often present in these Arabic varieties.

2.7. Variables and constraints

2.7.1. Variables

Although a number of variables are present in the dialect of Gaza City, two have been chosen for analysis in the present study: the uvular stop (q) and the feminine ending (ah). A general overview of both variables will be provided below by examining previous literature in Arabic linguistics. Additionally, the limited available literature on the dialect of Gaza City will be examined in the case of these variables.

2.7.1.1. Uvular Stop (q)

The uvular stop (q) has been investigated as a sociolinguistic variable in a number of other studies conducted on Arabic speaking communities (e.g. Al-Wer 2007, Haeri 1997, Holes 1987). Some examples of the variable realization of the uvular stop can be seen in the cases of Amman and Cairo below:

	Amman	Cairo
* ² <i>manṭīqa</i> ~ ‘area’	[mantīga]	[mantīʔa]
* <i>qahwa</i> ~ ‘coffee’	[gahwa]	[ʔahwa]
* <i>qa:la</i> ~ ‘he said’	[ga:l]	[ʔa:l]
* <i>qari:b</i> ~ ‘close’	[gari:b]	[ʔari:b]

In Palestinian Arabic (PA) generally, three primary realizations of the uvular stop /q/ exist (Shahin 2007: 527):

- [k] - voiceless velar stop
- [ʔ] - glottal stop
- [g] - voiced velar stop

In addition to the three realizations above, a fourth is present in the rural Palestinian dialect, where, “pharyngealized *q* is realized between a velar and uvular (transcribed as *ḳ*)” (Shahin 2007: 527). The uvular stop [q], while also the Standard Arabic realization of this phoneme, was once also a prominent feature in the dialect of Nablus in the northern West Bank, which has now

² * indicates the underlying form. This is generally the Classical Arabic form

given way to the [ʔ] variant (Abd El-Jawad 1987: 361). The voiceless velar stop [k] remains a feature of rural West Bank dialects and village dialects across historical Palestine. The glottal stop [ʔ] is the prominent dialectal realization for (q) in many of Palestine's urban centers including; Jerusalem, present day Nablus, Jaffa, and Ramallah (which traditionally had [k]) (Abd El-Jawad 1987, Horesh 2000, Rosenhouse 2007, Shahin 2007). Finally, the voiced velar stop [g] is a dialect feature that is most prominent in the Bedouin dialects of Palestine, particularly in the Negev Desert region, and the village dialects of the southern West Bank (Cleveland 1967, Palva 1984, Shahin 2007, Shawāribah 2012).

2.7.1.2. Feminine ending (ah)

The feminine ending /ah/ is an emerging variable in sociolinguistic studies on Arabic dialects. Earlier descriptive work, including that of the early Arabic grammarian Sibawayhi, has detailed the conditioning environments for the general process of vowel raising, *ima:la*, as well as the specific form of vowel raising which effects the feminine ending (Owens 2006, Versteegh 2001). In his treatment of *ima:la* based primarily on Sibawayhi's early account and a comparison with a collection of modern dialects, Owens makes a series of important notes regarding the phenomenon, of which points II and III are of crucial importance for the present study (Owens 2006: 226):

II. Imala is conditioned by an /i/ in a neighboring syllable.

III. This value is inhibited in the context of emphatic consonants and gutturals /x/, /y/, /q/, and sometimes /r/.

Additionally, the pharyngeal consonants, /ʕ/ and /ħ/, are shown to be inhibitors of the raising of the feminine ending /ah/ (Al-Wer 2007). In relation to Owen's point III and the case of /r/ and its influence on raising, /r/ generally speaking acts as an *ima:la* inhibitor, except in cases where there is a /i/ in the preceding syllable. In these instances *ima:la* is possible despite the general inhibiting effect of /r/ (Al-Wer 2007: 68). The effect of /r/ in different contexts is illustrated in the examples below:

**šağara* 'tree' ~ [ʃadʒara] (no raising)

**fatra* 'period' ~ [fatra] (no raising)

**kabi:ra* 'big' ~ [kbi:re] (/i/ in preceding syllable)

**šaği:ra* 'small' ~ [zği:re] (/i/ in preceding syllable)

In Palestinian Arabic, raising of the feminine ending is attested as a feature of northern and urban dialects (Shahin 2007: 530). Additionally, raising of the feminine ending has been attested in many of the major urban centers throughout the Levant. Most notably in this regard, raising has been described in Jerusalem (Rosenhouse 2007), Amman (Al-Wer 2007), and Beirut (Naïm 2007). This phenomenon generally speaking involves the raising of the feminine ending from a vowel in the neighborhood of [a] to that of [e], however raising to [ɛ] as well as [i] has been documented (Al-Wer 2007). Conversely, a number of other dialects which share geographic proximity to the Gaza Strip are noted as dialects which typically do not raise this vowel, leaving its realization at [a]. Notably in this regard is the sedentary dialect of Al-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula, which generally does not raise the feminine ending (de Jong 2000: 495).

An interesting case that is worthy of comment given its close proximity to the Gaza Strip is the dialect of the Negev desert. Shawarbah notes that the raising of the feminine ending is active in the dialect of the Negev but is inhibited by the primary or secondary emphatics and back consonants, which maintain an [ah] realization for this variable. While all other environments favour a [ih] realization (Shawarbah 2012: 88). Additionally, in the Negev the glottal /h/, pharyngeal /ħ/, and /ʕ/ are not inhibitors of raising this morpheme, a feature noted in other Bedouin dialects of the area (de Jong 2000: 76, Shawarbah 2012: 88). Examples of the variable realizations for the feminine ending are provided below in the cases of Cairo and Jerusalem respectively:

	Cairo	Jerusalem
* <i>sana</i> ~ ‘year’	[sana]	[sane]
* <i>ǧazza</i> ~ ‘Gaza’	[ɣazza]	[ɣazze]
* <i>šwayya</i> ~ ‘a little’	[ʃowajja]	[ʃwajje]

2.7.2. Uvular stop and feminine ending in Gaza City

Although it is possible to form a general impression of the realizations of these variables in the wider community of Palestinian dialects through previous literature, examining them in the dialect of Arabic spoken in Gaza City is much more difficult. Much of our current knowledge on the dialect of Gaza City stems from two studies; Bersträsser's *Sprachatlas Von Syrien und Palastina* (Bergsträsser 1915), covering all of historical Palestine, and Erkki Salonen's *Zum Arabischen Dialekt Von Gaza* (Salonen 1979,1980) on the dialect of Gaza City³. Based on these two texts it is possible to make some initial comments as they relate to the variables under investigation in the present study.

In regards to the uvular stop /q/, Bersträsser noted that the dialect of Gaza City featured the glottal stop [ʔ] for this phoneme (Bergsträsser 1915: map. 4). Additionally, when speaking of the raising of the feminine ending /ah/, Bergsträsser noted no raising of this ending in his account of Arabic in Gaza City (Bergsträsser 1915: map. 6). However, the descriptions provided by Bergsträsser are limited in scope given that almost 100 years has passed and it is impossible to know exactly where and from whom the information was gathered. This does not dismiss Bergsträssers account, it is just important to note that much could and arguably has changed in Gaza City over the intervening century.

