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Semantic Innovation and Change in Kuwaiti Arabic: A Study of the Polysemy of Verbs

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a socio-historical study of semantic innovation and change of a contemporary dialect spoken in north-eastern Arabia known as Kuwaiti Arabic. I analyse the structure of polysemy of verbs and their uses by native speakers in Kuwait City. I particularly report on qualitative and ethnographic analyses of four motion verbs: *dašš* ‘enter’, *xalla* ‘leave’, *miša* ‘walk’, and *rikaḏ* ‘run’, with the aim of establishing whether and to what extent linguistic and social factors condition and constrain the emergence and development of new senses. The overarching research question is: How do we account for the patterns of polysemy of verbs in Kuwaiti Arabic?

Local social gatherings generate more evidence of semantic innovation and change with respect to the key verbs than other kinds of contexts. The results of the semantic analysis indicate that meaning is both contextually and collocationally bound and that a verb’s meaning is activated in different contexts. In order to uncover the more local social meanings of this change, I also report that the use of innovative or well-attested senses relates to the community of practice of the speakers. The qualitative and ethnographic analyses demonstrate a number of differences between friendship communities of practice and familial communities of practice. The groups of people in these communities of practice can be distinguished in terms of their habits of speech, which are conditioned by the situation of use. The data for this research project are based primarily on field notes and more than twenty hours of audio recordings made between 2012 and 2013 and taken from the speech of thirty-one Kuwaitis representing two sets of social groups based on a particular set of tribal and sectarian allegiances. The overall findings of this research project lead to the conclusion that the factors responsible for semantic innovation and change are reflected in the social structure of a speech community.

In summary, this thesis (i) contributes to the theoretical and empirical treatment of the relationship between polysemy and semantic change; (ii) examines the historical semantic treatment of the key verbs within Kuwait; and (iii) proposes that both the semantics and sociolinguistics disciplines can greatly benefit from using each other’s methodologies.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Abbreviations

1 st pers.	first person (grammar)
2 nd pers.	second person (grammar)
3 rd pers.	third person (grammar)
a/v	vowel
adj.	adjective
b.	born
C	consonant
c.	approximately
CAUS	causative
cf.	compare
COND	conditional (interpropositional relation)
d.	died
DIM	diminutive (denominal noun derivation)
e.g.	for example
f./fem.	feminine
f.s.	feminine, singular
ibid.	in the same place
i.e.	that is
IMP	imperative
IMPF	imperfect
KOC	Kuwait Oil Company
lit.	literal(ly)
m./masc.	masculine
m.s.	masculine, singular
n.	noun
n.d.	no date
NEG	negative
n.p.	no page
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
OM	old men
OW	old women
pl.	plural
POSS	possessive
PRF	perfect

REL	relative (subordinative)
sic.	said thus
sg.	singular
SVO	subject verb object
UAE	United Arab Emirates
v.	verb
viz.	namely; in other words
VOC	vocative (case)
VSO	verb subject object
YM	young men
YW	young women

Languages

A	Sunnī ‘Arab usage
B	Shī‘ī Bahārna usage
C	Christian Arabic dialect
CB	Christian Baghdadi dialect
CLA	Classical Arabic
EA	Egyptian Arabic dialect
EKA	Educated Kuwaiti Arabic
GPA	Gulf Pidgin Arabic
H	High, standard variety of language
J	Jewish Moroccan dialect
JB	Jewish Baghdadi dialect
KA	Kuwaiti Arabic dialect
KAS	Kuwaiti Arabic Speaker
L	Low, colloquial variety of language
M	Muslim Arabic dialect
MA	Moroccan Arabic dialect
MB	Muslim Baghdadi dialect
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
SA	Standard Arabic

Symbols

<	derived from
>	developed into
=	meaning

TRANSCRIPTION AND SYMBOLS

The transcription used throughout is a fairly conventional one. The transliteration system I have chosen is more or less identical with the one used in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. However, when it comes to the morphosemantic description of the dialect in Chapter 4, I used interlinear morphemic glossing in order to read the examples meticulously. I give below the consonants and vowels of Kuwaiti Arabic.

1. Consonants

The following is an inventory of Kuwaiti Arabic consonants. Bracketed consonants are marginal, found either in formal, educated speech or in a few foreign borrowings.

	Plosive	Fricative	Sibilant	Affricative	Lateral/Vibrant	Nasal	Semivowel/Glide
Bilabial	(<i>p</i>) <i>b</i>					<i>m</i>	
Labiodental		<i>f</i> (<i>v</i>)					
Dental	<i>t</i> <i>d</i>		<i>s</i> <i>z</i>		<i>l</i>		
Emphatic	<i>t̤</i> (<i>d̤</i>)		<i>ʃ</i>				
Interdental		<i>t̪</i> <i>d̪</i>					
Emphatic		<i>ð</i>					
Alveolar			<i>ʂ</i>	<i>č</i> <i>ǧ</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>n</i>	
Palatal							<i>y</i>
Velar	<i>k</i> <i>g</i>	<i>x</i> <i>ǧ</i>					<i>w</i>
Uvular	<i>q</i>						
Pharyngeal		<i>ħ</i> ʕ					
Glottal	ʔ	<i>h</i>					

Examples of foreign borrowings include *plēstēšīn* ‘PlayStation™’, *pōst* ‘post (Internet)’, *vālēh* ‘valet’, *brōva* ‘rehearsal’ (< Italian *prova*). The glottal stop /ʔ/ is rare. Unlike some Levantine Arabic dialects, it is not an allophone of /q/ and occurs in borrowings from Standard Arabic: *masʿala* ‘an issue; question’, *ṭawāʿif* ‘sects’, *miʿawi* ‘centigrade’, *l-ʿumūr* ‘the matters, affairs’. I have decided to use *ð* (not *d̪*) throughout, except in proper names (thus Ḥanḍal, Ibn Manḍūr). The diagraphs *th*, *sh*, *kh*, etc. have been used only where the use of *t̪*, *ʃ*, and *x* might affect the recognition of a familiar word, and not at all, of course, in the dialect matter proper.

1.1 Emphatics

Emphatic (also ‘velarised’, ‘pharyngealised’) consonants in my data can be divided into two main groups: primary and secondary. The primary emphatics are *t*, *ḏ*, *ṣ*. The secondary emphatics are *b*, *f*, *l*, *m*, *n* and *r* which become the emphatics *ḃ*, *f̣*, *ḷ*, *ṃ*, *ṇ*, and *ṛ* only when they are in the contiguity of an emphatic, a back vowel, or if they precede /ā/. Some examples from my Kuwaiti material are noted below:

b > ḃ *gaḃuḷ* ‘before’, *gaḏḃa* ‘door handle’, *gaḷaḃha* ‘he overturned it’

f > f̣ *gaḟḟilḟha* ‘close it (tightly)!’

l > ḷ *waḷḷa* ‘really? by golly!’, *ḟtaḷḷig* ‘he is getting a divorce’, *gaḷḃ* ‘heart’

m > ṃ *xmām* ‘wheelie bin’, *māy* ‘water’

n > ṇ *nāyim* ‘asleep’

r > ṛ *arḏ* ‘width, breadth; honour’, *ṫrāg* ‘slap’, *gaṣṣir* ‘turn down (music)!’

2. Vowels

The Kuwaiti dialect has three short vowels, /a, i, u/, and five long vowels represented with a macron, /ā, ē, ī, ō, ū/. The long vowels /ē/ and /ō/ are sometimes shortened in particular words, but the resulting short, mid vowels are not phonemic. Thus, the short vowel /o/ is occasionally recorded in loanwords as in *operēšin* ‘operation’, *okay* ‘okay’, *combani* ‘company’, *mobāyl* ‘mobile’, *ofsāyd* ‘offside’, and in the exclamatory or emotive particle *oh* ‘oh’. In Kuwaiti colloquial, /o/ is also found in *lo* ‘if; or’, and in construct states: (*yōm >*) *yom-larbi’a* ‘Wednesday’. In addition, the short vowel /e/ is occasionally attested, which occurs medially in foreign borrowings as in *spelḡng* ‘spelling’ and (rarely) occurs finally when *a* is raised to *e* as in *harīse* ‘meat porridge’, *tašrībe* ‘a dish of broth, bread, and meat’.

2.1 Diphthongs

Old Arabic diphthongs *aw* and *ay* are ordinarily realised as *ō* and *ē*, respectively, and occur medially.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Because the multiplicity of meanings of words has always been a fascinating phenomenon to investigate, I aim to study and account for the phenomenon of polysemy and semantic innovation and change in Kuwaiti Arabic (henceforth, KA) from a historical semantic perspective. This research project provides insights into the historical semantic framework of analysis where I explore the ongoing meaning changes of verbs in the contemporary Kuwaiti dialect. The choice of this topic was prompted by the renewed interest of modern linguistics in linguistic change in Gulf Arabic. Several studies have been published dealing with phonological innovation and change in various languages and dialects, but there have not been many dealing with semantic change in classical or colloquial Arabic. Therefore, the main aim pursued in this thesis is to establish whether and to what extent linguistic and social factors condition and constrain the emergence and development of new senses.

I have chosen this particular dialect for several reasons. First, in addition to semantic studies that exist on Classical (CLA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), conducting a semantic study on Kuwaiti will increase the scope of this field since it is a spoken variety that is rapidly changing due to demographic and external factors, and it is actually an opportunity to explore change in meaning. Another reason for choosing the Kuwaiti dialect is the lack of lexico-semantic studies on this dialect especially at a time when it is being influenced rapidly by other regional Arabic dialects. In other words, enormous changes have occurred in the lifestyle and occupations of the people of Kuwait, which have implications for their language. For example, the replacement of maritime occupations following the discovery of oil has had dramatic implications on the lexicon of KA. Since I am researching a spoken dialect that is really contingent on speakers' use, speakers are highly responsive to their environment and the conditions in which they operate. That responsiveness will result in linguistic creativity. Concurrently, I am interested in the Kuwaiti dialect which is predominately an urban spoken vernacular that is used in a diglossic society where MSA is the high form. Finally, KA is a highly fluid and changeable dialect that is undergoing continuous change as a result of the impact of globalisation (i.e. using English as a language in certain areas of life) and various contacts with other community languages other than Arabic.

The key research gap is that dialect change in a community has not been looked at in this amount of detail in a time depth of one hundred years. I had the opportunity to gain data from elderly speakers as well as very young speakers whose speech repertoire demonstrates the range of meanings that are understood to be associated with the key verbs under investigation. Therefore, the statement of the problem may be situated in the fact that Kuwait has witnessed phenomenal change in the last hundred years. In this study, I report on a two-year ethnographic study that tracked the social dynamics of indigenous Kuwaiti speakers aged between eighteen and ninety. In doing so, I examine the innovative linguistic practices of small, well-defined groups within this community. I also discuss patterns of polysemy within the use of my speakers by looking at their socio-demographic characteristics. This means that sociolinguistic methods could shed light on semantic change. This is evident in the case of English as illustrated below.

Robinson (2012a) has demonstrated how the apparent-time construct can successfully be applied to researching semantic variation and change. She investigated the evolution of the English adjective 'gay' by implementing the variationist construct of apparent time, which proposes that generational differences in language use reflect actual real-time changes in language. In addition, a recent study has shown that the semantic variation of the English adjective 'skinny' is not random, but socio-demographically structured. This is exemplified in the work undertaken by Robinson (2012b) who explores the sociolinguistics of semantic change by focusing on semasiological change in progress. Robinson (2012b: 226) concludes that '[t]he wealth of observations made about semantic variation and change suggest that taking a sociolinguistics perspective in studies of meaning is a viable and beneficial methodological choice'.

My study differs somewhat from Robinson's because I am interested in polysemy and semantic change, but I have approached it from the perspective of historical semantics and lexicography rather than from a strictly sociolinguistic (variation and change) perspective. I investigate the lexical behaviour of motion verbs in KA since focusing on the family of semantically related verbs allows for a particularly reliable examination of developmental patterns. Furthermore, motion verbs comprise an important semantic domain in most natural languages. The aim of this study, however, is not only to give an account of the meanings conveyed by these key verbs in the dialect, but also to present a number of constantly emerging verb senses. There are at present two major research gaps which will be addressed

in the present study: (i) the extent of the polysemy has only been partially documented, and (ii) the verbs under investigation have not been studied in a systematic way.

In this research project, I only deal with the verbs. This restriction does not mean, however, that nouns and adjectives are not of interest. On the contrary, further investigation would be worthwhile also in this field. Most of the work regarding polysemy is done on nouns and adjectives. I believe that working on verbs rather than nouns and adjectives arguably has greater potential to make a real theoretical contribution to the field.

My focus is on the productivity of meaning in context, by which I mean speakers' innovative practices in the different domains in which they communicate. The primary research questions I address in this thesis are:

1. How do we account for the patterns of polysemy of verbs in Kuwaiti Arabic?
2. Where, and on what grounds, do we distinguish between polysemy and homonymy in Arabic? In other words, what do we conclude about the historical treatment of these lexical relations in Arabic?
3. How are changes in the social structure of Kuwait reflected in the patterns of dialect use?
4. To what extent do speakers share polysemies?
5. To what extent do speakers' meanings spread beyond the conversational contexts in which they arise? For example, are they utterance and situation specific? Or do they get established in a speech community such that my informants have no problem figuring out what is going on?
6. To what extent should a dictionary account for all the possible uses of the key verbs?

In preparation for exploring the polysemy in historical semantic change in KA, it is instructive to examine the socio-historical background. In the following section, I will look at the research literature on the Kuwaiti dialect. The literature was carefully selected with respect to its relevance and usefulness to my scope of study. The material presented is organised chronologically in order to keep the story of KA coherent, to let the reader know what period of time the documentation of the dialect took place in, and most of all, to enable the reader to retrieve the material easily.

1.2 The State of Literature on Kuwaiti Arabic

It was not until the nineteenth century that suddenly tourism and scientific research in the Arabic-speaking world became possible and actual literature of different types began to appear. Behnstedt and Woidich (2013: 301) observe that a number of word lists, dictionaries, and practical guides and textbooks appeared ‘as the result of increased possibilities of tourism and scientific research in the Arabic-speaking world’. In the Arabian Gulf littoral, however, Johnstone (1967b: xxv) observes that ‘much has been written on the history and politics of Eastern Arabia’.¹ Nevertheless, little has been published on the linguistics of Kuwaiti Arabic for the reason that ‘there is no tradition of writing in the dialect, so little evidence of what the dialect was like before World War II’ (Holes 2007c: 609). KA is a spoken variety that has not commanded much attention until the twentieth century, particularly from the 1920s onwards. Until the late 1950s, this dialect was recorded in different ways, such as in the form of word lists, glossaries, and pedagogical grammars.

Surveys such as that conducted by Clark (al-Shamlān 2000: 12) have shown that ‘the great majority of writings on Kuwait available in English are about the desert, the oil wealth, the modern development, the geopolitical role or the politics of Kuwait’s elite’. In our case, the body of literature can be classified into the following genres: general description, historical and demographic background, personal reminiscences, and sociolinguistic and lexicographical trends. The majority of the earlier works on KA was aimed at general readers concerned with the social history of Kuwait. In particular, the earliest work is from 1928, and this was published in the form of magazine articles for the general reader. Moreover, by the middle of the twentieth century, Kuwait had attracted considerable attention from serious Western writers, and non-linguist travellers to Arabia began to record the local vocabulary they heard in the region.² Some of these books are travel narratives from an outsider’s viewpoint rather than academic studies. These writings are not really about the dialect of Kuwait (i.e. are not reliably reflective of ordinary speech); instead, they are about the tribal life of Kuwait and happen to contain a glossary of Kuwaiti vocabulary items (one may thus perceive this as relevant information on the Kuwaiti dialect). In addition, some of the first handbooks on KA were prepared by Anglo-American missionaries in the early 1950s.

¹ The dialects of this group are Kuwaiti, Bahraini, Qatari, and Emirati, which are closely related to the ‘Aniza type dialects in morphology (Johnstone 1967b: 2).

² The first Western work on the Arabian Gulf wholly by an individual is *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, published in 1919 by Col. S. B. Miles (Auchterlonie 1986: 45).

Additionally, the earliest fieldwork on the spoken Arabic of Kuwait was carried out for a scholarly linguistic description of the Dōsiri dialect of Arabic in the late 1950s.

I believe that to firmly ascertain types of semantic change, it is necessary to work with long-term historical textual records. However, there is almost no textual evidence of the Kuwaiti dialects earlier than the 1920s.

In the early twentieth century, sheikh³ ‘Abdul‘azīz al-Rashaid⁴ (1928, 1929, 1930), the first Kuwaiti historian, recorded limited yet helpful information about colloquial Kuwaiti Arabic when he listed some words, phrases, and diminutives in his periodical articles.⁵

His column was entitled *al-Luġa al-‘Āmmiyya fi l-Kuwayt* ‘The Colloquial Language of Kuwait’. As far as one may observe, this presumably makes al-Rashaid’s articles the first Arabic textual records ever on the dialect. The excerpt in Figure 1.1 presents the first page of the article which features the introduction.

Twenty years later, two classic works were published by ‘the doyen of Kuwaiti scholarship’, Lt. Col. H. R. P. Dickson, CIE (Auchterlonie 1986: 51). Dickson was the British political agent⁶ at the time when he wrote his first book (1949) on the life of Bedouins in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Dickson (1949: 602-656) appended his book with a glossary of common (Bedouin) words.⁷ These words were recorded mostly in Kuwait when he started collecting material for his book in 1929 when he first came to Kuwait, and continued to do so up to the midsummer of 1936. Dickson, however, did not indicate the regional specificity of the words.

³ The honorary title *sheikh* here does not mean ‘an Arab prince or leader’, but ‘an old man’ and/or ‘an expert’.

⁴ ‘Abdul‘azīz al-Rashaid (1887-1938) was the first Kuwaiti scholar who ever wrote about the history of Kuwait. His book *Tārīkh al-Kuwayt* ‘History of Kuwait’ was published in Baghdad in two volumes in 1926 (Abu-Hakima 1988: 14).

⁵ I was able to obtain a reprint of two volumes of this periodical (Qurtās Publishing, Kuwait, 1999) which were originally published between March 1928 and March 1930. ‘Abdul‘azīz al-Rashaid was the owner and the editor-in-chief of his periodical called *Maġallat al-Kuwayt* ‘The Kuwait Magazine’ which was published in Cairo by al-‘Arabiyya Press. It might be relevant to mention that the magazine *Maġallat Kāḍma* was issued in 1948, the first Kuwaiti magazine to be both printed and published in Kuwait, and the official gazette *Kuwait al-Yawm* was issued for the first time on 11 December 1954.

⁶ The first Political Agent of Kuwait was Colonel S. G. Knox (1904-1909). Sir John Richmond (1959-1961) was the last of the Political Agents and Britain’s first Ambassador to Kuwait.

⁷ According to Holes and Abu Athera (2011: 28), ‘typically Bedouin words, phrases and usages [...] are no longer current in normal speech since they refer to a pastoral way of life, an environment, and a social world which has largely disappeared with urbanisation’.

الفتوى

اللغة

اللغة العامية في الكويت

الكويت كغيرها من البلاد العربية مصابة في صميم لغتها الفصحى بداء العامية العضال الذي اخلق جدتها وخدم محاسنها ذير ان اهلها مع هذا البلاء هم اليوم من اصح العرب الفاظاً واقربهم الى العربية لغةً وكثير مما يظن انه عامي من كلامهم هو عربي خالص وما ليس بعربي له اصل عربي يرجع اليه والقليل منه ماهو عامي صرف وقد كان القيام بهذا المشروع وارجاع كل الى نصابه حاجة تتردد في النفس من أمد بعيد ولم يساعدني الحظ على انجازها عند طبع تاريخ الكويت المرة الاولى فصدمت العزم على أن اقوم بها في طبعه المرة الثانية

اما اليوم وقد وفقت لانشاء هذه المجلة فقد رأيت الفرصة سانحة لاعطاء النفس مناها فعمى ان اوفق الى تحقيق ما قصدت

ومن غرائب الاتفاق ان احد علماء (١) مصر الفضلاء رأى في لغة ابناء مصر العامية ما رأيت انا في لغتنا فطفق يبحث وينقب الى ان اتحف القراء بكتاب جليل حافل في ذلك سماه (تهذيب الالفاظ العمومية) اتى في كثير من فصوله بفوائد نفيسة وسأرجع اليه في بعض الابحاث التي اها مسس بموضوعنا

وسيدور البحث في هذا الباب على امور اربعة (احدها) ما يظن انه عامي من كلامهم وهو عربي استعملته العرب قبلهم ولا بد في هذا من نقل عبارات اهل اللغة التي تؤيد ما قلنا (الثاني) ماهو عربي ولكن دخله شيء من التحريف وسنرد هذا الى

(١) هو الاستاذ الفاضل الشيخ محمد علي الدسوقي وقد اعتمدنا على ما نقله هو في الفصل التالي

Figure 1.1: An excerpt from al-Rashaid's (1928: 26) article on colloquial Kuwaiti Arabic.

As far as one may observe, this probably makes Dickson's (1949) glossary the first English textual record ever on the dialect. In his second book,⁸ Dickson (1956: 588-608) also includes a glossary of KA words which reflects the pre-oil culture of Kuwait.⁹ In the same vein, Calverley (1958: 181-182) gives a very short list of old KA words which she noted while she was working as the first American medical doctor with the medical missionary in Old Kuwait.¹⁰

A number of textbooks were prepared in Eastern Arabia by the oil companies for the instruction of their personnel. In Kuwait, the Kuwait Oil Company Ltd. (KOC) published *A Handbook of Kuwaiti Arabic*, in two editions¹¹ (KOC 1951; Holmes and Samaan 1957). Both editions have English-Kuwaiti Arabic word lists (also Kuwaiti Arabic-English in the second). Goodison (1958: 210) describes this handbook as being 'useful' although some sounds like /s/, /t/, and /h/ are not distinguished in the latter edition. Both editions contain grammar lessons with exercises and lessons consisting of conversations dealing with the company's operations. Nonetheless, Johnstone (1967b: xxv) notes that 'the first edition is an important source of material if it is used with a certain caution' because 'the authors of KOC tend to give preference to pan-Arabic *koiné* over Kuwaiti in the matter of vocabulary, and themselves say of their appended texts that they are 'closer to "Classical Arabic"' (ibid.; see section 3.5.1). During the same decade, a member of the American Mission in Kuwait published a textbook entitled *Spoken Arabic of the Arabian Gulf* (de Jong 1958), which also contains a number of grammar and conversation lessons. However, Johnstone (1967b: xxv) stresses that 'the most scientific of these is the KOC Handbook'. Similarly, Qafisheh (1977: xviii) points out that 'all of these handbooks and texts are very much limited in scope and lack a modern linguistic treatment'. It seems to me that one of the most comprehensive grammar books available today is that of Holes (1990) which describes the educated, pan-Gulf dialect, in which KA is included, and it is 'a great improvement in terms of accuracy, methodology and reliability of data on handbooks previously available' (Ingham 1991: 370).

⁸ It was translated into Arabic in 1964 by Jāsim Mubārak al-Jāsim and again in 2012 by Futūḥ al-Khatrash as *al-Kuwayt wa Ġārātihā*, though the former translation is more faithful, in my opinion.

⁹ Dickson (1881-1959) was survived by his wife Dame Violet (1896-1991) and his married daughter Zahra Freeth, both of whom produced books on Kuwait. 'Daksan' was the Bedouin version of Dickson's name, but he was more often known by the teconym Abū S'ūd, 'the father of S'ūd'. Additionally, the original building that housed the British Political Agency, in which Dickson lived with his wife, has now been converted into the Dickson House Cultural Centre, which is situated in the Arabian Gulf Street, Kuwait City ('Abdulmoati 2003: 41; Holes 2010: 85).

¹⁰ This book was translated into Arabic in 1968 by the Kuwaiti historian 'Abdullāh al-Ḥātim.

¹¹ Both editions contain a foreword by J. R. Firth.

Since the 1960s, developments in the field of Arabian Gulf dialectology have led to a renewed interest in researching and collecting material for studying this colloquial variety of the Arabic language. However, there were no academic studies focusing on the dialects of Kuwait compared to other peninsular Arabian dialects until the work of the British dialectologist Thomas Muir Johnstone.¹² Johnstone's distinguished contribution to KA linguistics is evident in his early studies of the Dōsiri dialect of Kuwait (1961, 1964), as well as his co-authored study (Johnstone and Muir 1964) on a specialised aspect of lexicography which explores some nautical terms in the Kuwaiti dialect of Arabic. Additionally, Johnstone (1967b)¹³ places Kuwait in the regional context in his groundbreaking description of the Gulf littoral dialects, and his dialectal studies 'have continued to provide the matrix for peninsular dialect studies in which later researchers have located their more specific contributions' (Holes 1992: 133, 2012: 233). Above all, Johnstone (1967b) was the first dialectologist to attempt a comprehensive description of the Eastern Arabian dialects.

In the mid-1960s, the first (unofficial) monolingual lexicon of KA was published by the Iraqi scholar Jalāl al-Ḥanafī¹⁴ (1964), which is a study of the vocabulary of the pre-oil culture of Kuwait and 'records only words which are not found in the koiné' (Johnstone 1967b: xxvi). Al-Ḥanafī (1964: 2, 43) concludes that colloquial Kuwaiti Arabic shows an apparent affinity with the dialects of Baṣra and Zubair, southern Iraq (cf. Johnstone 1967b: 18; Ingham 1976: 80; see also section 4.4). Johnstone and Muir (1964: 322) describe this lexicon as 'an extremely useful vocabulary of Kuwaiti words'. In Kuwait, however, al-Ḥanafī's lexicon has been criticised by Kuwaiti historians such as Ya'qūb al-Ghunaim (2004: 53-70) for listing words and phrases that have never been used by indigenous speakers of Kuwait and for ascribing Kuwaiti words to Baghdadi Arabic. Before al-Ḥanafī's (1964) lexicon was released, al-Shirbāṣī (1953: 257-262) provided a list of Kuwaiti words and phrases, and al-Shamlān (1959) presented a glossary of Kuwaiti words of Classical Arabic, Turkish, and Persian origins, as well as a number of Kuwaiti colloquial proverbs in addition to terms related to Kuwaiti flora and fauna.

¹² Bruce Ingham (1994: xiii) emphasises that his 'initial interest in the dialects of the Arabian Peninsula was inspired by the late T. M. Johnstone'. Also, Clive Holes (2005b: xiv) describes T. M. Johnstone as 'the godfather' to Holes' project as well as 'the pioneer of Arabian Gulf dialectology'. An obituary of T. M. Johnstone was published by G. Rex Smith (1984) and a bibliography of his works was presented by J. D. Pearson (1988).

¹³ It was translated into Arabic by the former president of King Saud University, Prof. Aḥmed bin Moḥammed al-Ḍubaib in 1975.

¹⁴ Al-Ḥanafī (1964: 3) states that he started compiling this dictionary in 1960 and reports that the material was collected in Kuwait in only two months. So it took him four years to publish it in Baghdad. It is boldly stated on its front cover that only 500 copies were printed and distributed.

Also, al-Shirbāṣī (1953: 275-304) collected 286 Kuwaiti proverbs and examples of conventional wisdom. Al-Nourī (1968) compiled one of the first books on local colloquial proverbs and idioms.¹⁵ Ten years later, al-Roumī and Kamāl (1978, 1980, 1982, 1984) produced a set of four volumes of KA comparative popular proverbs which provide short indications of their historical origins. Also worthy of mention is Muḥammad (2004) who collected modern idiomatic expressions of KA, explaining their origins. These phraseological dictionaries are in fact aimed at the language aficionado interested in idiomatic expressions as linguistic curiosities and their historical explanations. However, Yassin's (1978a, 1988) linguistic analysis of Kuwaiti idioms and proverbs is a systematic study on the subject.

Between 1969 and 1970, the Egyptian linguist Maṭar¹⁶ (1969, 1970) conducted useful phonological and morphological field studies that 'largely replicate Johnstone's work but provide many more examples' (Holes 2007c: 609). Yassin (1977a, 1977b, 1978b), on the other hand, investigated some interesting semantic and anthropological linguistic aspects of KA.

Ingham's (1982a) 'data-oriented' study aimed to present a descriptive analysis of north-east Arabian dialects, in which Kuwaiti is included, where he was able to make recordings of the speech of nomadic groups in 1977. Also, Ingham's (1979, 1982b, 1986) brief accounts of the Muṭair, Dhafīr, and Āl Murrah tribal dialects include few Kuwaiti lexical examples as noted in the peninsula and in the vicinity of Kuwait. Moreover, Ingham (1985) gives a very short description of the KA dialect and writes briefly about the distinction between the Qibla (southwest) and Sharq (east) provinces of Kuwait – *ḡibla* and *šarg* in local pronunciation – when pre-oil Kuwait was still a small walled town (see section 3.5). Last but not least, Ingham's (1994) book is the 'most useful and theoretically original description' of Najdi Arabic (Holes 1996: 563) as well as 'an excellent example of a dialect description that goes far beyond the usual focus on phonological and morphological details' (Versteegh 1998b: 296). Najdi-based dialects are spoken all along the Gulf littoral, including Kuwait. Since most of my speakers are descended from Najd and its environs (cf. Brustad 2000: 3), Ingham's (1994: 173-192) lexicon of Najdi items and idiomatic expressions is relevant to the region of my focus.

¹⁵ The late Kuwaiti scholar, Khālid Sa'ūd al-Zaid, published a book on popular Kuwaiti proverbs entitled *Min al-Amṭāl al-'Āmmiyya* in 1961, which predates al-Nourī's (1968) *al-Amṭāl ad-Dāriḡa fī l-Kuwayt*. However, the book is now rare.

¹⁶ Dr. 'Abdul'azīz Maṭar is considered the first Arab to have conducted an academic field study on Kuwaiti Arabic.

In terms of polysemy and semantic change, al-Ayyoub (1982: 337-341) includes a section in his vocabulary book entitled ‘words which have three or more senses’ in which he lists 32 Kuwaiti polysemes/homonyms but without explaining how these words proliferate. A year later, al-Sab‘ān’s¹⁷ book on the semantics of KA was published which discusses the evolution of Kuwaiti neologisms and borrowings, some of which were captured in Muḥammad’s (2009) dictionary. Al-Sab‘ān’s book, the first book on the semantics of KA (1983: 8), covers on the one hand the geography, history, and society of Kuwait, and on the other, it concerns the semantics of the Kuwaiti dialect. The sections on ‘homonymy’ and ‘semantic change and maintenance’ are directly relevant to this study. Al-Sab‘ān does not appear to distinguish between homonymy and polysemy (see Chapter 2). Regarding ‘homonymy’, she calls this section *al-muštarak al-lafḍi* (1983: 98) and glosses it with the English term ‘homonymy’. Although the title reads ‘homonymy’, her examples include Kuwaiti polysemous items. She examined 35 Kuwaiti words that are *alfāḍ muštaraka* ‘homonymous’ in KA, 21 of which are actually polysemous lexical items that are typically translated into Arabic as *ta‘addud ad-dalālah* ‘polysemy’ rather than *al-muštarak al-lafḍi* ‘homonymy’ (Fehri 2009: 254). As regards ‘semantic change and maintenance’, al-Sab‘ān (1983: 170-186) explores the mechanisms of change by giving a number of interesting examples of KA polysemous vocabulary items which are mostly nouns and adjectives. Six years later, al-Sab‘ān (1989) compiled a dictionary of the Kuwaiti dialect where she includes some of the words discussed in her 1983 book along with others, and she also indicates the parts of speech for each entry; this feature is absent in most of the local dictionaries. Khalaf (1988: 22-23) touches upon the idea of how Arabic words change over time in a paragraph, but he does not give any examples of Kuwaiti words.

On the syntax-semantics interface, Brustad’s (2000) comparative syntactic study is data-driven and covers important syntactic aspects of four spoken dialects collected using three methods and sources: tape-recorded data collected from informants in Morocco, Syria, Kuwait, and Egypt; commercial tape recordings of plays and interviews from these countries; and published texts and studies. Tsukanova (2008) investigates discourse functions of the verb in the ‘sedentary’ dialect type of Kuwait.

Furthermore, al-S‘aydān’s (1970, 1971, 1972) three-volume encyclopedia is a remarkable reference work on Kuwaiti dialect, culture, and society which includes words, phrases, place

¹⁷ I interviewed Dr. Laila al-Sab‘ān on 15 July 2013 in her office in the Kaifān campus at Kuwait University.

names, notable people in the history of Kuwait, popular proverbs, flora and fauna, and so forth. He states in his encyclopedia that it contains ‘everything about Kuwait’ (1970: 541). In addition, al-Rashaid¹⁸ (2012) has recently published a pictorial encyclopedia of the urban Kuwaiti dialect which is based on the spoken Arabic of Kuwait City for the entertainment of the general reader. Al-Shamlān’s two-volume collection (1975, 1978),¹⁹ al-Bakr’s encyclopedia (2000), and al-Roumī’s dictionary (2005), along with the aforementioned article by Johnstone and Muir (1964), have all lexically contributed to preserve KA nautical and pearl diving terminologies and help prevent them from sinking into oblivion. All these reference works provide us with a rich social description of the maritime culture of old Kuwait.

Additionally, Holes (2007c) provides a general yet useful linguistic description of KA with many interesting examples collected from ‘urban Kuwaitis speaking in relaxed conversational circumstances’ (ibid.: 609). From a sociolinguistic perspective, Holes (2011: 139, 2013: 283) refers to a form of Kuwaiti Arabic-English code-switching which is known as ‘Arabīzī; a blend formed from ‘*arabī* (‘Arabic’) and *inglīzī* (‘English’). Dashti’s (2013) recent study investigates the grammatical features of foreigner talk while interacting with domestic workers in Kuwait.

Although painting was his real *métier*, the folklorist Ayyoub Ḥ. al-Ayyoub²⁰ is important for Kuwaiti lexicology because he produced what is considered to be the first Kuwaiti *mu‘ğam mubawwab* ‘onomasiological dictionary’ (1982).²¹ Unlike the available local dictionaries, the contents of this vocabulary reference book are arranged in semantic fields. For instance, the dictionary user may find the Kuwaiti lexeme *dašš* ‘enter’ (1982: 105) with *daxal* ‘enter’, *dar‘am* ‘barge in’, *čifat* ‘enter quickly’, and so on. The purpose of this book is to help dictionary users expand their Kuwaiti vocabulary.²² His second book (1997) contains 1,620 carefully selected entries that are arranged alphabetically and cross-referenced. The

¹⁸ I interviewed Khālid al-Rashaid (the grandson of sheikh ‘Abdul‘azīz al-Rashaid) on 30 July 2012 and on 7 July 2013 at the Kuwait Writers Association, ‘Adayliyya area.

¹⁹ An abridged version has been published by Peter Clark as *Pearling in the Arabian Gulf: A Kuwaiti Memoir*, London Centre for Arab Studies, 2000.

²⁰ Four months before he passed away, I interviewed Ayyoub Ḥusain al-Ayyoub (1932-2013) on 6 July 2013 in his house in al-Manšūriyya, Kuwait City, who at that time was a sprightly old man of 81.

²¹ The term ‘onomasiology’ was introduced by Adolf Zauner in 1903. See Baalbaki (2014: 62-278) for a comprehensive survey of Arabic onomasiological and specialised lexica.

²² According to al-Ayyoub (1982: 7), the organisation of the material of his book was inspired by Arabic multi-thematic works such as Manšūr al-Ta‘ālibī’s (d. 1039 AD) *Fiqh al-Luġa wa Sirr al-‘Arabiyya* (cf. Baalbaki 2014: 266-278), which is ‘a vast storehouse of vocabulary which sometimes gives synonyms, and at other times distinguishes between the finer shades of meanings of words which are roughly synonymous’ (Haywood 1965: 113).

significance of this lexicographic work, as indicated by the compiler (1997: 14), is that it includes 1,600 Kuwaiti lexemes which are not listed in al-S‘aydān’s (1970-1972) three-volume encyclopedia. In sum, one may argue that al-Ayyoub’s works, in a sense, fill a lexical gap that has been neglected by some Kuwaiti lexicographers.

In the second half of the twentieth century, recent doctoral research on KA has focused on phonological treatment, particularly on phonological variation and change and has been situated within the Anglo-American linguistic framework.²³

Nonetheless, Yassin’s (1975) descriptive study analyses forms of address in KA within an Anglo-American sociolinguistic framework. His primary data sources are derived primarily from participant observation over a period of five years, tape-recordings of conversations in natural settings, interviews, and TV and radio shows.

Al-Najjar (1984) recorded native KA speakers’ spontaneous conversations and television talk shows for her PhD thesis on the syntax and semantics of verbal aspect in KA. In addition to consulting with native informants, she used her personal judgments as a native speaker of the dialect concerning the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of the examples. The KA described in her study is urban middle-class Kuwaiti speech.

Al-Ajeel (2002) collected her data in Kuwait for her PhD on aspects of the lexical relations of equivalence and opposition in KA and American English via verbal inquiries (mostly based on her native speaker judgment), participant observation, and by phone, fax, and e-mail.

My current study combines some of the data collection methods used in Yassin’s (1975), al-Najjar’s (1984) and al-Ajeel’s (2002) studies, in addition to contemporary research techniques such as an online questionnaire and data from social networking sites. Unlike their linguistic approaches, my approach and focus is on historical semantics in a socio-historical dimension. Besides, my study puts forward a use-based theory of change that focuses on hitherto unrecorded spoken data from various speakers who come from different backgrounds and social statuses.

In their latest study, Behnstedt and Woidich (2013: 311) survey the available spoken Arabic dictionaries in the market and argue that ‘Arabic dialectologists have a number of dictionaries

²³ To the best of my knowledge, there are no dissertations that investigate lexico-semantic variation and change in the Kuwaiti dialect.

at their disposal, although many of them are rudimentary and are better classified under the categories ‘vocabulary’ or ‘glossary’ than dictionary’. Although differences of opinion still exist, there appears to be some agreement that the Kuwaiti dictionaries reviewed thus far are better categorised under the category ‘word list’ or ‘glossary’ than ‘dictionary’ due to the lack of a dictionary ‘microstructure’, i.e. the detailed information a traditional dictionary gives for a headword.

The literature presented thus far provides solid evidence that most of the works published on the dialects of Kuwait are lexicographically, phonologically, and sociolinguistically based. Of course, we have seen a couple of semantic studies, but not historical semantic ones. As Holes (2007c: 609) points out, ‘[t]here has been no more recent, in-depth, dialectological or sociolinguistic study of Kuwait City’.²⁴ So I believe my aim in this section was not to review and comment on all the existing literature on KA (since some of it lies well outside my own sphere of specialisation), but has primarily been to provide the reader with an idea of the current linguistic literature on Kuwaiti Arabic.

As a final point, several books and studies have been published under the titles ‘Peninsular Arabic Dialects’, ‘Eastern Arabian Dialects’, ‘North East Arabian Dialects’, ‘Arabian/Persian Gulf Dialects’, and what is referred to by the shorthand term ‘Gulf Arabic’.²⁵ These studies cover mainly the dialects of Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and to some extent, the dialects of Oman and Saudi Arabia. However, some of these studies concentrate on one dialect over another, i.e. the material presented in those studies does not necessarily represent the dialects of Kuwait City.

1.3 The Organisation of the Thesis

The organisation of the thesis is as follows. It is in two parts. Part 1 describes the *State of the Art* which contains Chapters 1-4. Part 2 considers *Kuwait City as a Case Study* which includes Chapters 5-9.

²⁴ It is worth mentioning that I have heard about several other published materials on KA but these are not at my disposal because some of them are hardly attainable and others have been out of print for several years. In addition, I have not included publications of little scholarly value which draw heavily on their predecessors.