When speaking of Salonen's later account of the dialect, a voiced velar stop [g] was noted as the realization for the uvular stop /q/, in contrast to Bergsträssers earlier account of the dialect (Salonen 1979: 20). In regards to the feminine ending /ah/ in Salonen's texts, it is possible to cite instances of raising in the dialect from a vowel in the neighborhood of [a] to one closer to [e], and even as high as [i] (Salonen 1979: 40). De Jong notes the degree of raising evidenced through Salonen's texts as being similar the limited raising of the feminine ending in the dialect of Al-Arish in the North Sinai Peninsula, although, according to de Jong, it appears much more regularly in the dialect of Gaza City (de Jong 2000: 537). Additionally, when commenting on the dialect based on his observations of these two earlier works de Jong notes the plausibility that the glottal [ʔ] realization for /q/ shifted towards the voiced velar [g] as a result of direct dialect

³ Although not focusing directly on Gaza City, it is important to acknowledge the work of Dr. Jamal Al-Shareef (Al-Shareef 2002). Dr. Al-Shareef's sociolinguistic analysis of Jabalia refugee camp, north of Gaza City, plays a crucial role in future research which will expand the linguistic discussion beyond Gaza City to one which focuses on language variation and change in the wider Gaza Strip.

contact with any number of the Bedouin tribes in the area, as they all feature the velar realization [g] in their dialects (Bergsträsser 1915: map. 4, de Jong 2000: 590). De Jong additionally notes a number of other Bedouin features in the dialect, which give credence to his hypothesis that the neighboring Bedouin dialects have had a significant influence on the dialect of Gaza City (de Jong 2000: 581). In the interest of classification of the dialect of Gaza City based on the two earlier texts, de Jong expresses his support for the notion that the dialect of Gaza City was originally of a sedentary variety and took on a number of Bedouin characteristics at a later point (de Jong 2000: 589).

In his classification of the dialects spoken in greater Palestine and Transjordan, Heikki Palva classifies the dialect of Gaza City as being of an urban stock, close in comparison to Bergsträssers earlier account (Palva 1984: 373). The feminine ending /ah/ is not discussed by Palva, however the voiced [g] reflex for /q/ is noted as a prominent Bedouin feature in the southern dialects of Palestine, i.e. the dialects of the Negev Bedouin tribes (Palva 1984: 363). Palva also addresses some of the shortcomings present in Bergsträssers study, namely that it was limited in scope and based on a small amount of data collected over a very wide geographic area. However, as Palva notes, it does provide a fair overview of the dialect situation at the time (Palva 1984: 360). Although the maps provided in Palva would suggest that Gaza City be classified as an urban dialect type, his classification criteria suggest that it is closer to that of the southern Palestinian dialects that are of Bedouin provenance. It is never explicitly stated in Palva, but based on his classification of the southern Palestinian dialects and drawing his data on Gaza from Bergsträssers earlier work it would suggest that Palva was pointing in the same direction as de Jong's later account made explicit; that Gaza City represents an older urban dialect which took on a number of Bedouin dialect features as a result of contact with neighboring tribes, presumably from the areas of the Sinai and Negev.

Before moving forward with the present analysis, it is crucial to note the shortcomings apparent in one of the two foundational sources that exist on the dialect of Gaza City; Salonen 1979/80. De Jong provides a thorough overview of his doubts regarding Salonen's texts and the reliability of his informants; in brief, de Jong's concerns relate to the dialect background of Salonen's informants as actually being of true Gazan origin, i.e. actually from Gaza City itself, not simply from the Gaza Strip generally. De Jong notes that four of the ten speakers used in

Salonen's study are of questionable origin based on their own statements in the texts. De Jong cites one example in particular wherein the informant mentions being raised in a village that is 8km from Khan Younis, which would put it at its closest possible point, 12km from Gaza City. By de Jong's count, two-thirds of Salonen's texts (by page count) are of questionable authenticity. De Jong also notes that Salonen's speakers were living in Sweden and Finland respectively, and de Jong rightly cautions against underestimating the possible effects of contact with speakers of other dialect backgrounds as a result of their exile from Gaza (de Jong 2000: 590-91, see comment 8). As a result of these concerns, Salonen's work must be approached with caution and its comments regarding the dialect weighed against the potential unreliability of the source material itself. My own reservations regarding the accuracy of Salonen's sources as they relate to the raising of the feminine ending /ah/ in Gaza City will be addressed below in light of the research conducted in this study.

In contrast to the limited sources available on the dialect of Gaza City, it is possible to discern a clearer picture for these two variables in the dialect of Jaffa based on previous literature. The dialect of Jaffa is very much of the urban stock of Palestinian dialects and in the case of the uvular stop /q/; Jaffa favors a [ʔ] realization as the primary dialectal realization (Horesh 2000, Shahin 2007). The Jaffa dialect has also been noted to raise the feminine ending /ah/, given a favorable phonological environment, in line with other urban Palestinian dialects (Shahin 2007). Thus, within the present sample we have two groups of speakers, indigenous Gazans and Jaffan refugees, who are in intimate contact and have complimentary realizations for both of the variables under investigation.

In the interest of defining the envelope of variation in the present analysis, the two dialectal variants of the (q) which are present in Gaza City are the glottal stop [ʔ] and voiced velar stop [g]. The uvular stop [q] occurs in loan words from Standard Arabic, and is also occasionally realized as a sound closer to the voiceless velar stop [k̠] (retracted [k]). However these latter variants do not occur in the actual dialect of the city, merely as loan words or a byproduct of heightened speech formality among those speakers with a faculty in Modern Standard Arabic. In the case of the feminine ending /ah/, the two available sources offer a contradictory picture of the dialectal realization for this variable; with Bergsträsser noting a [a] realization and Salonen noting [e] or [i]. For the purposes of this study, Bergsträssers unraised [a] will be considered the

accurate representation of the dialect for this variable, given the reservations expressed regarding Salonen's work and any variant of /ah/ that is raised beyond that of [a] will be considered a raised token for this variable.

2.7.3. Social factors

2.7.3.1. Introduction

It is possible to demarcate the present sample along social lines in a variety of ways. However due to space constraints three social categories have been chosen on which to examine the data collected from Gaza City. First and foremost, the sample is divided into two categories based on dialect background; Indigenous Gazans and Jaffan refugees. Additionally, the informants are categorized by biological sex as male and female. The third and final category within the sample is that of age. These three social categories will be expanded upon and discussed below.

2.7.3.2. Age

While other sociolinguistic studies categorize age based on generational divisions (Labov 1966, Trudgill 1974), when researching the Palestinian community and particularly the Gaza Strip, I argue that another divisional makeup is called for. Eckert notes a general division of community studies into two categories, etic and emic, as they relate to age. While the first groups speakers into arbitrarily determined age groups, it is the emic approach that is put forward in the study of Gaza City; an approach that, "groups speakers according to some shared experience of time" (Eckert 1997: 155). Important for the case of the Gaza Strip is the assumption put forward that at the same time that social or political events can influence language that age differences in language variation can reflect these social or political changes (Eckert 1997: 167).

To reflect the unique political and social history which defines many aspects of life for Palestinians in Gaza, age was divided into three groups. The elderly group, over the age of 65, was born before the 1948 war and the ethnic cleansing that displaced roughly 750,000 Palestinians while creating a massive influx of refugees into the Gaza Strip. The middle aged group was born after the 1948 war but before the October war of 1973, with most of the informants in this category having been born in the period surrounding the Six Day War of 1967. Finally, the youngest age group was born following the 1973 war, grew up during the First and Second Palestinian uprisings, and in the case of the youngest speakers in the sample grew up

during the later years of the Second Intifada and experienced Operation Cast Lead⁴ in 2008/9, and Operation Pillar of Defense⁵ in 2012.

Categorizing informants based on political events, in reality wars, appears on the surface to be an unlikely way of delimiting the sample community. However, given the unique history of Palestinians these events define life stages and greatly affect the personal experiences, backgrounds, and daily activities of speakers. In much the same way that patterns of change in Quebec-French have been attributed to specific political or social changes in Canadian society in the wake of the Great Depression and World War II (Clermont and Cedergren 1979, Kemp 1979, Kemp and Yaeger-Dror 1991) it is possible that similar patterning could be manifest in the speech of Gaza City. By delimiting age based on these defining events the door is then opened to a more thorough analysis of the effects of social and political change on language, as they relate to age.

Age	Number of Speakers
17-39	9
40-64	8
65+	5
Total	22

Table 3: Distribution of speakers by age

Classifying age in this way, the study presents an apparent-time view of the Gaza City speech community. Although in some ways a real-time study on Gaza City would be insightful, given the ever changing political climate in the territory viewing linguistic change from the perspective of apparent time is more feasible. Viewing the age divisions in this study in light of apparent-time, we can consider the three groups to be representative of specific eras in the history and time of the Gaza Strip.

The elderly group represents both the initial community of refugees who were forced to relocate in 1948, as well as the indigenous community in Gaza City that existed before the massive influx of refugees and thus provides a view of the Gaza City dialect before large scale dialect contact took place. The middle aged group represents the first generation of Gazans of

⁴ Operation Cast Lead was a 22 day war lasting from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009. For additional information see: (IMEU 2012)

⁵ Operation Pillar of Defense was an eight day military campaign by the Israeli Defense Forces from 14 November 2012 to 21 November 2012. For additional information see: (BBC News 2012)

both indigenous and refugee heritage born in the Gaza Strip post-1948 refugee influx. This middle generation, additionally, had the most direct access to their ancestors who presumably spoke their original local dialect as part of their daily speech while also experiencing the first wave of large scale dialect contact in Gaza City. This middle aged group also had access to the Israeli labor market, which encouraged further dialect contact and mixing with Palestinian laborers of other backgrounds, as well as multilingualism through contact with Modern Hebrew⁶. Finally, the youngest age group represents the second generation of refugee speakers as well as the youngest generation of indigenous Gazans and provides a view of the dialect of Gaza City as it is today in the wake of large scale dialect contact. The speakers of this generation are also the least mobile (both in terms of freedom of movement, as well as social mobility) due to the harsh economic conditions and continuing military blockade on the Gaza Strip.

Before moving forward and additional a brief comment is necessary on the potential for age-grading to affect the sample in the present study (Bailey 2004: 324). Through earlier work we now know that it is true that not all linguistic differences in a community necessarily represent a change in progress and that certain linguistic features can be representative of specific age groups. However, in the case of Gaza City earlier work on neighboring communities for the two variables under analysis in this study suggest that (q) and (ah) are present as variables in all age groups and not specific generational features of speech, but exist in the community as a whole (Al-Wer 2007, Haeri 1997).

2.7.3.3. Gender

Earlier sociolinguistic work has shown gender to play an important role in linguistic variation and change. Studies conducted in Western, English speaking communities, have shown that women tend to favor the use of standard or ‘prestigious’ variants more than their male counterparts (Cheshire 1998, Labov 1966, Milroy 1980, Trudgill 1974). When examining Arabic speaking communities an apparent dilemma arises when considering standard linguistic forms, the issue of diglossia. An example of this point can be seen in the case of the Standard Arabic voiceless uvular stop [q]. Previous studies have shown that men tend to favor the usage of the Standard Arabic [q], while women often disfavor its usage (Abd El-Jawad 1981, Haeri 1997).

⁶ Although not focusing specifically on the Gaza Strip, Hawker (2011) provides an insightful account of lexical borrowing from Modern Hebrew in the speech of Palestinians in three West Bank refugee camps.

This creates what appears to be a contradiction with the studies conducted in Western/English speaking communities, where women favor these standard/prestige forms.

The wealth of recent linguistic research on Arabic speaking communities has provided a solution to this problem by accurately re-defining the notion of the ‘standard’. Through the diglossic nature of Arabic, Standard Arabic and the dialects exist side by side and are utilized for very different purposes and with specific communicative goals in mind. Standard Arabic represents an ‘official’⁷ standard that is used in formal address, media reports, and literature, but is not the daily language of anyone in the Arabic speaking world. As such, the notion of the standard in linguistic research on Arabic has been re-oriented towards one based on the local dialect standards for the community being researched.

Al-Wer succinctly summarizes the issue of gender and linguistic usage in Arabic speaking communities by stating that, “The data from various parts of the Arab world show overwhelmingly that Arab men opt for localized and older features while Arab women favor features which have a wider regional acceptance and usage regardless of the status of these features vis-à-vis Classical Arabic”, i.e. the varieties spoken in the major urban centers of the Middle East (Al-Wer 1997: 261). Work on the dialects spoken in Amman and Cairo (Al-Wer 2007, Haeri 1997) point to the reality of these local urban standards that provide researchers with criteria on which they can make comparisons with the results of sociolinguistic research as it relates to gender in English speaking communities. With these localized concepts of standard in mind, the findings of these studies show us that linguistic communities in the Arabic speaking world closely resemble those of the West in regards to the role of gender in linguistic production.

For the present study, when searching for a local standard through which a comparison can be made with the data collected in Gaza City, Cairo serves as the major urban center that would have presumably had the greatest social, economic, or political pull on those speakers in the Gaza Strip. In many ways the Gaza Strip has been isolated from greater Palestine, this is especially true when examining the period following the creation of the state of Israel to the present day. Following 1948 and until the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978, Gaza was under almost near continual Egyptian control. Even today, the Philadelphi route at the Rafah

⁷ The official standard here represents much the same standard as that which was put forth by Pierre Bourdieu: i.e. one which is given official status in the linguistic market (Bourdieu 1991)

Crossing with Egypt remains Gaza’s only window to the outside world. So it is plausible to assume that it is Cairo, the major urban center with which Gaza has had the greatest degree of accessibility and contact, which would play an important role when examining the language situation in Gaza City. However, it is important to note that while Cairo serves as a major urban center from which to draw a comparison with Gaza City, historically, Gaza City itself was also an established urban center that served as a crucial trading point for the region⁸. Being that Gaza was an established urban center in and of itself, it is plausible that it too had its own distinct urban dialect; a point supported by Bersträssers earlier findings.

Based on earlier research, for (q) the standard dialectal variant in Cairo Arabic is the glottal stop [ʔ] (Haeri 1997). Given Al-Wer’s previous assertion regarding gender and linguistic usage and in light of the view that Cairo could act as a local standard for Gazan speakers, theory would suggest a hypothesis that purports females to have a higher usage of [ʔ] for (q), while men would be believed to favor the more localized [g] realization for this variable. In this same regard, for the case of the raising of the feminine ending (ah), the Cairo dialect does not raise this ending, maintaining an [a] realization (Woidich 2006). However, although Cairo is a non-raising dialect, hypothesizing that females in Gaza City would favour the unraised [a] variant because of the influence of Cairo is unwise given the lack of present knowledge regarding the social salience of (ah) and also because in the dialects of the Levant the non-raising dialects are stigmatized. This is a point which will be discussed in further detail below.

Gender		
Age	Male	Female
17-39	5	4
40-64	5	3
65+	2	3
Total	22	

Table 4: Distribution of speakers by age and gender

⁸ See Meyer (1907) for a thorough overview of the history of Gaza City.

2.7.3.4. Dialect background

Although not unique to the community of speakers being examined in Gaza City, the socially identifying marker of one's dialect background is especially important in any study conducted on Gaza City or the wider Palestinian community in general. History has created a scenario in which the Palestinian community has been afflicted with massive waves of migration and expulsion that has dispersed a once localized group across the wider Middle East and truly, across the world. The unique dialect backgrounds of the speakers in this study will be examined as a potentially influential feature in their realizations of the two variables under investigation.

	Gazans		Jaffans	
Age Gender	M	F	M	F
17-39	3	3	2	1
40-64	3	3	2	0
65+	2	1	0	2
	8	7	4	3
Total	15		7	
Grand Total	22			

Table 5: Distribution of speakers by age, gender, and dialect background

Dialect background, which in the case of Gaza City also indexes refugee status, is an emerging social category that has received somewhat limited attention thus far in Arabic sociolinguistics. Al-Wer's work on the formation of the dialect of Amman represents perhaps the most serious attempt at integrating dialect background into an analysis of language variation and change in an Arabic speaking community to date. Her analysis of Ammani Arabic has shown dialect background to play an influential role in the realization of linguistic features and the development among the younger generation of Ammani speakers of a new dialect in the Jordanian capital (Al-Wer 2007). It is this earlier work that will serve as the lens through which dialect background is examined in the data from Gaza City.

2.8. Statistical analysis

The recorded interviews were analyzed by listening to the data and noting the occurrences of each variable, their respective realizations, and gloss for the surrounding context of the variables under consideration. In an effort to avoid an over-representation of high frequency lexical items only three tokens of each word were included in the analysis, with any additional tokens beyond this limit excluded from the study. Following the coding process further statistical analysis was carried out using Microsoft Excel 2010 (Microsoft) as well as the Rbrul statistical package (Johnson 2009).