²⁵ According to Holes (2010: x), Gulf Arabic is linguistically closer to Literary Arabic, while, culturally, ‘what remains of Bedouin society provides a modern-day insight into the values and social conditions that gave birth to Islam’. As far as I am aware, the first self-taught textbook bearing the title ‘Gulf Arabic’ was published in 1970 by Ḥamdi A. Qafisheh, and is based on the spoken Arabic of Abu Dhabi.

Within Part 1, I review in Chapter 2 the literature on polysemy and semantic change in the Arabic language and dialects from a historical perspective. I describe and discuss the methods used in investigating lexical relations such as polysemy and homonymy in Classical Arabic and contemporary Arabic dialects.

Chapter 3 surveys the lexical variation and change in modern Arabic dialects. It also explores the structure of the Kuwaiti lexicon throughout the modern history of Kuwait in terms of such contextual factors as diglossia and religion, and the changing socio-demographic factors.

Chapter 4 focuses on the formal characteristics of four verbs of motion, viz. *dašš* ‘to enter’, *xalla* ‘to leave’, *miša* ‘to walk’, and *rikaḏ* ‘to run’ on the basis of their usage in KA. In particular, I investigate the morphological and the lexico-semantic features of these key verbs.

Within Part 2, Chapter 5 explains how changes in the social structure of Kuwait are reflected in the patterns of dialect use. Since this study primarily focuses on the socio-historical characteristics of polysemy and lexical semantics, I focus on change in society and demography, which all contribute to change in dialect patterns.

Chapter 6 details the methodologies used for the analyses in Chapters 7 and 8. I discuss how data were obtained in the speech community by highlighting the stages of collection and preparing of data. This includes the selection of informants from family members and friends, and from residential areas of Kuwait City. The data required were obtained through two approaches: group recording and social network. Also, two corroborating pieces of evidence were gathered as mediated oral sources: Twitter posts and Kuwaiti one-act television plays.

Chapter 7 presents the semantic analysis of the research results. I report the uses of four verbs in my spoken material, namely, *dašš* ‘enter’, *xalla* ‘leave’, *miša* ‘walk’, and *rikaḏ* ‘run’. I also explore the structure of polysemy and the lexical semantic behaviour of these verbs and detect the semantic innovation and change in them. Specifically, the structure of polysemy is such that there is a great deal of productivity in use.

Chapter 8 discusses the contexts of semantic innovation and change in KA. I report the research results in terms of the contexts of use of the key verbs, their users, and the social interpretation. I focus on speakers in social groupings as the agents of these innovations. I trace these changes with the help of two key sociolinguistic concepts which contextualise the

understanding of semantic change in KA, viz. social network analysis and the community of practice approach.

Chapter 9 summarises the main findings in this thesis, the limitations of the study, and points out other areas for future research.

In summary, the significance of this study is the fact that the Kuwaiti dialect has not previously been explored in this historical and descriptive manner. There is no study on KA of this nature, especially in historical semantics, as diachronic studies of meaning are comparatively rare. I adopt a sociolinguistic and an empirical design in order to focus on semantic change which is located within a historical semantic perspective. I hope to add to the literature in this field with the information in this thesis produced within Gulf Arabic dialectology.

Chapter 2

Polysemy and Semantic Change in Arabic

2. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on polysemy and semantic change in the Arabic language and dialects from a historical perspective. It specifically describes and discusses the methods used in investigating lexical relations such as polysemy and homonymy in Classical Arabic and contemporary Arabic dialects as explored by some key thinkers and recorded in key texts. In this thesis, the linguistic term *polysemy*¹ is used throughout to refer to the phenomenon where a single lexeme (i.e. a polyseme) is linked to multiple distinct but related senses. As Cruse (2006: 133) puts it, these multiple senses ‘must be felt by native speakers to be related in some way’. Research into polysemy has a long history; polysemy is ‘a characteristic and [...] most researchable aspect of natural languages’ (Weinreich 1966: 398). Moreover, recent evidence suggests that ‘semantic change cannot be studied without drawing on a theory of polysemy because of the nature of change’ (Traugott and Dasher 2005: 11).

However, within the tradition of Arabic linguistics, polysemy seems to be an under-differentiated concept. It has commonly been assumed that the matter of multiple meaning has always been of interest and of significance to the discussion of the Arabic language and dialects. However, what makes polysemy an issue worthy of investigation within semantic change is that Arabic philologists and linguists discuss the case of a single word having two or more related and/or unrelated senses, but their diverse points of view means that it remains a matter of dispute. In other words, there have been debates about whether a particular case is homonymy or polysemy and this has always been controversial. Although I do not intend to deal extensively with this difference of opinion, I will, however, identify the key points that rest on solid evidence.

There is some evidence to suggest that Arab philologists have observed the problem of meaning in different contexts for a long time in the Arabic language and dialects. While they focus on meaning, they are not necessarily trying to account for changes in meaning or the

¹ Firth (1957: 26) argues that ‘Bréal is the godfather of the words *sémantique* and *polysémie*’. In 1883, Michel Bréal used the word *sémantique* for the first time and it was translated into the English ‘semantic’ in 1900. However, al-Fallouji (2012: 537) claims that ‘semantic’ may ultimately come from the Arabic *sima* ‘sign’.

generation of meaning. But the works presented are relevant in so far as they shed light on our understanding of the role of multiplicity of meaning in the history of Arabic.

As a consequence, I wish to give an historical account of the treatment of polysemy in Arabic and its role in semantic change. As noted by Stetkevych ([1970] 2006: 66), ‘semantic changes and developments are an old process in the Arabic language’. Kuwaiti Arabic (henceforth, KA) is a variety that has considerable similarities with other Gulf urban dialects. More precisely, KA is typologically related to the Bedouin-descended dialects of other Gulf States (Holes 2007c: 609). Regarding the mutual intelligibility of the dialects, Aoun et al. (2010: 2) state that ‘those dialects differ from one another, with mutual intelligibility decreasing as the geographical distance between them increases’. Consequently, it seems sensible to draw our attention to Arabic first, since the Kuwaiti dialect has been considerably influenced by it.

The arrangement of this chapter is as follows. In section 2.1, a historical background will be presented on the aspects of semantic developments in Arabic, including information on semantic change, semantic shift, and semantic extension as obtained from the dialectological literature. This section will particularly throw light on Arab philologists’ views on the question of multiplicity of meaning. This will include the concept of *mā ittafaqa lafḍuh wa-xtalafa ma‘nāh* or, as it was referred to later, *al-muštarak al-lafḍī*. In section 2.2, I will entirely focus on Jaroslav Stetkevych’s view on semantic developments in modern Arabic because he pays attention to modern examples of literary Arabic words and their semantic evolution by identifying the patterns of these current expressions for new things and analysing their origins and derivations, and I will consider some of the shortcomings of his approach. Section 2.3 explores the available literature on polysemy and semantic change in KA. I discuss in section 2.4 other sources of Arabic polysemy and lexical variation, namely, the lexical relation *’addād*, Quranic exegesis, and wordplay. The concluding remarks are given in section 2.5.

2.1 Historical Background

According to Versteegh (1997: 227), ‘[i]t is not an exaggeration when we say that in the study of Arabic the traditional orientation continues to be alive, especially in the field of semantics’. This observation gives us a glimmer of hope in terms of Arabic semantics scholarship and one may thus assume that notions such as polysemy and homonymy have

been challenged continually. However, in chapter two of his book, al-Ma'touq (2008: 91) sparks the discussion with the following statement of opinion:

موقف الباحثين واللغويين العرب حيال هذه الألفاظ وحديثهم عن طبيعتها وعن أهميتها ودورها في مجال التعبير كان وما يزال خلافاً غير مستقر.

Arabic philologists' and linguists' views upon the nature of these words and their importance, and role in expression remain controversial.

In fact, there has been little agreement on what to call Arabic lexemes that have more than one meaning. Among the longstanding peculiarities of the Arabic language noted by Zaydān (1957: 54), he mentions *al-ma'ānī al-kaīra lil-lafḍ al-wāḥid* 'multiple meanings for the same word'. Several studies have called it *al-muštarak al-lafḍī*, while others have called it *ta'addud al-ma'nā*. However, a specialised English-Arabic dictionary of modern linguistic terms distinguishes between 'homonymy' and 'polysemy', naming the former *al-ḡinās² al-lafḍī* and the latter *ta'addud ma'āni l-lafḍ* (Ḥanna et al. 1997: 60, 111). However, in his latest work on Arabic lexicography, Baalbaki (2014: 198) translates the Arabic phrase *al-muštarak al-lafḍī* into 'homonymous polysemic words', which seems to be a convenient translation. 'Omer (1993: 10), on the other hand, uses the word 'homophony' as a comprehensive term to cover both polysemy and homonymy because he reports that 'all Arab philologists did not distinguish between what are called by modern linguists homonymy and polysemy'.

Moreover, Baalbaki (2014: 198) argues that *al-muštarak* is a lexical relation 'which Sībawayhi (d. 796 AD) refers to in the introductory part of his book by the expression *ittifāq al-lafḍayn wa-xtilāf al-ma'nayayn*, i.e. coincidence of form and divergence of meaning'. Among the eight works that belong to the genre of *muštarak* type (i.e. of the *mubawwab* 'onomasiological lexica' type), Baalbaki (2014: 200) lists the earliest Arabic work entitled *al-Aḡnās min Kalām al-'Arab wa mā Štabaha fī l-Lafḍ wa-Xtalafa fī l-Ma'nā*, which is claimed to have been compiled by an anonymous author from Abū 'Ubayd's (d. 838 AD) *Ġarīb al-Ḥadīth*.

Between the 11th and 12th century, one of the comprehensive manuscripts written on Arabic *muštarak lafḍī* 'homonymy' was produced by Ibn al-Shaḡarī (d. 1148 AD). He compiled a dictionary entitled *ما اتفق لفظه واختلف معناه* 'That which is Pronounced the Same but Differs in Meaning' to explain 1,670 Arabic homonyms. Commenting on the significance of this work, Versteegh (1998a: 236) notes that '[n]o doubt, Ibn aš-Šaḡarī's book on homonyms is the

² According to Bettini (2007: 496), possible translations of *ḡinās* are 'paronomasia' (the most general), 'alliteration', or 'pun'.

most important of the entire series, be it only because of its size'. One of the homonyms investigated is *an-naḥru* (Ibn al-Shaḡarī 1992: 419), and he lists the following senses for this term: 'double chin', 'first day of the month', and 'gullet'. This is a clear case of homonymy since these senses are quite unconnected. On the contrary, he lists the word *nawf* (pl. *anwāf*) with the following senses and in this order: 'camel's hump' and 'ascension' (1992: 439). Both senses are connected. One may observe that a relationship does exist between 'camel's hump' and 'ascension' in that a 'hump' is located in the highest point of a camel and 'ascension' indicates the act of moving up or of reaching a high position. One of the word's senses was metaphorically extended, and this process is intimately linked to a historical process of semantic change. But are they different words for us today? History can be misleading. Additionally, Hans Wehr's (1976: 1011) *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*³ lists the following senses for *nawf*: 'to be high, lofty, exalted, sublime; to exceed, be above, be more than, go beyond'. If we take Ibn al-Shaḡarī's organisation of senses, 'camel's hump' is the primary meaning of *nawf*, although if we take Wehr's organisation of senses, 'to be high' is the primary meaning of *nawf*.

No one can deny that one of the problems lexicographers confront concerns how they order the senses: by frequency, by history, by degree of establishment, by metaphorical extensions, and so forth. It is apparent from looking up some dictionary entries that new senses develop from core/original meanings: the process is therefore *motivated* and not *arbitrary*. In his preface, Wehr (1976: x) clarifies that '[i]n the presentation of the entries in the dictionaries, homonymous roots are given separately in only a few especially clear instances'. It can be deduced from this quotation that Wehr was careful enough to organise the homonymous senses, which is a common practice in modern lexicography. As Lyons (1995: 27-28) points out, 'most dictionaries distinguish homonyms by assigning to them distinctive numbers and giving to each of them a separate entry'. Wehr (1976: x) continues: '[t]he arrangement of word entries under a given root does not necessarily imply etymological relationship'. This quotation is slightly misleading and I believe that Wehr serves to illuminate the dictionary user that there are entries which are related etymologically, i.e. polysemous entries. Commenting on Wehr's lexicographic work, Esseesy (2009: 165) holds the view that:

A cursory review of Hans Wehr's root-based Arabic-English dictionary shows that the great majority of Arabic roots are polysemous, and the possibility for semantic extension of the vague core cluster of senses increases when the set of (tri)consonantal roots is expanded in derived forms.

³ Originally published in German and was translated into English in 1961.

Moreover, al-Ma‘tūq (2008: 94) points out that the dividing line between homonymy and polysemy does not pose a problem for contemporary linguists (i.e. Western linguists) since they treat each concept independently, judging by the sheer amount of scientific studies on this subject matter. In the East, as Ibrahim (2005: 54) points out, ‘Old Arab grammarians did discuss this phenomenon [i.e. the existence of different meanings for one word]; however, it has not been investigated further in recent linguistic studies’. Nonetheless, an examination of *al-muštarak al-lafḏī* by al-Ma‘tūq (2008: 95) shows that *ta‘addud al-ma‘nā* ‘polysemy’ coexists with *al-muštarak al-lafḏī* ‘homonymy’. Al-Ma‘tūq (2008: 96) indicates that Arab linguists distinguish between two types of lexical relations, namely: Arab philologists/lexicographers call ‘homonymy’ *al-ištirāk al-lafḏī* while Arab linguists call ‘polysemy’ *al-ištirāk fil-lafḏ*, which corresponds to the phrase *ta‘addud al-ma‘nā* discussed earlier. However, there is a degree of uncertainty around both terminologies; I will provide operational criteria to distinguish them. In my terms, *al-ištirāk al-lafḏī* is ‘homonymy’ while *ta‘addud al-ma‘nā* is ‘polysemy’. Logically speaking, I distinguish between these terms because the phrase *al-ištirāk al-lafḏī* literally translates into English as ‘verbal (or ‘phonetic’) association’, and this translation is relevant to the linguistic function of homonymy because homonymous items are associated phonetically but not semantically. Furthermore, *ta‘addud al-ma‘nā* literally translates as ‘multiplicity of meaning’ and one may therefore observe how relevant this translation is to its Arabic counterpart and how it conveys the proper function of polysemy.

In his linguistic encyclopaedia, the 15th-century Egyptian polymath al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505 AD) discusses the Arabic *muštarak* ‘homonymy’ whereby a single word denotes two or more senses.⁴ However, al-Suyūṭī (n.d. 369) argues that *واختلف الناس فيه* ‘people hold conflicting views on this subject [i.e. homonymy]’. So one may argue that the idea of how a single lexeme carries more than one meaning did exist in the 15th century and even before then but al-Suyūṭī and his predecessors, such as Ibn Ğinnī (d. 1002 AD) and Ibn Fāris (d. 1004 AD), did not distinguish between polysemy and homonymy systematically. Interestingly, one of the examples given by al-Suyūṭī (n.d. 370) is the verb *mašā* ‘to walk’, which is the literary form of the Kuwaiti term under investigation, *miša*. He explains:

⁴ According to Ibn Durustawayhi (d. 958 AD), cited in al-Suyūṭī (n.d. 384), one of the conclusive pieces of evidence regarding the existence of *al-muštarak* lies in the Arabic word *wağada*, meaning both ‘to find’ and ‘to become angry’, and Sībawayhi (d. 796 AD) mentions and explains this word at the beginning of his book *al-Kitāb*, the first book on Arabic grammar ever written. Cf. Versteegh (1998a: 236) and Baalbaki (2014: 189, 198).

يقال مَشَى يَمْشِي من المَشْيِ، وَمَشَى إِذَا كَثُرَتْ مَاشِيَتُهُ، وَكَذَا أَمْشَى لَغَتَانِ فَصِيحَتَانِ. قَالَ: وَفِي التَّنْزِيلِ: أَنْ أَمْشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَى آلِهَتِكُمْ. كَأَنَّهُ دَعَاءُ لَهُمْ بِالنَّمَاءِ. وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ.

It is believed that *mašā* (and) *yamšī* derive from *mašī*, and *mašā* is used if his *māšiya* ['livestock'] increases'. So both senses are pure (eloquent) language. He said, and in the Holy Qur'ān: *Walk away! Stay faithful to your gods!* It is like praying for them to increase. God knows best. (Translation mine).

In this citation, al-Suyūfī draws our attention to two distinct senses and two distinct parts of speech, i.e. the verb 'to walk' and the noun 'livestock'. The part of speech distinction is notable when *mašā* is morphologically modified. However, his explanation raises the following question: is his example a case of polysemy or homonymy? If we think about it, the *māšiya* 'livestock', be it any Arabian cattle breeds, are typically seen on the move, i.e. they *yamšūn* 'walk' because of the seasonal migration of the nomadic people from southern to northern Arabia and vice versa. All we know is that both the verb sense *mašā* and the noun sense *māšiya* derive from the Arabic trilateral (Semitic) root *m-š-y*.⁵ But I do not have evidence that *mašā* and *māšiya* are linked etymologically in order for them to be called polysemes. In modern written Arabic, Wehr (1976: 911) glosses *māšiya* as a sub-entry of *mašā*, so he does not treat it as a separate entry as is the case in Western lexicography because this would label the dictionary entry as a 'homonym'. However, 'the decision as to whether two words are homonymous or different senses of the same word may not be easy to make' (Hartmann and James 1998: 69).

According to Lyons (1995: 55), homonyms are divided into two categories: 'absolute homonymy' and 'partial homonymy'. The former will satisfy the following three conditions: (i) they will be unrelated in meaning; (ii) all their forms will be identical; and (iii) the identical forms will be grammatically equivalent. Conversely, partial homonymy can be determined by the following two criteria: (a) there is an identity of (minimally) one form; and (b) one or two, but not all three, of the above conditions are satisfied. That is to say, *bank* ('place to deposit money' and 'one side of a river') is an example of absolute homonymy whereas the verbs *to find* and *to found* are examples of partial homonymy because they both share the form FOUND.

Arabic lexicons tend to collect the largest possible number of examples of words with more than one meaning. A well-known example is the word 'ağūz 'old woman', for which al-Fīrūzābādī (d. 1415 AD) in his *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* records about seventy meanings, e.g. 'wine; nail in the hilt of a sword; sword blade', and so on (Brill 2014: n.p.).

⁵ Cf. Landberg (1942: 2698).

Additionally, the noun *‘ayn* is one of the typical examples in the literature. Zaydān (1957: 54) records 35 senses of this word in Arabic. Al-Suyūṭī (n.d. 372) lists the following senses of *‘ayn*: ready money, cash, eye, rain, spring of water, man, etc.⁶ ‘Omer (1998: 153-155) gives a comparative table showing the treatment of the lexeme *‘ayn* by four Arabic philologists, namely Kurā‘ al-Naml⁷ (d. 922 AD), Abū l-‘Amayṭal (d. 854 AD), Abū ‘Ubayd (d. 838 AD), and al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 831 AD); their dates of birth are gleaned from al-Khaṭīb (1994: 37-42).⁸ In the Kuwaiti dialect, Dickson (1956: 588) glosses *‘ain* (pl. *‘ayun*) ‘spring of water’, while al-Ayyoub (1982: 341) records the following senses for *‘ayn*: ‘eye, spring of water, the eye of the sun, the evil eye’. He also gives the following idiomatic expressions for *‘ayn*: *ṭāfiḥ lēy ‘ēnah* ‘full (lit. it’s full to its eye)’, *‘ēnah ḥārṛa* ‘he is envious/green-eyed (lit. he has hot eyes)’, *‘ēnah bārda* ‘he is not envious (lit. he has cold eyes)’, and *‘ēnah ḍayḡa* ‘stingy (lit. he has narrow eyes)’ (1982: 356-7, 360). In a more technical sense, Holmes and Samaan (1957: 165) list *‘ayn naft* ‘oil rig (lit. an eye of oil)’ as a petroleum engineering term in KA. Esseesy (2009: 165) explains the metaphorisation of this lexeme as follows:

‘ayn ‘eye’ as a body part functioning as the vision device is extended metaphorically in *‘aynu l-mā* ‘lit. eye of the water’ ‘water spring’,⁹ whereby an aperture with flowing water in the ground is expressed in terms of the body part that has the capacity to shed tears (conceived of as water).¹⁰

Cross-linguistically speaking, the same phenomenon is observed in British English and Australian English. Palmer (1981: 103) points out that in English, ‘eye is used with a variety of other meanings, e.g. the centre of a hurricane or a spring of water, which are not so obviously related semantically to the organ of sight’. Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2008: 31) briefly mentions Australian English metaphors regarding the semantic extensions of *eye*, ‘to any point-like entities, including ‘star’, ‘well’, ‘small hole in ground’ and ‘bullet’.

Moreover, one of the peculiarities of the Arabic lexicon is that Arabic words have different local and tribal realisations. In examining the history of dialect diffusion in Arabia and Mesopotamia, Ingham (1980: 322) argues that ‘a group may move from one locality to another, taking their original dialect with them as an intruder dialect’. Therefore, it should really come as no surprise that large amounts of lexical variation distinguish the usage of different tribes. Al-Suyūṭī (n.d. 381) exemplifies this with the word *al-‘alfatu* meaning

⁶ The reader is referred to Wehr (1976: 663) for more modern written Arabic senses, and Arts (2014: 572-573) for Standard and colloquial Arabic examples.

⁷ His full name is Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī bin al-Ḥasan al-Ḥunā‘ī, though he is better known as Kurā‘ an-Naml (lit. ant’s foot) due to his shortness or ugliness (Baalbaki 2014: 89).

⁸ See Blažek (2007: 68) for Semitic uses and senses of *‘ayn*.

⁹ See Hudson (2013: 98) for the meanings of ‘spring of water’ in Northeast African Semitic languages.

¹⁰ Cf. Baalbaki (2014: 98).

‘stupid’ in the language of the Qays tribe and ‘left-handed’ in the language of the Tamīm tribe.¹¹ Also, *as-salīṭ* means ‘oil’ in the language of Arabia and ‘sesame oil’ in the language of Yemen.

Anīs’ (1984: 122-133) book on Arabic semantics explores the nature of semantic extension from a historical semantic perspective. He highlights this linguistic feature by providing a number of examples in Arabic and in his native language, i.e. Egyptian Arabic. Anīs (1984: 126) also explains how the notion of lexical borrowing triggers semantic shift. For example, he argues that the loanword *bišt* means ‘back (body part)’ in Persian while it means ‘light goat’s-wool over-wrap or cloak for men’ (Holes 2001: 42) in colloquial Arabic. The following examples highlight the contrast between old and new senses of selected Egyptian Arabic words and the evolution of word usage as demonstrated by Anīs (1984: 125): the old, original meaning of *buṣṣ* is ‘to dazzle, shimmer, sparkle’ whereas the new meaning is the imperative ‘look!'; the old, original sense of *araf* is ‘accusation’ while the new sense is ‘filth’. Anīs (1984: 134-151) also explains the motivation for semantic change in any natural language, which is twofold: ‘subliminal change’ and ‘intentional change’. As a result, these processes of change are based on two factors: ‘use’ and ‘necessity’. In his terms, incidents of misunderstanding are notable sources of semantic change. For instance, an individual may misinterpret and then pick up an utterance he/she heard, and then this utterance may become so entrenched that the speakers no longer feel that it is a matter of misunderstanding over time. However, this does not make the default reading of a word less accessible; the old and the new ‘coincidental’ senses coexist. For example, Anīs (1984: 136) gives the word *layṭ* as having two meanings, ‘lion’ and ‘spider’, and *gurūb* means both ‘sunset’ and ‘bucket’.

In terms of the mechanisms of change, Anīs (1984: 152-167) explains the consequences of change in the Arabic language. He seems to have adopted the Western typology of

¹¹ Al-Shamlān (2000: 26) points to the fact that ‘[t]he land of Kuwait was the homeland of Arab tribes, the most important of which was the Tamīm’. Also, Maṭar (1969: 97) concludes his phonological and morphological study on KA by stating that the Kuwaiti dialect is characteristically Arabic and structurally Tamīmī. Additionally, al-Maṭlabī (1978: 38) argues that the dialect of Tamīm is remarkably closer to the soul of Standard (‘eloquent’) Arabic than the dialect of al-Ḥiḡāz (cf. Rabin 1951: 94-192). Al-Maṭlabī (1978: 56-67) supports his argument by giving citations of Qur’ānic verses that include Tamīmī words and pronunciation. According to Baalbaki (2014: 7), ‘most of the material which the philologists recorded and set as a model for emulation derived from the tribes of Qays, Tamīm and Asad’. Also worthy of mention is the fact that ‘Eastern Arabia, represented by the dialect of Tamīm, is said to be closer to the language of poetry’ (Ferrando 2007: 263). However, unlike the other scholars, ‘Abdulbāqī (2006) calls it *luḡa* ‘language’ of Banī Tamīm rather than *lahḡa* ‘dialect’. The word *luḡa*, which may be derived from the Greek *logos* (Haywood 1965: 17), has many meanings. It may mean a language, a word or expression, a dialect form, or common usage. For example, a lexicographer might say of a certain usage: *wa hiya luḡa fī banī tamīm* ‘and it is a form used among the Banī Tamīm’.

investigating the taxonomies of semantic change in terms of opposing pair mechanisms such as that discussed by Ullmann (1962).¹² Arguably, there are two reasons for adopting the Western traditions and orientations of analysing polysemy and semantic change. First, ‘[t]here is hardly any general literature on semantics in the Arabic tradition’ (Versteegh 1997: 277), and second, because of the wealth of literature available in this part of the world, and the fact that the study of semantics has boomed in the West since English has become the medium *par excellence* for the transmission of ideas. An implication of this is observed by Versteegh (1997: 227) as follows: ‘[i]n the 20th century the impact of Western linguistics has supplanted the traditional approach to grammar in most departments of linguistics, especially in Egypt, Morocco, and the Gulf States’.

Moreover, this approach of investigating meaning change is linked to a lexical semantic framework known as ‘historical-philological semantics’. Historical-philological semantics¹³ is a diachronic approach to lexical semantics which highlights the dynamic nature of meaning. Within this framework, four practical mechanisms of semantic change are typically discussed, which ‘constitute the core of most classifications’ (Geeraerts 2010: 26), viz. metaphor, metonymy, generalisation, and specialisation. As noted by Stetkevych (2006: 68-69), Anīs’ general observations are largely derived from Leonard Bloomfield. The typology of the patterns of change below appears to be based on loan translations from English, i.e. word-for-word translation:

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| 1. <i>taxṣīṣ ad-dalāla</i> ¹⁴ | ‘narrowing of meaning’ |
| 2. <i>ta‘mīm ad-dalāla</i> | ‘widening of meaning’ |
| 3. <i>inḥiṭāṭ ad-dalāla</i> | ‘pejoration of meaning’ |
| 4. <i>ruqiy ad-dalāla</i> | ‘amelioration of meaning’ |
| 5. <i>tagyīr mağāl al-isti‘māl</i> ¹⁵ | ‘metaphorical/semantic transfer’ |

Similarly, al-Maṭlabī (1978: 257-263) adopts the Western typology to explain the pathways of change such as the ones discussed above by Anīs (1984) but with different terminology. This includes:

¹² See Geeraerts (1997: 84-122) for an overview of the adequacy of Ullmann’s classification of semantic changes.

¹³ Geeraerts (2010: 10) claims that ‘Bréal is the first or the single most important exponent of historical semantics’. Al-Jabboury (1998: vii), however, states that semantics was first studied and investigated in Arabic in the 10th century by the philosopher Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (Alpharabius, d. 950 AD) in his book *fi l-Manṭiq*.

¹⁴ Al-Suyūṭī (n.d. 427) names this factor *al-‘ām al-muxaṣṣaṣ*. Cf. al-Jabboury (1998: ix).

¹⁵ The literal translation for *tagyīr mağāl al-isti‘māl* is ‘change in the patterns of use’, which technically corresponds to the English study of ‘metaphorical/semantic transfer’.

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| 1. <i>taġyīr inhiṭāfī</i> | ‘pejoration of meaning’ |
| 2. <i>taġyīr mutasāmi</i> | ‘amelioration of meaning’ |
| 3. <i>taġyīr naḥwa taxšīṣ al-ma‘nā</i> | ‘specialisation of meaning’ |
| 4. <i>taġyīr naḥwa ta‘mīm al-ma‘nā</i> | ‘generalisation of meaning’ |
| 5. <i>taġyīr maġāl ad-dalālah</i> | ‘semantic transfer’ |

To this list, al-Maṭlabī (1978: 257-263) adds two more factors: *taġyīr naḥwa aḍ-ḍidiyya* (see section 2.4.1 below) and *taġyīr fī ṣ-ṣifa l-ġinsiyya* ‘change of gender characteristics’. He exemplifies the latter with the word *baṭn* ‘abdomen’ where it is masculine in Standard Arabic and feminine in colloquial Arabic.

On the other hand, ‘Omer (1998: 159-190) compares the old and the modern Arab grammarian’s viewpoints regarding the factors and the mechanisms of semantic change and extension. It appears that there are two factors which old Arab grammarians distinguish: internal and external factors. Within the internal factors we find phonological change and meaning change, and within the external factors we find change in the environment. His method of analysis and explanation is largely influenced by the research tradition of Western linguistics. This is apparent in the wealth of English examples presented in his Arabic book.

2.2 Stetkevych’s View on Semantic Development

Turning now to more evidence on semantic extension in Arabic as illustrated by Stetkevych (2006), Stetkevych’s work has been described by Stowasser (1971: 423) as follows: ‘[w]ith the greatest insight and sensitivity, the author analyzes the methods by which Arabic has been and is currently changing’. Stetkevych’s theoretical approach is lexical-historical, which seems directly relevant to my scope of study because it explores the diachronic change of meaning. As expounded in Stetkevych (2006: 20-22), Arabic neologisms are moulded on the basis of two criteria: derivations and semantic extensions. However, ‘[i]t goes without saying that *’iṣtiqāq* ‘derivation’ in Arabic has been and still is the most important principle of word creation’ (Ali 1987: 19). Therefore, it is worth sketching briefly some of Stetkevych’s examples of Arabic semantic extensions designating locality (a-f) and instruments or machines (g-i). The asterisked items are used throughout Kuwait:

- a) *maṣna* * (factory) – could be considered as a semantic extension (however, Stetkevych did not explain the semantic extension from/of what)

- b) *maṭba* ‘ (printing house, press) – remotely a semantic extension¹⁶
- c) *mağma* ‘ (academy) – semantic extension, originally ‘a place of gathering’
- d) *maṭār** (airport) – a semantic extension, the classical meaning being ‘a place from which, or to which, a bird flies’
- e) *mawqif** (stop, station; bus, train) – a semantic extension
- f) *maḥaṭṭah** (station railroad, broadcasting) – a semantic extension, the old meaning being ‘a place where something (a load) is put down’, ‘a place where one alights’
- g) *dabbābah* (tank) – a semantic extension of the medieval war-machine ‘testudo’¹⁷
- h) *ḥarrāqah* (torpedo) – a semantic extension of the medieval ‘fireship’
- i) *barrādah* (refrigerator, icebox) – a semantic extension of the old term for a vessel for cooling water, or a stand upon which vessels are put for cooling¹⁸

It should be pointed out that Stetkevych’s use of the term ‘semantic extension’ has been criticised as being ‘loose and uninformative’ (Beeston 1972: 138). I believe it is necessary to clarify exactly what is meant by ‘semantic extension’. Individual senses are often related by a process of extension or modification of meaning, and this process ‘could be historical, functional, semantic, or metaphorical’ (Edmonds 2009: 225). Among the standard categories of semantic change discussed earlier, Stetkevych’s use of the term ‘semantic extension’ would probably equate to the ‘broadening/generalisation’ of meaning since all the items listed above have evolved and acquired new senses in order to cope with new localities and machineries. Accordingly, Cruse (2011: 241) identifies three types of extensions of meaning:

- a) **Naturalised extensions:** ‘what is historically no doubt an extended meaning may be so entrenched and familiar a part of a language that its speakers no longer feel that a figure of speech is involved at all’. For example, *He’s in love*.
- b) **Established extensions:** ‘readings which are well established, and presumably have entries in the mental lexicon, but are nonetheless felt to be figures of speech’. For example, *She swallowed the story*.

¹⁶ In the spoken Arabic of Kuwait, the feminine form *maṭba* ‘a is currently used to mean ‘printing press’.

¹⁷ Beeston (2006: 104) observes that *dabbāb* ‘a creeper’ has generated *dabbābah*, which now exclusively means ‘a tank’. In Kuwaiti, the old-fashioned footwear *dabbābah* ‘women’s (tank) shoes’ used to be worn in the 1940s (al-Ayyoub 1982: 301, 1997: 217; al-Sab‘ān 1983: 107, 111; al-Maghribī 1986: 88).

¹⁸ In the spoken Arabic of Bahrain, Holes (2001: 36) lists *barrādah* (pl. *barrādāt*), meaning ‘cold store; supermarket’. While in Kuwait City, *barrādah* is a ‘drinking water cooler’. However, Holmes and Samaan (1957: 191) list *barrādah* as an ‘air-conditioner’ for Kuwait. But this has been replaced by the literary *mukayyif* and *wiḥdāt* ‘AC units’ and the English borrowings *kindēšin* ‘(air-) conditioner’ and *sintrāl* ‘central’ in the modern Kuwaiti dialect (cf. al-Sab‘ān 1983: 94, 109).

- c) **Novel extensions:** ‘nonce readings are ones for which there are no entries in the mental lexicon; they therefore cannot be ‘looked up’’.

Furthermore, Beeston (1972: 138) describes Stetkevych’s analytical approach as being ‘marred by a certain linguistic *naïveté*’, illustrating his point by giving examples of semantic extensions drawn from Stetkevych’s book. Below, I will only quote Beeston’s constructive comment made on the word *maḥaṭṭah*:

What S[etkevych] calls its ‘old’ meaning is ‘a place where a load is put down’, ‘a place where one alights’: since this is precisely and exactly what a railway station is, the word still in a certain way has its ‘old’ sense. Nevertheless, it has lost its applicability in a large number of other contexts where it could formerly have been used, because it has become so particularly associated with the railway. This is a clear case of semantic contraction. But *maḥaṭṭah* also illustrates another noticeable feature of modern Arabic, to which S. devotes hardly any attention. This is the occurrence of lexical calques on European languages (usually English): that is to say, if an English word has a range of meanings not covered by any one Arabic word, there is a tendency to take one of the English meanings and find an Arabic equivalent for that, and then to extend the range of the Arabic word over the whole field of the English word. This is true semantic extension, and a result of it is that the extended range of the Arabic word cannot be deduced from within Arabic itself but only by reference to the foreign language on which it is *calqué*. Now, simply because English uses ‘station’ in the context of broadcasting as well as that of railways, *maḥaṭṭah* has acquired purely mechanically the additional implication of a ‘broadcasting station’, without any consideration of the earlier meaning of the word in Arabic (Beeston 1972: 138-9).

Beeston is pointing out the fact that Stetkevych does not distinguish between semantic extension and semantic borrowing, which is explicitly defined by Geeraerts (2010: 29-30) as ‘the process by means of which a word x in language A that translates the primary meaning of word y in language B copies a secondary meaning of y’. According to a definition of semantic calqué provided by Zalizniak (2008: 225), ‘the reproduction of a given semantic shift can be the result of independent similar semantic evolution as well as the result of a borrowing from another language’. Additionally, examples of dialectal calques have been noted by Smeaton (1973: 53) in Ḥasāwī colloquial as spoken in eastern Saudi Arabia. He exemplifies that *sikkat ḥadīd* ‘railway’ is a direct translation from the French ‘chemin de fer’ that reached the Arabian Peninsula from Cairo.¹⁹ We therefore understand from this argument that colloquial Arabic uses more foreign loanwords than literary Arabic does. This state is apparently due to the fact that ‘in many cases literary Arabic uses loan-translations (*calqué*) and newly coined terms rather than foreign ones used in colloquial Arabic’ (Rosenhouse

¹⁹ Mansour (1991: 193) records the French borrowing *šamandáfar* ‘chemin de fer’ in the Jewish Baghdadi dialect.

2007: 668).²⁰ It seems to me that the fact of semantic borrowing, as well as its direction, is hard to establish.

Stetkevych (2006: 66-78) devotes chapter four of his book to investigating semantic developments and change in the Arabic language. He opens the chapter with the following quotation:

Since pre-Islamic times until the present moment, the change in meanings of words has been so great that it now requires a special philological background to be able to read and properly understand poets like Imru' al-Qays, al-Nābighah, or al-Shanfarā (Stetkevych 2006: 66).²¹

Stetkevych's argument is limited to developments within the modern literary language. He does not attempt to discuss the existing differences between 'the classical meanings and their colloquial offsprings' (2006: 67). In contrast, in his *Semantic Dictionary of Colloquial and Classical Arabic*, al-Jabboury (1998: 74) notes the semantic change of the noun *as-sālfa* where it means 'the front part of the neck' in Classical Arabic but in colloquial Arabic has generated the meaning of 'story' in Iraq (and throughout the Arabian Gulf). Nonetheless, Stetkevych principally focuses on Arabic verbs, whether the shift is from concrete to abstract or vice versa. For example, he argues that the verb *šağala* 'to occupy, to busy, as to busy anyone in' can be used concretely as in: *naħnu našğalu 'anka al-marta'a* 'we occupy the place of pasturage so as to keep it from you' (2006: 71). One may thus argue that the process of semantic development and extension is made possible 'by a general openness of meanings' and is not to be seen as a simple shift from concrete to abstract or from abstract to concrete, but rather 'as an increasingly conceptualized concentration of meaning in a word, without any qualifications beyond the concept' (Stetkevych 2006: 72). Regarding Arabic nouns, Beeston ([1970] 2006: 25) shows that *rizq* 'is not only applicable to the abstract 'act/notion of providing someone with his daily needs' but also to the concrete 'wages''. In a nutshell, we learn from Stetkevych's exploration that meaning change as change in the conceptualisation of our world, and the use of words, is driven by the speakers' interests and needs. As Eckardt et al. (2003: 11) argue, '[o]ur beliefs are constantly adjusted, renewed, extended and corrected as we learn more about the world and its inhabitants. And finally, there is language change'. Despite his technical shortcomings, the data Stetkevych discusses are informative.

²⁰ According to Holes (2004a: 38), '[m]uch foreign lexical, phraseological, and even syntactic influence has been exerted on MSA in recent years as a result of loan translation from European languages'.

²¹ Pre-Islamic Arabic is the cover term for all varieties of Arabic spoken in the Arabian Peninsula until immediately after the Arab conquests in the 7th century C.E. (El-Sharkawy 2008: 689). A number of interesting examples regarding semantic development in pre-Islamic poetry have been collected by Zarzour (2001) in which she focuses on the semantic field of Arabic moral values.

In sum, as Esseesy (2009: 165) states, ‘medieval Arabic grammarians did pay attention to instances of polysemous words and their various extensions by cataloguing putative cases encountered in Classical Arabic’. So we can learn from the previous arguments that a strong relationship between polysemy/homonymy and semantic change has been reported in the Arabic literature since the medieval period but that it has not been studied in a systematic way. In fact, words are open to different semantic interpretations depending on the context.