2.9. Limitations of the study

Sociolinguistic research and data collection is a necessarily “messy” enterprise. The sample is never as balanced as the researcher would like, there is a perpetual need for more data, and further research is almost always a necessity. All of these are truths in the case of the present study. The challenges discussed regarding locating elderly and middle aged Jaffan informants present a scenario in which the subset of Jaffan speakers is much more limited in its size than was envisioned at the outset of fieldwork. The amount of time spent in the field also limited the amount of data that could be collected and analysed in the present study. Three weeks is an incredibly short period of time for a researcher to try to integrate into an entirely new community with which he or she has had no prior contact. It is my belief that a lengthier period of fieldwork would aid in mitigating many of the problems faced in the present study.

Additionally, a number of social factors were excluded from the present study out of necessity. Time and space created a situation in which three social factors and two linguistic variables were chosen out of a plethora of options. By not being able to examine social factors such as education, social class, and varying social networks the study has limited itself and its ability to describe more fully the variation present in the data. Despite its limitations, it is my belief that the present study offers an important starting point for the further study of language in the Gaza Strip. Any shortcomings present in this analysis can be approached and re-examined in future research on the community and a longer period of ethnographic research will surely lead to a fuller analysis, both of the variables in the present study but additionally of any number of other linguistic variables present in the speech of Gaza City’s residents.

CHAPTER 3: THE VARIABLE (q)

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the variable (q) in the context of other work on the variable. Findings related to this variable are presented and used to draw conclusions on the outcomes of dialect contact between two communities in Gaza City and the potential correlates with the social factors examined in the study.

3.2. Background

When speaking of the history of /q/, Versteegh notes that

The phoneme corresponding in Classical Arabic to Proto-Semitic *k was probably a non-emphatic voiced counterpart to /k/, i.e. /g/; this is the phoneme that is nowadays realized in Standard Arabic as a voiceless /q/, but that in earlier stages of Classical Arabic was probably a voiced /g/, as in the modern Bedouin dialects. (Versteegh 2001: 21)

The early Arabic grammarian Sibawayhi additionally classified the /q/ as *mağhūra*, equivalent to a voiced consonant, which is in line with the present day realizations of the /q/ in the modern Bedouin dialects (Versteegh 2001: 89). Additionally, in reference to the modern dialects of the region, Versteegh states that

Most dialects in the Syro-Lebanese area exhibit the typically sedentary features of voiceless realization of q as ' (sic. ?)...But the fact that they are all sedentary does not mean that they never have Bedouin features. Most Jordanian dialects, for instance, have /g/ for /q/, reflecting contact with Bedouin tribes (Versteegh 2001: 153)

Versteegh additionally points to the dialects of the capitals (Damascus and Beirut, specifically) as replacing those dialects of the countryside and the notion of the urban “prestige” dialects encroaching on or potentially dislocating the more rural countryside dialects. (Versteegh 2001: 153).

An important first question in the examination of (q) in Gaza City is whether or not (q) is actually a variable in this specific case. Herin and Al-Wer make an important point regarding the frequency with which (q) is examined as a variable in studies on Arabic sociolinguistics and the potential misidentification of the phoneme as a true variable. The authors cite the dialect of Damascus as an example of this point, which features the [ʔ] variant as its standard dialectal realization. The authors note that the occurrence of [q] in the dialect is confined predominantly to learned lexical items from Standard Arabic or instances of formal speech. The lack of actual

variation between [ʔ] and [q] in the vernacular creates a situation in which (q) is not variable in Damascus Arabic, despite being labeled as such in previous studies. Beirut and Jerusalem are provided as further examples of this point, wherein the [q] has been misidentified as a variable in situations where no real variation occurs (Herin and Al-Wer 2011: 60-61).

By examining the corpus of speech collected for this study it is possible to answer the base question regarding the actual variability of [q] in Gaza City. A cross tabulation of the 618 tokens of (q) collected in the data set paints the following picture:

Dependent Variable [q]			
[g]	[ʔ]	[q]	Total
412	163	43	618

Table 6: Tokens of the dependent variable (q)

When looking at the cross tabulations, a clearer picture of the (q) in Gaza City comes into immediate view. The sound [q]⁹ is marginal Gaza City; representing lexical items from Standard Arabic that retain the voiceless uvular stop. Because of this, all lexical items containing tokens of [q] were excluded, since such items do not occur with any other realization, i.e. there is no variation represent. After their exclusion we are left with a sample of 575 tokens of (q) divided between two variants, the glottal [ʔ] and voiced velar [g] stops.

The present situation in Gaza City in regards to (q) bears similarity to that of Amman, where [g] and [ʔ] co-occur alongside each other for the same lexical items (Al-Wer 2007, Herin and Al-Wer 2011: 61). Additionally, after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the creation of the state of Israel, Amman too experienced a sizable influx of Palestinian refugees who have since become a part of the dialect mixture of the city (Herin and Al-Wer 2011: 64). Thus we have a similar situation in both Amman and Gaza City where both have experienced an influx of migrants from other parts of the region with different dialect backgrounds and the cities share the same variants for the uvular stop, [g] and [ʔ] respectively. However Gaza City differs from Amman in that while Amman reflects a process of new dialect formation and koineization, Gaza

⁹ The pronunciation of this phoneme as [q] alternated with [k] (retracted [k]), which is quite common in Palestinian and Lebanese dialects.

City has always had its own dialect as it was already an established urban center with a distinctive traditional dialect and a native population (Bergsträsser 1915: map.4).

3.3. Findings and discussion

The use of (q) was examined in the speech of 22 speakers from both genders and three age groups; as detailed above. The examples below reflect the use of this variable in the speech of Gaza City:

**qabil* ‘before’ ~ [ʔabil]

**taqri:ban* ‘approximately’ ~ [taʔri:ban]

**halqe:t* ‘now’ ~ [halʔe:t]

**qalb* ‘heart’ ~ [galb]

**biqu:l* ‘he says’ ~ [bigu:l]

**fo:q* ‘up’ ~ [fo:g]

No known linguistic conditioning factors exist on the variation in the use of (q) variants in casual Arabic speech. The most concerted effort at describing any such factor is Abd El-Jawad’s discussion on the lexical conditioning effects, or the influence of what was termed “lexical class” on the realization of (q) (Abd El-Jawad 1981). However for the scope of this study, the only variants of (q) which fit within the envelope of variation are its dialectal variants [g] and [ʔ], as such, Abd El-Jawad’s discussion can be set aside.

From the speech of these 22 speakers, 575 tokens of (q) were drawn for analysis. The breakdown of this variable by its respective variants is as follows:

Variant	Percentage of variants	Tokens
[g]	72%	412
[ʔ]	28%	163
Total		575

Table 7: Distribution of uvular stop (q) between its two dialectal variants in Gaza City

These results show a noticeable tendency by speakers to favor the voiced velar [g] realization of (q). This tendency will be expanded upon as the interaction between these variants and dialect background, age, and gender is examined below.

3.3.1. (q) and dialect background

Within this sample the speakers represent two dialect backgrounds, Gaza City and Jaffa. While both are part of the larger community of Palestinian dialects, they differ in their classification as typically being of an urban or rural/Bedouin variety. We have accepted for the purposes of this study de Jong's assessment that Gaza City is an old urban dialect which has taken on a number of Bedouin characteristics while Jaffa is accepted to be a dialect of the common urban Palestinian type (de Jong 2000: 589, Horesh 2000, Shahin 2007). Table 12 below shows the results of the analysis for the glottal [ʔ] variant and its correlation with dialect background. In the Rbrul results presented in this chapter, the [ʔ] variant of (q) is treated as the application value and as such, higher log-odds and factor weights indicate a stronger tendency to favour the [ʔ] variant¹⁰.

Dialect Background	Total Tokens	%ʔ	Log Odds	Factor Weights
Jaffa	198	55% (N= 109)	1.539	0.823
Gaza	377	14% (N = 54)	-1.539	0.177

Table 8: Rbrul results for [ʔ] realization of (q) by dialect background ($R^2=.473$ $p=8.23e-35$)

The results point to the role that dialect background plays in the realization of the [q] in Gaza City. Speakers of Jaffan descent show a clear tendency to favour the use of the glottal [ʔ] variant, which is in line with the standard realization of this variable in the dialect of Jaffa (Horesh 2000). These results also reflect the findings of earlier work that deals with dialect background or heritage and its interaction with age.

3.3.2. (q) and age

When conducting the Rbrul analysis on the (q) variable age does not come back as being a statistically significant factor in the analysis. However, despite its apparent lack of statistical significant age as a social factor warrants further comment because the examination of age in this sample further reflects the findings of earlier work, and with further research in Gaza City it is possible that a new analysis would find age to play a more statistically significant role. Before examining age in the sample from Gaza City earlier findings from Amman will be presented as they provide a useful backdrop for discussion.

¹⁰ See Gorman and Johnson (2013) as well as Johnson (2009) for an extended explanation of both log-odds and factor weights in sociolinguistic analysis.

Al-Wer’s study on Amman found that among the older generation of Ammani speakers the tendency was for speakers of Palestinian dialects to favour the use of the [ʔ] variant, what would be considered their input variant, while older Jordanian speakers utilized the [g] variant for this variable. The second generation of speakers in the Amman study were marked by extreme levels of variation, which the author attributes to the use of a mixture of two dialects. While the third generation of Ammani speakers underwent what Al-Wer refers to as a social and stylistic reallocation, beginning to establish some new normative characteristics in their speech. Among this generation female speakers favored the [ʔ] variant consistently, while male speakers realized (q) in a more complex manner as described below (Al-Wer 2007: 66):

- [ʔ] is used among Palestinian boys (talking to each other)
- [g] being used among Jordanian boys
- [ʔ] being used by both groups when speaking with girls
- [g] is used by both groups in mixed (Jordanian and Palestinian) boy groups

When examining Al-Wer’s findings alongside the data from Gaza City it is possible to note both similarities and marked differences. For comparison purposes the tables below show the cross tabulations of the dependent variable and age, while separating the two Gaza City communities into separate tables:

Gazan Speakers				
Age	[ʔ]	[g]	%ʔ	Total
65+	1	64	2%	65
40-64	7	154	4%	161
17-39	46	105	30%	151
				377

Table 9: Distribution of (q) by age among indigenous Gazan speakers

Jaffan Speakers				
Age	[ʔ]	[g]	%ʔ	Total
65+	47	2	96%	49
40-64	25	21	54%	46
17-39	37	66	36%	103
				198

Table 10: Distribution of (q) by age among Jaffan speakers

For the oldest generation, Al-Wer’s results mimic those obtained from the Gaza City data. The oldest generation of Jaffan speakers in the sample favored the use of their input variant, [ʔ], while the oldest Gazan speakers favored the use of their own input variant, [g]. However, while the middle generation of Al-Wer’s study was marked by extreme variability the variability present in Gaza City is somewhat less profound. Indigenous Gazan speakers of this generation still overwhelmingly favored the use of [g] for (q), regardless of their gender, while middle aged Jaffan speakers paint a more variable picture of (q) realization. Important to note in this middle generation of Jaffan speakers is that no female Jaffans from this generation were available for

interviews. So the data presented here is based solely on middle aged male Jaffan speakers. The shortcomings of the gender distribution in this instance notwithstanding, the distribution apparent in this generation of Jaffans shows an almost even split between the use of [ʔ] and [g] among these speakers. Another important point as it relates to this subset of speakers is that the informant which shows the highest use of [ʔ] was also, by his own account, a speaker that uses his native Jaffa dialect at home and with family but speaks differently when interacting with other members of the community. Because of the shortcomings and lack of data in this category of speakers the inferences that can be drawn on this middle generation of speakers are somewhat limited.

The youngest generation provides possibly the most interesting viewpoint, wherein young Gazan speakers, while still favouring the use of [g] show a noticeable intrusion of the [ʔ] variant into their speech (30% of tokens). At the same time, Jaffan speakers of this youngest generation used more tokens of the velar [g] than their native [ʔ] variant, which represents a reversal of the trends from the previous two generations. Interestingly in this youngest generation of Jaffan speakers, virtually all of the tokens of [ʔ] are from female speakers, while the vast majority of tokens of the velar [g] are from male Jaffan speakers. A clear gender differentiation is visible among this youngest generation of Jaffan speakers that could reflect a tendency by Jaffan men to abandon their heritage variant [ʔ] in favour of the localized [g]. It is worth noting that three out of the four male Jaffan speakers in this sample almost categorically realized (q) as [g].

3.3.3. (q) and gender

Table 11 below shows the Rbrul analysis of [ʔ] in relation to gender. In general, the data reflects a clear differentiation by gender on the use of the glottal variant of (q), with female speakers showing much higher rates of usage for this variant.

Gender	Total Tokens	% ʔ	Log Odds	Factor Weights
F	268	46% (N = 123)	1.437	0.808
M	307	13% (N=40)	-1.437	0.192

Table 11: Rbrul results for [ʔ] realization of (q) by gender (R²= .473 p= 2.54e-29)

The Rbrul results from Gaza City for the distribution of [ʔ] and gender broadly reflect the findings of earlier work on Arabic speaking communities for this variable (Haeri 1997, Schmidt

1974, Shorrab 1981). In addition, Al-Wer found a similar situation in Amman, wherein women showed consistent rates of usage of the glottal [ʔ] variant for (q) regardless of their dialect backgrounds (Al-Wer 2007: 66). The results obtained from Gaza City also reflect the findings of other sociolinguistic work generally as it relates to the tendency for female speakers to favour the use of supra-local variants¹¹. The variant [ʔ] is a supra-local variant of (q) *par excellence*. It is noticeable that in the Levant, all city dialects have [ʔ] for (q), or have changed in that direction, eg. Jerusalem, Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo, Nablus, etc. Operating under the assumption that Gaza City was once a dialect which featured the [ʔ] for this variable but underwent a change to [g], in present day Gaza City [ʔ] would be an incoming form while at the same time serving as a regional standard, as it has been described in other major urban centers in the region. In light of these assertions the findings of this study broadly coincide with Labov’s principles *I & II* (Labov 1990: 205-206).

However, while Al-Wer noted that women in Amman, regardless of their dialect background, favored the use of the [ʔ] variant, in Gaza City a slightly more complex interaction with gender should be discussed. In tables 12 and 13, the distribution of (q) by gender is provided, with the two communities separated by dialect background.

Gaza Speakers				
Gender	[ʔ]	[g]	%ʔ	Total
F	44	142	24%	186
M	10	181	5%	191
				377

Table 12: Distribution of (q) by gender among indigenous Gazans

Jaffa Speakers				
Gender	[ʔ]	[g]	%ʔ	Total
F	79	3	96%	82
M	30	86	26%	116
				198

Table 13: Distribution of (q) by gender among Jaffan speakers

When cross tabulating gender and dialect background together with the dependent variable it becomes clear that it is the female speakers of a Jaffa dialect background who favour the use of the glottal variant, while female Gaza speakers, although showing more tokens of [ʔ] than their male counterparts, still favour the use of the velar [g] for this variable. Additionally, among the female Gazan speakers, the speaker who shows the highest rates of [ʔ] usage (26

¹¹ I intentionally avoid the term ‘prestige’ here because even though [ʔ] is discussed as a prestigious variant elsewhere, it is not a given that the case is the same in Gaza City and in any case the issue of linguistic behaviour, prestige, and gender is a complex issue that merits detailed discussion which cannot be addressed within the limitations of the current work. Milroy (1985) also provides a useful discussion on the challenges of tapping into linguistic prestige.

tokens) has parents who are of a mixed dialect background, with her father being of indigenous Gazan heritage while her mother is originally from the city of Lydd. So this particular speaker was presumably raised in an environment where a mixture of dialects were spoken, but had potentially higher levels of exposure to her mother's dialect ([ʔ] dialect) during her formative years (*cf.* Trudgill 1983: 167). Therefore it is not surprising that she would have acquired a dialect that favours the use of the glottal [ʔ] variant for (q).