2.3 Polysemy and Semantic Change in Kuwaiti Arabic

Of the few research studies that have investigated the semantics of Kuwaiti Arabic, polysemy and semantic change have not been examined in much detail. In his now classic work, folklorist al-Ayyoub (1982: 337-341) included a section in his Kuwaiti Arabic vocabulary book entitled ‘words which have three or more senses’ in which he lists 32 Kuwaiti polysemes/homonyms. One of the limitations of al-Ayyoub’s explanation is that he does not explain why and how these words proliferate. By way of illustration, he shows that the colloquial verb *nigašš* carries the following five senses: ‘to target, to engrave, to carve, to pick one’s teeth, to remove spines/needles from skin’ (ibid. 339).

Al-Sab‘ān’s (1983: 8) book on semantics is the first academic attempt to study the semantics of the Kuwaiti dialect. Regarding ‘homonymy’, she names a section of her book *al-muštarak al-lafḍi* (1983: 98) and glosses it with the English term ‘homonymy’. She recognises 35 Kuwaiti words that are *alfāḍ muštaraka* ‘homonymous’ in KA; however, only 21 of these are actually polysemous. The author offers no explanation for the distinction between homonymy and polysemy. Nevertheless, the mechanisms of change that al-Sab‘ān (1983: 98-104) observes in the spoken Arabic of Kuwait are the following:

- 1) Metaphorical transfer
- 2) Semantic transfer (semantic broadening and semantic specialisation)
- 3) Lexical borrowings
- 4) Language and dialect contact (the influx of foreign communities in Kuwait)

It can be noticed from the four factors that the first three are purely linguistic, while the fourth factor is a social one. Al-Sab‘ān tells us that one of the vital reasons for meaning proliferation is metaphorical transfer and extension. In the following paragraphs, I will illustrate each of the four factors with an example provided by al-Sab‘ān (1983).

First, an example of a metaphorical transfer is the word *šabba*, which has two meanings: ‘lump of alum’ and ‘lamp post’. There is no obvious connection between the two senses except that both the lump of alum and the ‘light bulb’ of the lamp post are bright white. Therefore, the ‘lamp post’ sense is a metaphorical extension of the ‘lump of alum’ because, from a hearsay point of view, lumps of alum have been used in the country (e.g. in folk medicine) long before street lighting was installed in Kuwait (cf. Khalaf 1989: 160-161).

A second factor that causes meaning extension is semantic transfer/shift. Two types of semantic shift are discussed here: semantic broadening (i.e. widening of meaning) and semantic specialisation (i.e. narrowing of meaning). An example of semantic broadening is the word *mulla*, which has two senses: ‘a Muslim teacher of religion and holy law’, and ‘any religious man’. So the semantic broadening here is the process by which the meaning of *mulla* becomes broader or more inclusive than its earlier meaning. Therefore, the meaning is no longer limited to Muslim teachers of religion and holy law, but to religious men in general. An example of semantic specialisation is the word *lazga* meaning ‘sticking plaster’ and, by extension, ‘a person who follows another person in a way that is annoying’. The term *lazga* designates any sticking object. For instance, *lazzāg* is ‘sticky tape’ in KA, or as an adjective: *bētkum lāzig fīnna* ‘your house is next to ours’. However, *lazga* in Kuwaiti has been specialised to mean ‘a sticking plaster’ and then metaphorically extended to mean somebody who is characterised as being *lazga* (i.e. ‘a human sticker’) for being interfering and for getting under somebody’s skin.

The third factor that causes meaning extension is lexical borrowing, and this is illustrated by the word *istād*,²² which has three senses: ‘head of a construction site’, ‘teacher’, and ‘stadium’. The head of a construction site is called *istād* in KA and this is derived from the Persian استاد meaning ‘master, teacher, tutor; artificer, manufacturer, artisan; barber, etc.’ (Steingass 1892: 49; Frayḥa 1973: 2; Holes 2004a: 306). For instance, *istād* (and *istād*) *l-īnglēzī* ‘instructor of English’ is again borrowed from the same Persian root. In addition, football has been the Gulf’s most popular sport since the 1950s. Therefore, the large building where people watch football matches is called *istād*, and this time it is an adaptation of the English word ‘stadium’. As can be seen, the ‘teacher’ sense is derived from and linked to ‘the head of a construction site’ sense (i.e. polysemy), but the ‘stadium’ sense is ultimately borrowed from the English word ‘stadium’ (i.e. homonymy).

²² Holes (2005b: 119) records *astada* ‘skill, knowledge’ in Bahrain which derives from the same root.

The final factor that causes meaning extension in KA is due to the influx of the non-Kuwaiti labour force. The population of Kuwait was *ca.* 4 million in August 2015, of whom 1,292,489, or 31 per cent, are Kuwaiti by nationality.²³ The rest of the population is a shifting multinational mix of foreign workers.²⁴ Five decades ago, Johnstone (1964: 88) observed that ‘the external influence would seem to have been the speech of the educated Palestinians, of whom there are large numbers in Kuwait and who seem to have influenced the Kuwaiti dialect itself’. Among the many non-local forms, al-Sab‘ān (1983) notes the use of the Levantine word *mazza* (i.e. ‘meze’) by KA speakers and lists two meanings for this word: ‘taste’ and ‘appetisers’. Hence, the word *mazza* is usually found in menus of Middle Eastern, Greek, and Turkish restaurants in Kuwait, meaning ‘a variety of hot and cold dishes, served together at the beginning of a meal’. Contemporary Kuwaiti speakers usually replace *mazza* with the literary borrowing *muqabbalāt* ‘starters (i.e. ‘hors d’oeuvre’)’. Nevertheless, both senses of *mazza*, i.e. ‘taste’ and ‘appetisers’, are clearly related to one another because they both refer to food tasting and eating.

Apart from the four linguistic factors that cause meaning extension, al-Sab‘ān (1983: 39-75) explains in later chapters ten external and socio-cultural factors that shape the spoken Arabic of Kuwait, namely, the discovery of oil, migration, education, the media, healthcare, social care, commerce, means of transportation, sport clubs, and the establishment of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL). It seems to me that there are three key events that have helped mould the direction of change, namely, the discovery of oil (1938), independence from Britain (1961), and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990), all of which will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

2.4 Other Sources of Arabic Polysemy

After having discussed the historical and literary strands of Arabic polysemy and semantic change, I wish to briefly pay attention to a long-established lexical-semantic relation called *al-’aḍḍād* in subsection 2.4.1. Additionally, I will look at the religious aspect regarding the treatment of polysemy by introducing the salience of polysemy in historical studies of Arabic from an exegetical tradition in subsection 2.4.2. Finally, subsection 2.4.3 will give a short

²³ According to the latest statistics published by the Kuwaiti Public Authority for Civil Information, <<http://www.paci.gov.kw>>.

²⁴ With a flood of expatriate and Gastarbeiter Arabs, chiefly from Egypt and the Levant, and Asian foreign workers from the Indian subcontinent and East Asia, Kuwait City’s population is a polyglot community and a type of a ‘mixed’ dialect can be heard as well in areas such as Ḥawallī, Sālmiyya, Murgāb, Khaiṭān, Farwāniyya, and Jilīb l-Shyūkh.

overview of a kind of linguistic creativity of semantic extension based on words with double meaning since polysemy ‘is typically the result of lexical creativity’ (Cowie 2009: 485).

2.4.1 *al-’Aḍḍād*

Al-Suyūṭī (n.d. 387-402) discusses a lexical relation called *’aḍḍād* (plural of *ḍidd*); he states that هو نوع من المشترك ‘it is a type of homonymy’ and it is a form of polysemy, but where a single word acquires distinct and completely opposite senses. Here, antonymy is not treated as a lexical opposite; what al-Suyūṭī refers to is a subtype of semantic opposition whereby a lexeme carries two contrary senses, and not two contrary words (i.e. ‘bi-polar sense relation’). Such words have been called ‘enantiosemanitics’ or ‘voces mediae’ (Justice 1987: 195) and ‘contronymy’ (Karaman 2008). In the literature, the term ‘contronymy’ tends to be used to refer to ‘a form of polysemy that can be defined as sense opposition at the micro-level. This occurs when a minimum of two senses of a polysemous lexical item contradict each other’ (Karaman 2008: 175). This phenomenon of sense opposition has been reported in Classical Arabic, Turkish, German, and English (Karaman 2008: 189).²⁵ In Classical Arabic, we find the contronym *al-ḡawn* means ‘black’ and ‘white’; thus, ‘black’ and ‘white’ are antonyms. Also, the contronym *as-sudfa* in the language of the Tamīm tribe means ‘dark’ while in the language of the Qays tribe it means ‘light’; hence, ‘dark’ and ‘light’ are antonyms.²⁶ Another example of what is meant by *al-’aḍḍād* is the word *aṣ-ṣarīm* which means both ‘morning’ and ‘evening’.

Al-Suyūṭī continues to provide rich examples of this semantic phenomenon. As pointed out in Justice’s study (1987: 195), ‘[t]he great majority are no longer used, though one still finds dictionary entries like *zaraḥa* ‘walk slowly; walk fast’’. Haywood (1965: 74) notes that al-Jawharī (d. 1007 AD) includes in his *Ṣaḥāḥ* dictionary a number of *’aḍḍād* collected from poetry and from Arab speech of the desert such as *ša’aba* ‘to unite and to separate’. Among the eleven works on *’aḍḍād* listed by Baalbaki (2014: 194), the earliest one was compiled in the 9th century by a famous student of Sībawayhi (d. 796 AD) called Quṭrub (d. 821 AD); his

²⁵ In English, Murphy (2003: 173) uses the term ‘Janus words’ to refer to words that are their own opposites and she provides the following English examples: *temper* ‘to harden/to soften’, *cleave* ‘to stick together/to force apart’, and *sanction* ‘to approve/to censure’. Murphy (2003: 250) also notes that other terms for this lexical-semantic relation have been proposed, including ‘auto-antonyms’, ‘enantiosemy’, and more humorously, ‘antagonyms’. Karaman (2008: 174) adds the following terms to the list: ‘antilogy [...] enantiodromic word, fence-sitter, amphibolous word, enantiodronymy, enantiodrome, pseudo-opposite, self-antonymy, opposonym, and self-contradicting word’.

²⁶ Rabin (1951: 9) writes: ‘[b]orrowing from different dialects was proffered as an explanation for the *’aḍḍād*’.

book is entitled *al-ʿAḍḍād* where he lists 218 *ʿaḍḍād* items and ‘he frequently adduces textual evidence mostly from the Qurʾān and poetry’ (ibid.; Cohen 1961: 1).

In Qurʾānic Arabic, Hanna et al. (1997: 7) quote some examples of *ʿaḍḍād* from the Qurʾān such as the ‘contronymous’ verb *ištarā* meaning ‘buy; sell’. Makram (2009: 103) has published an important book on Qurʾānic homonymy/polysemy and explains, for instance, that *māʾ* has three interpretations: ‘rain’, ‘human being’, and ‘Qurʾān’. Moreover, a great deal of these *ʿaḍḍād* has been captured in Qunbos’ (1987) specialised dictionary. For example, he glosses *baṣīr* ‘blind; sighted’ as a word meaning both one thing and its opposite (1987: 21).

In his analysis of Arabic lexicon, Beeston (2006: 101) clarifies that ‘some words have a generalized meaning capable of taking an additional coloration from the context’. This can be illustrated briefly by the word *ṭarab* ‘strong emotion’, ‘and only the context will reveal whether the emotion is one of joy or sorrow’ (ibid.). In addition, Beeston (ibid.) shows that *ṭulūʿ* means ‘climbing’, and in ancient Arabic (though no longer in Standard Arabic) could be used in contexts where ‘climbing down’ is envisaged and not ‘climbing up’. But Beeston (ibid.) notes that ‘[t]he Arab lexicographers however have registered *ṭulūʿ* as a word with the contradictory meanings of ‘ascending’ and ‘descending’.

Cadora (1979: 5) uses the term ‘semantic dispolarity’ to refer to Classical Arabic *ʿaḍḍād* and shows that a Beiruti speaker from Lebanon uses the form *ballaš* for ‘he began’,²⁷ which is compatible with the non-cognate *bada* in Jiddan Arabic as spoken in Saudi Arabia where the cognate *ballaš* has the opposite meaning, ‘he finished’.²⁸

As has been noted, we can argue that the words presented here are contronymous lexemes and ‘[l]anguage change is one important reason for the occurrence of contronymy in natural language’ (Karaman 2008: 175).

²⁷ Turkish borrowing via metathesis: *başlamak* ‘to begin’.

²⁸ Piamenta (2000: 81) notes that *abbad* is ‘to annihilate’ in Judaeo-Jerusalem Arabic while it means ‘to make lasting’ in Jerusalem Arabic. In the Kuwaiti dialect, I could only locate one colloquial example of the *ʿaḍḍād* type as reported by al-Ayyoub (1982: 119, 1997: 471) where he lists the Kuwaiti verb *kaššar* meaning both ‘to grin from ear to ear’ and ‘to frown’ (cf. Piamenta 2000: 82, 236). For a comparative study on Semitic *ʿaḍḍād*, see Kamāl (1972: 69-97).

2.4.2 Qur'ānic Exegesis

Qur'ānic exegesis or *tafsīr al-Qur'ān* is the elucidation and interpretation carried out in order to understand the book of Islamic scripture and its commandments, the Holy Qur'ān. The *tafsīr* is carried out in linguistic, juristic, and theological fields. 'Explanation of the text is achieved by simple juxtaposition of the Qur'ānic phrase and its interpretation [...] in terms that are easier to understand than the original' (Versteegh 1997: 234-5). In Islam, there are different schools of *tafsīr*. While a variety of *tafsīrs* have been suggested, theologians are divided into a myriad of sects, each commenting on the Qur'ān with their own point of view. The meaning of the text is identified with the intention of the speaker (i.e. God's intention regarding His revelation), and the commentator's task is to elucidate this intention (Versteegh 1997: 235). An implication of this is the possibility that the classic *tafsīrs* include linguistic and grammatical explanations of many words. However, each *mufasssīr* (pl. *mufasssīrūn*) 'exegete' clarifies the meanings of the words within the verses differently, with the aim of conveying the same parable. Therefore, it seems to me that because we have different schools of *tafsīr* and different *mufasssīrūn*, this has led to the generation of multiple interpretations (i.e. multiple meanings). In addition, as pointed out earlier, the Qur'ān contains evidence of semantic variation on the basis of tribal distinctions.

The problem does not stop here; the Qur'ān has been translated from Arabic into other natural languages from the perspective of Arabs and Arabists. As alQinai (2012: 83) points out:

Quranic translation has always been fraught with inaccuracies and the skewing of sensitive theological, cultural and historical connotations owing to the peculiar mechanism of stress, semantico-syntactic ambiguity, prosodic and acoustic features, the mesh of special rhetorical texture and culture-bound references.

Apart from the exegetical tradition, polysemy can be determined by means of collocations.²⁹ In consequence, collocations narrow the choices for the translator because 'some words may be erroneously rendered as synonymous when considered in isolation' (alQinai 2012: 99). In Chapters 7 and 8, I will test the robustness of this assumption by looking at the kinds of polysemies that arise depending on context and on the syntagmatic possibilities and relations which are based on relationships of co-occurrence and association.

²⁹ However, interest in collocation as a linguistic phenomenon in Arabic dates back to the work of traditional Arab philologists, 'who noted its existence in Arabic but did not assign it a label' (el-Gemei 2006: 434).

Moreover, in an exegetical and socio-anthropological tradition, Wasserstein (2003) investigates the semantic evolution of the Arabic word *khalîfa* ‘caliph’ as a case study and the interplay between meaning change and reference change. Presumably, because it is so central to religious life, he analyses the history of the word, the origins of the use of the title *khalîfa*, and concludes that *khalîfa* has acquired and lost a wide range of meanings over the last millennium and a half but ‘without ever losing entirely the flavor of its origin’ (Wasserstein 2003: 129). In addition, ‘the purely semantic, lexicographical aspect of the term, shorn of the religious element, remains impressively durable’ (ibid.).

From the previous discussion, it can be observed that there is certainly polysemy as we may understand the term when we look at the debates about the meanings of words and phrases in different readings throughout the history of the Qur’ân. But equally, if we have a religious institution, that may not be subject to interpretation and therefore to the derivation of multiple meanings.

2.4.3 Wordplay

Wordplay is widely understood as a clever and funny way of using words. Some of these words are quite frequently used with an extension of meaning. Holes (1986: 22) attempts to show phonological variation in Bahrain; his conversational material contains instances of extended joking, wordplay, and riddles. He reports that one of his speakers ‘began with a play on words and led to a series of jokes based upon words with a double meaning’ (1986: 23). What we can infer from this is that the Bahraini speaker has creatively played on words to generate extended meanings of certain vocabulary items. He exemplifies this with the word *saham* which means ‘share’ and ‘arrow’. The following dialogue will make this clear:³⁰

A: *la, išrab saħmi*

‘No, (you) drink my share.’

B: *ašrab saħmič ə?*

‘I drink your share (arrow)?’

A: *ey*

‘Yes’

B: *‘adil – ila ‘aṭētəni saħmič kataltni! (laughs) is-saħm yaktil!*

‘All right – if you give me your arrow, you’ll kill me (laughs). Arrows kill!’

³⁰ This interview appears in full in Holes (2005b: 313).

It seems to me that playing on words is a creative technique of generating new senses from existing ones. The meaning of a word arises holistically from the entirety of speakers' world knowledge concerning that word. This may lead to further semantic innovations. Stock (1984: 134) argues that '[t]he fact that we can make and recognize puns successfully depends on such a state of affairs'. As Holes (1986: 23) points out, some of his speakers continue to play on some words like *hawa* 'desire, air', *flūs* 'money, branding iron', and *sawwa fiṅṅān gahwa* 'to make a cup of coffee, to make a coffee-cup'.

For light relief, Smart (1990: 115) records humorous instances of semantic extension in Gulf Pidgin Arabic based on printed material that appeared in certain Gulf newspapers during the year 1986. The following are clear examples of semantic/metaphorical transfer:

- a) *wāḡid tārīx* 'for a long period' (lit. 'much date [of time]').
- b) A jocular song title runs: *ḥubbak fī iqāma* 'your love has residential status' (lit. 'your love is here to stay').
- c) A hen-pecked husband expresses fear: *mumkin ib'ād barra bēt* 'deportation from the house is possible' (lit. 'going outside the house is possible').

Some of my Kuwaiti speakers have been creative in terms of patterns of use of the investigated verbs. In other words, my conversational material contains a number of innovative examples which have not been captured in local Kuwaiti dictionaries. Although these examples are not based on wordplay, they nonetheless show some linguistic creativity.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has only skimmed the surface of the literature and ideas available on polysemy and semantic change in Arabic. However, the study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of polysemy and homonymy in the history of Arabic and the controversy that engenders their treatment at the level of the colloquial and classical language. Therefore, it is important to realise that the majority of the early scholars accepted as truth the existence in Arabic of homonymous polysemic words, but had different opinions.

I have also looked at the linguistic historiography with respect to the historical treatment of semantic change as far as Classical Arabic is concerned. As a result of looking at the different controversial and debatable ways in which people have looked at these matters, what do we conclude about the historical treatment of polysemy in Arabic to this point? In Arabic

linguistics, particularly in the history of Arabic, polysemy and homonymy are enduring matters of analysis and discussion. In other words, polysemy and homonymy are germane to historical semantics. However, Arab philologists neglected many aspects of multiplicity of meaning which now occupy a prominent position in modern semantics. The analytical approach observed in modern Arabic studies seems to mirror that of the Western traditions that have examined the role of polysemy in semantic change. Admittedly, several multithematic works containing material on Arabic *muštarak*, almost without exception, have called those Arabic terms that refer to lexical items which have the same form but differ in meaning *al-muštarak al-lafḍī* ‘homonymy’ (cf. Baalbaki 2014: 198-204). It is clear that linguists have traditionally struggled in their efforts to distinguish polysemy from homonymy through straightforward analysis. I will interpret the lexical meaning of *al-muštarak al-lafḍī*, albeit in a very cursory way: the literal meaning of *al-muštarak* is ‘common, joint, collective, shared, mutual’. As to the literal meaning of *al-lafḍī*, it is an adjectival form of the Arabic noun *lafḍ*. Kouloughli (2007: 623) lists the original senses of *lafḍ* as follows: ‘to spit, reject, vomit’ and, in the context of speech activities, ‘to emit words, to utter’. Notice the term *lafḍ* is polysemous in itself. As a consequence of looking at all of these, how should we define polysemy and homonymy now? The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the phrase *al-muštarak al-lafḍī* combines both features of polysemy and homonymy as far as Arabic literature is concerned. Additionally, it has been reported that throughout the history of Arabic linguistics, ‘the term *lafḍ* continued to serve as the antonym of *ma‘nā* [meaning], indicating the physical correlate of whatever abstract notion *ma‘nā* was currently standing for’ (Versteegh 1997: 274).

Although we do not have at our disposal a general, encompassing study of the history of Arabic lexical semantics, in the preceding sections, I have, however, described some key terms, thinkers, and texts that are most likely to crop up in Arabic semantics reading. I have provided some literary and colloquial examples to elucidate the role of polysemy in semantic change in the Arabic language and dialects. Upon completion of reading the literature, the reader should have noticed that a fair number of the terms and thinkers discussed are from the philosophical as well as lexicographical traditions (the latter being a sister science of lexical semantics).

Ali (1987) explores the techniques of vocabulary expansion in modern Arabic in technical and scientific fields. It was found that the paths of lexical growth and expansion are trifold:

ta' rīb 'Arabization' or 'assimilation of foreign words, *qiyās* 'formation by analogy', and *naħt* 'blending of two or more words into one unit'. However, from the classification developed by Arab philologists, one can define polysemy/homonymy as that which occurs when a word has more than one meaning, regardless of whether:

- i. The two meanings are cognate. For example, the word X means both 'A' and 'B'.
- ii. The two meanings are opposite. For example, the expression X means either 'A' or 'B'.
- iii. Areal/tribal variation: the two meanings belong to more than one dialect or tribe. For example, the word X means 'A' in some dialects or tribes and 'B' in some others.
- iv. They are not of the same gender. For example, the form X is used sometimes as a 'masculine', and sometimes as a 'feminine' form.

Almost all the senses of the words examined in this chapter are based on dictionary definitions. What makes this study significant is that it investigates polysemy and semantic innovation and change in the Kuwaiti dialect not in terms of just semantic analysis, but also in terms of a socio-historical account and the explanation of how these things come about.

Consequently, my spoken data will provide enough contexts for me to make an inference about what triggers particular innovative uses. I can account for the spoken data by using lexical semantic categories and features. The question is: how do we account for the difference in acceptability and interpretability of the same expression for different speakers? Presumably, because I have real speakers, real communities, real ages, and real social factors, then I can tie my historical-philological framework to the sociolinguistic characteristics. Indeed, polysemy is hugely important in the historical treatment of semantic change in Arabic. I am going to look at change from a socio-historical perspective because I will look at native speakers.

But first things first. Chapter 3 surveys the lexical variation and change in modern Arabic dialects. It also explores the structure of the Kuwaiti lexicon throughout the modern history of Kuwait in terms of such contextual factors such as diglossia and religion, and the changing socio-demographic factors. Lexical variation in KA is quite considerable. For instance, amongst others, the word for 'tired' has the following renderings: *ta' bān*, *'ayzān*, *halkān*, *mitlayyiš*. Therefore, it should be emphasised that the following chapter is part and parcel of the current chapter.

Chapter 3

Lexical Variation and Change in Modern Arabic Dialects

3. Background

In line with Anīs' (1984) observations discussed in Chapter 2, Ibrahim (2005) collected her material from native speakers of Arabic, consisting of their stories of incidents of misunderstanding occurring due to polysemy. The spoken Arabic dialects covered in her study include Algerian, Egyptian, Lebanese, Moroccan, and Syrian. She investigated two semantic aspects of these dialects, namely, lexical expressions (phrases) and lexical items (words). However, Ibrahim does not offer an adequate explanation for the different polysemies that a lexeme may have. Regarding lexical items, Ibrahim (2005: 56-62) discusses twenty items, including nouns and verbs. The following food nouns are due to metaphorical/semantic transfer:

- a) *makdūs* → 'kind of pickle' in Syria / 'dish made of eggplant' in Palestine
- b) *muluxiyya* → 'green soup' in Egypt / 'okra' in Morocco
- c) *lubiya* → 'black-eyed peas' in Lebanon / 'cowpea' in Egypt

From the above examples, it appears that Ibrahim fails to fully define what each lexical item means. For instance, *makdūs* is not simply a pickle or eggplant; rather, *makdūs* refers to tiny, tangy eggplants stuffed with walnuts, red pepper, garlic, olive oil, and salt. This shows a need to be explicit about exactly what is meant by such a word. Nevertheless, we notice from Ibrahim's explanation that each word has the same referent but in each case they are localised. In other words, the three lexemes (*makdūs*, *muluxiyya*, *lubiya*) are all food nouns but have local differences. If we look closely at these lexemes, we can clearly see that they share very common elements, e.g. both 'black-eyed peas' and 'cowpeas' are hyponyms, and together are co-hyponyms of *lubiya*, and they have become localised and domesticated in each individual country. Ibrahim (2005: 57) comments on the above examples: 'these examples are either cases of metaphorical transfer or a simple switch whereby the names of the food items were switched by the time a food item reached another geographical destination'. Holes (2005b: 71) supports this notion with the example of 'date-palm' and notes that in eastern Arabia 'the vocabulary associated with growing and tending date-palm, and harvesting its fruit, is similar from one Gulf country to another, though with detail differences'.

In Kuwait, the fruit *baṭṭīx* is ‘melon’ (al-Ḥanafī 1964: 44) and ‘watermelon’ in Syria (Stowasser and Ani 2004: 259). Also, the term ‘*eyš* (< the root ‘-y-š ‘life’) is applied to mean ‘rice’ in Kuwait (al-Ḥanafī 1964: 265; al-Sab‘ān 1983: 95) and the domestic ‘loaf of bread’ in Egypt¹ (Hinds and Badawi 1986: 613; Behnstedt and Woidich 2012: 236) since it is the staple food in these countries.² Furthermore, take the word *harīsa*; in Kuwait³ and Bahrain it refers to a ‘dish of cracked wheat and meat, crushed and mixed with oil into a dough-like consistency (and typically eaten in Ramadan)’ (Holes 2001: 542). In Tunisia, Libya and Algeria, *harīsa* refers to a ‘hot chilli pepper paste’. In Egypt, *harīsa* refers to ‘any of a number of sweet confections made with flour, clarified butter, and sugar’ (Hinds and Badawi 1986: 904), (cf. Drower 1956: 38, 42). Because *harīsa* has more than one referent in North Africa and the Middle East, it is a perfect example of lexical variation.

This lexical variation is not exclusive to food nouns. For instance, *sēkal* (< English ‘cycle’) is ‘motorbike’ in Kuwait⁴ and ‘bicycle’ in Bahrain (Holes 2001: 260), the United Arab Emirates (Ḥanḍal 1998: 343), and Yemen (Qafisheh 2000: 328). This is because KA already contains a word for ‘bicycle’, which is commonly known as *gāri* (< Hindi ‘गाड़ी’). Hence, in the Arabic-speaking world, a single referent may have different labels. Brown (2007: 350) states that ‘the development of polysemy is a common means whereby languages encode new referents or alter the encoding of existing ones’. As remarked by Beeston (2006: 104), ‘Arabic has on the whole been fairly resistant to the importation of foreign words’. The prevailing tendency has always been ‘to assign new senses to existing words or to make new coinages from the existing resources of the language’.

Furthermore, Badawi et al. (2003: 743) identify some regional lexical variations of a historical or geographical origin but without indicating the regional specificity of the items. Consequently, ‘there may be variation between synonyms in the different regions of the Arab world’. For instance, they note that the HOTEL has the following four lexical realisations: ‘*otel**, *funduq**, *lokanda*, and *nazl*. Similarly, AUTOBUS can be expressed in four ways: ‘*otobīs*, *bāš**, *omnībūs*, and *ḥāfila*; the asterisked items are used throughout Kuwait (cf. Behnstedt and Woidich 2012: 433).

¹ Mahgoub (1968: 18, 59) records the Cairene proverb ‘*iddī l’ēš li xābbāzu, wālāw yākūl nūṣṣu* ‘Give your dough [lit ‘bread’] to the baker though he may eat half of it’.

² Cf. Drower (1956: 43); Smeaton (1973: 14); al-Ayyoub (1982: 190, 196); al-Jabboury (1998: 39).

³ Daniels (1971: 110) gives the following recipe for *harīsa* as noted in Kuwait in the 1960s: ‘A pudding of rice or wheat cereal cooked with sugar and cinnamon and reeking with sheep-fat’.

⁴ Al-Ayyoub (1982: 303) lists the onomatopoeic term *ḥiḡḡāḡī*, an obsolete Kuwaiti word for ‘motorbike’.

Vocabulary differences within one area are one source of common patterns of semantic variation and lexical variation. The differences are, however, not restricted to one country; these differences are also evident between different communities distinguished by geographical and social factors such as ethnicity, religious and sectarian affiliations, urban/rural, i.e. by national boundaries. To make my argument clear, I believe it is important to distinguish between lexical change and dialectal lexical variation. The following examples are based on dialectal differences that correlate closely with religious and sectarian allegiances as reported in geographically diverse varieties of spoken Arabic, viz. Iraqi, Bahraini, Sudanese, and Moroccan. They were chosen as representative of four distinct dialect groups in Mesopotamia, Eastern Arabia, the sub-Saharan, and North Africa, respectively.⁵

However, it should be pointed out that the asterisked lexical items in all the word lists presented in the following subsections are widely understood and used in the Kuwait City dialect. With respect to mutual intelligibility in those Arabic dialects, some lexical items presented may or may not be mutually intelligible to Kuwaiti interlocutors. Nonetheless, educated Kuwaiti speakers have two or more overlapping lexical systems. According to Cadora (1979: 7-8), one system is ‘mobile in the spoken form variety’, which Kuwaitis understand and use; another is ‘mobile in the written and spoken forms (literary)’, which Kuwaitis understand and occasionally use; and the third is ‘immobile’, which Kuwaitis understand but do not use. This last system is acquired through exposure to other varieties through various modes of communication including ‘magazines, books, television, radio, and movies, the latter three including varietal forms’ (ibid.). For instance, one of the meanings of ‘much, many’ in Iraqi Arabic is *hwāya* which is ‘immobile’ in Kuwait, i.e. it is widely understood in Kuwait through Iraqi songs but not used at all by Kuwaiti indigenous speakers; for this reason it is not asterisked below.

⁵ Fischer and Jastrow (1980) outline the major groupings of Arabic dialects according to phonological and morphological features, whereas Behnstedt and Woidich (2011, 2012, 2014, [2016/7 forthcoming]) present the major groupings of Arabic dialects according to lexical features. To my knowledge, the first attempt to show lexical variation across Arabic dialects is the 18-page mimeograph by Charles A. Ferguson and Majed Said, *Lexical Variants in Arabic Dialects* (Harvard University, 1958).

3.1 Iraqi Arabic⁶

The Middle East is ‘the land of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, and thus the home of three great monotheistic religions of universal outlook – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam’ (Dougherty 1980: 281). Iraq is historically diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, sects, and languages. Before 1948, the city of Baghdad exemplified an interesting linguistic situation where three distinct communal dialects intersected: the Christian (CB), the Jewish⁷ (JB), and the dominant Muslim (MB). In his masterly monograph, Blanc⁸ (1964: 133-159) attempts to characterise the relationship among the vocabularies in these major religious communities. For historical and comparative interest, Blanc (1964: 145-159) lists a number of lexical items which may or may not be shared by the three communities; below I have selected some examples to show the lexical variation in the area.⁹

MB	JB	CB	Gloss
<i>kanīsa*</i>	<i>knīsi</i>	<i>bī‘a</i>	‘church’
<i>hdūm*</i>	<i>ḥwās</i>	<i>ḥwās</i>	‘clothes’
<i>bībi¹⁰/jedda*</i>	<i>jedda*</i>	<i>jedda*</i>	‘grandmother’
<i>ḍamḥ</i>	<i>xaba</i>	-	‘hide’
<i>hwāya</i>	<i>ktīg</i>	<i>ktīg</i>	‘much, many’
<i>xašem*</i>	<i>enf</i>	<i>xašem*</i>	‘nose’
<i>ḍabb</i>	<i>farr¹¹</i>	<i>dabb</i>	‘throw down’

One interesting observation that can be drawn from the above list is that ‘hide’ is *ḍamḥ* in Muslim Baghdadi whereas it is *xaba* in Jewish Baghdadi, but neither occurs in Christian Baghdadi. Also, *xaba* and *ḍamḥ* ‘hide’ are not attested in my Kuwaiti material, because *xašš*

⁶ The term ‘Iraq’ here refers to the present political entity. In pre-1918 literature, English language works use the term ‘Mesopotamia’ before WW1 for roughly the same area, the term ‘Iraq’ appearing only after 1918 (Blanc 1962: 52-53).

⁷ The once thriving Sephardic Jewish communities of Iraq have all but disappeared since 1948.

⁸ Johnstone (1966: 620) describes Haim Blanc’s (1964) study as ‘a most important monograph in the field of comparative dialectology’ while Holes (2004a: 361) describes it as ‘a landmark in the study of variation in Arabic’.

⁹ According to Blanc (1964: 9), Jewish Baghdadi and Christian Baghdadi ‘are spoken respectively by Jews and Christians largely at home with coreligionists, while M[uslim], the dominant dialect, is used in public in intercommunal situations by the many Jews and Christians who have a command for it’.

¹⁰ The kinship term *bībi* ‘grandmother’ occurred in my material when I recorded the Qinā‘āt (of the Suhūl tribe) colloquial of Arabic as spoken in Kuwait City; it is also noted to occur in Iraq (Blanc 1964: 148; Abu-Haidar 1991: 186; Maamouri 2013: 63). Madan (1903: 162) similarly glosses *bibi* ‘grandmother’ in Swahili as spoken in Zanzibar. Blanc (1964: 148) shows that *bībi* comes from the Persian *bibi* ‘matron, grandmother’. Harrell (2004: 7), however, glosses the homonym *bībi* as ‘turkey’ in Moroccan Arabic. In addition, the female proper name ‘Bībī’ is common among the urbanites in Kuwait.

¹¹ This word is used in Kuwait to mean ‘spin, cause to revolve; run about hither and thither’.

is the local form for ‘hide’. On the other hand, all three Baghdadi communities share the kinship term *jedda* ‘grandmother’, presumably, because it is a pan-Arab term.

Within the same locality, Abu-Haidar (1988: 159) records male/female lexical variation based on the Muslim Arabic dialect spoken in the old Baghdad quarter of Bāb al-Shaykh. She points out that old women (OW) use the old forms and young men (YM) and young women (YW) use more standard ones. Old men (OM) seem to vary in their choice of lexical items.

OM/OW	YM/YW	Gloss
<i>skamli</i>	<i>kursi</i> *	‘chair’
<i>mhaffa</i>	<i>mirwaḥa</i> *	‘fan’
<i>ṣiqat</i> *	<i>risab</i> *	‘he failed (an examination)’
<i>ydugg</i> *	<i>yi ‘zif</i> *	‘he plays (a musical instrument)’
<i>ḥōš</i>	<i>bēt</i> *	‘house’
<i>čarxači</i>	<i>ḥāris</i> *	‘night watchman’
<i>kāḡad</i>	<i>waraq</i> *	‘paper’

It is noticeable that the asterisked Kuwaiti forms are typically associated with youth. The reason for this is that young men and women are contemporary speakers and the vocabulary items associated with them are somehow pan-Arabic and standard. Moreover, a couple of observations should be given here regarding the terms *ḥōš* and *mhaffa*. In Kuwait City, *ḥōš* occurs with the meaning ‘courtyard’ and not ‘house’ (cf. Altoma 1969: 100). Also, the word *mhaffa* (*mahaffa* in the local pronunciation) occurs with the meaning ‘paper fan’ in KA and not ‘fan’ in general, since *banka*¹² is the local form for ‘(ceiling) fan’. However, in the following Bahraini Arabic word list, the meaning of *ḥōš* is ‘enclosure, compound (house)’, which is closely related to the Kuwaiti meaning.

3.2 Bahraini Arabic

In Eastern Arabia, al-Tajir (1982: 132) identifies lexical variation between the Shī‘ī Bahārna (B) and the Sunnī ‘Arab (A) communities in the Bahrain archipelago. I will select some of the lexical items to show the lexical variation. We will see that the majority of the Sunnī ‘Arab forms occur in the Kuwaiti dialect. The reason for this is arguably because the Sunnī

¹² Dickson (1970: 75) records *punkah* for Kuwait. For some speakers, when *n* is followed by *k*, it is actualised as a kind of ‘velar nasal’ that I may transcribe with the symbol /ŋ/. Examples from my data include: *ḥayka* ‘fan’, *ḥayk* ‘bank’. Cf. Mansour (1991: 65).

(orthodox) Muslims make up the predominant part of the Kuwaiti population in the State of Kuwait. Hence, one is more likely to encounter the Sunnī ‘Arab (A) forms in Kuwait City than the Shī‘ī Bahārna¹³ (B) ones.

B	A	Gloss
<i>ġarše</i>	<i>buṭil*</i>	‘bottle’
<i>sannūr(-a)</i>	<i>gaṭu/gaṭwa*</i>	‘cat’
<i>ixawwuf*</i>	<i>ixarri ‘*</i>	‘causing alarm or dread’ ¹⁴
<i>maškūk*</i>	<i>msakkar*</i>	‘closed, shut’
<i>ḥawi</i>	<i>ḥōš*</i>	‘enclosure, compound (house)’
<i>rama</i>	<i>gaṭṭ*</i>	‘he threw’
<i>rid wara*</i>	<i>waxxir*, tna ‘az*</i>	‘move back’
<i>ġafur</i>	<i>ġilīb*</i>	‘well’

It should be noted that in modern Kuwaiti, *ġarša* designates a ‘glass jar’ rather than ‘bottle’. Also, Holes (2005b: 152) notes that *ġarša* is ‘now the region-wide word for a small bottle (e.g. of soft drink) but originally a small clay drinking vessel’. In addition, the Shī‘ī Bahārna form *rama* is used in Kuwait City with the meaning ‘to fire a gun or other weapon’ rather than ‘to throw’. Furthermore, al-Tajir (1982: 133) gives specimens of interdialectal variation between rural and urban forms of the Bahārna dialect of Arabic in Bahrain. I will select some of the lexical items to show the lexical variation. Note that the below urban form *miġlas* (properly pronounced *maġlis* in Kuwaiti) typically refers to *maġlis l-’umma* ‘the Kuwaiti Parliament (lit. National Assembly)’ in Kuwait.

Rural B	Urban B	Gloss
<i>ma ‘šūma</i>	<i>mugbara*</i>	‘graveyard’
<i>imzayyin</i>	<i>imḥassin*</i>	‘hairdresser’
<i>ṭamar*</i>	<i>naṭṭ*</i>	‘jumped over’
<i>dīwāniyye*</i>	<i>miġlas</i>	‘spacious sitting room’
<i>tdimm</i>	<i>tġaṭṭīh*</i>	‘you cover it’

¹³ ‘The term is an ethno-historical one: the Bahārna consider themselves to have been the ‘original’ inhabitants of the coastal regions of the Arabian Gulf’ (Holes 2010: 283). Thus, in Bahrain, the term Baḥrānī (pl. Bahārna) ‘denotes an Arabic-speaking Ja‘farī Shī‘ī’ (Holes 2001: xviii).

¹⁴ Also noted by Holes (2005b: 262).

By the same token, Holes (2001: xxxix-xlii) presents some community-based differences in vocabulary between the ‘Arab (A), or the indigenous Bahraini Sunnīs, and the Baḥārna (B), or the indigenous Bahraini Shī‘a, dialects of the island kingdom of Bahrain which stem from their different geographical origins. I will select a few examples to demonstrate the lexical variation.

A	B	Gloss
<i>ta’axxar</i> *	<i>mahal</i>	‘be late’
<i>xirġa</i> *	<i>xalaga</i>	‘cloth, rag’
<i>ḍahar</i>	<i>ṭila</i> *	‘to go out’
<i>mṭawwa</i> *	<i>mi’allim</i>	‘Quran teacher’

It is interesting to note that *ḍahar* means ‘to go out’ in the ‘Arab dialect of Bahrain while it means ‘back (part of body)’ in the Kuwait City dialect. Also, *mi’allim* is a ‘Quran teacher’ in the Baḥārna dialect and ‘a teacher or instructor’ in literary Arabic. However, *m’allim* in colloquial Kuwaiti means ‘teacher’, as well as ‘boss in a workshop, an office, etc.’, and by extension, *m’allim šawarma* ‘a shawarma/doner kebab/gyro maker’. Wehr (1976: 637) gives also ‘master of trade’ as one of the meanings of the word (cf. Rosenhouse 2007: 668).¹⁵

3.3 Sudanese Arabic

In North Africa, Geva-Kleinberger (2002: 185-186) discovered some vocabulary differences between two Judaeo-Arabic dialect groups in Sudan, i.e. Sudāni-Sudāni and Maṣri-Sudāni. I give below a few examples of these vocabulary differences. Note that the Maṣri-Sudāni *faraš* ‘butterfly’ is pronounced *farāša* in Kuwaiti because *faraš* is a verb meaning ‘to cover, spread out (a sheet, rug, etc.) over (a surface), furnish’. Also worthy of notice is the Sudāni-Sudāni item *tūt* ‘strawberry’, which is ‘raspberry’ in Kuwaiti.

Sudāni-Sudāni	Maṣri-Sudāni	Gloss
<i>samiḥ</i>	<i>ḥilu</i> *	‘beautiful’
<i>’abu-dagīg</i>	<i>faraš</i>	‘butterfly’
<i>māyzer</i>	<i>baxīl</i> *	‘miser’
<i>tūt</i>	<i>farāwla</i> *	‘strawberry’
<i>šēn</i> *	<i>waḥiṣ</i>	‘ugly’
<i>mustarāḥ</i>	<i>kabīné</i>	‘WC’

¹⁵ Fassberg (2010: 285) glosses *ma’allam* ‘teacher’ who functions also as a ‘rabbi, ritual slaughterer, cantor’ in the Jewish neo-Aramaic dialect of Challa. Cf. Piamenta (2000: 163).

3.4 Moroccan Arabic

Heath (2002: 123) presents key lexical items that distinguish Jewish (J) from Muslim (M) dialects of Moroccan Arabic (MA) which function widely as communal markers. I will, however, select some of the verbs to illustrate the J/M isoglosses. Note that the only items MA shares with KA are the Muslim forms *ḥətt* ‘put down’ and *šuf* ‘see’ (with appropriate modifications in pronunciation) because of two reasons. First, it seems to me that because Kuwait is an Islamic state, these forms will thus be present in both KA and M dialects; second, KA and MA belong to two distinct dialect groups, Eastern Arabia and the Maghreb, respectively.

J	M	Gloss
<i>ḡyyer š-sfr-a</i>	<i>ftəʔ</i>	‘eat breakfast’
<i>šib</i>	<i>laq</i>	‘find’
<i>ra</i>	<i>šuf*</i>	‘see’
<i>rqəd</i>	<i>n’əs</i>	‘sleep’
<i>trəḥ/wdə’</i>	<i>ḥətt*</i>	‘put down’
<i>’bbi</i>	<i>ddi</i>	‘take away’

It can be observed that Arabic dialects show great lexical variation for certain common semantic items. The overall array of items are organised according to religions, to major sects, and to urban or rural communities. The vocabulary which I found in the abovementioned Arabic communities may be common forms or they may be forms that are not shared, but where I see variation that seems to be conditioned by the identity of the speaker as Muslim, Jewish, Christian or as Shī’ī or Sunnī. What might look like a lexical change in one context is simply dialectal lexical variation in another context because it is not an ‘either-or’ situation. We have also seen that the asterisked items are commonly used throughout Kuwait City but these categories of variation do not seem to affect present-day Kuwait. However, in order to make sense of the case of KA, I wish to offer the following observations regarding the lexical variation of the spoken Arabic of Kuwait.

3.5 Lexical Variation in the Spoken Arabic of Kuwait

First, Kuwait is an Islamic country and Islam is enshrined within the Kuwaiti Constitution.¹⁶ Second, Holes (2007c: 609) reports that '[t]he Kuwaiti population is approximately 75 percent Sunni and 25 percent Shi'i, but there is no sect-based dialect cleavage'. In fact, two recent phonological (and not lexical) studies did indicate sect-based dialect variation in Kuwait; these studies appeared too late to be consulted by Holes.

An example is the study carried out by Hassan (2009) in which she investigates the minority 'Ajam (that is, literally, 'Persian') Arabic-speaking community in Kuwait, who speak a distinct variety of Persian referred to as Eimi (i.e. 'imī). Hassan (2009: 159-161) lists some of the most common Eimi words and expressions 'Ajam are likely to use. However, Hassan (2009: 272) concludes that the use of the Eimi variety is declining and it has steadily diminished across generations in favour of the dominant urban dialect of Kuwait. Nonetheless, Eimi has not completely disappeared from the linguistic repertoire of 'Ajam, but it functions as a solidarity marker within the community. The overall findings of Hassan's (2009: 288) study support the view that language choice is directly linked to social, political, and economic changes. Moreover, Taqi (2010) investigates social influences on the accent variation and change of two ethnic groups of Kuwait: the Najdis (originally from Saudi Arabia) and 'Ajams (originally from Iran). These two groups have over the years gradually come into contact with each other. Because the Najdis hold the highest position in the social scale and the 'Ajams hold the lowest, Taqi (2010) concludes that the 'Ajams' accent seems to be moving towards the Najdis'.

Therefore, a social distinction in Kuwait could be sectarian, between the Sunnī¹⁷ (orthodox) Muslims – who still make up the predominant part of the Kuwaiti population in Kuwait – and the Shī'ī Muslims.¹⁸ There are also distinctions based on ancestral ties added to this sectarian division. Even so, no in-depth lexical (and not phonological) studies have shown that the Shī'ī community in Kuwait speak a different dialect from their Sunnī compatriots, as is the case in Bahrain (cf. Holes 1987; Behnstedt and Woidich 2013: 320). In other words, some of

¹⁶ Article 2 of the Constitution states that 'The religion of the State is Islam, and the Islamic Sharia shall be a main source of legislation'.

¹⁷ The word is derived from the *sunna* of the Prophet Muhammad, which means his 'practice' or 'custom' (Holes 2010: 282).

¹⁸ Shī'a means 'party' and is short for *šī'at 'Ali* 'the party of (the fourth Caliph) 'Ali' (Holes 2010: 282). They make up 20-30% of the population of Kuwait (Ghabra 1997: 367-8).

the sources consulted are silent on the existence of lexical differences among the socio-religious communities in Kuwait.

In addition, the duality of nomad/sedentary – in Kuwaiti *ḥaḍar*/*badu* – is a classic feature of the social history of Kuwait¹⁹ (see section 5.3.1.1). Hence, a social distinction could be a socio-economic one, between *ḥaḍar* ‘urban/sedentary’ and *badu* ‘Bedouin’, but never a religious divide, but sectarian, as is the case in Baghdad where its communal community is divided into Muslim, Christian, and Jewish (Holes 1999: 47; Miller 2004: 189-192). Although it is difficult to pinpoint the origins and causes of Jewish and Christian settlement in Arabia, I however believe it is worth sketching briefly the status of the Christian and Jewish communities of Kuwait.

To date there has been little agreement on the population of the Jewish community in Kuwait. However, a few writers have been able to draw on research into this matter. In his recent publication, Olayan (2013: 9) argues that in 1890, the population of the Jewish community in Kuwait was estimated to number fifty only. Olayan (2013: 17) also states that the Jewish community in Kuwait lived in a neighbourhood called *firīḡ l-yahūd* ‘the Jewish Quarter’, which has turned into *sūg ṣ-ṣifāfir* ‘the Coppersmiths Market’ in modern Kuwait. According to al-S‘aydān (1972: 1665), some two hundred Jews were permanently exiled from Kuwait; among them were the singers Ṣāliḥ and Dāwūd al-Kuwayfī. Potts (1990: 221) explains that ‘Christian and Jewish communities are attested in eastern Arabia long after 640, when the caliph Omar called for the expulsion of all Christians and Jews’. Furthermore, there are a relatively small number of indigenous Christians in the whole Arabian Peninsula, while Bassiouney (2009: 109) claims that ‘the Arabian peninsula has no native Christians to speak of’. In Kuwait particularly, there are approximately 300 Kuwaitis who come from Christian background families (Thompson 2010: 15). The three biggest Kuwaiti families are the Ghareeb,²⁰ Shammās,²¹ and Sam‘ān (ibid.).²²

¹⁹ Longva (2006) and al-Nakib (2014) give a clear anthropological description of the *ḥaḍar*/*badu* dichotomy in Kuwait.

²⁰ The Arab Reformed Church ordained a national Kuwaiti, the Reverend Amanuel Ghareeb (b. 1950) of the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait on 8 January 1999, and it was marked as a historical event (Olayan 2015: 233-237).

²¹ Ya‘qūb Shammās was the first Christian in Kuwait who spoke Arabic fluently. He came to Kuwait in 1919 from Mardin, southeastern Turkey. He acquired Kuwaiti nationality in 1949 (Olayan 2015: 133).

²² According to the Public Authority for Civil Information of Kuwait, the Christian population in Kuwait, as of 30 June 2014, is estimated at 707,003, of whom 56,197 are Arabians, 593,751 are Asians, 39,244 are Africans, 8,476 are Europeans, 8,271 are North Americans, 635 are South Americans, and 429 are Australians <<http://www.paci.gov.kw>>. According to Koszinowski (2014: n.p.), in 2000, ‘the largest Christian groups were

Notwithstanding this, nobody has ever conducted a dialectal study on the Jewish/Christian Arabic of Kuwait. Holes (2006a: 1931) explains that ‘there were flourishing Nestorian Christian communities settled all down the Gulf coast, nothing written has survived in the locality’, (cf. Potts 1990: 241-247). A Kuwaiti pastor, Reverend Amanuel Ghareeb, mentions that ‘[t]he first Christian families came from southeast Turkey and Iraq and they have been living in Kuwait for over 90 years and speak the Kuwaiti Arabic dialect’ (Sharaf 2014: n.p.).

From the pre-oil era up to the late 1950s, Kuwait was divided into several major provinces and quarters, namely, Ğibla (Qibla ‘southwest’), Sharg (Sharq ‘east’), al-Wasaṭ (between Sharg and Ğibla), al-Murgāb (al-Murqāb), ad-Dimna (Sālmiyya), Fēliĉa (Failaka Island), and other small townships (cf. al-Sab‘ān 1983: 21); see Figure 3.1 below. For example, the place names Ğibla and Sharg ‘indicate the origins of the two populations. Qibla means people from the interior of Arabia and Sharq people from Iraq and Iran’ (Ingham 1985: 67).

Moreover, while al-Shamlān (2000: 93-100) lists the names of the most famous pearl merchants and shipmasters of Kuwait, he divides the names according to the east-west division of the city. Al-Shamlān (2000: 93) recounts: ‘In the eastern quarter the work of most people is concerned with the sea, and especially with pearl-diving. It was the home of many shipmasters, sailors and merchants’. Regarding the merchants of the western quarter, al-Shamlān (2000: 97) adds: ‘The number of people in the western quarter was smaller than that in the eastern quarter’.²³

At the present time, the division has become blurred, and people from all provinces speak a form of ‘levelled’ Kuwaiti dialect²⁴ due to many reasons, the most important of which is conurbation (al-Sab‘ān 1983: 30; al-Nakib 2014: 8). As Bonine (1980: 245) observes, ‘most of the inhabitants live in one large conurbation, in what might be called Kuwait City’.²⁵ Thus, no single variety of spoken KA is accepted as the standard norm for the whole speech community.

Roman Catholic (75,000 persons affiliated) and Coptic Orthodox (60,000). The several smaller groups (numbering no more than a few thousand adherents each) included Catholic Melchites of Antioch, Anglicans or Episcopalians, the Armenians of the Apostolic Church, and the Arabs of the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Syrian (Syriac) Orthodox Churches of Antioch’. Cf. Sanmiguel (1978: 123-157).

²³ A notable example of this distinction is drawn from a hearsay point of view: a ‘frying pan’ is called *ġābi* by the al-Wasaṭ population whereas it is called *migla* by the Ğibla population (cf. al-Shirbāsī 1953: 259).

²⁴ The Kuwaiti dialect is becoming more acceptable in the written form (e.g. in social networking websites, in local advertisements, in election posters and manifestos) and in some formal oral situations, such as certain political or religious contexts (e.g. the Qur’ānic commentary by sheikh ‘Uthmān al-Khamīs or the speeches of the current speaker of the Kuwaiti parliament, Marzouq al-Ghānim).

²⁵ As opposed to *dīra* ‘Kuwait Town’, the old *madīna* within the Old City.

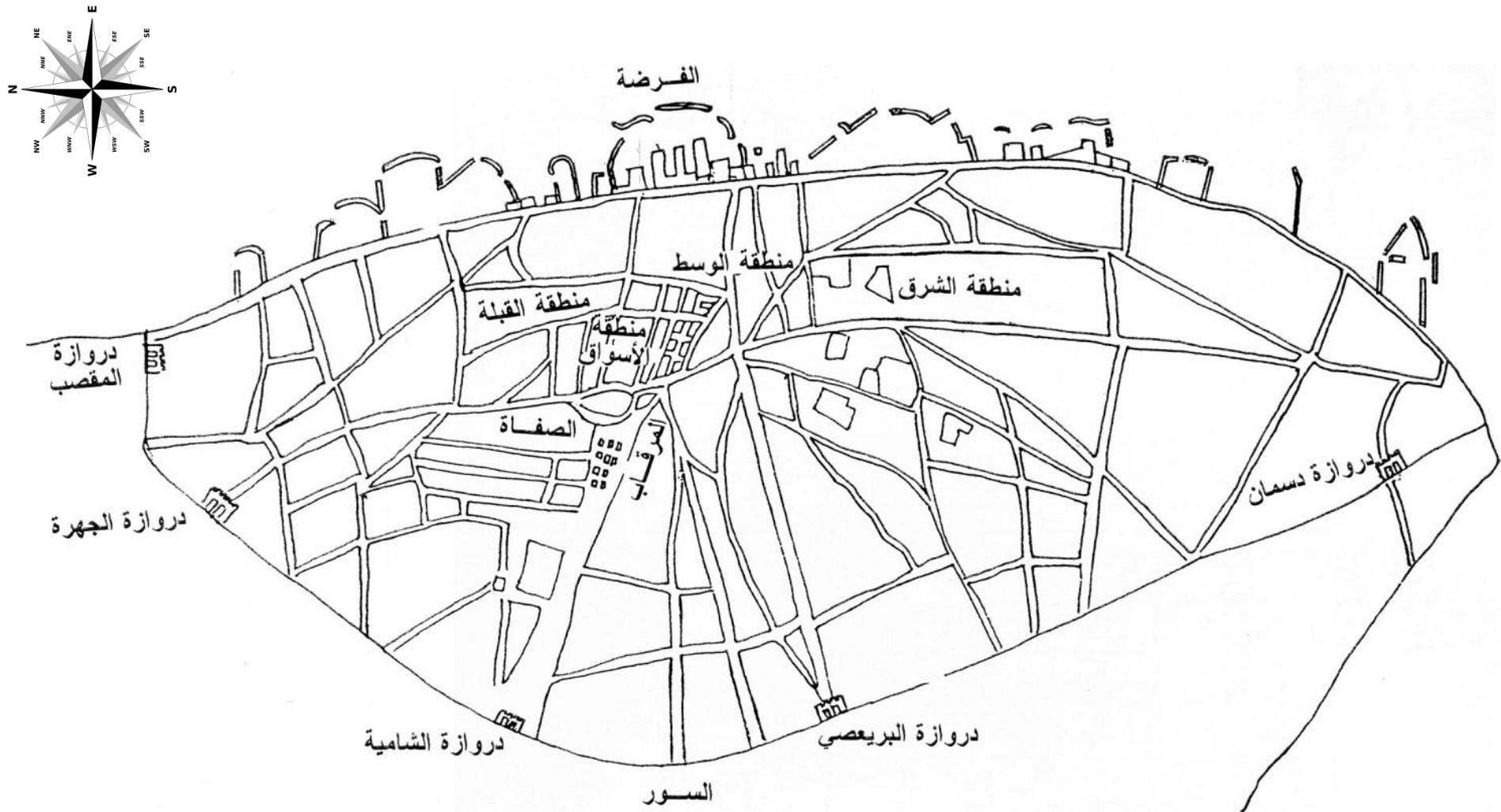


Figure 3.1: Map of the major quarters and provinces of Kuwait Town in 1951 adapted from Jamāl (2004: 25).
See also Kochwasser (1969: 232-233).

Nonetheless, the Kuwaiti lexicon unquestionably contains multiple lexical items for the same concept.²⁶ However, in current speech, no one will look at you strangely when you use, for instance, *ixawwuf* variation instead of *ixarri* ‘to talk about a horror film as long as these lexical doublets are colloquial and not Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth, MSA). That is to say, it is normal to say either *filim ixawwuf* or *filim ixarri* ‘to mean ‘a horror film’ but it will sound strange if you say *filim muxīf* ‘a horror film’ because *muxīf* is an MSA adjective. However, the expression *filim ru‘b* is widely acceptable in Kuwait to refer to a ‘horror film’ since *ru‘b* is a pan-Arabic koiné form which is shared by other Arabic dialects and found in written forms of Arabic, such as in a cinema listings brochure.

Speaking of Arabic koiné, it has been observed that the koiné itself ‘developed (alongside ‘Classical Arabic’ by which it was influenced) during the period of Arab expansion (7th to 10th centuries AD) as tribes speaking different varieties intermingled in military camps and campaigns’ (Cadora 1979: 17). Ferguson (1959b: 628) notes that ‘[a] striking feature of lexical difference between Classical Arabic and the dialects is the disappearance in the dialects of a group of high-frequency words such as *mā* ‘what’, *‘ayḍan* ‘also’, *laysa* ‘it is not’ [...].’ One may notice the disappearance of a group of Classical forms in Arabic dialects and their replacement with more specific localised forms. For instance, the Classical *mā* and *‘ayḍan* are replaced by *šinu* ‘what’ and *hamm* ‘also’, respectively, in the Kuwaiti dialect.

In Bahrain, al-Tajir (1982: 131-2) records pan-Arabic koiné forms in the Baḥārna dialect of Arabic which are shown in the following list whereby the dialectal forms on the left-hand side are often replaced by the koiné forms shown on the right.

Baḥārna	Pan-Arabic koiné	Gloss
<i>daxtar</i>	<i>ṭabīb*</i>	‘doctor’
<i>karwa*</i>	<i>‘iğra</i>	‘fees, fares, wages’
<i>motar il-ḥarīga</i>	<i>sayyārat il-‘itfā’</i>	‘fire brigade’
<i>glāṣ*</i>	<i>kās</i>	‘glass’
<i>šāgardi</i>	<i>‘āmil*</i>	‘labourer, worker’
<i>lūmi*</i>	<i>laymūn*</i>	‘lime’
<i>bāzār</i>	<i>sūg*</i>	‘market’
<i>dlāğ*</i>	<i>ğūrāb</i>	‘socks’

²⁶ De Jong (1958: *passim*) records various examples of lexical variation in Kuwaiti and Gulf Arabic, e.g. the word ‘clothes’ is given three translations: *hudūm*, *ṭiyāb*, *malābis*, and ‘room’ has three realisations: *dār*, *ḥuğra*, *ğurfa*. According to Wells and al-Bāṭinī (1987: 10), rooms in the roof in the old houses of Kuwait are called *ğorfa* where the head of the family sleeps. Al-Ayyoub (1997: 215) and Holes (2005b: 195), however, observe that *dār* is ‘a downstairs room’ while *ğurfa* is ‘an upstairs room’ in the Kuwaiti and Bahraini dialects.

We can notice from the asterisked items that the spoken Arabic of Kuwait City contains a mixture of Baḥārna and pan-Arabic koiné vocabulary items. However, a number of lexical points should be mentioned here. The lexeme *šāgardi* (*šigardi* in local pronunciation) is currently used in Kuwait to mean not just a ‘worker’, but a ‘reliable, hard-working person’. Also, while it means ‘glass’ in Bahrain, *kās* is used in Kuwait to specifically refer to ‘the cup given as a prize in a sports competition’, e.g. *kās l-‘ālam* ‘the World Cup’. The phrase *sayyārat il-‘iḥfā* ‘fire brigade’ is known in Kuwait as (*sayyārat*) *maṭāfi*. Moreover, where *karwa* ‘fees, fares, wages’ is noted for Kuwait, *magsūm* is in fact more common nowadays (cf. al-Ayyoub 1982: 159-160). Unlike the Baḥārna dialect of Arabic, the Kuwaiti dialect distinguishes between *lūmi* and *laymūn* by assigning the former ‘lime’ and the latter ‘lemon’. For example, *čāy lūmi* is ‘tea made of lime only’. Lastly, *daxtar* is a corruption of ‘doctor’ which was the local form in pre-oil Kuwait but has become obsolete and gave way to the pan-Arab term *ṭabīb* and the borrowing *diktōr* (< English ‘doctor’).

A good deal of lexical variation and change has been identified from the lexical examples above due to diglossia and foreign borrowings. As a result, I shall explore further the lexicon of KA and also identify the diglossic situation of Kuwait.

3.5.1 Lexical Diglossia in Kuwait

It has been observed that ‘the twenty-three countries in which Arabic is an official language have been described as diglossic speech communities’ (Bassiouney 2009: 10). Undoubtedly, Kuwait is a diglossic speech community in which people speak one language and write another, The concept of *izdiwāḡiyya luḡawiyya* ‘linguistic duality’ or ‘diglossia’ has been a factor of Arab society almost since the era of the Islamic expansion (Johnstone 1970: 619). In a diglossic community, ‘the prestigious standard or ‘High’ (or H) variety, which is linguistically related to but significantly different from the vernacular or ‘Low’ (or L) varieties, has no native speakers’ (Trudgill 2003: 39).²⁷ In our case, the H variety generically signifies Classical/Standard Arabic while the L variety is colloquial/vernacular/patois. There is no doubt that literary and colloquial Arabic have differences at all linguistic levels,

²⁷ Kaye (2002: 379) states that ‘[a]lthough the French term *diglossie* was introduced by the Arabist William Marçais in 1930, it is the late Charles A. Ferguson who is most often credited as the first to introduce this notion in a classic (1959) article with the now famous one-word title, ‘Diglossia’ (cf. Campbell and Mixco 2007: 45-46). In contrast, Suleiman (2013: 264) argues that diglossia ‘was the subject of discussion and debate in the Levant in the 19th century’; this was well before Ferguson’s and Marçais’ first use of the term diglossia.

including morphology, syntax, and phonology, in addition to vocabulary. Yassin (1975: 36) describes the following two varieties used by Kuwaiti speakers:

one with higher prestige (“superposed variety of Arabic”), referred to as (High) H and a less prestigious nonstandard variety referred to as (Low) L. These two varieties of Arabic fulfil distinctly complementary and stable roles within the same speech community – H is the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, learned largely through formal education, and generally used for formal purposes, while L is the normal medium of everyday conversation.

A notable example of this includes the use of the abovementioned adjectives *ixawwuf* or *ixarri* ‘frightening, scary’ which instantly tells us that the speaker is on the L level while *muxīf* ‘frightening’ tells us that the speaker is on the H level. Another example of this occurrence is the MSA *manāx* versus the common Gulf Arabic vernacular *ḡaww*²⁸ ‘weather, climate’ (Smart and Altorfer 2010: 158). It is *manāx* which would be interpreted by a native speaker as a symbol of H, whereas *ḡaww* would be indicative of L.²⁹ Additionally, Ferguson ([1959a] 1996: 33) offers the following observation:

A striking feature of diglossia is the existence of many paired items, one H one L, referring to fairly common concepts frequently used in both H and L, where the range of meaning of the two items is roughly the same, and the use of one or the other immediately stamps the utterance or written sequence as H or L.

Ferguson (1996: 33) then gives five examples of lexical doublets gleaned from MSA and Egyptian Arabic (EA). The asterisked item is one of the many highest-frequency dialectal words in the Gulf.

MSA	EA	Gloss
<i>ʿanfun</i>	<i>manaxīr</i>	‘nose’
<i>ʿalʿāna</i>	<i>dilwaʿti</i>	‘now’
<i>ḥiḍāʿun</i>	<i>gazma</i>	‘shoe’
<i>ḍahaba</i>	<i>rāḥ*</i>	‘went’
<i>mā</i>	<i>ʿēh</i>	‘what’

It should be mentioned that some scholars have found that the vernacular, or a L(ow) variety for one group of speakers, can function as a H(igh) variety for another group. For example, from the Iraqi lexical items presented in section 3.1 above, Standard Arabic (SA) is the H

²⁸ Dickson (1949: 626) and Sowayan (1992: 256) gloss the homonym *ḡaww* as ‘a low, flat basin or a wide valley where underground water is not too far below the surface’ for the Kuwaiti and Šammari dialects of Arabic, respectively.

²⁹ In the mid-1970s, Holes (2005b: 99) recorded the term *manāx* within the agricultural domain in Bahrain as in *mā byxālīf wiyyāh l-manāx* ‘the climate doesn’t disagree with it’. This seems to be a literary borrowing or merely a term associated with agriculture and farmers’ parlance. Jayakar (1889: 824) glosses *manāx* as ‘camp’ in Omani Arabic.

variety shared by Muslim Baghdadi (MB) and Christian Baghdadi (CB) speakers. Abu-Haidar (1991: 143) observes that MB is the L variety for Muslim Baghdadis, whereas it is another H variety for Christian Baghdadis, falling between SA and their own CB dialect, which is their L variety. She adds that ‘MB functions as an H variety for Christian Baghdadis, since it is not learnt at home and not spoken with in-group members, but used in situations requiring a certain level of formality and perhaps more guarded behaviour’ (ibid.). It can therefore be presumed that CB speakers are triglossic because they use three distinct varieties of Arabic, viz. SA, MB, and CB.

In Bahrain, Holes (1983: 439) discovered three types of linguistic variation: the first two are phonological while the third type is ‘lexical variation involving phonologically unrelated items’. He argues that the ‘lexical variation arises chiefly as a result of the borrowing into the dialect of MSA neologisms’ (ibid.). Thus, many pairs of synonyms, such as the following, are found in the speech of Bahrainis (Holes 1983: 440). It should be remembered that the asterisked items are understood and used in colloquial Kuwaiti.

Dialectal	Standard	Gloss
<i>saykal</i> ³⁰	<i>darrāġa</i>	‘bicycle’
‘ <i>arras</i> *’	<i>zawwaġ*</i>	‘he married’

Consequently, a thorough review of the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) glossary compiled by Holmes and Samaan³¹ (1957: 111-228) shows that the individual senses or referents assigned to the vast majority of Kuwaiti vocabulary items may be realised in at least two lexical forms, or as two different lexemes. This includes verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. Thus, given that the Kuwaiti lexicon contains two lexical forms for the same concept, then we could put together word lists like the ones compiled above to account for the lexical variation in KA.

When we speak of old Kuwait, a degree of lexical variation has been observed with respect to the urban and rural (read: tribal) dialects as we shall see later on. In fact, even though one could still distinguish the diverse tribal dialects of Kuwait:

³⁰ This English borrowing is used in Kuwait to mean a ‘motorbike’.

³¹ He is Ṣabrī Sam‘ān Shammās, a Christian Kuwaiti of Turkish origin (Olayan 2015: 166).

[They] have all collapsed, not into ‘a local version of the pan-Arabic koiné’, but into a levelled but still distinctively Kuwaiti dialect which Kuwaitis routinely use, as far as one can observe, in all dialectal contexts, public or private, in their now sprawling metropolis of well over a million inhabitants (Holes 1995a: 286).

Commenting on the KOC glossary, Johnstone (1967b: xxv) notes that ‘the authors of KOC tend to give preference to pan-Arabic *koiné*³² over Kuwaiti in the matter of vocabulary’. So the authors of KOC did not assign a particular vocabulary item to particular religious, sectarian, or tribal groups. Diglossia-wise, the authors (Holmes and Samaan 1957) hinted that the items listed in their handbook are closer to the H level than the L level. Nonetheless, both authors termed the words listed with the generic term ‘Kuwaiti Arabic’.

By way of illustration, I will list some of the KOC vocabulary items (Holmes and Samaan 1957: 111-228) to give a clear picture of what the KA lexicon was like in the 1950s. I should emphasise that I am only interested in diglossia as reflected in the vocabulary of literary and Kuwaiti colloquial Arabic because it is particularly relevant to my scope of study, and ‘the importance of the lexical aspect in the distinction between literary and colloquial Arabic is partly due to the sheer number of the lexical items, which naturally far exceed the number of grammatical structures and phonological categories’ (Rosenhouse 2007: 655). Therefore, the following word lists focus on a comparison of KA vocabulary as reflecting Arabic diglossia, and not on their diachronic development.

I provide the labels ‘KA’ for Kuwaiti colloquial Arabic/L level words and ‘pan-Arabic koiné’ for Standard/H level words. The following and the subsequent categorisations are mine, based on my intuition as a native speaker of the dialect since it is a widely held view that semantic analysis in general relies on native-speaker intuition about the acceptability and equivalence of expressions (Hellwig 2009: 311). In addition, Hellwig (ibid.) argues that the meaning of an expression has to be inferred from observing its use in context or from eliciting grammaticality and acceptability judgments.

³² ‘The term ‘koiné’ comes from the Greek word *koinē* ‘common’, referring to the variety of Greek that became the lingua franca, or common language, of the eastern Mediterranean area during the Hellenistic period. It has since been applied to many other languages that share certain features with the original Greek koiné. Inspired by the Hellenistic tradition, a number of Arabists used the term to refer to two historical types of Arabic varieties: the pre-Islamic poetic koiné and the military or urban dialect koiné of the early periods of the Arab conquest’ (Miller 2006: 593).

KA (L)	Pan-Arabic koiné (H)	Gloss
<i>dār madār</i>	<i>ḥawl</i>	‘around’
<i>ḥilū</i>	<i>ḡamīl</i>	‘beautiful’
<i>ḡisim</i>	<i>ḡasad</i>	‘body’
<i>šāl</i>	<i>ḥamal</i>	‘carry’
<i>‘alač</i>	<i>maḍaḡ</i>	‘chew’
<i>našlah</i>	<i>zukām</i>	‘cold (n.)’
<i>ḍalmah</i>	<i>‘itmah</i>	‘darkness’
<i>xašim</i>	<i>taxfīḍ</i>	‘discount (n.)’
<i>ḥag</i>	<i>līaḡil</i>	‘for’
<i>balāš</i> ³³	<i>maḡḡānan</i>	‘free’

Next, I select a number of items extracted from Holmes and Samaan (1957: 111-228) with the aim of distinguishing between KA words which are *musta‘mal* ‘used’ (i.e. ‘current’) in Kuwait City and their *muhmal* ‘unused’ (i.e. ‘obsolete/outdated/old-fashioned’) counterparts in which the latter are now only recognised by older speakers (cf. Baalbaki 2014: 91). In fact, Holes (2007a: 214) observes the diglossic situation in the Gulf States and points out that, ‘[a]s a consequence of education and increased exposure to Modern Standard Arabic, many older borrowings are now being replaced by Modern Standard Arabic neologisms in the speech of educated younger speakers’.³⁴ He notes that the below listed *draywal* (< English ‘driver’) is giving way to MSA *sā‘iq* (= KA *sāyig*) (cf. Smeaton 1973: 63, 89).

<i>musta‘mal</i> (current)	<i>muhmal</i> (obsolete)	Gloss
<i>ṭabīb</i>	<i>daxtar</i>	‘doctor’
<i>sāyig</i>	<i>draywal</i>	‘driver’
<i>ishāl</i>	<i>ḥillah</i>	‘dysentery’
<i>ḍabāb</i>	<i>mrayx</i>	‘fog’
<i>kura</i>	<i>ṭimbāxiyyah</i>	‘football’
<i>marag</i>	<i>šālūnah</i>	‘gravy’
<i>ḡitrah</i>	<i>čafiyyah</i>	‘head-kerchief’
<i>čibrūt</i>	<i>šixxāṭah</i>	‘matches’

³³ *balāš* is generally accepted as an abbreviation of Standard Arabic *bilā šay* ‘without a thing’ (Altoma 1969: 95).

³⁴ In the same way, Stowasser and Ani (2004: xiii) note the influence of the written ‘educated’ language on Syrian Arabic. They observe that ‘the extent to which a speaker incorporates features of the written language into his idiolect may still reveal his educational background’ (ibid.: xv).

Johnstone (1967b: xxviii) finds it useful to distinguish between ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Kuwaiti, the latter in many cases having different verbal and phonological forms based on one of the high-prestige dialects or literary Arabic (cf. Yassin 1975: 3). For example, Johnstone (1967b: 70) notes the following features of Old Kuwaiti: ‘There is considerable S. Iraqi influence on the older Kuwaiti verbal forms, and latterly the influence of the literary language and of Egyptian and the Syrian dialects is strong’. As for New Kuwaiti, Johnstone (1967b: 91) gives the following example: ‘Beside the Kuwaiti *‘idna* [‘we have’], in New Kuwaiti there can be heard *‘indina*, *‘indīna*, and so on’.

In 2013, I conducted a face-to-face interview with the late Ayyoub H. al-Ayyoub (1932-2013) at his house in al-Manšūriyya in Kuwait City. Al-Ayyoub authored several books on the Kuwaiti dialect and culture, two of which are acclaimed lexicographic sources (1982, 1997). We talked about linguistic change in the Kuwaiti dialect and the distinction between old and new Kuwaiti.³⁵ He solemnly said:

- Ayyoub: *l-lahğa l-yidīda? lā, l-lahğa l-yidīda xtarbat. dašš ‘alēha, daššat ‘alēha kalimāt wāyid aġnabiyya. xiḏḏ anwā ‘ l-ma ‘kūlāt, hambūrgar mā hambūrgar. kalimāt iħna mā n ‘arifha!*

‘The new (Kuwaiti) dialect? The new (Kuwaiti) dialect is wrecked. Many foreign borrowings have entered the dialect. Take, for example, types of food, “hamburger” and such like, and these words are not known to us!’

Furthermore, I will select a number of different items, as recorded by Holmes and Samaan (1957: 111-228), with the aim of showing that some older Kuwaiti forms have now been replaced with non-Semitic loanwords; their etymologies are given in the footnotes.

Old KA₁	Old KA₂	Modern KA	Gloss
<i>baymbāġ</i> ³⁶	<i>rbāṭ</i>	<i>karafitta</i> ³⁷	‘necktie’
<i>wašil</i>	<i>gabḏ</i>	<i>fātūra</i> ³⁸	‘receipt’
<i>gabīħ</i>	<i>baši</i> ‘	<i>šēn/šīfa/siħt/ġēkar</i> ³⁹	‘ugly’

³⁵ Al-Ayyoub also gave me a guided tour of his private museum located in the second floor of the house where he displayed his classical Kuwaiti antiquities and old maps of downtown Kuwait.

³⁶ Turkish borrowing: *boyunbaġı* ‘necktie’, also noted by Abu-Haidar (1991: 186) in the Christian Arabic of Baghdad.

³⁷ Italian borrowing: *cravatta* ‘necktie’.

³⁸ Italian borrowing: *fattura* ‘invoice’.

³⁹ English borrowing: ‘joker’.

In the following list, I present a number of items extracted from Holmes and Samaan (1957: 111-228) to show that both colloquial lexical items are used side by side throughout the community in current Kuwaiti speech. In other words, they are synonyms and virtually interchangeable, though there are no discernible criteria that dictate the speakers' choice. Some of the examples are actually attested in my spoken material. It should be pointed out that some of the listed words are also Gulf-wide forms such as *baṭṭal*⁴⁰ 'to open, turn on (light)' (cf. Holes 2007a: 215). I use the labels 'KA₁' and 'KA₂' for organisational purposes only.

KA ₁	KA ₂	Gloss
<i>sā</i> 'ad	'āwan	'help'
'od	čabīr	'huge'
<i>ganaṣ</i>	šād	'hunt (v.)'
<i>maṭlūb</i>	<i>madyūn</i>	'indebted'
<i>tawwā</i>	<i>alḥīn</i>	'just now'
'araf	<i>darā</i>	'know'
čāyid	ğāsī	'laborious'
'irs	<i>zawāğ</i>	'marriage'
<i>fačč</i>	<i>baṭṭal</i>	'open'

Moreover, recent semantic variation examples reported by Behnstedt and Woidich⁴¹ (2011, 2012, 2014) also support the idea that Kuwait is a diglossic community and the lexicon of KA contains multiple lexical items for the same concept. What is interesting about their monumental *Word Atlas of Arabic Dialects*, which is a milestone in Arabic lexicography, is that it shows that KA may contain five lexical forms for the same concept. For instance:

⁴⁰ Holes (2005b: 116) notes that, in virtually every other Arabic dialect group, *baṭṭal* means 'to stop, put an end to', its virtual opposite, may perhaps be a local Gulf development of *baṭṭ* [to cleave open, make many openings].

⁴¹ According to the atlas blurb, '[e]ach map presents a topic or notion and its equivalents in Arabic as collected from the dialectological literature (dictionaries, grammars, text collections, ethnographic reports, etc.), from the editors' own field work, from questionnaires filled out by native speakers or by experts for a certain dialect region, and also from the internet' (Behnstedt and Woidich 2011, 2012, 2014).

Concept	Form ₁	Form ₂	Form ₃	Form ₄	Form ₅
FILL (v.)	<i>taras</i>	<i>mila</i>	<i>‘abba</i>	<i>fawwal</i>	<i>ṭass</i>
FRIEND	<i>ṣāhib</i>	<i>rabi‘</i>	<i>xabīr</i>	<i>rifīġ</i>	<i>ṣadīq</i>
HEAT (n.)	<i>ḥarr</i>	<i>ḥarāra</i>	<i>gāyla</i>	<i>ḥrūra</i>	<i>ġatta</i>
JUMP (v.)	<i>šigaḥ</i>	<i>naṭṭ</i>	<i>ṭumaṛ</i>	<i>nigáz</i>	<i>qifáz</i>
LANE	<i>fīrīġ</i>	<i>yādda</i>	<i>dā‘ūs</i>	<i>daxla</i>	<i>sikka</i>
POOR	<i>faqīr</i>	<i>maskīn</i>	<i>faġrān</i>	<i>ḥāfi</i>	<i>mnattaf</i>
SEND	<i>dazz</i>	<i>ṭarraš</i>	<i>arsal</i>	<i>wadda</i>	<i>arkab</i>
THROW (v.)	<i>ḥidaḥ</i>	<i>gaṭṭ</i>	<i>ġaḷḷ</i>	<i>šāḥ</i>	<i>ḍabb</i>
WAIT (v.)	<i>niṭaṛ</i>	<i>raġa</i>	<i>tana</i>	<i>taḥarra</i>	<i>tiraggab</i>

It is apparent from the list above that, for example, ‘jump’ has five realisations in KA, viz. *šigaḥ*, *naṭṭ*, *ṭumaṛ*, *nigáz*, and *qifáz*. However, if we put *šigaḥ* in a sentence as in *il-ġaṭwa šgaḥat fōg ṭ-ṭōfa* ‘the cat jumped over the wall’, this sentence may end up having a number of probable trajectories. This relies on highly specified lexical entries. In all probability, the speaker/hearer will find this sentence unambiguous and readily understandable. One might arguably say that meaning construction must be inherently conceptual in nature. Many more examples can easily be listed.