Additionally, it is possible to note an interesting corollary in the data from Gaza City with Al-Wer's earlier findings as it relates to the male speakers in the sample. While Al-Wer found a situation in Amman where there was a clear situational differentiation among male speakers (Al-Wer 2007: 66) a somewhat different, but ultimately related, picture emerges in Gaza City. In the present sample male speakers heavily favored the use of the [g] variant regardless of their dialect backgrounds and the dialect backgrounds of their interlocutors. Only one male speaker, who was of Jaffan origin, heavily favored the use of the [ʔ] variant and on that occasion he was speaking to the researcher, who is a non-native speaker of Arabic, and an indigenous Gazan speaker. It is interesting to note that after the interview concluded this speaker admitted that his native Jaffa dialect is one which is only spoken at home and that, when interacting with others in the community, he speaks a different dialect. Presumably this informant was referring, at least in part, to the use of the [ʔ] variant for (q)¹².

3.3.3.1. Complicating gender in Gaza City

Earlier research on Arabic sociolinguistics has shown that the glottal [ʔ] variant of (q) is a supra-local variant in the Levant and in regards to gender; female speakers often favour these variants in their speech. This is reinforced by the data from Gaza City in the general tendency of female speakers to favour [ʔ]. However, when looking only at the subsample of speakers who are of indigenous Gazan heritage it may be possible to more clearly see the interaction between (q) variants and gender as a result of the massive influx of refugees of [ʔ] dialect backgrounds. If we postulate that the initial shift from the [ʔ] as noted by Bergsträsser to the [g] has gone virtually to completion, with the [g] variant now being the predominant variant of the city, a hypothesis at

¹² It is important to note, nonetheless, that my male speakers from Gaza were not recorded in situations where they were interacting with female speakers who were unrelated to them. It is perfectly possible that a situation similar to that found in Amman holds true in Gaza, namely that the young men of Gaza alternate between the two variants when interacting with women.

least partially reflected by the overwhelming tendency of Gazan speakers of the middle and older generation to favour the velar [g], then the incoming variant post 1948 would presumably be the [ʔ]. The distribution in the speech of the youngest generation of indigenous Gazans is provided in Table 14 below:

Gender	[ʔ]	[g]	%ʔ	Total
F	40	39	51%	79
M	6	66	8%	72
				151

Table 14: Distribution of (q) in the youngest generation of Gazan speakers

Although the size of this subsample is limited, it reflects the tendency for female speakers to adopt the incoming variant, [ʔ], at a higher rate than their male counterparts. While at the same time it is plausible that the velar [g] has a form of covert prestige (see Labov 1994, Trudgill 1972) in Gaza City, particularly with male speakers but also potentially with female speakers of Gazan heritage who show high rates of usage for this variant. As previously mentioned, the female speaker from this group who shows the highest rates of [ʔ] usage (26 tokens) is the product of a marriage of mixed dialect backgrounds. It is possible that within the youngest generation of female Gazan speakers the general tendency for women to favour the [g] variant, as evidenced by the speech of the older generations which overwhelmingly favor [g], could be giving way as a result of dialect contact and intermarriage between speakers of different dialect backgrounds. With successive generations it is possible that female Gazan speakers may begin to adopt the [ʔ] variant more frequently, in line with the wider regional tendencies, with their traditional velar [g] losing ground to the urban variant [ʔ]. However, the present sample is admittedly too limited in scope to draw a firm conclusion. This is merely an area which should be closely considered in future work on the dialect as it could represent the beginnings of a change in progress among female indigenous Gazan speakers towards wider regional koineized trends which favor the [ʔ] realization of (q).

3.4. Conclusion

Through examining the results of Rbrul analysis for the (q) in 575 tokens collected in Gaza City it is possible to see a complex linguistic situation emerging in the speech of Gaza City's residents. Both gender and dialect background shows a statistically significant correlation with the realization of the (q). In this regard it is both women and speakers of Jaffan descent who show the greatest tendency to favour the [ʔ] variant. Specifically, it is female speakers of a Jaffan background that show the highest usage of the [ʔ] variant, while men regardless of their dialect backgrounds tend to favour the use of the [g] variant.

CHAPTER 4: FEMININE ENDING (ah)

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the feminine ending /ah/ examined in this study in the context of other work on the variable. Findings related to this variable will be presented below and used to draw conclusions on the outcomes of dialect contact between two communities in Gaza City and the potential correlates with the social factors examined in the study.

4.2. Background

A number of previous studies have researched this variable in different communities across the region, with many focusing on the dialects spoken in the Levant region of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine. Even within the literature on the Palestinian dialects of Arabic a number of studies have dealt with the raising of the feminine ending /ah/. Of the Palestinian Bedouin dialects in northern Israel, Rosenhouse states that, “Sedentary dialects of the area are known to have this feature [imāla] in their speech in varying degrees, while the bedouin [sic] dialects do not always have it” (Rosenhouse 1982: 18). Additionally, Rosenhouse provides limited phonological conditions which favour the raising of the feminine ending in this particular dialect which are in line with the conditions discussed above (Rosenhouse 1982: 18).

In the Bedouin dialects of southern Palestine, those which are in close geographic proximity to the Gaza Strip, limited raising is also attested in the literature. Cleveland notes, “when the consonant preceding the ending is a laryngeal, one of the velars, g, k, or ġ¹³, or a velarized consonant, the ending –a will be found. In other cases, the ending is –e” (Cleveland 1967: 52). Shawarbah’s recent work, as discussed previously, provides a more thorough description of the position of this variable in the southern Bedouin dialects. He notes that the raising of the feminine ending is active in the Negev but inhibited by the primary or secondary emphatics and back consonants, which maintain a [ah] realization for this variable. While all other environments favour a [ih] realization (Shawarbah 2012: 88). Additionally, in the Negev the glottal /h/, pharyngeal /ħ/, and glottal /ʕ/ are not inhibitors of raising; a feature noted in other Bedouin dialects of the area (de Jong 2000: 76, Shawarbah 2012: 88).

¹³ This notation by Cleveland presumably refers to IPA [g], [x], and [ɣ].

As it relates to Gaza City, research on this variable in the dialect is limited to the two primary sources discussed previously. Bergsträsser's early dialect atlas notes no raising of the feminine ending in the speech of Gaza City (Bergsträsser 1915: map. 6). Contrary to Bergsträsser's earlier work, Salonen's texts do point to variable raising in the speech of his speakers. This raising manifests itself with the vowel of the feminine ending being raised from [a] to [e], and also as high as [i] in certain examples (Salonen 1979: 40). In his analysis of Salonen's texts, de Jong similarly notes a degree of raising of this variable (de Jong 2000: 537). Despite Salonen's assertion of variable raising in this dialect, on the whole the dialect of Gaza is generally considered by Arabists to be of the type described in Bergsträsser's account: i.e. non-raising when it comes to the feminine ending /ah/.

When examining the dialect of Jaffa, Al-Wer's comments on the dialect situation in Amman will aid in explaining the case of raising of the feminine ending among Jaffa speakers. As Al-Wer notes, "in urban Palestinian the feminine ending is realized as /e/ except after velarized, emphatic and pharyngeal sounds where /a/ is used (i.e. /e/ is the default variant)" (Al-Wer 2007: 68). Additionally, Al-Wer notes that, "at the level of the Levant region in general, the non-raising dialects are generally peripheral, localized, non-urban dialects, whereas all of the socially dominant dialects are raising dialects, such as the dialects of Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem" (Al-Wer 2002: 71). By all accounts Jaffa as well would represent a case of an urban Palestinian dialect which features a raised default variant for the feminine ending given a favorable environment. In that same regard, at the regional level Gaza City would typically be viewed as a more peripheral, non-urban dialect, despite its collection of both urban/sedentary and Bedouin features. In light of Al-Wer's earlier work on Amman and her discussion on the phonological conditions which favour raising in urban Palestinian Arabic we would expect a scenario in which speakers of a Jaffa dialect background would raise this variable in line with the phonology of the dialect. However when we begin to examine the results of the present analysis a different picture comes into focus.