I should point out that some of the lexical forms listed are foreign borrowings such as *fawwal* (< English ‘to fill, full’), others are pan-Arabic koiné such as *arsal* ‘to send’, and some are tribal/Bedouin words which might be unintelligible to the urbanites such as *arkab* ‘to send’ (unless some sedentary dialects have been ‘bedouinised’ by the incorporation of certain elements), which is used by ‘Ajmān⁴² tribespeople as noted by Ingham (1982a: 104) in Kuwait. Similarly, Johnstone (1961: 249) notes that the ‘Ajmān and Duwāsir tribes ‘have tribal vocabulary which covers many everyday things and which (they claim) is not used by other tribes’.⁴³ Lexically, I found out that the verb ‘catch/grasp’ is polyglossic and has six forms, namely, *giḏab*, *misak*, *šabbas*, *ligaf*, *yawwad*, and *xamaṭ*, all of which are found in current speech (Behnstedt and Woidich 2014: 246-258).

⁴² More accurately ‘Ijmān, but usually spelt ‘Ajmān in orientalist literature. Johnstone (1964: 85) notes that ‘[i]n the Kuwait area the ‘Ajmān have the reputation of speaking the ‘best’ Arabic and their dialect has considerable prestige both amongst the tribesmen and the people of Kuwait town’.

⁴³ See, for example, Dickson (1956: 609-610) for a glossary of ‘Ajmān peculiarities.

Furthermore, the interplay in everyday speech between MSA and KA is worth discussing here. In this case, between *baṅğara*, *dirīša*, *šibbāk*, and *nāfiḍa*, all of which mean ‘window’. However, one may arguably perceive *dirīša*, *šibbāk*, and *nāfiḍa* as synonyms rather than lexical variants. Three decades ago, al-Sab‘ān (1983: 119) noted that *šibbāk* used to be the local form. In modern Kuwait, however, the most common of all nouns for ‘window’ is *dirīša*⁴⁴ because *šibbāk* has been specialised to refer to the *šibbāk t-taḍākīr* ‘window of the box office’ where tickets are sold to the public for admission to an event and it is used in Modern Written Arabic, whereas *nāfiḍa* is nowadays a literary borrowing used, for instance, as a computer term as in ‘Microsoft Windows’. Additionally, *baṅğara*⁴⁵ once used to be the local form for ‘window’ but has now become obsolete (al-Ayyoub 1982: 301; al-Sab‘ān 1983: 119). In the al-Ḥasa province of Saudi Arabia, Smeaton (1973: 78, 99) reports that the original reference to *darīšah* in the spoken Arabic of al-Ḥasa is the following: ‘a window consisting of a vertically barred opening in the wall of a building, and its application to a window is based on the unchanged function of the referent, though the structure and appearance are altered’. In contrast, the Standard Arabic *šubbāk* is ‘as good as unknown in Al Hasa in reference to a window’. This lexical variation is a major source of polysemy. In fact, within each of these ‘window’ terms, we may find complementary polysemy whereby ‘the alternative readings are manifestations of the same core sense as it occurs in different contexts’ (Pustejovsky and Boguraev 1996: 3). For example, *dirīša* may designate ‘a space in the wall which has glass in it’ or ‘pane’. Thus, both senses are logically connected and are examples of complementary polysemy.

Before I conclude my discussion, it is worth pointing out some of the forecasts which were made in the 1950s. Johnstone (1967b: xxviii) made the following prediction on the basis of research he carried out in the Arabian Gulf in the late 1950s:

There is no real doubt that the Kuwaiti dialect is doomed to disappear in a relatively short time and that it will be replaced by a local version of the pan-Arabic koiné. Young Kuwaitis already found it difficult and even embarrassing to speak ‘pure’ Kuwaiti at the time of my visit’.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Persian borrowing: *دریچه* ‘window’. Cf. al-Ayyoub (1984b: 40).

⁴⁵ Turkish borrowing: *pencere* ‘window’.

⁴⁶ Johnstone (1967b: xxviii) justifies his prediction by stating the following: ‘Indeed I was rebuked by two small boys in the sea-shores for using the Kuwaiti word *simač* ‘fish’ instead of *samak*’. That is to say, when foreigners speak Arabic, they are, as it were, not supposed to say the colloquial *simač*, but the Standard form *samak*. Cf. Ingham (1994: 11); Holes (1995a: 285-6).

Luckily this has not happened. According to Holes (2004a: 75), the Kuwaiti dialect:

[s]urvives and indeed thrives as a badge of social identity and solidarity, and not [...] in a debased or koinéized form. Kuwaiti popular culture, in the form of dialect poetry, film, theatre, and radio and television soap opera, flourishes and is even exported to neighbouring states.

Since the 1950s, Kuwaiti popular culture has not only played a pioneering informative role within Kuwait but it also reaches out to cover most Arab countries (see section 6.6.2).⁴⁷

While comparing diglossia in English and Arabic, Kaye (2002: 387) concludes that '[d]iglossia in English resembles bidialectalism, whereas diglossia in Arabic is more like bilingualism'. This is true when the *'āmmiyyā-fuṣḥā* 'colloquial-classical' dichotomy is taken into consideration, for we understand that Arabic speakers start learning Classical Arabic at school while colloquial Arabic is actually acquired at home. On the whole, 'it is virtually impossible to chart the historical development of diglossia with any certainty in any area of the Arabic-speaking world' (Holes 2006a: 1935).

3.6 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we have distinguished between lexical change and dialectal lexical variation in modern Arabic dialects and identified that lexical variation is endemic in these dialects. The results of this investigation show that vocabulary differences within one area are one source of common patterns of semantic variation and lexical variation and a significant source of polysemy. Taken together, these observations suggest that Kuwait is a diglossic community and the lexicon of KA contains multiple lexical items for the same concept.

The variation that I am describing in each of the cases (i.e. urban vs. rural/ Sunnī vs. Shī'ī) is reasonably well understood and it is quite structured. There is variation in Kuwait structured not only by diglossia but by other social factors. I believe that the following should be considered: the fact that we have lexical variation that was actually structured socially, and one aspect of this would be diglossia. That structured variation does not necessarily apply in Kuwait. So out of that observation comes the following question:

⁴⁷ For Arabic, Ferguson (1996: 37) concludes his study by making the following forecast: 'A tentative prognosis for Arabic over the next two centuries (i.e. to about 2150 AD) may be hazarded: Slow development toward several standard languages, each based on an L variety with heavy admixture of H vocabulary'. However, it should be emphasised that the combining form *di-* in 'diglossia' may have created the impression of bi-polarity between the H (highly formal) and L (informal) forms, i.e. the *fuṣḥā* 'standard' and the range of *'āmmiyyās* 'dialects' in the Arabic-speaking world (Suleiman 2013: 265). Apart from L(ow) and H(igh) varieties, an intermediate language level does actually exist in Kuwait which we may term (M)iddle, i.e. a less formal variety. This intermediate 'hybrid' level of language combines elements from both the dialect and Standard Arabic and is 'by no means random' (Holes 2013: 282).

- If traditional diglossic patterns are breaking down, or no longer salient, what are the parameters or what extralinguistic variables are going to be important in accounting for the patterns of polysemy that we discover?

This variation is highly structured, and it is structured according to diglossia. In the past, within the Arabic world (see Chapter 2), we have seen that homonymy has been recognised, polysemy has been recognised, lexical variation has been recognised, but it has been understood in a highly structured context. But polysemy is much harder to account for in the absence of these structures. Nevertheless, in order to arrive at a valid conclusion, we will study and account for contemporary speakers.

Diglossia is a hallmark in understanding the contemporary sociolinguistic situation in Kuwait as well as in the Arabic-speaking world. The Arabic dialects discussed are defined primarily by geography,⁴⁸ but there are also distinctions based on social variables that cross-cut geography, viz. religion/sect and Bedouin-descended/sedentary dialects (Holes 2013: 281). Arguably, present-day Kuwait is a melting pot where the particular constraints – the parameters or the variables that control the distinction, e.g. between the politico-religious ideologies Sunnī Muslims and Shī‘ī Muslims, do not seem to hold, especially in lexical terms.

Chambers (1995: 142) argues that ‘[t]he diglossic situation entails that literary Arabic be a superimposed variety. It is not a mother tongue. It is thoroughly codified, and as a result, highly stable and unchanging’. Holes (2006a: 1937) offers a cogent account of the contemporary sociolinguistic situation in Arabia:

An undeniable consequence of the increase in public education and literacy, and the proliferation of the media over the last fifty years, has been the ‘democratisation’ of H and the breaking down of the barriers between H and L in many commonly occurring speech situations, with code-switching, code-mixing, and hybrid forms now common.

In conclusion, Holes’ observation is by no means true in the case of Kuwait. As we shall see in Chapters 7 and 8, the speech pattern of my educated informants is filled with English/Turco-Persian/Hindi/Standard Arabic–Kuwaiti Arabic code-switching, code-mixing, and hybrid forms.

⁴⁸ This means that the dialects are listed and described mainly within the framework of larger geographical entities such as the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Gulf area, Arab Peninsula with Yemen and Oman, Egypt with Sudan and the sub-Saharan, North Africa, and Mauretania, to which the “islands” Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Anatolia, and Cyprus are added (Behnstedt and Woidich 2013: 317).

Chapter 4

A Morphosemantic Description of Four Kuwaiti Arabic Verbs

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the formal characteristics of four trilateral¹ verbs of motion (also called translocative verbs), viz. *dašš* ‘to enter’, *xalla* ‘to leave’, *miša* ‘to walk’, and *rikaḏ* ‘to run’ on the basis of their usage in the spoken Arabic of Kuwait City. Specifically, I will be looking at the morphology and lexico-semantics of these key verbs because I have evidence from the dictionaries that these verbs are polysemous, and I also have evidence that *rikaḏ* ‘to run’ is not, and I want to look at the extent to which polysemy is productive in semantic change.

Since we are looking at the context for examining the polysemy of these verbs in Kuwaiti Arabic (KA), we need to understand the complexity of these verbs in order to begin to understand their variety of uses and how stable or ephemeral they are. As a result, for each verb under investigation, I will describe its morphology in the Kuwaiti dialect and thereupon explore its conjugation and declension. Also, for the purpose of dialectal comparison, I have put several cross-references from published materials on neighbouring areas of Kuwait in the texts and footnotes which will enable us to place Kuwait in a regional context, and this practice has been employed throughout the thesis. For each verb, I will be discussing the following three points: (i) their formal and morphological characteristics, (ii) their dictionary treatment and attestation, and (iii) their historical provenance. Moreover, by consulting a good number of local dictionaries and encyclopedias, we will be able to look at the manner of attestation in order to test the utility of the dictionaries. But before I begin exploring this chapter, I will talk about my sources in section 4.1 because I am looking at the treatment of these key verbs, both formally but also in terms of their lexical characteristics, and that is why the dictionaries are such an important source.

¹ See Maṭar (1970: 123-135) for a discussion on trilateral verbs in the Kuwaiti dialect. For the verb morphology of modern Arabic dialects, see Holes (2004a: 117-142).

4.1 Sources

My main sources for exploring the senses of the verbs in this chapter are: general-purpose dictionaries, specialised dictionaries, and two online questionnaires. I will briefly discuss the nature of each source in the following subsections.

4.1.1 General-purpose Dictionaries

The general-purpose dictionaries² and glossaries consulted are those compiled by the Kuwait Oil Company (1951), Holmes and Samaan (1957), al-Ḥanafī (1964), al-Ayyoub (1982, 1997), Khalaf (1988, 1989), al-Sabʿān (1989) and al-Rashaid (2012). There are still, to my knowledge, no bilingual dictionaries or monolingual dictionaries of KA ‘which have been compiled on anything which could be called a representative data base of usage-in-context’ (Holes 1995b: 224).³

Furthermore, none of these monolingual dictionaries provide real examples and/or information on levels of linguistic formality in Kuwait City. Apparently, most of the example sentences in the local dictionaries and glossaries were invented and created by the compilers, whereas my Kuwaiti material contains genuine texts which constitute a source of authentic examples. The dictionary compilers, however, give a number of instances of combinatorial information to their users (mostly relying on their own intuitions); they clearly differ from each other in terms of coverage. By combinatorial information, I mean that the specificity of meaning associated with the polysemous words emerges in collocation with other terms.⁴ Sinclair (1991: 109) observes that ‘most everyday words do not have an independent

² In the fashion of the Arabic lexicographical tradition, dictionaries can be further subdivided into two types of lexica: *mubawwab* ‘onomasiological’ and *muḡannas* ‘semasiological’, but which need not concern us here. See Baalbaki (2014) for a comprehensive and methodologically sophisticated history of Arabic lexicography.

³ To test this claim, I approached Khālid al-Rashaid, the author of *The Encyclopaedia of Kuwaiti Dialect* (2012). We conducted two interviews during Ramadan 2012 and 2013. The main reason behind these interviews was to enquire about his data collection methodology and the material on which his encyclopaedic dictionary is based. I specifically asked him about the policy for the provision of senses in his *Encyclopaedia*; he directly replied: *illi yaṭri ʿalēy* ‘on the basis of whatever comes to my mind.’ This informs us that his encyclopaedic dictionary has not been constructed on the basis of primary linguistic data extracted from real contexts of use. However, we did end up having a friendly chat. Moreover, it is worth pointing out that there are some Arabic dictionaries which are based on hearsay and rely heavily on published material and on the compilers’ colleagues or predecessors. For a critical survey, see Hoogland (2007).

⁴ We may define collocation as ‘the mutual expectancy of words, or the ability of a word to predict the likelihood of another word occurring’ (Jackson and Amvela 2007: 106). In English, Crystal (2008: 86) states that collocation is ‘a term used in lexicology’ while Baker et al. (2006: 36) label ‘collocation’ as a corpus linguistic term. Also, Hartmann and James (1998: 22) include ‘collocation’ in their *Dictionary of Lexicography*. However, unlike Cruse (2006: 27), who considers ‘collocation’ a semantic concept, Murphy and Koskela (2010) do not consider ‘collocation’ as a key term in semantics because it is not listed in their glossary.

meaning, or meanings, but are components of a rich repertoire of multi-word patterns that make up text'. I concur completely with J. R. Firth (1957: 11) in his most quoted pronouncement: 'you shall know a word by the company it keeps', and this dictum has been taken to heart in 'linguistics, psycholinguistics, language teaching, and lexicography' (Kilgarriff 2006: 997). In our case, the essential elements to consider in the verbs are subjects, objects, and adverbials.

4.1.2 Specialised Dictionaries

The key sources for ascertaining the provenance and attestation of these verbs is to look at authoritative texts, including Qur'ānic uses first, and then Kuwaiti *amṭāl* (sing. *maṭal*) 'proverbs' which reflect conventional wisdom. I will treat these sources of data as the so-called *ṣawāhid* (pl. of *ṣāhid* 'evidence, proof') of written evidence of reliable usage in attested and often ascribed material.⁵

I will consider the Qur'ānic uses of these terms and to explore the textual or the documentary provenance of these words, including which are the most basic ones and the most stable. This is useful because some of the senses continue to coexist, not necessarily in the same setting. In this respect, two specialised dictionaries will be consulted: *A Comparative Lexical Study of Qur'ānic Arabic* by Zammit (2002) and the contextualised *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage* by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008).

I decided to provide examples of Kuwaiti proverbs and everyday sayings because I have collected many sources for them since '[t]he Arab is for ever [sic] quoting proverbs or sayings of some poet or other, and he seems to enjoy this almost as much as story telling [sic]' (Dickson 1949: 336). Generally speaking, proverbs 'represent a special type of idiom in that they can be attributed sentence or utterance status and thus special pragmatic function' (Herbst and Klotz 2009: 222). In Kuwait, textual collections of these items have existed since the early 1950s. Indeed, the significance of proverbs and idioms has been recognised by such scholars in their phraseological dictionaries; see, for example, al-Shirbāṣī (1953), al-Nourī (1968), al-S'aydān (1970, 1971, 1972), al-Roumī and Kamāl (1978, 1980, 1982, 1984), Muḥammad (2004) and the systematic linguistic analysis of Kuwaiti proverbs and idioms carried out by Yassin (1978a, 1988) in English. What is also significant about idiomatic

⁵ See, for example, Baalbaki (2014: 29-36) for a discussion on the epochs of reliable usage of the Arabic lexicographical tradition.

expressions is that '[t]he majority of KA idioms are semantically specialized phrases that belong to a more informal or colloquial level of speech' (Yassin 1978a: 67). In terms of the decision about the translation of these proverbs, I tried to strike a balance between the literal sense of words and their English equivalents. In many instances, this is an almost insurmountable task. As expressed by Sawayan (1992: 75), '[t]ranslation of idiomatic expressions is even much harder. As is well-known, a literal translation of an idiom is in many cases misleading, even ludicrous at times'. As a consequence, I have attempted to translate colloquial idiomatic expressions with their nearest English equivalents. I felt that nobody but a professional translator could do them justice.

Apart from those reference works, literature on the domestic life and pearling lore and information in Kuwait has been useful in giving us a flavour of the usages of certain lexical items. These include Dickson (1949), al-Shamlān (1959, 1989, 2000), al-Bakr (2000), and al-Roumī (2005).

4.1.3 Online Questionnaire

As part of my corroborating evidence, two online questionnaires were designed, viz. a "preference" questionnaire, distributed in March 2012, and an "elicitation" questionnaire, distributed in May 2013. I am using an online questionnaire as a source of contemporary data of up-to-date, lay speakers' responses and intuitions about the use of the key verbs. The results of these questionnaires will be used as part of the way in which I build a hypothesis about the nature of polysemy and lexical variation with respect to the key verbs. However, it should be borne in mind that questionnaires could be adduced as useful for a dialectological survey but the questionnaire in my study has one major limitation: I cannot verify the background of my respondents, because they all self-report their background.⁶

⁶ When I asked my Kuwaiti respondents about their spoken dialect, they distinguished themselves by giving ten nomenclatures to Kuwaiti. Some of these varieties/colloquials somehow reflect the respondents' hometown; they presumably see it as a symbol and source of pride for the people who speak the variety. The ten colloquials of Kuwait indicated are listed in order of the number of respondents who speak them: Kuwaiti Arabic, Kuwaiti Ḥaḍari Arabic, Kuwaiti Bedouin Arabic, Kuwaiti Ḥasāwī Arabic, Kuwaiti Šammari Arabic, Kuwaiti Zubērī Arabic, Kuwaiti 'Āzmī Arabic, Kuwaiti Ġibla Arabic (Western Kuwaiti), Kuwaiti Ġahrāwī Arabic (Northern Kuwaiti), and Kuwaiti 'Atīġ (Old Kuwaiti). There is no doubt that these diverse yet related vernaculars will continue to upsurge in Kuwaiti society because nowadays it seems to me that a number of Kuwaiti *ašīlīn* families proudly boast their own distinct dialect and culture. This dialectal diversity is reflected in the choice of the senses of the target verbs, as I received a number of interesting synonyms for each lexeme in the survey.

There are two main reasons for distributing the questionnaire online. First, it was a practical data collection method to reach Kuwaiti speakers while I am in Sheffield. Second, a recent study of the Arabic blogosphere reports that the third biggest cluster of users in the Arab world, after Egypt and Saudi Arabia, is based in Kuwait (Etling et al. 2009: 3).⁷ I will report the findings in the relevant sections of this chapter. In the following subsections, however, I attempt to discuss the design of and motivation for each questionnaire and to indicate the nature of the demographics.

4.1.3.1 The Preference Questionnaire

As part of my pilot study, I administered two sets of questionnaires on two different occasions: the first set included example sentences on the motion verbs *tarak* and *xalla* ‘to leave’, and the second set contained example sentences on *daxal* and *dašš* ‘to enter’. For the sake of brevity in my pilot study, the two remaining key verbs, i.e. *miša* ‘to walk’ and *rikaḏ* ‘to run’, were not included in this questionnaire.

A link to both online questionnaires was sent to my active Twitter followers asking if in principle they would be willing to participate in a research project into the “dialect of Kuwait” and they expressed a real interest in participating. The questionnaire was entirely designed in Arabic. Each participant was asked to give their biographical information, including their age, sex, and spoken dialect. Some 400 affirmative replies were received, which proved to be valuable. Most of the test subjects are female, and range in age from 15 to 64 years old. As for the spoken dialects of the participants, 80% are native speakers of Kuwaiti colloquial Arabic.⁸

The primary aim of this questionnaire is firstly: to test the similarities and differences between the near-synonyms *tarak* vs. *xalla*, and *daxal* vs. *dašš*; and secondly: to check the acceptability and the interchangeability of these verbs in given contexts. The questionnaire is designed with multiple-choice questions. Each question has three answers, with only one answer being selected by the respondents.

⁷ I should mention that the web survey provider SurveyMonkey <www.surveymonkey.com> made it easy to conduct, manage and analyse my research through gathering participant feedback on a given topic.

⁸ Although the questionnaire was designed for Kuwaiti speakers, 20% of the responses are nonetheless from native speakers of the following dialects: Saudi, Qatari, Emirati, Bahraini, Omani, Lebanese, Jordanian, Iraqi, Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, Algerian, and Yemini.

The information was analysed statistically. Percentage totals are provided adjacent to each answer, which determines the acceptability and preference of the verb usage in KA. Each questionnaire ended with the following question: Do you feel there is a difference between the two verbs? A comment box was included to let the participants express what they had noticed, felt, and discovered upon completion of the questionnaire.⁹

A total of 19 contextual examples of *tarak* vs. *xalla* were given to 457 respondents, of whom 108 (23.63%) are male and 349 (76.37%) are female. The following are the age groups of the respondents:

Age group	No. of respondents (%)
15-24	215 (47.05%)
25-34	152 (33.26%)
35-44	64 (14%)
45-54	21 (4.6%)
55-64	5 (1.09%)
Total	457 (100%)

Table 4.1: Age groups of the respondents who completed the *tarak* vs. *xalla* questionnaire

Additionally, a total of 22 contextual examples of *daxal* vs. *dašš* were given to 448 respondents, of whom 100 (22.32%) are male and 348 (77.68%) are female. The following are the age groups of the respondents:

Age group	No. of respondents (%)
15-24	238 (53.13%)
25-34	138 (30.8%)
35-44	45 (10.04%)
45-54	25 (5.58%)
55-64	2 (0.45%)
Total	448 (100%)

Table 4.2: Age groups of the respondents who completed the *daxal* vs. *dašš* questionnaire

⁹ When the respondents were asked about whether there is a difference between *tarak* and *xalla*, 74.1% reported yes and 25.9% reported no, and when asked about whether there is a difference between *daxal* vs. *dašš*, 66.4% reported yes and 33.6% reported no.

4.1.3.2 The Elicitation Questionnaire

The “elicitation” questionnaire is a structured questionnaire that was designed and distributed online on 1st May 2013 and stopped collecting responses at the end of 5th May 2013 (GMT). A link to the questionnaire was provided on my Twitter page¹⁰ to my twitter followers. The aim of this questionnaire was to retrieve information on the actual use of each polysemous sense of *dašš* ‘enter’, *xalla* ‘leave’, *rikaḏ* ‘run’, and *miša* ‘walk’ and to obtain comparable data on the usage of different senses. 574 respondents completed the questionnaire.¹¹ The questionnaire contained four biographical questions and twenty linguistic questions focusing on four examined words, i.e. each examined lexical item had five questions written entirely in Kuwaiti Arabic, although it is a spoken variety.¹²

Out of 574 respondents, 408 (71.08%) of them are female speakers and 166 (28.92%) are male.¹³ The majority of respondents are young speakers, which is an expected finding because younger Internet users mainly dominate social networking sites. The age range of the respondents is between 15 to 64 years old. The following are the age groups of the respondents:

Age group	No. of respondents (%)
15-24	312 (54.36%)
25-34	182 (31.71%)
35-44	50 (8.71%)
45-54	24 (4.18%)
55-64	6 (1.05%)
Total	574 (100%)

Table 4.3: Age groups of the respondents who completed the “elicitation” questionnaire

¹⁰ I tweeted the link twice a day, day and night, for five consecutive days and it was retweeted several times to reach as large an audience as possible <<https://twitter.com/yalbader>>.

¹¹ Before distributing this questionnaire, I ran two versions of the pilot questionnaire by two native speakers of Kuwaiti Arabic via email to check if the questions were uncomplicated and clear enough to deal with. After discussing and having received my supervisor’s approval, a structured questionnaire was designed and distributed online.

¹² Because the questions were entirely given in Kuwaiti, and the respondents in general are used to Arabic questionnaires, I received a number of motivating sentiments of praise such as *ḥadda ‘ağṭb l-stibyān* ‘the questionnaire was really amazing’, *kān mumti* ‘it was fun’, and so on.

¹³ At first, my aim was to collect responses from Kuwaiti speakers. However, I was surprised by the number of non-Kuwaiti respondents (107 respondents) who took part in the questionnaire which makes the study particularly interesting in terms of investigating polysemy across Arabic dialects.

The question I asked in the survey was about the academic qualifications that the respondents have already acquired. The majority of the respondents have completed an undergraduate level of university education. This may be taken as a firm indication of the high literacy rate in Kuwait. The following is a summary of the educational background of the respondents:

Education level of the respondents	No. of respondents (%)
Elementary/intermediate	1 (0.17%)
High school	81 (14.11%)
Diploma	60 (10.45%)
Undergraduate	373 (65.98%)
Postgraduate	68 (11.85%)
Total	574 (100%)

Table 4.4: Education level of the respondents

Most Twitter users accessed the survey via their mobile phones or touchscreen tablet computers so this is why I did not crowd the survey with complicated questions. I asked the same five questions for each of the four verbs. Below, I illustrate these questions using *dašš* as an example, followed by the aim of each question.

Q1: What does *dašš* mean? Please provide as many examples as you can.

Aim: To observe the senses that first come to the respondents' minds. By answering 'What does *dašš* mean?' the respondents will provide a referent (i.e. a person, thing, animal, phenomenon, activity) which they perceive as being *dašš*.

Q2: What could *yidišš*? Who could *yidišš*? Please provide me with examples.¹⁴

Aim: To obtain more referents/extensions of the investigated verb. I asked the respondents to give examples to prompt them to think of subjects.

Q3: How many of the abovementioned meanings do you actually use in your daily life?

Aim: To observe the most frequently used senses in Kuwaiti Arabic and the range of meanings the respondents know and use in their own speech.

¹⁴ In this question, the verb given is built on the imperfect tense and derived from the 3rd person singular form of the verb *dašš*. This verb is inflected by adding the prefix *y-* to the stem, which roughly corresponds to the English present tense. Note, however, that the vowel *-i-*, inserted between the stem *-dišš-* and the subject marker *y-*, is a helping vowel. The imperfect tense of *yidišš* in Kuwaiti has the progressive meaning (Qafisheh 1975: 97-98).

Q4: In addition to the meanings you have already mentioned, are there meanings that you are aware of that you would not use?

Aim: To expand the possibility of other senses that may be conjured up.

Q5: Which of the meanings you provided for *dašš* is the most central one?

Aim: To help me organise the senses from the most to the least frequently used sense.

4.1.4 Notes on Terminology

The four verbs under investigation are inflected for gender and number in the perfective and imperfective aspects and the imperative.¹⁵ Plural verb forms are of common gender.¹⁶ However, Johnstone (1967b: 50) notes that ‘[f]eminine plural forms occur only in a few fixed expressions’ in the Kuwaiti dialect, which do not occur in my material. According to Qafisheh (1975: 98) and Holes (2010: 155), the imperfect tense in Gulf Arabic (and in Kuwaiti) describes the following: (i) habitual or ‘timeless’ actions, (ii) general truth value, (iii) progressive, and (iv) future actions or intentions to act. That is to say, the imperfective aspect in KA denotes the past, present, or future tenses (al-Najjar 1984: 119). In the same way, al-Najjar (1984: 16) defines the perfective aspect of KA verbs as follows: ‘the primary use of the perfective is to denote past actions, i.e. it describes a complete action or situation that took place prior to the moment of speaking’. Moreover, the imperative verb has three different forms, reflecting differences in number and gender. To put it another way, an imperative verb ‘occurs only in the second person masculine, feminine and common plural’ (Holes 1990: 199).¹⁷

One of the *idées reçues* in Arabic (and Semitic) linguistics is that words are uniquely formed by combining a consonantal *root*, which indicates core meaning, and a syllabic-vocalic *pattern*, which indicates grammatical function (Ratcliffe 2013: 72). To express the relationship between a root and the various patterns derived from it, ‘grammarians represent the root by trilateral template *f-’l*, where the *f* stands for the first radical (*fā’ al-fi’l*), the ‘ for the second (*‘ayn al-fi’l*), and the *l* for the third (*lām al-fi’l*)’ (Baalbaki 2013: 107). Therefore,

¹⁵ A useful list of Eastern Arabian imperatives is given in the handbooks of the Arabian American Oil Company (1954: 60-68, 1956: *passim*). See also Holes (2010: 2-3).

¹⁶ In Oman and parts of the United Arab Emirates, ‘there are feminine plural forms for the 2nd and 3rd person when one is talking about a group that is purely composed of women’ (Holes 2010: 79).

¹⁷ According to Johnstone (1967b: 18), ‘Kuwaiti has apparently been influenced in some ways by Iraqi, particularly in the perfect and the imperfect of the strong simple verb’.

the root is seen as the ‘basic’ component of a word, to which are added vowels, and at times, prefixes, infixes, and suffixes. Moreover, the notion of *mīzān šarfī* ‘morphological measure’¹⁸ is introduced to identify the patterns to which words belong. The *mīzān* normally consists of the root of the word, its vowels, and, where applicable, its affixes.

As far as derivational systems are concerned, Gulf Arabic verbs are mainly based on either *trilateral* roots, i.e. having three radical consonants, or *quadrilateral* roots (also known as *quadriradical* and *quadriconsonantal*), i.e. having four radical consonants (Qafisheh 1977: 39). In our case, the four verbs under study are all trilateral.

In general, verbs are classified as strong, weak (either ‘defective’ or ‘hollow’), and geminate. Weak verbs have *hamza* (glottal stop), *w* or *y* as one of their radicals. Strong verbs have radicals other than *hamza* or the semivowels *w* and *y*. Where the second and third radicals are identical, the verb is called ‘geminate’. Indeed, most verbs in KA have trilateral roots, from which the shape of the verb is formed. For example, from the root *n-š-r* (representing the trilateral template *f-‘-l*), we can form the verb *nišar* ‘to spread out flat, unfurl; to publish’, the noun *našra* ‘news’, the gerund *našir* ‘publishing’, and so forth. Also, from the pattern *maf‘ūl*, for instance, we can typically form the passive participle, as in *manšūr* ‘published, broadcast’. Within the trilateral verbs, Gulf Arabic has ten verbal classes/patterns/themes that are usually referred to in the Orientalist tradition by Roman numerals. It should be noted, however, that Classes II through X are derived from Class I and they are sometimes referred to as Derived Verbs or Derived Themes (see, for example, Johnstone 1967b: 45; Qafisheh 1977: 39).

Additionally, it is a well-known fact that the form of the verb given, for example, for *dašš*, is built on and derived from the 3rd person singular form of the verb, which is known as the stem: *dašš* ‘he entered’. This stem is used to refer to the verb as a whole, just as the infinitive is used in English (Qafisheh 1975: 280). There is no infinitive in Arabic. It should be therefore borne in mind that whenever I say *dašš*, *xalla*, *miša*, and *rikaḏ*, which literally mean ‘he entered’, ‘he left’, ‘he walked’, ‘he ran’, respectively, I refer to what corresponds respectively to the English infinitives ‘to enter’, ‘to leave’, ‘to walk’, ‘to run’ (cf. Smart and Altorfer 2010: 162). Besides, it is only for practical reasons that the male form has been used for verbs, active and passive participles, as well as in expressions. As shall be explained

¹⁸ Other terms used by Arab scholars for the same concept include *qālab* ‘mould’, *šīghah* ‘form’ (‘Ali 1987: 17).

below, the verbal prefix *ti-* of the imperfect verb is used for both the 3rd person feminine singular and the 2nd person masculine singular.

Last but not least, I will give some noteworthy remarks on the phonotactics of the target verbs because they occur quite frequently in my data. I will also be looking at some of the important morphophonemic peculiarities that these verbs have which are not shared by other verbs in the dialect, since some of them have implications for semantic change, although without delving into too much historical detail. The features selected for description are those which seem most convincing to me. When I refer to the phrase ‘Classical Arabic’, I use it as a cover term for ‘Classical’ and ‘Modern Literary Arabic’.

4.1.5 Notes on the Spoken Variety

It has been demonstrated in Chapter 3 (and is socially surveyed in Chapter 5) that the distinction between Bedouin and sedentary dialects ‘is one of the two typological backbones of Arabic dialectology’ (Procházka 2014: 340). In Kuwait, the two groups of dialects are known variously by the names of the two communities with whom they are associated. The two communities are contrasted as *ḥaḍar* ‘settled people’ and *badu* ‘Bedouin’. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to note that the pronunciation of the verb forms in this chapter is representative of the spoken Arabic of urban Kuwaitis, i.e. the *ḥaḍar* ‘settled people’ pronunciation. Although the designation “Kuwaiti Arabic” has been employed, the focus and the phonological frame is that of Kuwait City. In the late 1950s, Johnstone (1962: 179) made several notes on the dialects of Kuwait and he pointed out that ‘the language of such tribesmen is fairly soon affected by Kuwaiti and by technical English, and they then develop a ‘Kuwaitised’ variety of their own tribal speech’. In this case, Kuwait is/was a bidialectal community and the dialects of tribal elements of Kuwait City, formerly nomad, are now settled or semi-settled (i.e. sedentarised).¹⁹

¹⁹ ‘The sedentary dialects can further be divided into urban (*madanī*) and rural (*qarawī* ‘village’ or *fallāḥī* ‘peasant’) dialects’ (Palva 2006: 605).

4.2 Dašš ‘to enter’

The lexical verb *dašš* is amongst the most frequently used verbs in Gulf Arabic. It is prototypically a verb of change of location which entails that an animate moving entity changes location during the process: for instance, *daššēt d-dīra* ‘I went to (Kuwait) town’ (Maṭar 1969: 94). Across the four dialect regions investigated by Brustad (2000: 147), including Kuwait, she notes that ‘the most commonly occurring verbs of motion in narratives are verbs meaning *to go*, *to come*, *to get up*, and *to sit*’.²⁰

In Gulf Arabic grammar, a verb that ends with two identical consonants, such as *dašš* ‘to enter’, *madd* ‘to stretch’, *fačč* ‘to open’, *taxx* ‘to calm down’ is called a ‘doubled’ verb. These simple doubled verbs are characterised by a final double consonant in the stem, and the second and the third radicals are identical (Qafisheh 1977: 41, 1979: 6). By normal rules, the basic form of the verb from this root would be *dašaš*; this, however, is ‘an inadmissible verb form in Arabic, and we find *dašš* instead’ (Holes 2010: 119).

In terms of pronunciation, words with two-consonant clusters occur frequently in Gulf Arabic. A final double consonant *šš* in *dašš* is not pronounced differently from a final single consonant, i.e. final *š* in *dašš* is the same as final *š* in *frāš* ‘bed’ as far as the sound itself is concerned (Qafisheh 1977: 22). Notice that the basic form of the past tense of doubled verbs is always CvCC (where C = any consonant, and v = vowel).

4.2.1 Formal and Morphological Characteristics of *dašš*

A detailed report of the morphology of Kuwaiti verbs was first made by T. M. Johnstone (1967b) in his pioneering study of Gulf Arabic, the fieldwork for which was done in the late 1950s. With respect to the imperfect aspect, Johnstone (1967b: 74) notes that ‘these verbs have the imperfect vowel *i* unless the geminate radical is a labial, in which case the ‘characteristic’ vowel may be *u*’. For example, *dašš* and *yidišš* are the usual forms but not *yidušš* because ‘in Kuwaiti Arabic there are no verbs which have *u* as their characteristic vowel, imperfect being of the form *yaf‘il* or *yif‘al*’ (Johnstone 1961: 256).

As will be shown below, doubled verbs do not require a prefix; a Kuwaiti speaker may simply use the present tense form for the imperative (Holmes and Samaan 1957: 33). The

²⁰ Cf. Nāim (2010) for a semantic account of verbs of ‘coming’ and ‘going’ in the vernacular Arabic of Zabīd, Yemen.

conjugation of the perfect, imperfect, and imperative of the representative verb *dašš* is given below (cf. Qafisheh 1977: 57, 1979: 10).

a) *Perfect*:

3 rd pers. masc. sg.	<i>dašš</i>	‘he entered’
3 rd pers. fem. sg.	<i>daššat</i>	‘she entered’
3 rd pers. pl.	<i>daššaw</i>	‘they entered’
2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>daššēt</i>	‘you entered’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>daššētay</i>	‘you entered’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>daššētaw</i>	‘you entered’
1 st pers. sg.	<i>daššēt</i>	‘I entered’
1 st pers. pl.	<i>daššēna</i>	‘we entered’

b) *Imperfect*:

3 rd pers. masc. sg.	<i>yidišš</i>	‘he enters’
3 rd pers. fem. sg.	<i>tidišš</i>	‘she enters’
3 rd pers. pl.	<i>yidiššūn</i>	‘they enter’
2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>tidišš</i>	‘you enter’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>tidiššīn</i>	‘you enter’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>tidiššūn</i>	‘you enter’
1 st pers. sg.	<i>adišš</i>	‘I enter’
1 st pers. pl.	<i>ndišš</i>	‘we enter’

c) *Imperative*:²¹

2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>dišš</i>	‘enter, go in!’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>diššay</i>	‘enter, go in!’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>diššaw</i>	‘enter, go in!’

²¹ Holmes and Samaan (1957: 33) give *diššī* ‘enter (f)!’ and *diššū* ‘enter (pl.)!’ for Kuwaiti Arabic, which do not occur in my material.

It has been reported by Holes (1990: 223-234) that Educated Gulf Arabic ‘has a number of inherently directional lexical verbs, but does not morphologically mark directionality’, thus *dišš* ‘come/go in!’ In KA, two participles are prominently associated with the verb, the active and the passive. The active²² and passive participles of *dašš* are *dāš* (m.),²³ *dāšša* (f.), and *dāššīn* (pl.) ‘entering, having entered’ and *madšūš* (m.),²⁴ *madšūša* (f.), and *madšūšīn* (pl.) ‘it was entered’, respectively. As stated by Johnstone (1962: 82), ‘the active participle is used with verbs of motion to describe present continuous, and by extension future, actions’. Class VII of the verb, which is formed from transitive Class I verbs by prefixing *n-*, is also noted: *ndašš* ‘to be entered’ (Qafisheh 1979: 55). Often, the Kuwaiti imperfective passive carries a gerundive meaning loosely rendered by *-able* as in *hal mawqi mā yindašš lah min ġēr mā tašbik* ‘this website cannot be accessed without an Internet connection’ (cf. Brustad 2000: 334-335). This sentence is in fact a variant of *mā yindašš lah hal mawqi min ġēr mā tašbik* ‘in which the impersonal nature of the verb is clearer’ (Holes 1990: 183).

Concerning consonant clusters, Holes (2007c: 611) elaborates that ‘CCC clusters that arise via suffixation, where the first two consonants are the same, are usually reduced’. For instance, examples are *dašha* ‘he entered it’ (< *dašš* + *ha*), *xalha* ‘leave it!’ (< *xall* + *ha*). In terms of assimilation, it is noticeable that /t/ in *ti-* verbal prefixes of various kinds is assimilated (i.e. regressive assimilation) by some Kuwaiti speakers to /t, ʔ, ʔ, d, ɗ, ɗ, ʃ, ʃ, ʒ, ʒ, s, ʂ, š/ as a consequence of the deletion of unstressed /i/ in open syllables, e.g. *(i)ddišš* ‘it/she enters; you (m.s.) enter’ (Qafisheh 1997a: 14; Holes 2005b: xxxii, 2007c: 612). As a matter of fact, the first attested example of use was first noted for Kuwait in the Kuwait Oil Company Handbook (1951: 127) as follows: *ba ad mā ddišš* ‘after you enter’.

4.2.2 Dictionary Treatment and Attestation of *dašš*

A number of *dašš* senses have been noted for Kuwait; I will discuss each sense separately in the following subsections. They are organised in terms of frequency.

²² From the grammatical point of view, Holes (2010: 197) states that ‘active participles behave partly like adjectives and partly like verbs’.

²³ Notice the contraction in the active participle (cf. Qafisheh 1997a: 39). In the Kuwaiti dialect, the common expression *dāšni hawa* means ‘I caught a cold’ or ‘I am experiencing diarrhoea’.

²⁴ Also noted by Qafisheh (1979: 269) for Gulf Arabic.

4.2.2.1 Sense 1 of *dašš*

As predicted, the majority of the Kuwaiti dictionaries gloss *daxal* ‘to enter; come or go into something’ as the most central meaning of *dašš*; in other words, the lexicographers define *dašš* as *daxal* (Holmes and Samaan 1957: 193; al-Ḥanafī 1964: 133; al-S‘aydān 1971: 578; al-Shamlān 1978: 366; al-Ayyoub 1982: 105, 1997: 222; Khalaf 1988: 169; al-Sab‘ān 1989: 124; al-Rashaid 2012: 247). Nonetheless, what distinguishes these compilers is that each one of them has his/her own policy and style regarding the inclusion and organisation of senses along with the provision of illustrative examples. It can be noted that al-Shamlān (1978: 366) is the only one who lists the causative form *daššaš* ‘he made it/him enter’, which is also noted for Bahrain by Holes (2001: 176) as follows:

1. *yāxḏūn* *il-‘arūs* *u* *yidaššišūn-ha* *‘ala* *l-mə‘ris*
IMPF-TAKE.3pl the-bride and IMPF CAUS-ENTER.3pl-her on the-groom
‘They take the bride and put her in (a room) with the bridegroom.’

This is possibly because the causative form *daššaš* is not as productive as *daxxal*, as far as I can observe. Additionally, the example sentences provided in most of these lexicographic works are actually in the form of ‘verb + noun/prepositional phrase’ collocation, and not in the form of complete sentences.

By defining *dašš* as *daxal*, it is arguable that KA speakers would have no problem interchanging *dašš* with *daxal* in any circumstances; the meanings are perfect synonyms with no semantic differences between them. This claim has not been challenged yet, but it looks sensible to investigate the extent to which *dašš* and *daxal* denote the same thing. I was extremely eager to test this statement by conducting a small-scale study in the form of a questionnaire. In the following paragraph, I will distinguish between the two words, albeit briefly.

The results of the “elicitation” questionnaire show that, out of 574 respondents, more than half of them defined *dašš* as *daxal*, which matches the definitions given by the above lexicographers. In terms of formality, *daxal* is formal and sounds more standard while *dašš* is colloquial, and this view was given by some of the participants in the “elicitation” questionnaire where they labeled *daxal* as *kilma ḏarba* ‘an elegant word’ and *dašš* as *kilma dafša* ‘a hasty word’, which is probably a matter of preference. In some occasions, *dašš* could imply that the motion event happens unintentionally, or it could mean ‘to rush with sudden

impetuosity’. This can be demonstrated in the following sentence. When asked to indicate a preference between *dašš* and *daxal* in example 2 below, 240 (58.39%) out of 411 respondents in the “preference” questionnaire responded that

2. a) *s-sayyāra* ***daššat*** *fīni*
the-car PRF-ENTER.3fs in-me
‘My car was rammed from behind by another car.’

was preferable to

- b) *s-sayyāra* ***daxalat*** *fīni*
the-car PRF-ENTER.3fs in-me
‘My car was rammed from behind by another car.’

because the collision occurred by accident. This specific use of *dašš* is well-established in modern Kuwaiti and was noted by al-Rashaid (2012: 247) where he gives the collocation:²⁵

3. ***dašš*** *biš-šabba*
PRF-ENTER.3ms in the-lamp post
‘He hit/rammed into the lamp post.’

Similarly, Hinds and Badawi (1986: 251) record this sense for Cairene Arabic as in:

4. *‘il-‘arabiyya* ***xaššit*** *fī-šagara*
the-car PRF-ENTER.3fs in-the tree
‘The car crashed into a tree.’

Note that the Egyptian verb *xašš* ‘to enter’ corresponds to the Kuwaiti *dašš*, owing to the fact that *dašš* has a different meaning in Egyptian Arabic, viz. ‘to mash, pound, shatter’ (Hinds

²⁵ Many linguists have used the term ‘collocation’ (also called ‘recurrent combinations’ or ‘fixed combinations’) in various subfields of linguistic studies. According to the *OED* the term ‘collocation’ has been in use at least since 1751 in connection with aspects of language (Herbst and Klotz 2009: 235). In Arabic, several terms have been proposed to refer to the notion of collocation. From the available literature on this matter, I noticed that the most consolidated term is *at-talāzum al-lafḍiyy*, which was first used by S. El-Ḥassan in 1982 (Santillán Grimm 2009: 27). Similarly, Santillán Grimm (2009: 27) observes that several other terms have been or are still used in Arabic to refer to collocation: *al-muṣāhibāt al-luġawiyya*, *tawāfuq al-kalimāt*, *al-mutawāridāt al-lafḍiyya*, *at-taġammu‘āt at-tābita/al-mutakarrira/al-mutawātira*, *al-ittibā‘*, *at-tatābu‘*, *at-taḍāmm*. For example, Ḥāfiḍ (2004) glosses ‘collocation’ in his dictionary as *mutaṣāhibāt lafḍiyya*, while Ghazāla (2007) glosses it as *mutalāzimāt lafḍiyya*, and both terms contain the word *lafḍiyya* ‘verbal’ which we referred to in Chapter 2.

and Badawi 1986: 289) and thus it is considered a homonym. More examples can easily be listed to test the interchangeability.²⁶

4.2.2.2 Sense 2 of *dašš*

The second sense of *dašš*, after ‘to enter, go in’, is ‘to go to’. From this sense, we get specific contexts of use, namely, ‘to set sail, embark on a sea voyage, dive into water’, i.e. verbs designating motion in water or the so-called ‘Aquamation Verbs’ (al-S‘aydān 1971: 578; al-Shamlān 1978: 366, 1989: 371; Khalaf 1988: 169; al-Ayyoub 1997: 222; al-Rashaid 2012: 247). According to Koptjevskaja-Tamm et al. (2010: 316), ‘the domain of AQUAMOTION is complementary to TERRA-MOTION (motion on land) and to AERO-MOTION (motion in the air)’. As evidenced in Holes’ (1995a: 271) study, urbanisation is one of the social forces that drive the engine of linguistic change in the Middle East. It is therefore important to realise that Kuwait changed in two decades from a near-medieval sheikhdom to a modern welfare state when its first oil well gushed into being in 1938. Noticeably, enormous changes have occurred in the lifestyle and occupations of the people of Kuwait, which have had implications for their language. For example, the replacement of maritime occupations following the discovery of oil has had dramatic implications for the lexicon of KA. In Eastern Arabian dialects, Holes (2001: xxxviii) reports that:

There has been large-scale semantic extension of vocabulary brought from Arabia to meet the different circumstances of sedentary life on the coast. The vocabulary of the sea—in particular of pearl-diving—gives many examples of terms used in the central Arabian dialects (and CLA) which acquired a specialised nautical meaning, and sometimes lost their original senses.

Consequently, I noticed that the above aquamation verbal senses are mostly recognised by older Kuwaiti speakers. According to Holes (2011: 132), during the pearling trade in the era before oil was discovered in the mid-1930s, ‘there was a whole language and lore which related to the practice and financing of diving’. This observation was strongly supported by Johnstone and Muir (1964: 299) when they interviewed Kuwaiti sailors and shipbuilders (*gaḷālīf*) in 1958; they observed during the course of their work that ‘younger people no longer know much of the traditional Kuwaiti lore of the sea, and that this knowledge will have disappeared almost entirely within a few generations’. As a matter of fact:

²⁶ In some Arabic dialects, *xašš* coexists alongside *dašš*. In Iraq, for instance, Abu-Haidar (2006: 272-3) notes that *dašš* ‘to enter’ is used along with the Baghdadi *ṭabb*. At one time *ṭabb* was indicative of rural speech occurring with the urban *xašš*. *xašš* is now rarely used, and even Christian Baghdadis are using *ṭabb* in free variation with *daxal*.

Most Kuwaitis have forgotten the names of boats from lack of use and lack of need of them. They no longer remember [nautical] terms such as *yamluh* ‘the rail at the poop’ [...] The names of parts of cars have replaced them (al-Shamlān 2000: 67).

Gulf-wide, this sense of *dašš* is also noted by Ingham (1994: 177) for Najd, by Holes (2001: 175) for Bahrain, and by Qafisheh (1997b: 220) for Abu Dhabi. However, in his dictionary of obsolete words in Saudi Arabian dialects, al-‘Ubūdī (2002: 288) lists *dašš* in the sense of ‘to set sail, dive into water’ as no longer being in current use.

Furthermore, while explaining the meaning of *dašš*, Khalaf (1988: 169) lists the geographical distribution of the word and points out that it is particularly used in Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula. This is also confirmed by Behnstedt and Woidich (2014: 71-74) in their semasiological word atlas while providing the translations and realisations of ‘enter’ in modern Arabic dialects. Khalaf (1988: 170), however, states that *dašš* is nowadays used to talk about the landing of an aeroplane, e.g.:

5. *daššat* *ṭ-ṭayyāra*

PRF-ENTER.3fs the-plane

‘The plane is approaching (the airport)’ (i.e. ‘Aero-motion Verb’).

The foregoing discussion implies that pearl diving was the mainstay of the economy of Kuwait and eastern Arabia (ceasing altogether in 1959) and that the senses related to this occupation were really active before the oil boom in the region. It is reasonable to suppose that a core sense of *dašš* is ‘enter’ and given the particular historical, demographic, and socio-economic conditions, it would be localised as ‘dive into water’ in the context of seafaring occupations. So the sense ‘dive into water’ would have been primed in that particular environment. Consequently, I wish to propose a possible scenario for the synchronic process of this meaning extension. First of all, the verb *dašš* has established literal sense₁ designating motion in water ‘to set sail, etc.’ Some creative person occasionally uses *dašš* in figurative sense₂ ‘to enter’. Now, ‘to enter’ becomes established, and catches on (i.e. becomes entrenched in the mental lexicons of members of the speech community as an entry), so that *dašš* becomes polysemous between ‘to set sail, etc.’ and ‘to enter’. Then, ‘to set sail, etc.’ is still seen as literal, while ‘to enter’ is figurative. ‘To set sail, etc.’ accordingly begins to become obsolescent. ‘To enter’ begins to be identified as literal, and ‘to set sail, etc.’ as figurative. Finally, ‘to set sail, etc.’ is lost, at which point the sense of *dašš* has immediately transformed from ‘to set sail, etc.’ to ‘to enter’.

In fact, within these aquamotion senses of *dašš*, we may distinguish between two nautical activities: self-propelled motion of animate figure (‘dive’) and motion of vessels and people aboard (‘sail’),²⁷ (cf. Koptjevskaja-Tamm et al. 2010). The following example is noted in Kuwait for the ‘dive’ sense by al-S‘aydān (1971: 578) and al-Ayyoub (1982: 53, 1997: 222):

6. *dašš/daššēna* *l-ġōš*
 PRF-ENTER.3ms/1pl. the-diving
 ‘He/we went pearl-diving.’

Furthermore, the following examples are noted by al-S‘aydān (1971: 578), Khalaf (1988: 170), and al-Rashaid (2012: 247) for the ‘sail’ sense:

7. *daššēt/daššēna* *l-baḥar*
 PRF-ENTER.1sg/1pl. the-sea
 ‘I/we put to sea.’

and the following sense is noted by Khalaf (1988: 169) and al-Roumī (2005: 185):

8. *daššat* *s-safīna*
 PRF-ENTER.3sg the-ship
 ‘The ship set sail.’

The sense of *dašš* as ‘to embark on a sea voyage’ is also noted for Kuwait by al-S‘aydān (1971: 578) and al-Ayyoub (1997: 222):

9. *dašš/daššēna* *s-sifar*
 PRF-ENTER.3ms/1pl. the-travel
 ‘He/we embarked on a sea voyage.’

Other local writers have merely listed the lexeme *dašš* (m. sg.) and *daššaw* (pl.) indicating ‘a sea voyage’ as if it is the sole meaning of *dašš* (al-Shamlān 1978: 366, 1989: 371; al-Roumī 2005: 185).²⁸

²⁷ In English, the verb ‘dive’ is categorised within the semantic field of Search Verbs, while ‘sail’ is considered a Motion Verb, or Verbs That Are Not Vehicle Names (Levin 1993: 198, 268). In contrast, Koptjevskaja-Tamm et al. (2010: 316) label verbs such as *dive* and *sink* as Immersion Verbs.

²⁸ Sowayan (1992: 264) glosses *dašš* ‘to wade’ for the Arabic dialect of the Šammar. Hava (1899: 197) lists *dašš* as meaning ‘to travel in (a country)’ which could possibly be a homonym rather than a polyseme.

Additionally, the noun *dašša* (lit. ‘the entering, going in’) occurs in Kuwaiti, Bahraini and Emirati dialects with the meaning ‘the beginning of the pearling season proper’, and this gives a firm indication as to the establishment of *dašš* as meaning ‘to set sail, embark on a sea voyage, pearl dive’ (al-S‘aydān 1971: 578; al-Shamlān 1978: 366, 1989: 371, 2000: 178; Khalaf 1988: 169-170; al-Bakr 2000: 72; al-Roumī 2005: 185).²⁹ Another extended meaning of the noun *dašša* as observed by Khalaf (1988: 169) is the expression *lēlat id-dašša*³⁰ ‘the wedding night (lit. the night of the entering)’ which is also noted by Holes (2001: 176, 2005b: 166) for Bahrain. There is no doubt that the expression *lēlat id-dašša* is giving way to *lēlat id-daxla* in modern Kuwait, presumably in favour of a Gulf-wide koiné, since *daxal* is a pan-Arab term for ‘to enter’ (cf. Abdel-Massih 1975: 30).

4.2.2.3 Sense 3 of *dašš*

Moving on to the third sense which signifies how temporal events and various kinds of winds could be contained in the meaning of *dašš*. This is illustrated by Khalaf (1988: 169-170) as follows; these meanings are still in current use:

10. *dašš* *l-išta*
 PRF-ENTER.3ms the-winter
 ‘The winter has begun.’

11. *dašš* *l-gēḏ*³¹
 PRF-ENTER.3ms the-summer
 ‘The late summer has begun.’

²⁹ Noted by Ḥanḍal (1998: 242) for the UAE and by Holes (2001: 176, 2005b: 2) for Bahrain, in addition to *ir-rakba* ‘the setting out’. In present-day Kuwait, *dašša* could also mean ‘entrance’ as in *daššat l-maḥaf* ‘the museum entrance’. However, al-Ḥanafī (1964: 133) records *al-madašš* ‘entrance’ for Kuwait which is not recorded elsewhere.

³⁰ In the context of marriage, the expression *dašš/daxal* ‘*alēha* ‘he went into her’ is used in Kuwait and Bahrain to describe the groom ‘going into’ (the bedroom) to meet his bride to consummate their marriage, which clearly has a sexual connotation. Cf. the Egyptian Arabic example: *bi-yxušš* ‘*al-‘arūsa lēlit id-duxla* ‘he has intercourse with the bride on the wedding night’ (Hinds and Badawi 1986: 251). Additionally, I was surprised to have found a similar usage recorded for Chadian Arabic as spoken in N'Djamena, cf. *al arīs andassa lē martah* ‘Le marié est entré dans la chambre de sa femme’ (Jullien de Pommerol 1999: 156); see also Kaye (1982: 24) for Nigerian Arabic. Daniels (1971: 155) records *lēlat id-daxla* ‘the wedding night’ for Kuwait. Landberg (1920: 717) also records the following sense for *daxal* in southeastern Yemeni (Dathīnah) Arabic: *alors il l’ēpouse et consomme le mariage*.

³¹ Arid, subtropical Kuwait has very hot summers. The hottest part of the summer in Kuwait is known as *qēḏ* or *gēḏ* (Dickson 1949: 247; Holes 2005b: 62).

12. *daššat* *l-marba ‘āniyya*³²
 PRF-ENTER.3fs the-forty (days)
 ‘The *marba ‘āniyya* wind has begun/come.’

13. *daššat* *l-‘ayūz*³³
 PRF-ENTER.3fs the-old woman
 ‘The ‘*ayūz* wind has begun/come.’

Other acceptable temporal activities that naturally co-occur with *dašš* and all calendric readings of words denoting periods of time, such as *week*, *month*, *year* are noted by al-S‘aydān (1971: 577):

14. *ba ‘ad* *ayyām* *yidišš* *š-šahar* *t-tāni*
 after days IMPF-ENTER.3ms the-month the-second
 ‘The next month will begin in few days.’

Similarly, Holes (2001: 170) records the following Bahraini usage, but with *daxal*:

15. *it-tālit* *rāḥ* *wi* *r-rābi* ‘ *daxal*
 the-third PRF-GO.3ms and the-fourth PRF-ENTER.3ms
 ‘The third (month of the diving season) has finished, and the fourth is beginning.’

4.2.2.4 Other Senses of *dašš*

The following miscellaneous senses of *dašš* are only noted once:

16. *daššaw* *l-‘irs*
 PRF-ENTER.3pl the-wedding
 ‘They attended the wedding.’ (al-Rashaid 2012: 247)

³² Its approximate period is 23th November to 1st January. It starts with a very strong *šamāl* (northwest wind) and goes round to the west in the early morning and finishes in the east in the afternoon (Dickson 1949: 250).

³³ Lit. ‘the old woman wind’, its approximate period is 26th February to 8th March. A very strong *šamāl* (northwest wind) lasting for at least five days. Sometimes it suddenly veers round to *kōs* (southeast wind) (Dickson 1949: 249). Ḥanḍal (1998: 87) gives the plural form *bard l-‘ayāyiz* ‘the old women cold’ for Emirati Arabic.

concerning the trilateral root *d-x-l*, eight forms occur 126 times. I will only deal with the verbal forms here: *daxala* (intransitive verb) occurs 75 times, *duxila* (passive verb) occurs once, *'adxala* (transitive verb) occurs 38 times, and *'udxila* (passive verb) occurs four times. The uses and senses of the Qur'ānic *daxala* are listed below:

1. to enter, to go into³⁵
2. to enter upon, to force one's way (with the preposition *'ala* 'upon')³⁶
3. to join with (with the preposition *fī* 'in')³⁷
4. to consummate marriage (with the preposition *bi-* 'in')³⁸
5. to be entered, to be invaded³⁹
6. to admit, to cause to enter⁴⁰
7. to put into, to enter something into⁴¹

It is to be observed from the Qur'ānic senses of *daxala* above that senses 1, 4, 6, and 7 are noted for Kuwait by the use of its plesionym *dašš* (see section 4.2.2 above). This presumably suggests that the senses of *daxala* have at some point transferred to *dašš* or developed in parallel. As for senses 2, 3, and 5, I have evidence from my material that they occur in the Kuwaiti dialect with *dašš* as we shall discover later.

Regarding Kuwaiti proverbs, I have only noted four examples of *dašš* proverbs in the reference works. As is shown below, the proverbial meanings of *dašš* recorded are 'to enter, go to' and 'to join'. Al-Nourī (1968) lists the following two proverbs:

³⁵ وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ 'and he **went into** his garden while he was being unjust to himself [harming his own soul by his conceit and disbelief]', translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 300).

³⁶ ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَانظُرُوا عَلَىٰ يَمِينِكُمْ لِئَلَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ عَدَاؤُهَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ 'enter in upon them through the gate, for if you **enter by it**, you will indeed be victorious', translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 300-301).

³⁷ فادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي 'join My servants', translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 301).

³⁸ وَرَبَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ 'and [your] stepdaughters in your care-those born of your women [wives] with whom you have **consummated** marriage', translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 301).

³⁹ وَلَوْ دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَقْطَارِهَا 'had it [the city] **been entered**, [and the enemy came] upon them, from all [its] sides', translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 301).

⁴⁰ يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ 'He **admits** to His mercy who He will', translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 301).

⁴¹ وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ 'put your hand inside [the neck of] your cloak', translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 301).

1. *dāšīn* *fī* *r-ribḥ* *sālmin* *min* *l-xasāra*⁴²
 PRF-ENTER.3ms in the-profit safe from the-loss
 ‘You will not lose (financially) if you join (a partner)’ (i.e. ‘pay more, lose less’, said to someone who donates and likes to help other people). (al-Nourī 1968: 402)
2. *yā* *bāb* *maḥḥad* *dašš-ik*
 VOC door NEG PRF-ENTER.3ms-you
 ‘O door, nobody has entered through you.’ (al-Nourī 1968: 455)

The ideational function of the first proverb is a ‘statement of fact’ (Yassin 1988: 60). Notice the uncommon verb forms *dāšīn* ‘having entered’ (dāš + in) and *sālmin* ‘having been safe’ (sālm + in). This is one of the verb phrases (active participles) in which a dialectal *tanwīn* normally occurs (signifying nunation, ‘the adding of the letter *nūn* n’). This morphological feature is usually labeled ‘conservative’ and harks back, as the label suggests, to Classical Arabic (Holes 2004c: 89). In such examples, a dialectal *tanwīn* is marked in Classical Arabic with a double subscript known as *kasra*, sometimes (as here) written with an orthographic *nūn*. In any case, the presence of the *-in* ending reminiscent of Classical *tanwīn* is one of the salient Arabian/Najdi features where there is a ‘formulaic flavour’ to what is being said. Despite the fact that a dialectal *tanwīn* is ‘common on the noun in indefinite noun-adjective phrases [...] in the speech of older [Bahraini] speakers’ (Holes 2005b: 148), the *tanwīn* suffix, however, occurs in the verb in KA. Similarly, Holes records typical examples of this type of *tanwīn* from Bahrain as *rāḥat-in zēna* ‘a good break’ (2005b: 102) and *bint-in zēna* ‘a nice girl’ (2005b: 186). Johnstone (1967b: 87) was right when he noticed that the *tanwīn* occurs very infrequently in the Kuwaiti dialect except in proverbs and conventional phrases. In fact, the vestigial survival of *tanwīn* in such words gives ‘the dialects of eastern, central and southern Arabian their distinctively ‘Classical’ tang’ (Holes 2001: xix). Among the different Aktionsart types of verbs, Ingham (1994: 90) notes that verbs that end with *-in* are telic and their grammatical function indicates a ‘resultant state’.⁴³ The second proverb begins with a vocative particle *yā* which is used to attract attention or to address someone.

⁴² Al-Roumī and Kamāl (1984: 213) note a similar proverb for Kuwait: *dāš fir-ribḥ ṭāli’ min l-xasāra* but without a dialectal *tanwīn*.

⁴³ My data contains the following *tanwīn* phrase: *ba’ad ‘umr-in tuwīl* (lit. ‘After (your) long life!’), it is normal to add this phrase to attenuate the ominous talk when talking to someone about what might happen after their death.

Additionally, al-Roumī and Kamāl (1978) list the following perfective verbal proverbs which begin with the relative pronoun *min* ‘he who, whoever’ (cf. ‘he that...’) followed by *dašš* ‘to enter, go to’:

3. *min* ***dašš*** *d-dōḥa* *mā* *ṭāḷa* ‘
REL PRF-ENTER.3ms the-bay NEG PRF-LEAVE.3ms
‘He who enters the (muddy) cove/land-locked bay will never get out’ (said to someone in trouble) (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1978: 463).

4. *min* *ḡalab* *bā* ‘ *u* *min* ***dašš***
REL PRF-BRING.3ms PRF-SELL.3ms and REL PRF-ENTER.3ms
s-sūg *šara*
the-market PRF-BUY.3ms
‘Whoever brings (saleable goods) will sell, and whoever goes to the souk will buy’ (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1978: 513).

In summary, I wish to present all the senses of *dašš* as represented in the examined Kuwaiti dictionaries.

➤ ***dašš***

1. to enter, go in, go in for
2. to go to, embark on
 - a. to join
 - b. attend (a wedding)
 - c. work at sea
 - i. put to sea
 - ii. embark on a sea voyage
3. to come into someone’s presence
 - a. marry, consummate a marriage
4. to insert into
 - a. to kick a ball into the goal (i.e. to score)
5. to interfere
6. to begin (a month)

4.3 Xalla ‘to leave’

The extremely common verb, *xalla* ‘to leave, let’, is one of the so-called ‘derived themes’ verbs that belongs to the final *w/y* verb pattern. Among this verb group, we find Class II verbs such as *sawwa* ‘to do, make’, *wadda* ‘to take away’, *walla* ‘to turn away, go away’. A simple verb normally consists of a three-consonant skeleton, symbolised here as C₁-C₂-C₃ (where C = any consonant) ‘on which various vowel patterns are superimposed to denote tense, person and gender’ (Holes 2010: 213). One can observe that the consonant skeleton of *xalla* is CaCCa which is derived from the simple skeleton C₁-C₂-C₃ by the addition of various consonants. Therefore, the C₂ in *xalla* is doubled and hence pronounced twice as long as the single consonant. Moreover, Qafisheh (1979: 20) notes that *xalla* ‘to leave something’ is an example of a defective Class II verb in Gulf Arabic (see section 4.4 below). Johnstone (1962: 41) highlights that verbs final *y* in almost all the Peninsular dialects ‘have an archaic form of the imperative. Thus /xall-/ and not /xallí/ as in the Levantine dialects, Egyptian, etc.’ Note, however, that *xalla* is glossed ‘to leave’ in some dialectal literature and ‘to let, to put’ in others. I however treat it as ‘to leave’ in this thesis. This verb is inflected in the following subsection.

4.3.1 Formal and Morphological Characteristics of *xalla*⁴⁴

a) *Perfect*:

3 rd pers. masc. sg.	<i>xalla</i>	‘he left’
3 rd pers. fem. sg.	<i>xallat</i>	‘she left’
3 rd pers. pl.	<i>xallaw</i>	‘they left’ ⁴⁵
2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>xallēt</i>	‘you left’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>xallētay</i>	‘you left’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>xallētaw</i>	‘you left’
1 st pers. sg.	<i>xallēt</i>	‘I left’
1 st pers. pl.	<i>xallēna</i>	‘we left’

⁴⁴ Cf. the forms given by de Jong (1958: 55) for the spoken Arabic of the Arabian Gulf.

⁴⁵ Blanc (1964: 109) records the following perfective forms for three communal communities of Baghdad: *xallaw* (Muslim Baghdadi), *xallu* (Jewish Baghdadi), and *xallō* (Christian Baghdadi) ‘they put’. Cf. Mansour (1991: 139, 165).

b) *Imperfect*:

3 rd pers. masc. sg.	<i>y(i)xalli</i>	‘he leaves’
3 rd pers. fem. sg.	<i>txalli</i>	‘she leaves’
3 rd pers. pl.	<i>y(i)xallūn</i>	‘they leave’ ⁴⁶
2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>txalli</i>	‘you leave’ ⁴⁷
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>txallīn</i>	‘you leave’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>txallūn</i>	‘you leave’
1 st pers. sg.	<i>axalli</i>	‘I leave’
1 st pers. pl.	<i>nxalli</i>	‘we leave’

c) *Imperative*:⁴⁸

2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>xall</i>	‘leave!’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>xallay/xalli</i>	‘leave!’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>xallaw/xallu</i>	‘leave!’

For the spoken Arabic of the Arabian Gulf, de Jong (1958: 3, 55) gives the imperatives *xalli* (m.), *xallī* (f.), and *xallū*⁴⁹ (pl.) ‘leave!’ with long vowels. In fact, a diphthongal quality often occurs in the suffixes of the imperative *xalli* (*xallay*), *xallu* (*xallaw*) in the Kuwait City dialect, which is also noted in the spoken Arabic of Širqāt in northern Iraq (Salonen 1980: 81). This seems to be a north-eastern feature (Johnstone 1967b: 50). Ingham (1982b: 252, 1997: 84) similarly notes *hu* (*haw*) in the dialect of the Dhafir of North-Eastern Arabia. In his description of the Kuwaiti dialect, Holes (2007c: 618) puts forward the claim that imperative forms like *xallay* and *xallaw* tend to be used by ‘older, less educated speakers, especially

⁴⁶ Blanc (1964: 109) records the following imperfective forms for three communal communities of Baghdad: *yxallūn* (Muslim Baghdadi), *yxellōn* (Jewish Baghdadi), and *yxallōn* (Christian Baghdadi) ‘they put’. Cf. Mansour (1991: 155, 159).

⁴⁷ Sometimes pronounced *itxalli* because short vowels in an open syllable are regularly dropped, and ‘an orthographic *alif* is inserted to reflect the prosthetic vowel to make the initial consonant cluster pronounceable’ (Holes and Abu Athera 2011: 26).

⁴⁸ Holes (2014: n.p.) reports that the imperative *xall* ‘let, leave!’ is one of the most common imperatives in Nabaṭī poetry. Urkevich (2015: 88) also notes that the imperative *xalha* ‘leave it!’ is used as the main segment of a *sāmri unayza* musical performance in the Arabian Gulf.

⁴⁹ Abu-Haidar (1991: 114) notes *xallūnu* ‘leave it!’ for the Christian Arabic of Baghdad. Blanc (1964: 110) similarly gives *xallīnu* ‘put him!’, *xellēnu* ‘put (f.s.) him!’, and *xellōnu* ‘put (pl.) him!’ for Jewish Baghdadi (cf. Mansour 1991: 121), none of which occur in Kuwaiti. Cf. Borg (2006: 540) who records *xallūn* ‘leave them!’ for Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

women’. However, as a native speaker, I noticed that the imperative forms such as *xallay*, *xallaw* ‘leave!’ or *tiṭammišay*, *tiṭammišaw* ‘take a look!’ are heard more often than *xalli*, *xallu* or *tiṭammiši*, *tiṭammišu*, respectively, regardless of the age and gender of speakers. This is especially true of Kuwait City, the capital, and largest centre of population.⁵⁰ In addition, Blanc (1964: 109-110) records the regular imperatives *xalli* (m.s. and f.s.) and *xallu* (pl.) ‘put!’ for Baghdad.⁵¹

Moreover, Johnstone (1967b: 9) argues that ‘[i]n the [Eastern Arabian] dialects imperatives of this verb type do not have a terminal vowel. Thus, from *xalla*[a] ‘to let, allow, *xall* ‘let’’. Brustad (2000: 254-255) notes the following remarks concerning the imperfective verbs:

Superficially, Kuwaiti verbs bear certain affinities to Classical Arabic verbs: they lack imperfective modal prefixes, and the imperfective third-person plural and second-person feminine singular retain final /nūn/, for example: /yḡūlūn/ *they say*, /lā txallīn/ *don’t let*. The active participle of *xalla* is *mxalli* ‘leaving, having left/let’.⁵²

I should mention that there are unusual forms of *xalla* in KA that occur very often in my spoken material. There is the prefix *xan-* or *xal-* which is a short form of *xalna* ‘leave, let us...’, ‘why not...’, and it is sometimes treated in the singular form ‘let me’, which is morphologically a second person imperative followed by an enclitic pronoun. It was first noted for Kuwait by Holmes and Samaan (1957: 64, 88) in the early 1950s as follows: *alḥīn xalnansūg* ‘now let’s drive on’, *xalnanrūḥ alḥīn* ‘let’s go now’. This assimilation occurs most commonly with the first person plural as in *xanšūfa* instead of *xalna nšūfa* ‘let’s see it/him’ (lit. ‘leave-me I-see’). Thus, the imperative construction *xanšūfa* is made up of *xall* ‘to let someone do something’ + a suffixed pronoun + the imperative of *šūf* ‘to see’ and the suffixed pronoun *-a* (obj. of ‘to see’). It means ‘let me see it (him)!’ The *-i* in *xalni* ‘leave, let me’ is omitted because of initial ‘*a-*’ in *ašūfa* ‘I see it’ (Qafisheh 1975: 195; Smart and Altorfer 2010: 200). The prefix *xal-* may also correspond to the English ‘have’ with a pronoun object and a verb as in *xal-yigra* ‘have him read...’

⁵⁰ ‘Historically, the /aw/ allomorph probably derives from historical coalescence of /a/ of the stem and /u/ of the masculine plural suffix’ (Watson 2002: 185).

⁵¹ In the Jewish Baghdadi dialect, Mansour (1991: 43) reports that *xalli* is added before the 1st and 3rd person of the imperfect as a modal: *xalligūḥ* ‘let him go!’

⁵² Ingham (1986: 284) records *xilli* ‘the internal passive of *xalla*’ from the dialect of the Āl Murrah of Eastern and Southern Arabia, which does not occur in my material. The internal passive has disappeared in most Arabic dialects. Ingham (1994: 27), however, states that ‘in the related dialects of the Gulf and Southern Iraq it remains either as relic forms or in a much reduced condition’. In the Kuwaiti dialect, Holes (2007c: 618) states that ‘[t]he internal passive occurs in normal speech only in a few fixed phrases, and usually in the imperfect’. Johnstone (1967b: 50) also notes that ‘[p]assive forms (always excepting the passive participle) occur only in proverbs and fixed expressions’.

Another unusual word form is *xa-*, which is also a shortened form of *xall*; an imperative form of the verb *xalla* ‘to let, leave’ as in *xa-txaḷiṣ* instead of *xall txaḷliṣ* ‘let it finish’. Erwin (2004: 142) also noted these prefixal forms of *xalla* in the colloquial Iraqi Arabic spoken by educated Muslims in Baghdad in the early 1960s. Johnstone (1964: 81-82, 1967b: 9, 143) also notes this form of *xalla* in his explanation of the absence of a terminal vowel in the 3rd person masculine singular imperative of verbs final *-yā*’ and mentions two forms of *xalla* in Kuwaiti, viz. *xalni* and *xanni*. He argues that the Bedouin dialects of Kuwait exhibit this feature, i.e. *xall-*, which is used by ‘Āzmi tribespeople. He similarly notes that this type of imperative formation is useful for distinguishing the Najdi dialects from other dialect groups in the North; the Ḥaḍramī dialects of Yemen do have imperatives of this type. Prochazka (1988: 179-180) also records some uses of the imperative *xalla* in Najdi and Eastern Arabian dialects as well as in the dialects of the Southern Ḥiǧāz and the Tihāmah with the meaning ‘to let’. Along similar lines, Ingham (1982a: 68) records the North Najdi form *xallōnan* ‘they left me’, which does not occur in the Kuwait City dialect because *xallōni* is the usual form.⁵³

The morphophonemic explanation for this assimilation is put forward by Holes (2005b: xxxii, 2007b: 612) as follows: ‘/l/ in the imperative *xall* ‘let’ > /n/ before the *-ni* and *-na* suffixes, e.g. *xanna* ‘let’s...’ For some speakers, this assimilation is general, e.g. *štaǧanna* ‘we worked’, *ǧinna* ‘we said’’. Additionally, I noticed in my material that *xalna* is used in exhortative sentences as in *xallīna nšūf šitǧūl* ‘let’s see what she has to say’ (cf. Holes 1990: 18). In the Central Arabian Najd,⁵⁴ Ingham (1994: 124) notes that *xal-* has a jussive force which can be used with a ‘2nd person suffix and following non-verbal sentence as an equivalent to an imperative ‘to be’’. Examples from my Kuwaiti material include: *xall-ik mukānik* ‘stay where you are!’, *xall-ik ǧāhiz* ‘be ready!’ Ingham (1982a: 89) also records the ‘Utaibi form *xall-ik* ‘leave yourself’ as well as the Rashīdi form *xall-ik* ‘let yourself’ (1982b: 250).⁵⁵ It seems to me that the contracted forms *xall-*, *xal-*, *xan-*, or *xa-* are worthwhile to note because it may be that they are going to be indicative of the extent to which this sense is established for my speakers. It is not necessarily grammaticalised as I first suspected. But we have a sense that it is increasingly fixed which is good potential linguistic evidence for the entrenchment of this sense.

⁵³ Cf. Salonen (1980: 81).

⁵⁴ Kurpershoek (2005: 82) glosses *xalla* ‘to leave, leave behind, abandon, desert’ for Central Arabia.

⁵⁵ The second person masculine singular object is always formed by suffixing the clitic *-ik* in the Kuwait City dialect, which is also noted in Qaṣīm and Central Najd.

Furthermore, in KA and in Educated Gulf Arabic in general, ‘many speakers would not use a passivized subject-complement structure to express such notions as ‘I was made captain’’ (Holes 1990: 123). Nonetheless, one of the dialectal ways of expressing this would be ‘by using an active verb [i.e. *xalla*] and an unspecified subject in an object-complement structure’ (ibid.): for example, *xallōni ra’īs qisim* ‘they made me head of the department’. Another noteworthy feature of this verb is that both transitive and intransitive verbs can be made causatives by the verb *xalla* ‘to make, let’, which is also noted in Central Arabia (Ingham 1994: 77) as the example from my material illustrates: *inta mxallth sāylant* ‘did you make it (=Facebook notifications) silent?’ Moreover, it is used with a suffixed pronoun and following verb to mean ‘to allow someone to do something’ as exemplified in my material: *txallīni arūḥ⁵⁶ bil ḡims* ‘will you allow me to drive the GMC?’ (cf. Holes 2010: 216). Additionally, it is evident that ditransitive verbs are made causative by the use of the verb *xalla* in KA and in other regional dialects (Holes 1990: 185). Take the following example: *xallēna ubūy yaḡgiz lina taḡkira* ‘we made my father book us a ticket’. There is a verb aspect called ‘terminative’ in which *xalla* may be used to express this feature as in *xall ‘annik⁵⁷ suwālif l-banāt ‘ād* ‘leave off the girlie stuff, can’t you?!’ (cf. Holes 1990: 197).

4.3.2 Dictionary Treatment and Attestation of *xalla*

The majority of the Kuwaiti dictionaries gloss *xalla* ‘to leave, let go, abandon’ as the most central meaning of *tarak*; in other words, the writers construe *xalla* as *tarak* (al-Ḥanafī 1964: 177; al-S‘aydān 1970: 207; al-Shamlān 1978: 364; al-Rashaid 2012: 218). In contrast, Holmes and Samaan (1957: 216) gloss *xalla* as ‘to allow, permit’. Apart from those meanings of *xalla*, no other senses were recorded for Kuwait.