4.3. Findings and discussion

In light of the conditioning environments mentioned above for this variable, all tokens of the feminine ending were coded for their preceding phonological environment. My analysis of this variable regarding the conditioning factors of raising confirm the findings in other research, namely that the raising of the feminine ending was blocked when following emphatic, pharyngeal, and velarized sounds; following /r/, raising was also blocked unless there was an /i/ in the preceding syllable (Al-Wer 2007: 68, Owens 2006: 226). Additionally, the conditioning environments mentioned by Shawarbah in the dialects of the Negev; namely that the glottal /h/, pharyngeal /ħ/ and /ʕ/ are not inhibitors of this form of raising, were not active in the Gaza City data. Quite the contrary, these consonants do appear to inhibit the raising of the feminine ending /ah/ in this data set.

Because of this, those tokens of the feminine ending that occurred in situations where the preceding phonological environment blocked raising were excluded from the analysis, since no variation is attested in this environment. After excluding tokens that do not meet the conditions for potential raising the sample contains 1110 tokens of the feminine ending that occur following non-emphatic and non-pharyngeal consonants, as well as in an environment following /r/ with a /i/ in a preceding syllable. Examples of this variable from the data in the corpus include the following:

[yazza] vs [yazze] ~ ‘Gaza’

[kbi:ra] vs [kbi:re] ~ ‘big’

[maglu:ba] vs [maglu:be] ~ ‘Maqlu:ba’ (a traditional dish)

[ħilwa] vs [ħilwe] ~ ‘beautiful’

In the sections that follow are the findings for the raising of the feminine ending /ah/ in correlation with dialect background, age, and gender. This chapter will conclude with a brief discussion on further social categories that could be examined in future work in order to develop a more all encompassing model of variation.

4.3.1. Feminine ending (ah) and dialect background

Presented in Tables 15 and 16 below are the cross tabulations and Rbrul analysis results for the feminine ending (ah) and its correlation with dialect background. In the Rbrul results presented in this chapter the raised [e] variant is considered the application value for (ah) and as such, higher log-odds and factor weights indicate a stronger tendency to favour the [e] variant¹⁴.

	[a]	[e]	% [e]	Total
Gaza	643	51	7%	694
Jaffa	293	123	30%	416
				1110

Table 15: Distribution of the feminine ending (ah) by dialect background

Dialect Background	Total Tokens	% [e]	Log Odds	Factor Weights
Jaffa	416	30% (N = 123)	0.821	0.694
Gaza	694	7% (N = 51)	-0.821	0.306

Table 16: Rbrul results for [e] realization for feminine ending (ah) by dialect background (R² = 0.204 p= 2.82 e-20)

The information presented above reflects a tendency for speakers of a Jaffa dialect background to favour the raised [e] variant of the feminine ending (ah). However, although this tendency is noticeable, it is not especially strong. In addition it is important to note that for speakers of this dialect background the [e] realization of (ah) represents the unmarked variant as it is a common feature of the Jaffa dialect. So in this sense their raised variant could be viewed as the maintenance of a dialectal norm. While the statistical results reflect the tendency for Jaffan speakers to favour the [e] variant for (ah) an equally notable tendency is present in which speakers of a Gazan dialect background favour the unraised [a] realization for this variable.

In the same sense that the raised [e] realization was described above as the unmarked variant for Jaffan speakers, the unraised [a] realization could be considered the unmarked dialectal variant for speakers of a Gazan dialect background. When viewing the data from a top down approach and only taking dialect background into consideration there appears to be a relatively straightforward picture emerging regarding the realization of the feminine ending between these two groups in Gaza City. Both groups show a tendency to favour the dialect

¹⁴Once again, see Gorman and Johnson (2013) as well as Johnson (2009) for an extended explanation of both log-odds and factor weights in sociolinguistic analysis.

variant most closely associated with their heritage dialects; i.e. [a] for Gazan speakers and [e] for Jaffan speakers. What appears to be a similarly straightforward picture emerges when the feminine ending is examined alongside age as a social factor.

4.3.2. Interaction of dialect background and age in the feminine ending (ah)

In light of the Rbrul analysis presented above for dialect background which suggests a tendency for speakers to realize (ah) with the variant associated with their native dialect, age will be discussed alongside dialect background as it is in essence mimics the effect of dialect background. Presented in Tables 17 and 18 below are the distributions of the feminine ending by age and dialect background:

Age	[a]	[e]	% [e]	Total
17-39	248	12	5%	260
40-64	307	29	9%	336
65+	88	10	10%	98
				694

Table 17: Distribution of the feminine ending (ah) by age among Gazan speakers

Age	[a]	[e]	% [e]	Total
17-39	141	26	16%	167
40-64	103	40	28%	143
65+	49	57	54%	106
				416

Table 18: Distribution of the feminine ending (ah) by age among Jaffan speakers

Table 17 shows what can already be inferred from the Rbrul analysis of the feminine ending and dialect background, i.e. there is minimal raising among Gazan speakers, with the ending remaining as [a]. Table 18, on the other hand, shows a successive decline by generation among Jaffan speakers in the use of the raised [e] variant of (ah). Within the oldest generation, the realizations of (ah) are extremely variable, with only a slight tendency towards favoring the Jaffan [e] variant. Of the two speakers in this category it is Dina, the oldest Jaffan speaker in the sample, 80 years of age, who shows the highest rates of the raised variant [e], with 74% (N=45) of the tokens in her speech being realized with this raised variant. Layla, the younger of the two elderly Jaffan speakers, age 70, shows a much different picture with only 26% (N=12) of the tokens of the feminine ending in her speech being realized as [e].

Some explanation of this variation could be gleaned from looking at the age of these two speakers in relation to the defining political events discussed at the beginning of the study¹⁵. Dina, the oldest speaker, was roughly ten years of age at the time of her expulsion from her

¹⁵ Specifically in this regard, the ethnic cleansing that took place in 1948 which coincides with the creation of the state of Israel. This defining event forced the two speakers in question to flee Jaffa and drove them to Gaza City.

native Jaffa. Layla, on the other hand, was five years of age at the same time; i.e. she was considerably younger when she came in contact with non-raising dialects (Gaza). It is possible that given Dina's older age her acquisition of the Jaffa dialect was more fully formed before she was forced to leave, while the influence from the Gaza pattern (non-raising) came at an earlier age in Layla's case (five years), which would have had a more profound influence on the variable realization of the feminine ending in her speech. Previous research on English *dialect* acquisition additionally suggests that more basic phonological rules are acquired at a faster rate than their more complex counterparts (Chambers 1992, Tagliamonte & Molfenter 2007). It is impossible to say with certainty, but it is at least plausible that Layla's acquisition of her native Jaffa dialect was not complete at the time of her expulsion. As such, since she was expelled from Jaffa at a younger age she was presumably more susceptible to the influence of the new, i.e. Gaza, dialect pattern. This is demonstrated through the fact that both speakers used the glottal [ʔ] realization of (q), a basic phonological feature of their native dialect, but a less complete acquisition of the rules regarding the raising of the feminine ending (ah), a more complex process, on Layla's part.

Furthermore, among the middle generation of speakers two interesting situations present themselves in the data. When looking at the middle aged speakers of a Gazan background, a similar tendency is present as with the elderly generation, 307 (91%) of the 336 tokens of /ah/ present in this middle Gazan generation were realized as the unraised [a] variant, standard of the local dialect. However among middle aged Jaffan speakers a much different picture is apparent. Only 40 (28%) of the 143 tokens of /ah/ were realized with the raised [e] variant common of the Jaffa dialect. Even more interestingly in this generation of Jaffan speakers is that of those 40 tokens of the raised [e] variant, 35 are from a single middle aged Jaffan speaker, which shows that the other three speakers in this category only account for 5 tokens of the raised Jaffan [e]. Furthermore, even in the speech of Sabeer, the speaker with the highest rates of [e] in the middle Jaffan generation, his 35 tokens of the raised [e] represent only 41% of his total realizations for this variable. So, 69% of the tokens in his speech were realized with the unraised [a] variant. These results reflect a clear tendency in the middle generation towards the lowering (in the case of the Jaffan speakers) of the feminine ending towards what could be considered a Gazan standard, the unraised [a].

When examining the youngest generation in this sample from Gaza City the most profound results become apparent. Among the youngest generation of Gazans 248 (95%) of the 260 tokens of /ah/ were realized as the unraised [a] variant. Interestingly among the youngest Jaffan speakers, only 26 (16%) of the 167 tokens of /ah/ were realized with the raised [e] variant standard to the Jaffa dialect. Additionally within this subset, one speaker represented 19 (73%) of these raised tokens, with the other two speakers almost categorically realizing the variable with the unraised [a] variant. A much more in depth study would be necessary but to offer a potential hypothesis as to why this particular speaker showed a noticeably higher tendency to realize this variable as [e] (48% of the total tokens in his speech featured the raised variant), I would argue that it is related to both mobility and social networks of the speaker.

This particular speaker is a fisherman from Beach Camp, a profession often practiced by Jaffans and other members of the refugee community. Of the youngest generation of Jaffan speakers in this sample he was the only speaker who had not gone to the university, he had never travelled outside of Gaza, and he lived in the camp itself. A thorough social network analysis of speakers in Gaza City is necessary to say this with any certainty, however observations based on the fieldwork suggest that this particular speaker's social network is limited to other speakers of a similar dialect background given his profession and the area in which he lives.

4.3.3. Feminine ending (ah) and gender

Table 19 below displays the distribution the feminine ending cross tabulated with gender. As can be seen in the table, the differences in speech between men and women in regards to this variable are minimal and the influence of gender is not statistically significant:

	[a]	[e]	% [e]	Total
Male	531	92	15%	623
Female	405	82	17%	487
				1110

Table 19: Distribution of the feminine ending (ah) by gender

Both genders in the sample realized the feminine ending in very similar ways. Informally, I observed no social awareness of the presence of variation in (ah) in the Gazan community in general. Additionally, Al-Wer (2007) also reported no correlation between gender and the feminine ending in the formation of the dialect of Amman. This is an interesting finding

especially if we take into consideration the observation made above, that there is little or no social awareness of the presence of this variation on the part of Gazans, i.e. the variation that does not seem to be accompanied by social awareness also does not correlate significantly with gender. Although the issue of degree of social awareness in relation to this variable needs further investigation, the observation on the lack of social awareness with respect to this variable is in itself not surprising given that the traditional dialect of Gaza does not have raising of the feminine ending, i.e. (ah) is not a variable. In other words, it is unlikely for Gazans to be aware of variation that they themselves do not have in their native dialect. A similar observation was made by Trudgill (1986) with respect to the distinction between [ʊ] and [ʌ] in northern English English dialects; in the traditional dialects of the north of England [ʊ] is used in *cut, cup, bus* as well as in *put, foot, soot*, i.e. the historical split of Middle English /ʊ/ did not affect these dialects. Trudgill maintains that this distinction, [ʊ] vs. [ʌ], is not salient for speakers of northern English English dialects simply because it does not exist in their native dialects.

4.4. Conclusion

When examining (ah) in the speech of Gaza City based on the sample presented in this study it has been possible to make a number of observations. Firstly, among those speakers of a Gazan dialect background the feminine ending does not appear to be a ‘true’ sociolinguistic variable. Among the oldest and middle generations the variable was realized with the unraised Gazan [a] over 90% of the time, and among the youngest generation this percentage rose to over 95% of tokens being realized as [a]. The earliest research on this feature in Gaza City pointed to a firm lack of raising in this environment, while the later research reflected variable raising for the feminine ending. However, based on the data in this study I would argue that it is possible to conclude with some certainty that for those speakers in Gaza City who are of an indigenous Gazan background the feminine ending is not a sociolinguistic variable at all, but is merely a dialectal feature with a local realization of [a]. This coincides with Bergsträssers earliest findings for the dialect and casts additional doubt on Salonen’s later research on the dialect of Gaza City.

Although not a true sociolinguistic variable in the speech of indigenous Gazans in the sample, the feminine ending is variable among those speakers of a Jaffan background. The shortcomings of the sample notwithstanding, it is possible to offer some final comments on this variable in Gaza City. Among the oldest generation of Jaffans the data reflected an extreme level

of variability in their realizations of the feminine ending, with a slight tendency to favour their native raised [e] variant. However in the middle generation of Jaffans, a sharp drop has occurred with the raised variant [e] occurring in only 28% of instances. This drop is a trend advanced further in the youngest generation, with the raised variant occurring in only 16% of tokens from the sample. More research is necessary, as well as a further advance of time before scholars will know conclusively what the results of dialect contact in Gaza City are as they relate to the feminine ending (ah). However, if present trends hold true for subsequent generations what is witnessed today by the data presented from Gaza City may be the later stages of a change in progress among Jaffan speakers, wherein their native raised [e] variant is giving way in a shift towards the unraised Gazan [a]. The next generation of Jaffan speakers may advance the change even closer to completion with a near total loss of the raised variant in their speech, in favour of the localized [a].

This apparent shift towards [a] by Jaffan speakers is accelerated not only by contact with indengous Gazan speakers, but also by the presence of speakers of other dialects, eg. the dialect of Bir is-Sabi', which are similar to the traditional Gaza dialect in that they do not raise the feminine ending in any context. So, while in Gaza City it may be possible to discuss the results of dialect contact between Jaffans and Gazans on the basis of the results presented in this research, in the wider linguistic theatre of the Gaza Strip a number of other groups could influence the variable realization discussed here among Jaffan speakers. A further study that looks more closely at the social networks of speakers would be necessary to uncover patterns of interaction between groups and its correlates with linguistic realization.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. Conclusion

As the first sociolinguistic foray into the intricate urban fabric of Gaza City, the reach and generalizability of this study is admittedly limited. Palestinian Arabic generally is still plagued by a lack of research, although that is changing. Forthcoming work on Jaffa Arabic (Horesh 2013) will add greatly to our understanding of urban Palestinian Arabic and it is my hope that a new generation of scholars will move our knowledge of Palestinian Arabic beyond dialectology and theoretical linguistics to begin to examine the influence of a multitude of social factors that affect the daily lives of Palestinians and their language.

Despite the unavoidable shortcomings of the present analysis, this study has begun to bring to light a complex and continually changing linguistic environment in Gaza City. Through the analyses presented in chapters 3 & 4, it has been shown that in the case of (q), dialect background and age played the most crucial role in determining the variation in the data. In this regard it was the female speakers and speakers of a Jaffan dialect background who most consistently favored the use of the [ʔ] variant. In the case of the feminine ending (ah), it was shown that among Gazan speakers this feature is not a variable at all; they maintain an almost categorical realization of the unraised [a] variant. However, for Jaffan speakers the feminine ending was variable. This manifested itself in extreme levels of variability among the oldest generation of Jaffan speakers and a continual decline in successive generations in the use of the raised [e] variant, which is native to the Jaffa dialect. The youngest generation of Jaffan speakers showed very little retention of their native [e] variant, which could reflect the later stages of a change in progress among Jaffans towards the unraised [a] variant. This change in progress could be part of a larger scale process of koineization and focusing towards a new levelled dialect in Gaza City. Further research incorporating additional and other refugee groups in the city will shed further light on the plausibility of this hypothesis.

For better or for worse Palestinians generally are in the middle of one of the most trying social and political environments in modern history. From a social or political standpoint it is possible for us as academics to see that the fabric of Palestinian society has been forever altered by protracted conflict, however we know very little about the effects of this conflict on language. It is my hope that the work presented above can be viewed in light of the continually evolving

social and political context in which it exists. To divorce language from society, or specifically in the case of Gaza City to divorce it from the politics that created and continually act on the city and its residents today would be an injustice to the study of Arabic in this sense. The further study of Palestinian Arabic and specifically the Arabic of the Gaza Strip must take as a starting point the realities of everyday Palestinian life. Because, truly, we can know nothing about the social correlates of language in Gaza without first addressing the way those social correlates continue to evolve and change in the community itself

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