In Standard Arabic, the verbs *tarak* and *xalla* derive from the Arabic trilateral roots *t-r-k* and *x-l-w*, respectively. It is therefore important here to discriminate between the two verbs to understand the lexical behaviour of each one. Consequently, I have consulted three Arabic monolingual dictionaries in order to look up the meanings of both verbs and to see whether *tarak* is (near-) synonymous to *xalla*.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Although *arūḥ* is the motion verb ‘I go’, it is used here as ‘I drive’ which describes motion using a particular type of vehicle (i.e. the GMC Chevrolet Suburban); furthermore, ‘no specific direction of motion is implied unless there is an explicit directional phrase present’ (Levin 1993: 268).

⁵⁷ Qafisheh (1997a: 159) translates *xalli* ‘*ank* ‘never mind’ in the Abu Dhabi dialect.

⁵⁸ Landberg (1920: 637) glosses ‘*خلى*, *laisser*, = *ترك*’ in southeastern Yemeni (Dathīnah) Arabic.

Firstly, I consulted the semasiological dictionary *Lisān al-‘Arab* by Ibn Manḍūr (d. 1311 AD),⁵⁹ which follows the ‘rhyme system’, because it ‘is the most comprehensive Arabic lexicon ever authored’ (Baalbaki 2014: 385). *Lisān al-‘Arab* mentions the existence of the verb *xallā-yuxallī* (pattern *fa‘‘ala-yufa‘‘ilu* or Class II) in the medieval stage of Classical Arabic (14th century); some of the senses associated with this Class II verb are ‘to leave’: *waxallā l-‘amra wa taxallā minhu wa ‘anhu wa xālāhu: tarakahu* ‘He left/left the thing and got rid of/left it, and quit it/abandoned it: left it’. Notice that *xalla* is defined as *tarak*. Next, I looked up *tarak* in a contemporary dictionary of Arabic called *Mu‘ğam al-Luġa al-‘Arabiyya al-Mu‘āšir* (Mukhtār 2008), where *tarak* is defined as follows: *taraka fulānun: xallāh wa ša’nah, wa inšarafa ‘anhu wa fāraqah* ‘to leave someone is to leave him alone, to go away from him, and to separate’. Finally, a monolingual Arabic dictionary called *al-Mu‘ğam al-Ġanī* lists the following definition for *tarak*: *taraka al-bāba maftūhan: xallāhu* ‘to leave the door open is to leave it/make it open’ (cf. Firanesu 2014).

It is possible to deduce from the above definitions that the Kuwaiti writers tend to adopt the policy implemented by Arab *luġawiyyūn* ‘lexicographers, philologists’ in terms of glossing *xalla* as *tarak*. This reveals solid evidence that *tarak* and *xalla* are semantically related. In fact, in the “preference” questionnaire, Kuwaiti speakers tend to discriminate between the uses of both verbs, possibly on the basis of the agency more clearly associated with *xalla* and not with *tarak*. Take the following example:

- | | | | | |
|-------|--|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. a) | <i>s-sāḥir</i> | <i>xalla</i> | <i>l-arnab</i> | <i>yixtifi</i> |
| | the-magician | PRF-LEAVE.3ms | the-rabbit | IMPF-DISAPPEAR.3ms |
| | ‘The magician made the rabbit disappear.’ | | | |

as opposed to:

- | | | | | |
|----|--|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| b) | <i>s-sāḥir</i> | <i>tarak</i> | <i>l-arnab</i> | <i>yixtifi</i> |
| | the-magician | PRF-LEAVE.3ms | the-rabbit | IMPF-DISAPPEAR.3ms |
| | ‘The magician allowed the rabbit to disappear.’ | | | |

In example 1(a), it is a matter of causativeness, i.e. the magician *caused* the rabbit to disappear, while in example 1(b), the magician *allowed* the rabbit to disappear, i.e. the magician has no responsibility, it has just disappeared. An explanation for this is that the

⁵⁹ It was completed in 1290 AD.

phrase *s-sāḥir tarak l-arnab yixtifi* creates a kind of semantic anomaly in the spoken Arabic of Kuwait.⁶⁰ According to Cruse (2006: 13), anomaly ‘refers to cases where there is a conflict in domains of applicability’. The semantic anomaly arises out of the randomness of the disappearance; the speaker has absolutely no agency. In other words, *tarak* creates a semantic clash because *xalla* is the best candidate in this specific context. This is simply because people in Kuwait are more likely to use *xalla* than *tarak*. It is not that there is anything wrong with saying the phrase *s-sāḥir tarak l-arnab yixtifi*; on the contrary, it is comprehensible. Nonetheless, Kuwaiti speakers will immediately recognise that example 1(b) is anomalous in some way if we mean that ‘The magician **made** the rabbit disappear’. Arguably, they will distinguish it from such sentences as 1(b) by applying to it such epithets as ‘paradoxical’, ‘peculiar’, and ‘odd’. However, ‘it is clear that the speaker does not have the explicit conceptual machinery to correctly characterize the difference between these sentences, his consistent use of such rough labels shows that he is aware of some sort of linguistic anomaly’ (Katz and Fodor 1963: 175).

According to Cruse (2004), when a semantic clash (also known as ‘lexical dissonance’) happens, we speak of ‘co-occurrence preferences’, as they come in varying degrees of severity: (a) non-satisfaction of collocational preferences, and (b) non-satisfaction of selectional preferences. In fact, my hypothesis was supported by consulting native Kuwaiti speakers in the “preference” questionnaire: out of 398 respondents, 377 (94.72%) reported that *s-sāḥir xalla l-arnab yixtifi* was preferable to *s-sāḥir tarak l-arnab yixtifi*.

In talking about ‘leaving a property or money to someone’, it is obligatory to use *tarak* as it sounds more natural to native speakers than *xalla*, e.g.:

2. <i>il-ubu</i>	<i>tarak</i>	<i>wart-a</i>	<i>ḥagg</i>	<i>ʿyāl-a</i>
the-father	PRF-LEAVE.3ms	inheritance-his	POSS	children-his
‘The father left his children an inheritance (of money).’				

⁶⁰ The notion of ‘linguistic anomaly’ has been reported in Arabic language and literature since the 9th century. In particular, Arabic philologists were greatly interested in recording strange or uncommon/rare words and usages or what they called *ḡarīb* from the speech of the Bedouins (*A ʿrāb*). ‘The reliable Bedouins referred to by the philologists are constantly described as *fuṣaḥāʾ* (pl. of *faṣīḥ*, eloquent) on the grounds that their language is characterized by purity, clarity, precision and freedom from error’ (Baalbaki 2014: 7). Baalbaki (2014: 37) notes that apart from the term *ḡarīb*, philologists used several terms to express the notion of irregularity and oddness, notably *nādir* ‘rare’, but also *ḥūšī* or *wahšī* ‘unfamiliar, uncouth, barbarous’, and even *šādd* ‘anomalous’. As an example of an early lexical work composed of a large body of material of the *ḡarīb* or *nādir* type, Baalbaki (ibid.) lists the work of Abū Miṣḥal al-Aʿrābī (d. 845 AD) entitled *Kitāb al-Nawādir* ‘The Book of Rare Usages’.

An interesting comment received by one of the respondents is that *tarak* is usually taken to mean that the thing that happened is out of the speaker’s control as in:

3. *aḥmad tarak waḏīft-a*
 Aḥmad PRF-LEAVE.3ms career-his
 ‘Ahmad left his job.’

This example could imply that Aḥmad quit his job because he got fired, whereas *aḥmad xalla waḏīfta* designates that Aḥmad is responsible for his quitting the job, so we have a question of agency and who is responsible for what. In addition, a number of respondents in the “elicitation” questionnaire pointed out that they use neither *tarak* nor *xalla*; they would rather use the colloquial verb *hadd* ‘abandon, leave, quit; cast away, leave aside; release, let go’ for the ‘quitting the job’ sense. In this case, both examples 4 and 5 sound semantically perfect and are well-formed sentences:

4. *aḥmad hadd waḏīft-a*
 Aḥmad PRF-LEAVE.3ms career-his
 ‘Ahmad quit his job.’

5. *aḥmad hadd murt-a*
 Aḥmad PRF-LEAVE.3ms wife-his
 ‘Ahmad left his wife.’

In everyday Kuwaiti speech, we find a number of fixed expressions that include *xalla* as the main verb, which are impossible to be substituted with *tarak*. For example, a commonly heard dismissive phrase is *xalla ywalli*⁶¹ meaning ‘who cares? (lit. ‘let it/him go’), and the verb *ywalli* here means ‘to clear off, leave’. In fact, the results of the “preference” questionnaire show that 364 (91.46%) out of 398 respondents prefer the expression *xalla ywalli* over *tirka ywalli*. Also, a specific use of the imperfect form of *xalla* consists of expressing the supplication of God *aḷḷah yixallīk* which has two meanings: ‘God preserve you!’⁶² is an example of the polite conversational pleasantries so typical of Arabic conversation and is said in thanks for a service rendered or when mentioning children or the

⁶¹ Also noted by Ḥaṇḍal (1998: 215) for the southern Gulf. Al-S‘aydān (1970: 517) notes the Kuwaiti aphorism *ḥawalli xalla ywalli* ‘Who cares about Ḥawalli City’.

⁶² Hava (1899: 175) gives ‘I beseech thee’ for *aḷḷah yixallīk*, and Fischer and Jastrow (1980: 77) note *aḷḷa yxallīk* ‘Gott behüte dich!’ for Muslim Baghdadi. It is also noted for Sudanese Arabic as spoken in Greater Khartoum (Tamis and Persson 2013: 126). Cf. Buckwalter and Parkinson (2011: 78).

possessions one has’,⁶³ and ‘please!’ is used as a way of ‘softening’ a request to someone to do something.⁶⁴ Hence, if we say *aḷlah yatrikik* as opposed to the more natural *aḷlah yixallik*, we may end up saying ‘may God leave you/let go of you’. More examples of these expressions are found in my material which will be explored later on.

4.3.3 Historical Provenance and Attestation of *xalla*

Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 285) present the causative sense ‘to let go’ for *xallā*,⁶⁵ which occurs only once in the Qur’ān.⁶⁶ As for the idiomatic expressions, al-Nourī (1968) lists the imperative idiom in example 1 (in the form of verbs + conjunctives), while Yassin (1978a: 72) notes the idiom in example 2 which denotes prohibition and exhortations, which both discuss the act of ‘taking and leaving’:

1. *xid* *u* *xall*⁶⁷
IMP-TAKE.2ms and IMP-LEAVE.2ms
‘Take (the best) and leave (out the worst)’ (said to a liar). (al-Nourī 1968: 453)

2. *xid* *mā* *tiyassar*, *wi* *xal* *mā* *ta’assar*
IMP-TAKE.2ms what available and IMP-LEAVE.2ms what difficult
‘Take what is obtainable (now) and leave aside what is difficult to get’ (Yassin 1978a: 72).

Al-S‘aydān (1970, 1972) gives the following proverbs which revolve around the meaning of ‘to leave, let’:

3. *min baġa* *šayy* *xalla* *šayy*
REL PRF-WANT.3ms thing PRF-LEAVE.3ms thing
‘Whoever wants a thing, will be willing to leave (sacrifice for) a thing’ (a terse summary of experience) (al-S‘aydān 1970: 207).

⁶³ In the *gīrgē’ān* folklore song, which is practiced in Kuwait in the middle of Ramadan, Smart (1996: 181) translates the verse *yā llāh xall-ah li-immah* (pronounced in Kuwait City, however, as *yā ḷḷah xalla lu-ḡmah*) into English as ‘o God **leave** him to his mother’ while Wells and al-Bāṭinī (1987: 122) translate it as ‘God **keep** him safe for his mother’ (emphasis mine). Cf. Firanesco (2014: 363).

⁶⁴ Also attested in Moroccan Arabic (Harrell 2004: 223).

⁶⁵ In Kuwaiti, *xallā* is pronounced with a short vowel *xalla*. Cf. Firanesco (2014: 363).

⁶⁶ The Qur’ānic verse where *xallā* occurs is as follows: *فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ* ‘but if they repent, maintain prayer and pay the prescribed alms, **let** them **go** on their way’, translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 285). Zammit (2002: 166) also translates the Qur’ānic Arabic *xallā* into ‘to pass away; be free, alone, clear’.

⁶⁷ Cf. al-Roumī and Kamāl (1980: 43).

4. *xall* *l-gar‘a* *tir‘a*⁶⁸
 IMP-LEAVE.2ms the-pumpkin grow
 ‘Let the bald ewe grow’ (i.e. let everybody do what they like) (al-S‘aydān 1970: 517).

5. *mā xalla* *‘ašāh illa min ‘illa b-ḥašāh*⁶⁹
 NEG PRF-LEAVE.3ms dinner-his except from illness in-intestine-his
 ‘He wouldn’t have left his dinner unless there is a problem along his intestine’ (said to someone who has had dinner already secretly) (al-S‘aydān 1972: 1316).

6. *min xalla* *‘ašāh aṣbaḥ ligāh*
 REL PRF-LEAVE.3ms dinner-his IMPF-WAKE UP.3ms PRF-FIND.3ms-it
 ‘He who left his dinner will find it when he wakes up’ (al-S‘aydān 1972: 1483).

Various *xalla* proverbs have been reported by al-Roumī and Kamāl (1978, 1980, 1982, 1984) for Kuwait. I will, however, select a random sample to show the different phraseological uses and senses.

7. *mā xalla* *l-awwal lit-tāli šayy*
 NEG PRF-LEAVE.3ms the-first to-the-other thing
 ‘There wasn’t a single thing that the first left for the second’ (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1978: 571).

8. *sīr b-masīr-ik u xalli fātin u*
 IMP-WALK.2ms in-way-your and IMP-LEAVE.2ms fascinating and
maftūn
 fascinated by

‘Walk away and leave the lovers alone’ (said to someone intrusive). Notice the imperative form *xalli* in the 2nd person masculine singular, which would be *xall* in ‘New’ Kuwaiti (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1980: 98).

⁶⁸ Also noted by al-Roumī and Kamāl (1984: 31) for Kuwait and by al-Sudais (1993: 45) for Najd. Though al-‘Ubūdī (2010: 470) gives *xalla d-dar‘a tir‘a* ‘He let the livestock grow’ for Najd.

⁶⁹ Also noted by al-Shamlān (1986: 46).

9. *min fīh ṭbē‘ mā xallāh*⁷⁰
 REL have DIM-temperament NEG PRF-LEAVE.3ms-it
 ‘He who shows (steady) temperament will never let it go’ (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1982: 268-272).

10. *in xallāk l-bēn mā xallāk l-kubur*
 COND PRF-LEAVE.3ms-you the-death NEG PRF-LEAVE.3ms-you the-aging
 ‘If you get away from death, you will not get away from getting old’ (lit. if death left you, age will not leave you) (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1984: 245).

To sum up, the proverbial senses of *xalla* presented above are ‘leave, leave alone, leave aside, let, let go’ with various uses and contexts, and so are presumably contextualised and fixed. However, as has already been indicated, *xalla* can refer to concrete nouns such as people, food, vegetables, and to abstract nouns such as conditions, states of mind, and qualities. As far as I can observe, the majority of the senses associated with *xalla* are still effective in MSA and spoken Arabic alike. The following are all the senses of *xalla* as represented in the examined dictionaries.

➤ *xalla*

1. to permit, allow
2. to leave
 - a. to let go
 - b. to abandon

⁷⁰ The term *ṭbē‘* is a diminutive of *ṭabi‘* ‘disposition, temperament’. Cf. al-Nourī (1968: 13, 42, 207).

4.4 Miša ‘to walk’

In my material, two productive verb constructions of *miša* are noted, viz. the inchoative *miša* ‘to walk, go on foot; leave’ and the causative *mašša* ‘to make walk; to make work’ along with its derived Class V form *ti-mašša* ‘to go for a walk, stroll’. The lexical verb *miša* belongs to the verb-final *y* class. It is morphologically categorised as the so-called final ‘weak’ verb in KA (and in common with Gulf Arabic). It seems necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by ‘weak’. In Arabic, weak verbs are either ‘defective’ or ‘hollow’. The term ‘weak’ has been applied to those verbs that have *y* as the final root consonant. Thus, *miša* belongs to the defective verbs because it has a final weak radical (Johnstone 1961: 261; Qafisheh 1975: 326). As Qafisheh (1977: 40, 1979: 5) explains, ‘weak verbs have one or more unstable or weak radicals. Weak radicals in Gulf Arabic are the glottal stop ʾ and the semivowels *w* and *y*’. Holes (2010: 120, 158) demonstrates that ‘this *y* only shows up in those parts of the verb where the ending for person/gender begins with a consonant. The basic form of the ‘weak’ verb is CvCa, for example *miša* ‘to walk’.

Within the verbs of motion used in the Bedouin dialects of Arabia, Ingham (2002: 300) notes that the verb *miša* (lit. ‘he walked’) is also commonly used for ‘go, leave’. This also applies to my Kuwaiti data as we shall see later. The paradigm below (section 4.4.1) gives the inflection of the perfect, imperfect, and imperative of *miša* ‘to walk’. Note, however, that in the perfect paradigm, the weak verb changes its vowel to *-ē* before the suffix in the first and second persons (Holmes and Samaan 1957: 26). Also, Johnstone (1967b: 50) notes that in Eastern Arabian dialects, ‘[t]he imperfect of these verbs [i.e. verbs final *y*] has the ‘characteristic’ vowel *-a[a]* or *-i[i]*’. The terminal vowel is usually short except when stressed’.⁷¹

⁷¹ Also noted by Khaḷaf (1989: 37) for Kuwait. Other verbs of this category have the characteristic vowel *i* in the imperfect, but none have *u*. Cf. Johnstone (1975: 96) for examples in the spoken Arabic of Tikrīt.

4.4.1 Formal and Morphological Characteristics of *miša*⁷²

a) *Perfect*.⁷³

3 rd pers. masc. sg.	<i>miša</i>	‘he walked’ ⁷⁴
3 rd pers. fem. sg.	<i>mišat</i>	‘she walked’ ⁷⁵
3 rd pers. pl.	<i>mišaw</i>	‘they walked’ ⁷⁶
2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>mišēt</i>	‘you walked’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>mišētay</i>	‘you walked’ ⁷⁷
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>mišētaw</i>	‘you walked’
1 st pers. sg.	<i>mišēt</i>	‘I walked’
1 st pers. pl.	<i>mišēna</i>	‘we walked’

b) *Imperfect*.⁷⁸

3 rd pers. masc. sg.	<i>yamši</i>	‘he walks’
3 rd pers. fem. sg.	<i>tamši</i>	‘she walks’
3 rd pers. pl.	<i>yamšūn</i>	‘they walk’
2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>tamši</i>	‘you walk’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>tamšīn</i>	‘you walk’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>tamšūn</i>	‘you walk’
1 st pers. sg.	<i>amši</i>	‘I walk’
1 st pers. pl.	<i>namši</i>	‘we walk’

⁷² Cf. Fischer and Jastrow (1980: 69-70) for the Negev-Bedouin and Ristāq forms of *miša*, al-Tajir (1982: 79) for the Bahraini dialect, Abu-Haidar (1991: 56) for Christian Baghdadi, and Eades (2004: 87) for Northern Omani.

⁷³ Cf. Prochazka (1988: 90-92), who gives the first systematic phonological and morphological survey on the Arabic dialects of the Saudi Arabian territory. See also de Jong (2004: 167) for Southern Sinai forms.

⁷⁴ Prochazka (1988: 19) notes that the reflex of the Classical Arabic *ʿalif maqṣūrah* is often *-e* in Hofūf (eastern Saudi Arabia) as in *miše* ‘he went’. De Jong (1958: 67) gives *mešā* ‘he walked’ for Gulf Arabic.

⁷⁵ Ingham (1982a: 70) gives *mišeih* ‘she went’ for the Arabic dialect of the Šammar.

⁷⁶ Cf. Salonen (1980:81) for northern Iraqi forms.

⁷⁷ For Saudi Arabian dialects, Prochazka (1988: 21) notes that the penultimate syllable is stressed in *mašēti* ‘you went’ in the speech of Rufaidah, Abha, Bal-Aḥmar, Bal-Qarn, and al-Qauz, as well as *masāyti* ‘you went’ in Tanūmah and Ghāmid.

⁷⁸ Cf. de Jong (1958: 67); Johnstone (1962: 96); Prochazka (1988: 92-95, 99).

c) *Imperative*:⁷⁹

2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>imš</i>	‘walk!’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>imšay</i>	‘walk!’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>imšaw</i>	‘walk!’

In Central Arabia,⁸⁰ Ingham (1994: 26) presents the conjugation of *miša* ‘to go’ in Najdi Arabic which looks exactly like that of Kuwaiti Arabic, excluding the imperfect of the 3rd person feminine plural *yamšīn* ‘they go’ and the imperative of the 2nd person feminine plural *imšan* ‘go!’

The active participle of *miša* is *māši* (m.), *māšya* (f.), and *māšyīn* (pl.) ‘walking, having walked’ (Johnstone 1961: 262; Qafisheh 1977: 136). Ingham (1994: 32), however, gives *mišyān* ‘walking’ as an example of the abstract noun of movement in Najdi Arabic, which KA does not share. By the same token, al-Najjar (1984: 183) categorises *māši* as a type of ‘experiential perfect’ which indicates that ‘a certain situation has occurred at least once in the past during a period of time leading up to the present’.⁸¹ She exemplifies this as follows: ‘*ali māši b-ha-d-dard min gabiḷ* ‘Ali has walked this path before’. As mentioned earlier, Class V of the derived theme of *miša* is productive in KA; thus, *timašša* (perfect), *yitmašša* (imperfect), *timašš(a)* (imperative), and *mitmašši* (active participle) ‘to stroll, to have a picnic’ are also reported in my data (Johnstone 1967b: 51; Qafisheh 1977: 68-69; al-Ayyoub 1982: 52; Prochazka 1988: 97).

While discussing the participles of motion in Arabic dialects (including Kuwaiti), Brustad (2000: 186) notes the grammatical meaning of *miša* as follows:

The verb /miši/ can mean, in different contexts, *to walk, to go, and to set out to go somewhere, leave*. If /miši/ is understood to mean *to set out to go* rather than the process of *going*, the semantic extension of /māši/ from perfect *having set out* to progressive *in a state of going* is not problematic, but well within the normal parameter of perfect meaning. Verbs meaning *to go* can carry both telic (*to go somewhere*) and atelic (*to set out*) meanings; it is the atelic meaning of these verbs that gives rise to the interpretation of the participle as motion in progress.

Obviously, Brustad is commenting on the aspectual construction of *miša* and therefore fitting this into a particular semantic framework. It should be mentioned that *māši* is also used in colloquial Kuwaiti as an exclamation/interjection, meaning ‘OK, okay, fine, all right’ (cf.

⁷⁹ Cf. Johnstone (1961: 262, 1962: 97, 1964: 81); Prochazka (1988: 95, 101).

⁸⁰ Kurpershoek (2005: 306) glosses *miša* ‘to traverse a country and see with one’s own eyes’ for Central Arabian Najd.

⁸¹ Cf. Eades and Persson (2013: 359).

Arts 2014: 766). Regarding the imperative of *miša*, Johnstone (1967b: 50) states that ‘the imperative of verbs final y is of the typical ‘Anazi pattern’. The Kuwaiti dialect, like many other Gulf and Najdi dialects, ‘allows iCC imperative forms in form I, e.g. *imš* ‘go!’’ (Holes 2007c: 619). Johnstone (1964: 82) similarly notes that the Bedouin dialects of the Kuwait area (viz. ‘Āzmi, Muṭairi, ‘Utaibi) also exhibit this feature, plus he notes the imperative of the 2nd person masculine singular *tamašš* ‘go for a walk!’ for the Ḥaḍari dialect of the Arabian Gulf and for the Bedouin dialects of the hinterland of Kuwait, which does not show up in my material. In southern Iraq and Khūzistān, Ingham (1976: 76, 1997: 12, 38, 49) observes that ‘*imiš* ‘go, let us go!’ is used by many speakers whose speech is primarily of the ‘sedentary’ type. However, many Kuwaiti speakers whose speech is primarily of the ‘sedentary’ type do not add an epenthetic vowel as in *im[i]š*. In Southern Arabian dialects, especially in Omani, Yemeni, and ‘Adani, ‘comparable imperative forms have final –i[i], and so apparently also in the Ḥijāzi town dialects. Thus the Meccan *imši[i]* ‘go’ (Johnstone 1967b: 9). In the same vein, Abu-Haidar (1991: 119) notes the interjection *mšē* in the Christian Arabic of Baghdad which is frequently reduplicated as *mšē mšē* ‘go on!’ implying incredulity and even dissatisfaction. De Jong (1958: 67), however, lists *imši* ‘walk!’ for Gulf Arabic.⁸²

As surveyed above, *mašša* is not only considered a causative verb, but also a change of state verb. Hence, *miša* ‘to walk, move’ vs. *mašša* ‘to cause to go’, which is also noted in Najd by Ingham (1994: 76). Holes (2005b: 60), on the other hand, notes that *mašša* is an intensive of *miša* in Bahraini Arabic, rather than its normal causative sense. For the dialect of the Šammar in Arabia, the word form *maššāy* ‘I am leaving’ is noted by Sawayan (1992: 297), which is also noted by Kaye (1982: 87) for Nigerian Arabic in the sense of ‘someone who walks quickly’. Dajani (1956: 54) gives the imperative *mašši es-sayyārah* ‘drive the car!’ for the spoken Arabic of Qatar. Under those circumstances, change of state verbs may also produce gradual or repetitive forms such as *timašša*⁸³ ‘to walk about’ (Ingham 1994: 83-84).

4.4.2 Dictionary Treatment and Attestation of *miša*

Amongst the Kuwaiti dictionaries consulted, only two have listed *miša* (Holmes and Samaan 1957; al-Ayyoub 1982). The only meaning listed for *miša* by Holmes and Samaan (1957: 204) is ‘walk’. Al-Ayyoub (1982: 40, 52, 107), on the other hand, distinguishes between *miša*

⁸² Interestingly, Cannon (1994: 214) lists *imši* ‘go, get lost!’, ‘to be off, go away’ as an example of a British slang word of Arabic origin, first attested in 1916.

⁸³ De Jong (1958: 88) records *temaššā* ‘to take a walk’ for Gulf Arabic.

‘walk’ and *yitmašša* ‘to go for a walk, go on a picnic’.⁸⁴ In addition, he lists vocabulary which sometimes gives synonyms of *miša*, and at other times distinguishes between the finer shades of meanings of *miša* which are roughly synonymous in the Kuwaiti dialect. For instance, al-Ayyoub (1982: 40) gives the lexical items *yihayhi*, *yiḍarbin*, *yilawwiṭ*, *yixūr*, *yihōbi*, *yitzangaḥ*, *yiluwi*, *yihī*, *yīšāwiṭ*, *yihīt*, *yī’ōliš* as different terms denoting the concept of ‘walking and wandering around aimlessly’. Moreover, al-Ayyoub (1982: 107) has a section called *awṣāf al-mašī* ‘descriptions of walk’ where he lists the following semantic field of walk terms in the Kuwaiti dialect: *yitrawwaṭ*, *yithazhaz* ‘to wiggle’, *yitmāyal* ‘to sashay’, *yaglub*, *yīcābux* ‘to bound’, *yitmarṭax* ‘to amble’, *yitmāyah*, *yixābuṭ* ‘to walk barefoot’, *yī’ari* ‘to limp’, *ihači*, *yithabba* ‘to totter’, *yitḡadda*, *yitcāḡḡak*, *yixāṭi* ‘to toddle’, *yadbi* ‘to crawl’.

4.4.3 Historical Provenance and Attestation of *miša*

The verb *miša* ‘walk’ is pronounced with a long vowel *mašā* in Qur’ānic Arabic.⁸⁵ According to Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 885), the trilateral root *m-š-y* occurs 23 times in the Qur’ān, 21 of which are related to the Kuwaiti verb *miša*. The meanings of Qur’ānic *mašā* are given below.

1. ‘to walk on foot’⁸⁶
2. ‘to move about, to go about one’s business’⁸⁷
3. ‘to go on, to move’⁸⁸

As a result, it can be observed that only senses 1 and 3 are recorded in Kuwaiti dictionaries while sense 2 is not; this, however, does not mean that it could not occur. At the proverbial level, the following colloquial proverb is recorded which begins with the vocative particle *yā* in order to attract attention (al-Nourī 1968: 409; al-S’aydān 1972: 1651; al-Roumī and Kamāl 1980: 412):

⁸⁴ Tsukanova (2008: 450) glosses *yitmašša* ‘to walk’ for the sedentary type of Kuwaiti dialect. In colloquial Jordanian Arabic, Farghal (1995: 371) notes the figurative euphemism *rāḥ yitmašša* ‘he went to take a walk’ which ‘infringes the maxim of quality by regarding urination/defecation as going to take a walk, thus implicating that these biological processes can be a source of recreation’.

⁸⁵ Zammit (2002: 383) gives ‘to walk, go, proceed’ for Qur’ānic Arabic *mašā*.

⁸⁶ *أَلَمْ أَرْجُلُ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا* ‘have they feet to walk with?’ translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 885).

⁸⁷ *هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ* ‘it is He who made the earth accessible for you-so travel its regions and eat of His provision’, translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 885).

⁸⁸ *وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ* ‘God created each living creature out of [a type of] water: some of them **crawl** on their bellies, some **walk** on two legs, and some [**walk**] on four’, translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 885).

1. *yā* *māšī* *darb* *z-zalag* *lā* *tāman*
 VOC IMPF-WALK.2ms path the-slippery NEG IMPF-GUARANTEE.2ms
ṭ-ṭēḥa
 the-falling

‘O you, who is walking on the mud, make sure you don’t slip’ (said to someone who is about to embark on a risky business).

Like *xalla*, various *miša* proverbs have been documented by al-Roumī and Kamāl (1978, 1980, 1982, 1984) for Kuwait. I will, however, select a random sample to show the different phraseological uses and senses.

2. *namla* *mā* *tamšī* *illa* ‘*ala* *d-disam*
 ant NEG IMPF-WALK.3fs except on the-fat

‘An ant only walks on the fat’ (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1978: 406), said to someone who enjoys benefiting from other people. Cf. ‘For nothing, nothing’ (Kilānī and ‘Āshour 1991: 95).

3. *ta ‘ašša* *wi* *timašša*; *tağadda* *wi* *timadda*
 PRF-DINE.3ms and PRF-STROLL.3ms PRF-EAT.3ms and PRF-STRETCH.3ms
 ‘He had dinner and took a stroll, he had lunch and stretched himself out/relaxed’ (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1980: 36-37). This proverb is known throughout the Arabic-speaking world and it is said to give health advice.⁸⁹ Cf. ‘After dinner sit a while; after supper walk a mile’ (Kilānī and ‘Āshour 1991: 3).

4. *sāb* *yamšī* *wala* *sāb* *yingiṭi* ‘
 stream IMPF-WALK.3ms NEG stream IMPF-CEASE.3ms
 ‘A flowing/running stream is better than a non-flowing stream’ (lit. ‘A stream that walks but not a stream that ceases to flow’) (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1982: 583).

5. *min miša* *lik* *ḡrā* ‘ *imšī* *lah* *bā* ‘
 REL PRF-WALK.3ms for you forearm IMP-WALK.2ms him arm
 ‘Give him an inch and he’ll take a mile’ (lit. ‘Whoever walks you a forearm/cubit, walk him an outstretched arm’) (al-Roumī and Kamāl 1984: 167-169).

⁸⁹ Also recorded by Mahgoub (1968: 58) for Cairo.

Given these proverbs, the meanings of *miša* revolve around ‘to walk, stroll’ and ‘to flow’. Note, however, that proverb 5 contains the imperative form *imši* in the 2nd person masculine singular, which does not occur in my material. The following are all the senses of *miša* as represented in the examined Kuwaiti dictionaries.

- ***miša*** (inchoative)
 1. to walk
 2. to move, move away
 3. to flow (of streams)

- ***mašša*** (causative)
 1. to make walk

- ***timašša*** (intransitive)
 1. to go for a walk, stroll

4.5 Rikaḏ ‘to run’

The trilateral verb *rikaḏ* belongs to the CaCaC- stem type in Old Arabic (the putative ancestor of the modern dialects). In the perfect stem, many of the dialectal CaCaC verbs, however, now have an alternative in CiCaC, e.g. *šibak* ‘to connect (Internet)’, *fiṣal* ‘to disconnect (Internet)’ as in southern Iraq and Muslim Baghdadi (Holes 2007c: 617). What is unique about *rikaḏ* is that it does not only include a specification of the direction of motion, but it also describes the *manner* in which animate and inanimate entities can move. Nonetheless, from the dialectal literature I reviewed, it appears that *rikaḏ* is not as productive as the other verbs are in Eastern Arabian dialects (at least in Kuwait); most (if not all) of the Gulf Arabic dictionaries and glossaries have short entries for *rikaḏ*.

Nevertheless, this verb is carefully documented in Central/Southern Arabian dialects and Modern South Arabian languages as showing various manners of running.⁹⁰ For instance, Sawayan (1992: 271) and Kurpershoek (2005: 122) gloss *rikaḏ* ‘to run, charge, attack, lead an assault’ for Central Arabia. My contention is that Eastern Arabians are famous for their

⁹⁰ See Landberg (1923: 1399-1407) for southeastern Yemeni (Dathīnah) Arabic, Qafisheh (2000: 262) for Ṣan‘āni Arabic. For Modern South Arabian languages, see Johnstone (1977: 10, 17, 19, 51) for Ḥarsūsi, Johnstone (1981: 15, 18, 23, 26, 57, 68, 133, 138, 173, 206, 211, 212, 228, 259, 279, 316) for Jibbāli, and Johnstone (1987: 584-585) for Mehri. See also Ḥanḏal (1998: 280) for the southern Gulf.

seafaring activities and maritime trades and thus ‘aquamotion verbs’ are more dynamic and fruitful than ‘run verbs’ (i.e. Eastern Arabians ‘pearl-dive’ more than they ‘run’). We now turn to the conjugation of *rikaḏ*. It must be remembered that the terms perfect, imperfect, and imperative are being used in this chapter mainly as morphological labels.

4.5.1 Formal and Morphological Characteristics of *rikaḏ*⁹¹

a) *Perfect*:

3 rd pers. masc. sg.	<i>rikaḏ</i>	‘he ran’ ⁹²
3 rd pers. fem. sg.	<i>rkiḏat</i>	‘she ran’
3 rd pers. pl.	<i>rkiḏaw</i>	‘they ran’
2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>rikaḏt</i>	‘you ran’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>rikaḏtay</i>	‘you ran’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>rikaḏtaw</i>	‘you ran’
1 st pers. sg.	<i>rikaḏt</i>	‘I ran’ ⁹³
1 st pers. pl.	<i>rikaḏna</i>	‘we ran’

b) *Imperfect*:

3 rd pers. masc. sg.	<i>yarkiḏ</i>	‘he runs’
3 rd pers. fem. sg.	<i>tarkiḏ</i>	‘she runs’ ⁹⁴
3 rd pers. pl.	<i>yarkiḏūn</i>	‘they run’
2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>tarkiḏ</i>	‘you run’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>tarkiḏīn</i>	‘you run’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>tarkiḏūn</i>	‘you run’
1 st pers. sg.	<i>arkiḏ</i>	‘I run’
1 st pers. pl.	<i>narkiḏ</i>	‘we run’

⁹¹ De Jong (1958: 160) gives the forms *rekaḏ*, *yerkuḏ*, *urkuḏ* ‘run’ for Gulf Arabic which do not occur in the Kuwaiti dialect.

⁹² Piamenta (1990: 188) lists *rakaḏ* ‘to kick’ in (Judæo-) Yemeni Arabic.

⁹³ Tsukanova (2008: 455) records the form *rakaḏt* ‘I ran’ for the sedentary type of Kuwaiti dialect, which does not occur in my material.

⁹⁴ Brustad (2000: 334) records the form *tārkaḏ* ‘she comes running’ for Kuwait.

c) *Imperative:*

2 nd pers. masc. sg.	<i>irkiḏ</i>	‘run!’
2 nd pers. fem. sg.	<i>rikḏay</i>	‘run!’
2 nd pers. pl.	<i>rikḏaw</i>	‘run!’

It should be stated that *rikaḏ* is pronounced *rakaḏ* in Old Arabic. However, the phoneme *ḏ* occurs only in the speech of sophisticated speakers, and it is orthographically *ḏ* in all forms of writings. In Kuwaiti, no distinction is made between *ḏ* and *ḏ*; both are nonetheless pronounced *ḏ*.

One of the characteristics of *rikaḏ* is that the irregular verb *yā* ‘to come and do something; come doing something’ may collocate with the imperfect verb *yarkiḏ* to specify the mode of coming. An example is *ya yarkiḏ* (or *ya rakiḏ*) ‘he came running’ (Brustad 2000: 334; Holes 2010: 181), and some educated speakers produce a fully front vowel *ā* as in *yāna yarkiḏ* (or *yāna rakiḏ*) ‘he came running to us’ (Johnstone 1967b: 32). Ingham (1994: 32) notes the Najdi abstract noun of movement *rkiḏān* ‘running’ in Central Arabia which is not heard in Kuwait City. However, al-Ayyoub (1982: 47) records *rakḏa* ‘hasty, in a flash’ for Kuwait. Al-Tajir (1982: 129) gives *mrākaḏ* ‘regular attendance’ for the Bahārna dialect of Arabic in Bahrain, which is also noted for Kuwait. Ingham (1994: 78, 93, 178) glosses two forms of this verb in Najdi Arabic, *rikaḏ* ‘to run’ and *rukaḏ*; the latter acts as an ‘Action’ verb. Mansour (1991: 105) records *rakḏ* (and *lakḏ*) ‘running’ for the Jewish Baghdadi dialect.

In Najdi (and Kuwaiti) Arabic, there are intransitive physical action roots which show the same patterning as the transitive one and where Class II denotes intensiveness: *rikaḏ* ‘to run’, *rakkaḏ* ‘to run about’ (Ingham 1994: 77-78). Ingham (1994: 200) explains that ‘certain items can be seen to operate in more than one class at once’. Thus, *rikaḏ* ‘to run’ behaves as an intransitive physical action verb, ‘while it can also follow *miša* ‘to walk, go’ in Change of State group so that the form *rakkaḏ* can also take the meaning ‘he made him run about’ or as we would put it in colloquial English ‘give him the run-around’’. Holes (2004b: 109) records *rākaḏ* ‘run around over the place’ that has an extensive/intensive sense in the Arabic dialects of Eastern Arabia.

4.5.2 Dictionary Treatment and Attestation of *rikaḏ*

Only two Kuwaiti dictionaries have recorded *rikaḏ* (Holmes and Samaan 1957; al-Ayyoub 1982). The only meaning listed for *rikaḏ* by Holmes and Samaan (1957: 208) is ‘run’. As regards al-Ayyoub (1982: 108), he gives the semantic field of ‘run’ verbs in the Kuwaiti dialect as follows: *yaṭrid*, *yisābig* ‘to race’, *yadbič* ‘to run’, *yiṭir* ‘to fly away’, *yinfilit* ‘to escape’, *yigub* ‘to flee’, and *yigīr*.

4.5.3 Historical Provenance and Attestation of *rikaḏ*

The Kuwaiti form *rikaḏ* ‘run’ is pronounced *rakaḏa* in Qur’ānic Arabic. Of this root, *yarkud* (imperfect of *rakaḏa*) occurs three times only in the Qur’ān with the following senses and uses (Badawi and Abdel Haleem 2008: 380-381):

1. ‘to beat with one’s feet, to kick, to stamp on the ground’⁹⁵
2. ‘to run away, to escape, to take flight’⁹⁶

The ‘only’ proverb that contains the verb *rikaḏ* is noted by al-Roumī and Kamāl (1984: 143), which also contains the verb *miša* ‘walk’.

- | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|---------------|-----------------|----------|---------------|
| 1. <i>faras</i> | <i>badu</i> | <i>tamši</i> | <i>na ‘sāna</i> | <i>u</i> | <i>tarkiḏ</i> |
| mare | bedouin | IMPF-WALK.3fs | sleepy | and | IMPF-RUN.3fs |
| <i>šēṭāna</i> | | | | | |
| mischievous | | | | | |
| ‘A Bedouin mare walks sleepily and runs (gallops) mischievously.’ | | | | | |

In sum, the following are all the Kuwaiti senses of *rikaḏ* as represented in the examined dictionaries:

➤ *rikaḏ* (intransitive)

1. to run

➤ *rakiḏ* (verbal noun)

1. (to come in) running

⁹⁵ اِرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ ‘stamp with your foot!, this is cool [water] for bathing and drinking’, translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 381). Zammit (2002: 200, 600) also gives ‘to stamp on the ground; to fly’ for Qur’ānic Arabic.

⁹⁶ فَلَمَّا أَحْسَوْا بِأَسْنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَرْكُضُونَ ‘when they felt Our might [coming upon them], how they ran away from it!’, translation by Badawi and Abdel Haleem (2008: 381).

4.6 Summary

The present chapter aimed to describe the morpho-phonological and lexico-semantic aspects of four lexical verbs of motion, viz. *dašš* ‘to enter’, *xalla* ‘to leave’, *miša* ‘to walk’, and *rikaḏ* ‘to run’ in the spoken Arabic of Kuwait City. From the morpho-phonological perspective, the vocabulary is built on the principle of root and pattern. We have observed that the four verbs under investigation are inflected for gender and number in the perfective and imperfective aspects and the imperative, and plural verb forms are of common gender. That is, KA has a twofold system for the inflection of finite verbs: a suffix-based conjugation (perfect) and a prefix-based conjugation (imperfect). We have also seen that all the four verbs are trilateral belonging to individual verb patterns stemmed from Classical Arabic.

Dictionary compilers clearly differ from each other in terms of the patterns of semantic coverage. We have noticed that semantically related words, namely, *tarak* vs. *xalla*, *dašš* vs. *daxal*, are used to define one another. By using the verb *xalla* to define *tarak*, and the verb *tarak* to define *xalla*, the definition becomes circular. One source of weakness in the reference works which could have affected the behaviour of the lexical items is that these dictionaries do not provide a rich store of real examples and information based on representative and contextual data; instead, they are all based on the introspective judgment (or competence) of a compiler rather than on corpus or fieldwork evidence. Additionally, the type of grammatical information that one would expect to find in these dictionaries is routinely missing, except for al-Sab‘ān (1989), who indicates the parts of speech of the dictionary entries. In their survey of dialectal dictionaries, Behnstedt and Woidich (2013: 322) observe that ‘[f]or regions such as Tunisia, Libya, Oman, and the Arabian Peninsula in general, no substantial dictionaries are available’.⁹⁷

Regarding the online questionnaire, one of its significant points is that it has given us really up-to-date responses so that we have a way to ascertain the value and validity of the results produced by local dictionaries.

The Classical Arabic senses and uses of the verbs in the Qur’ān provide the necessary background information about the development and endurance of a particular word throughout the history of Arabic dialectology. However, the following conclusions can be

⁹⁷ Five decades ago, Haywood (1965: 110) observed that ‘[t]here is no modern Arabic equivalent to the Oxford English Dictionary’ and ‘the most fruitful modern Arabic lexicographical work has been done by European Orientalists’.

drawn. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that the Qur'ānic senses and the Kuwaiti colloquial senses of the target verbs do not dramatically differ. Many of the meanings they had in the medieval stage of Classical Arabic are identical or very close to the meanings conveyed by the same form in the Kuwaiti dialect. The results of this particular investigation show that the most basic senses of the verbs remain durable. For example, both the Qur'ānic *mašā* and the Kuwaiti *miša* mean 'to walk on foot', and this particular sense of *miša* is given in most dialectal dictionaries and glossaries as the default, 'original' sense. What is especially striking is that the senses of the Qur'ānic *daxala* 'to enter' are equal or very close to the meanings conveyed by the same form in the Kuwaiti *dašš*, and they seem to be virtually interchangeable. According to Holes (2004a: 4), 'the Classical Arabic of the Koran is viewed as an immutable linguistic phenomenon fixed for all time'. In contrast, Holes (2004a: 5) adds that the phraseology and vocabulary of Arabic 'have undergone considerable changes in the fourteen centuries since the Revelation [of the Qur'ān]'.

The second major finding is that the roots of *xalla*, *miša*, and *rikaḏ* can be traced back to Classical Arabic while *dašš* may have been formed via contamination of *dass* 'hide' and *xašš* 'hide, enter'. In other words, the verbs *xalla*, *miša*, and *rikaḏ* are pan-Arab words, i.e. they are high-frequency spoken Arabic words which are widely and clearly recognisable with maximum applicability throughout the Arab countries (cf. Arabian American Oil Company 1958: 224, 345, 436). However, *dašš* is a pan-Gulf word; a high-frequency spoken Gulf Arabic word used and heard exclusively in some parts of the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq (Behnstedt and Woidich 2014: 71-74).

Furthermore, the evidence from the Kuwaiti proverbs suggests that the verbs may be used literally or figuratively, and can be attached to animate or inanimate entities. Also, it has been stated by Sharbatov (1988: 109) that Arabic proverbs are 'a significant aid in studying the ethnography and popular philosophy of the Arab peoples and play a great educational, social and cultural role in their life'. However, is there a point that is relevant to theories of semantic change and persistent polysemy that I can draw from all the proverbial examples? For each of these verbs, proverbial uses are interesting because they show sources of conventional wisdoms and meanings. They have specific senses attached to particular phrases and they are really good indicators of polysemy and show how these forms are fixed in contexts. It is unfortunate that the lexicographic works did not include colloquial poetry and

odes – being the oldest form of wordsmithery – to illustrate a particular meaning of the verb in a wider context; this is because the writers did not include them as citations.⁹⁸ With respect to the Eastern Arabian dialects in which KA belongs, we have seen, for example, that KA shares more lexical features with Gulf Arabic dialects than any other dialect group.

Returning to the hypothesis posed at the beginning of this chapter, it is now possible to state that the verb *rikaḏ* ‘to run’ is not at all dynamic. This is especially true given the fact that I have only found one sense listed in colloquial dictionaries and one proverb containing this verb. Furthermore, we have seen that ‘metaphor is one of the commonest means by which new meanings develop from existing senses’ (Cowie 2009). In order to arrive at a solid explanation of what triggers the change, interdisciplinary efforts are necessitated by the very nature of the object of study. Hence, my aim in the subsequent chapters is to study the social, economic, historical, and linguistic change as research tools to help us account for the conditions in which innovative meanings arise.

⁹⁸ Holes (2007b: 543) argues that popular poetry ‘remains a relatively unexplored reservoir of creative activity. There has been a tendency for native and western critics alike to ignore it, or at best pigeonhole it as ‘folklore,’ devoid of literary value, and written in a ‘debased’ form of language’.

Chapter 5

Kuwait: Dialect, Culture, and Society

5. Introduction

Studies such as Ismael (1982) showed that there are two different eras that mark the modern history of Kuwait: the pre-oil era and the post-oil era. The history of pre-oil Kuwait begins in the 18th century when a Bedouin group of the 'Utūb tribe migrated from Central Arabia as a result of drought to the site of present-day Kuwait City, where they found good grazing land and water. In the post-oil era, as one of the world's largest oil producers, Kuwait has undergone a radical change in all aspects of life. The first impression visitors to Kuwait must have is of the outcome of the oil boom, which stamped its mark on buildings and people alike. As has been described by an outsider, 'Kuwait, the former sleepy village, has awakened with the coming of oil and is stretching its strong new limbs' (Case 1952: 802). Nonetheless, Kuwaitis are fully aware of their heritage, and retain their traditions, values, individuality and identity. Another feature of Kuwait's progress is urbanisation. Young Kuwaiti nationals are now employed in white-collar office jobs, whether in the public or the private sector. To this internationally recognised portrait, Kuwaitis add the characteristic Kuwaiti dialect which is really a mixture of Standard Arabic and Gulf Arabic with Persian, Indian, Turkish, and more recently, English loanwords.

The aim of this chapter is to explain how changes in the social structure of Kuwait are reflected in the patterns of dialect use. Since this study primarily focuses on the socio-historical characteristics of polysemy and lexical semantics, it is important to understand the concept of "change": change in culture, change in society, and change in demography, which all contribute to change in dialect patterns.

The organisation of Chapter 5 is as follows. The geography of Kuwait is described first in section 5.1. Second, the early history of pre-oil Kuwait is discussed in section 5.2. Then, section 5.3 explores post-oil Kuwait in terms of urbanisation and city growth with the aim of identifying the social classes of Kuwait. Section 5.4 aims at locating the Kuwaiti dialect among the peninsular Arabian dialects. Finally, section 5.5 summarises the key events which have helped shape the direction of change throughout the modern history of Kuwait. Thus, it must be emphasised that the principal focus of this chapter is on the social history of modern Kuwait.

5.1 Area

In the form of a deep wedge, Kuwait, officially *dawlat al-kuwayt* ‘the State of Kuwait’, is an independent Arab State that lies at the northwestern corner of the Arabian Gulf¹ and has an area of approximately 6,880 square miles. It is bound on the west and north by the Republic of Iraq for 240 km, on the east by the Arabian Gulf for 195 km, and on the south by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for 250 km.² The capital city, Kuwait City, is located on the southern shore of the large inlet of Kuwait Bay and has attained a position of considerable maritime importance in the Middle East. In fact, Kuwait City was known chiefly as a junction of caravan routes and as home port of deep-water sailing boats (Case 1952: 783). It may be interesting to point out that al-Qinā’ī (1987: 11) notes that the name ‘Kuwait’ in Arabic proper is a diminutive of *kūt* meaning ‘a little fort’³ (cf. Dickson 1956: 32-34; Freeth and Winstone 1972: 61; Shaw 1976: 12; Abu-Hakima 1983: 1, 1988: 47; Ministry of Information 1988: 31), and in the local dialect of Kuwait it is the name given to water walls (Southwell 1953: 27).⁴ Already Kuwait consisted of a number of small coastal camps, fishing villages and warehouses, hence the name Kuwait, ‘a cluster of peasant houses used for storage’ (Hewins 1963: 48).

According to Sapsted (1980: 33), the country is split into four sections: the coastal dunes, the salt marsh and saline depressions around Kuwait Bay, the sparsely vegetated desert plateau in the west, and the desert plain with patches of coarse grasses littering the sand. Nowadays, Kuwait is divided into six *muḥāfaḍāt* ‘governorates’ which have been established since 1962. The governorates are further subdivided into districts. I will list these governorates below because they are important when I refer to the domicile of my informants in Chapter 6. For

¹ Most atlases call the Gulf ‘Persian’ but loyal Arabs call it ‘Arabian’. In addition, ‘the earliest historical references to the Persian Gulf appear to stem from the time of the Sumerian rulers of Mesopotamia in the third millennium B.C.’ (Bosworth 1980: xvii).

² The present borders of the State were fixed after the ‘Uqair Conference of December 1922 under the auspices of Great Britain (al-S‘aydān 1970: 402-405; Abu-Hakima 1988; Al-Nakib 2012). Major J. C. More, the British Political Agent in Kuwait, represented the country (Shaw 1976: 21).

³ Many cities in Kuwait are formed via diminutivation, e.g. Shuwaikh ‘a little sheikh’, Fḥēḥīl ‘a little palm tree called fiḥīl’. Cf. al-S‘aydān (1971: 997).

⁴ The name was given by the early Āl Ṣubāḥ (ruling house of Kuwait) and Āl Khalīfah (ruling house of Bahrain) settlers to the stronghold built in the centre of the original settlement (Dickson 1956: 32-34). According to Abu-Hakima (1983: 1, 1988: 47), in 1904, the Iraqi monk, Father Anastās Mārī al-Karmālī, commenting on the origin of the denomination of Kuwait, said that ‘al-Kuwait is the diminutive of Kūt. The word ‘Kūt’ in the language of southern Iraq and its neighbouring countries in Arabia and parts of Persia is the house that is built in the shape of a fortress or like it so as to be easily defended when attacked. This house is usually surrounded by other houses. The name ‘Kūt’ is given to such house only when it lies near the water, whether it is river, sea, a lake or even a swamp. Then it was applied to the village built on such a site’. See also Ibrāhīm (2009: 86-88) for a discussion on different etymologies.

information regarding the distribution and population of these governorates, the reader is referred to Appendix A.

1. Muḥāfaḍat al-‘Āṣima⁵ (the Governorate of the Capital), established in 1962.
2. Muḥāfaḍat Ḥawallī⁶ (the Governorate of Ḥawallī), established in 1962.
3. Muḥāfaḍat al-Aḥmadi⁷ (the Governorate of Aḥmadi), established in 1962.
4. Muḥāfaḍat al-Jahra⁸ (the Governorate of Jahra’), established in 1979.
5. Muḥāfaḍat al-Farwāniyya⁹ (the Governorate of Farwāniyyah), established in 1988.
6. Muḥāfaḍat Mubārak al-Kabīr¹⁰ (the Governorate of Mubārak the Great), established in 2000, when the Ḥawallī Governorate was split in two.

5.2 Pre-oil Kuwait

5.2.1 Sixteenth-century Kuwait: Early European Influence

The geographical location of Kuwait was a meeting point for the civilisation of the Old World. European influence first penetrated the Arabian Gulf in the 16th century when Portuguese ships, the first Europeans since the Greeks to be recorded as having arrived in that area, reached these remote waters (Ministry of Finance and Oil 1970: 12; Abu-Hakima 1983: 13-14). The Portuguese influence, which lasted for about a century, was never more than a maritime one, maintained by a chain of forts along the coast of which no trace exists today (Southwell 1953: 27).¹¹ As pointed out by Johnstone and Muir (1964: 300), ‘[t]he Portuguese profoundly affected shipbuilding techniques in the Persian Gulf and this has left distinct traces in the local nautical vocabulary’, (see Holes 2002).

⁵ It is the seat of government and contains the head offices of banks, museums, Kuwait Towers and old wall gates, as well as all the major islands.

⁶ It is the smallest in the area but contains three private universities, the Gulf University for Science and Technology (founded 2002), the American University of Kuwait (founded 2004), and the Australian College of Kuwait (founded 2004). It is called Ḥawallī as the first sweet water well was discovered there.

⁷ It is famous for major oil-fields and wells. It was named after the 10th ruler of Kuwait, the late Sheikh Aḥmad al-Jābir al-Ṣubāḥ (1921-1950).

⁸ It is the largest in the area and the birthplace of many Bedouin families. It contains *l-gaṣir l-aḥmar* ‘the Red Palace’ where the famous Battle of Jahra’ took place in 1920.

⁹ In terms of the total number of residents, it is the most populous of the six governorates of Kuwait. It contains Kuwait Airport, Kuwait Zoo, the Avenues Mall, and Jābir Stadium.

¹⁰ In terms of the total number of residents, it is the least populous of the six governorates of Kuwait. It mainly contains residential areas. It was named after the 7th ruler of Kuwait, the late Sheikh Mubārak bin Ṣubāḥ al-Ṣubāḥ (1869-1915) who is considered the founder of modern Kuwait by local historians.

¹¹ Reference for further reading: Miles (1919: Chapter 3); Belgrave (1966); Blake et al. (1980: 105-8); Holes (2010: 18-19).

Further back in history, an archaeological reconnaissance of the State of Kuwait revealed traces of ancient settlement on the mainland and of two town sites on Failaka Island¹² near the mouth of Kuwait Bay, one dating from about 2500 BC and the other from about the second century BC (Ministry of Finance and Oil 1970: 12). It was found that the Hellenes settled in the al-Khazna Hill area on Failaka Island in 600 BC (Ibrāhīm 2009: 82).¹³

5.2.2 Seventeenth-century Kuwait: Niebuhr the Explorer

No discussion of the history of Kuwait, however summary, would be complete without reference to Niebuhr. The German-born Danish explorer, Carsten Niebuhr (1733-1815), was the first cartographer to put the name Kuwait on a map dated 1765 (Cooke 1971: 10; Abu-Hakima 1983: 1; Slot 1998: 146-149). In 1709, however, the Damascene voyageur Murtaḍā bin ‘Alwān visited the area and was the first to use the name ‘Kuwait’ and to talk about the economic prosperity of the city and its buildings (Slot 1998: 115). Niebuhr was a member of a Danish mission which visited Egypt, Syria, and Arabia during the reign of Frederick V of Denmark. The map was attached to his book *Beschreibung von Arabien* (‘Description of Arabia’) which was published in Copenhagen in 1772. In 1774, he wrote his second two-volume book *Reisebeschreibung von Arabien* (‘Travels through Arabia and other Countries in the East’), which is basically a diary of his journeys. His map of 1765 is the earliest to mention Kuwait by the name *Koueit* accompanied by *Grān* ‘Grane’; see Figure 5.1 below. Dickson (1956: 34) notes that in the old English records and books, ‘Kuwait is generally referred as Graine or Grane, doubtless from the island of Qurain (or Qrain), a short distance to the west of it’. Abu-Hakima (1983: 1) similarly proves that ‘Grane’ must be the original name of the town.

¹² To British mariners it was once known as Pheleechi, from the ordinary pronunciation, Failicha (Dickson 1956: 55). Ingham (1982a: 27, 89) notes that Failaka ‘has a dialect easily distinguishable from standard Kuwaiti’. However, this dialect distinction no longer exists. The invading Iraqis depopulated the island during 1990 and 1991, which resulted in the expulsion of all of its residents to the mainland. Although, according to the Public Authority for Civil Information, the total population of Failaka is only two as of 30 June 2014, a Kuwaiti and an Asian; they are probably coastguards
<http://www.paci.gov.kw/stat/en/Publications/popu_en.pdf>.

¹³ On the Hellenistic period on Failaka, see Potts (1990: 154-196). The earliest link with ancient times so far found in Kuwait is a stone which was discovered in 1937, bearing a Greek inscription: ‘Sotel(es) an Athenian and soldiers (?) to Zeus saviours Poseidon Artemis saviours’ (Southwell 1953: 27); see also Freeth (1972: 117-119).

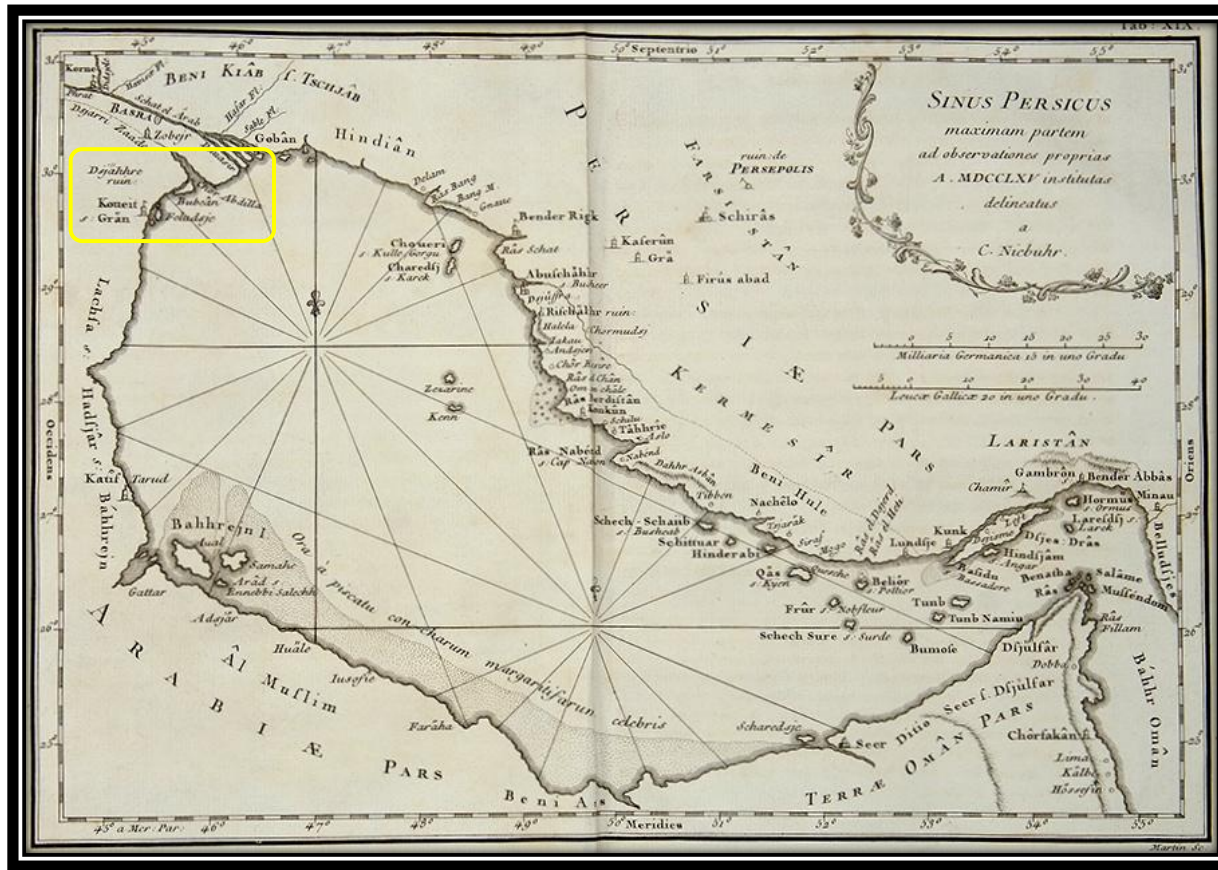


Figure 5.1: This 18th-century map of the Arabian Gulf was produced in 1765 during the 1st Scientific Expedition to Arabia of which the cartographer Carsten Niebuhr was the sole survivor.¹⁴ This was the most accurate map of the Gulf of the 18th century and the first one to show Kuwait (*Koueit*) and the emirate of Sharjah (*Scharedsje*) in the UAE (al-Qāsimī 1999: 214).

¹⁴ The expedition was composed of five members, each chosen for his qualifications; Niebuhr was a trained surveyor, who had also spent some months learning Arabic before the journey; Peter Forskal was a doctor and botanist; Christian Cramer was a surgeon and zoologist; Frederick von Haven was a philologist and orientalist, who with Forskal knew Arabic; and George William Baurenfeind was an artist. Of the six members, only Niebuhr survived (Blake et al. 1980: 112).

In fact, Grane¹⁵ had been in existence before a small fortress called Kuwait ‘was built by Barrāk, the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid¹⁶ tribe who were rulers of Eastern Arabia¹⁷ in the seventeenth century’ (Abu-Hakima 1983: 1; see also Ingham 1982a: 65; al-Qinā‘ī 1987: 11; Abu-Hakima 1988: 48).

Additionally, Niebuhr cited in his map the names of some islands, towns, and creeks of Kuwait, namely, *Chor Abdilla* ‘Khōr ‘Abdullah’, *Feludsje* ‘Failaka Island’, *Bubean* ‘Bubiyān Island’, and *Dsjahhre* ‘Jahra’;¹⁸ he also drew the outlying islets of Miskān (two miles from Failaka) and ‘Ōha (three miles from Failaka’s southeastern extremity) but without being indicated on the map (Kochwasser 1969: 42-44; al-Sa‘dūn 2010: 98). Niebuhr (1792: 127) describes his journey to Kuwait as follows: ‘*Koweit* or *Græn*, as it is called by the Persians and Europeans, is a sea-port town, three days journey from *Zobejer*, or old Baфра. The inhabitants live by the fishery of pearls and of fishes. They are said to employ in this species of naval industry more than eight hundred boats...’ Therefore, it can be observed that Niebuhr was the first to record the extent of the Kuwaitis’ new-found involvement in fishing and pearling, an industry which at the time was employing more than 800 boats (Sapsted 1980: 13).

5.2.3 Eighteenth-century Kuwait: Early Settlers in the Area

Materials for writing the history of Kuwait were traced from both Arabic and European sources. The early history of the State of Kuwait is still conjectural. The founding of the original settlement of Kuwait is believed to have taken place in about 1710 (Freeth and Winstone 1972: 61). However, earlier research, such as that collected and presented by Abu-Hakima (1983, 1988), based on documents from the East India Company, suggests that Kuwait Town was built around 1716, particularly when Arabs from the northern part of Central Arabia settled there (Southwell 1953: 27).

¹⁵ Grane was mentioned in Dutch sources as an established centre of trade in 1750 (Slot 1998: 117). It may be interesting to point out that Grane is the diminutive form of the Arabic word Qarn, meaning ‘hill high’, while Freeth and Winston (1972: 11) translate it into ‘little horn’.

¹⁶ According to the Kuwait Ministry of Information (1988: 20), the year 1672 AD is ‘the approximate date of the establishment of Kuwait town’, when Barrāk bin Ghurair was the Emir of the great Banī Khālid tribe.

¹⁷ Eastern Arabia was the land of the ‘Adnānī division of the ‘Arabs, or the Northern ‘Arabs, as opposed to the Qaḥṭānī or Southern ‘Arabs, the two major sections of ‘Arabs in their homeland (Abu-Hakima 1983: 2).

¹⁸ Al-Jahra lies near the foot of Kuwait Bay, twenty miles by road west of Kuwait City. It is the chief seat of agriculture in the Kuwait territory, and caravan to Baṣra and Burayda via the Ḥafar pass through it (Abu-Hakima 1988: 47). It houses many Bedouin families.

The Kuwait Ministry of Information (1988: 21) also confirms the year 1716 as the approximate date of the Āl Ṣubāḥ¹⁹ family's (the ruling house of Kuwait) arrival in Kuwait, who are of the Dahāmsha section of the 'Amārāt, a subtribe of the 'Aniza confederation.²⁰

Many modern Kuwaitis are descendants of the 'Aniza tribe, who in the 18th century came to this coastal site from their homeland because of drought and famine (Abu-Hakima 1983, 1988). Here, they founded a new Arab community or joined one already established, and around 1756 the chief of the al-Ṣubāḥ family, thereafter known as Ṣubāḥ bin Jābir (aka Ṣubāḥ the First), was chosen as the Emir²¹ for being at best *primus inter pares* (Frazer 1969: 656). Belgrave (1966: 123) similarly reports that early in the 18th century, the 'Utūb tribe, progenitors of the Ṣubāḥ, 'emerged from the Arabian desert, and settled at Grane, which was on the Arab coast at the top of the Arabian Gulf. The 'Utūb built a fort at Grane, which became known as Kuwait'.

Therefore, it can be observed that the 'Utūb tribespeople were the early settlers in Kuwait. It should be noted that 'Utūb was not the designation of a clan. Dickson (1956: 26) notes that these migrating families had '*atabū ila š-šimāl* 'moved to the north' and from this old but good Arabic word, as Dickson was told by the late Sheikh 'Abdullah al-Sālim al-Ṣubāḥ (1950-1965), the name 'Utūb 'the people who moved or trekked' was coined. This in turn clearly indicates the movement of the 'Utūb which is basically from the centre to the periphery of Arabia (al-S'aydān 1972: 1582-1585).

5.3 Post-oil Kuwait: Urbanisation and City Growth

Previous research has indicated that '[t]he urbanization of Kuwait is one of the most spectacular transformations in the history of urban development' (Bonine 1980: 245). Almost all of Kuwait's population is urban: 'official estimates put the urban population at 97 percent of the total, concentrated in Kuwait City and a few satellite townships' (Holes 2007c: 608). In almost all of the Arabian Gulf states, 'there has been a shift from a predominantly rural society toward one that is increasingly urban' (Magnus 1980: 392). However, in Kuwait,

¹⁹ The 'Āl' prefixed to Ṣubāḥ indicates a dynasty or lineage, not to be confused with the Arabic definite article 'al-' which denotes an immediate forebear.

²⁰ Āl Ṣubāḥ and Āl Khalīfa from central Najd and the Āl Thānī from southern Najd migrated eastwards and northwards to occupy areas of the Gulf coast. They eventually came to form the ruling families of Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar that we know today (Holes 2006b: 29).

²¹ The Kuwait Ministry of Information (1988: 21) records the date 1752 as the approximate year of the election of Ṣubāḥ bin Jābir to be the first ruler of Kuwait. Southwell (1953: 29) argues that the present dynasty can be said to have started in 1756 when Sheikh Ṣubāḥ abu 'Abdullah of 'Umm Qaṣr, between thirty and forty miles south of Baṣra, seized power in Kuwait.

Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, the indigenous populations are in a minority (Magnus 1980: 393).²² In this respect, it is important to understand when, how, and why this urbanisation occurred in the first place, and how these changes in the social structures in Kuwait are occurring at a rapid pace, which will be my next argument.

5.3.1 Population of Kuwait

The demography of Kuwait was reported in various forms by several European travellers and authors well before the first official census was conducted by the government of Kuwait in 1957. Although the pre-1957 reports lacked accuracy, their accounts help us assess the developments, growth, and prosperity of the town. It is interesting to record that Carsten Niebuhr, describing a visit to Kuwait in 1760, stated that the town had about 10,000 inhabitants and some 800 vessels (Niebuhr 1792: 127; Southwell 1953: 28). In June 1831, Kuwait was attacked by an epidemic and most of its inhabitants died, and this traumatic event was widely known as *sinat t-tā'ūn* 'The Year of the Pestilence' (al-Ḥanafī 1964: 229; al-Qinā'ī 1987: 64).²³ Al-S'aydān (1971: 911) reports that only 400 inhabitants of Kuwait survived during that year while most of the men were on a pearling voyage.

At the turn of the 20th century, the Central Statistics Office tentatively estimated the 1910 population at about 35,000 (Ministry of Information 1988: 38), plus 13,000 Bedouin in the rest of the country (Bonine 1980: 245). Between 1910 and 1935, 'the rate of population growth suddenly accelerated and reached 75,000 prior to the Second World War, or rather before actual oil exports started' (Ministry of Information 1988: 38). In 1932, Kuwait lived through its last great smallpox epidemic. More than 4,000 people died in about ten days (Shaw 1976: 134).

Since the 1950s, it has been estimated that 'the 170,000 inhabitants of Kuwait quietly occupied themselves with time-honoured pursuits of pearling, fishing, seafaring, and ship-building' (Case 1952: 783). In addition, Southwell (1953: 31) reported in 1953 that:

The population of Kuwait to-day is probably about 200,000, of which some two-thirds reside in the capital town of Kuwait or in nearby villages. The majority have their origin in the tribes of Nejd, belonging mainly to the Sunni sect of Islam and incline to the more puritanical forms of their religion.

²² Of a total Arabian Gulf population close to 30 million in 2000, less than two-thirds are nationals (Dresch 2005: 2).

²³ The Kuwait Ministry of Information (1988: 21) gives the year 1773, which seems to be a mistake.

Dickson (1956: 40) also reports that the population of Kuwait Town, in 1952 a little over 160,000, rose by the end of 1953 to 250,000, ‘an artificial increase due entirely to the enormous influx of foreign unskilled labour for the carrying out of the town-development scheme’. Apparently, based on the above (unofficial) estimates, these observers report a massive increase in the large and seemingly semi-permanent population of foreign workers.²⁴

It should be borne in mind that what has been referred to thus far as “Kuwait” is known today as *l-kwēt awwal* ‘(good) old Kuwait’, which was originally a walled town and is said to have had seven *dirwāzās* ‘gates’²⁵ on the landward side in 1874 (Dickson 1956: 35). Taken together, today the word ‘old’, applied to buildings in Kuwait, means pre-1950 (Freeth 1972: 23). So the old Kuwait had almost gone when the first Kuwait Master Plan was drawn up in 1952, and the Kuwait wall was demolished and removed in 1957. Since then, the distinction between Old Kuwait Town and New Kuwait Town has been recognised and both towns belong to the so-called *al-kuwayt al-kubrā* ‘Greater Kuwait’ (al-Şubāḥ and ‘Izzat 2004: 36; Ibrāhīm 2009: 96).

In the first official census reported in 1957, the country’s population was already 206,473 (of whom 92,851 were immigrants), and this more than doubled by the 1965 census²⁶ and doubled again by the 1975 census.²⁷ Despite the fact that the time between 1957 and 1965 is less than a decade, this rise in the population seems highly predictable given the urban expansion, rapid modernisation, and social developments which the world has seen. ‘The 994,837 total of that year [1975] represents a 9.1 percent per annum increase since 1957, one of the greatest national growth rates in the world’ (Bonine 1980: 245). It is interesting to note that in their typographical study on Kuwait, al-Şubāḥ and ‘Izzat (2004: 39) draw a clear distinction between two types of areas, namely, *al-manāṭiq al-ḥaḍariyya* ‘urban towns’ and *al-manāṭiq ġēr al-ḥaḍariyya* ‘non-urban towns’ of which the latter had a total population of 28,000 non-urbanites (13.6% of the total population) in 1957. ‘The 1977 population is at least 1.1 million; Kuwait’s inhabitants have increased more than five-fold in two decades’ (Bonine 1980: 245).

²⁴ For the period of residence of immigrant manpower in Kuwait, see al-Moosa and McLachlan (1985: 7-11).

²⁵ The first wall (750 metres long) was built around Kuwait City in 1760, the second (2,300 metres long) in 1811, and the third (6,400 metres long) in 1921 (Ministry of Information 1992: 18-19). The gateways of the old city wall have been preserved, nonetheless.

²⁶ In the early 1960s, the foreign population became larger than that of the native Kuwaitis, a trend that has remained to the present day (Bonine 1980: 246). However, more significant statistics are that for the total of 298,415 economically active persons, 70.9 per cent were not Kuwaitis (see Table 10.5 in Bonine 1980: 247).

²⁷ Registration of births and deaths has been required since 1952 (Hill 1975: 537).

Between 1970-1975, Arabs constituted about 80 per cent of the foreign population, about half these being Palestinian and Jordanian (Bonine 1980: 246; ‘Azīz and al-Moosa 1981: 22-31), their presence being largely the result of the June War²⁸ which played a major role in accelerating the rate of population growth in Kuwait (al-Sab‘ān 1983: 51-57; al-Şubāḥ and ‘Izzat 2004: 75). As a matter of fact, in 1961, half of the Jordanian population living outside their country was in Kuwait (Bonine 1980: 247). Table 5.1 below summarises the population growth from 1957 to 1975²⁹ based on the official State censuses.

Census date	Kuwaitis			Immigrants			Total	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% annual growth</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% annual growth</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% annual growth</i>
February 1957	113,622	55.0	-	92,851	45.0	-	206,473	-
May 1961	161,909	50.3	8.7	159,712	49.7	13.6	321,621	11.0
April 1965	220,059	47.1	8.2	247,280	52.9	11.8	467,339	10.0
April 1970	347,396	47.0	9.6	391,266	53.0	9.6	738,662	9.6
April 1975	472,088	47.5	6.3	522,749	52.5	6.0	994,837	6.1

Table 5.1: Kuwaiti and immigrant population, 1957-1975 (gleaned from Bonine 1980: 246; al-Sab‘ān 1983: 24; al-Yaḥya 1993: 7; al-Şubāḥ and ‘Izzat 2004: 57).

Between 1980 and 1989, al-Yaḥya (1993: 7) estimated the following population figures. Note that the foreign populations were still larger than that of the native Kuwaitis:

- 1980 (566,000 Kuwaitis) (792,000 non-Kuwaitis) = 1,358,000 inhabitants
- 1985 (681,000 Kuwaitis) (1,016,000 non-Kuwaitis) = 1,697,000 inhabitants³⁰
- 1989 (797,000 Kuwaitis) (1,252,000 non-Kuwaitis) = 2,049,000 inhabitants

By 1990, Kuwait’s overall population had reached 2,100,000 inhabitants. Five years later, the population of Kuwait decreased by half a million owing to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (2 August 1990 - 26 February 1991). Al-Şubāḥ and ‘Izzat (2004: 169) estimate that more than one million inhabitants left Kuwait, of whom 230,000 were Palestinians,³¹ 10,000 were

²⁸ Also known as the ‘1967 Arab-Israeli War’, or *an-Naksa* ‘The Setback’.

²⁹ 1957-75 annual growth = 9.0 percent.

1957-75 Kuwaiti annual growth = 8.2 percent.

1957-75 Immigrant annual growth = 10.0 percent.

³⁰ According to the Ministry of Information (1992: 37), ‘there has been a slight but perceptible increase in the Kuwaiti female percentage of the population’, based on the statistics of the 1985 census.

³¹ Prior to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, there were nearly 400,000 Palestinian residents in Kuwait (Lesch 1991: 42). Longva (1997: 30) gives 510,000 for the size of the Palestinian/Jordanian populations during that time.

Yemenis and Sudanis, and more than 90 per cent of the Egyptian community departed the country.

After laying the foundation of the demography of Kuwait, I believe it is necessary to distinguish between the so-called “original” Kuwaitis and the migrant communities in the population because we need to thoroughly understand the social classes and structures of Kuwait.

5.3.1.1 Indigenous Kuwaitis

We have seen in the previous section the sudden transition that Kuwait had undergone during the second half of the 20th century. By 1990, the population of Kuwait had rocketed to 2,100,000 (from 206,000 in 1957), i.e. a tenfold increase in only 33 years (Ibrāhīm 2009: 147). According to Hill (1969: 84), two factors are responsible for this very large growth: heavy immigration and a high rate of natural population increase. Moreover, Khouja and Sadler (1979: 37) have observed that from 1961 onwards, this phenomenal growth was due to two main developments:

1. The influx of workers from other countries in the region to help in the construction of new infrastructure projects and staff jobs created by the expansion of public services.
2. The increase in the number of Kuwaitis through a concerted effort to naturalise tribesmen scattered on the fringes of the country along with a limited number of qualified people who had resided in the country for an extended time (normally twenty years or more).

If the Gulf War had not occurred, the population is likely to have increased progressively. Actually, when Kuwait was invaded in 1990, the sight of thousands of Indians, East Asians, Westerners, and non-Kuwaiti Arabs trapped under occupation or fleeing ‘made the outside world suddenly aware of a singular fact of Kuwaiti society—that Kuwaitis are an absolute minority in their own country’ (Longva 1997: 266). This poses the following question then: Who are the Kuwaitis and how could they be socially classified? Their history as a nation goes back not much more than two hundred years, but their roots as a people stretch back over countless centuries (Sapsted 1980: 6). What is really important to argue about is why the urban-Bedouin division has such an important place in the popular discourse of Kuwait. I shall attempt to explore these questions in the following paragraphs, albeit briefly.

The Middle East as a cultural area has three major ‘culture types’: pastoral, rural, and urban (Cadora 1970: 10). The population of Kuwait can be divided into two communities: immigrants (‘non-Kuwaitis’) and *muwāṭinīn* (sing. *muwāṭin*) ‘citizens of Kuwait’ (‘Kuwaitis’); the former group is locally known by three epithets: *aḡānīb* (sing. *aḡnabī*) ‘foreigners’, *wāfidīn* (sing. *wāfid*) ‘expatriates’, or *muqīmīn* (sing. *muqīm*) ‘non-citizens’.³² Non-Kuwaitis are further subdivided into two communities: Arabs and non-Arabs,³³ which are discussed in section 5.3.1.2 below. According to Dickson (1949: 108), Kuwaiti Arabs divide themselves into two main groups: *al-ḥaḍar* and *al-bādiya*. *Al-ḥaḍar* (singular *ḥaḍari*), or settled communities, are those who dwell in permanent stone or mud houses, i.e. townfolk or villagers; *al-bādiya*, or ‘pastoral nomads’, are those who live nomad lives, own camels and live in black hair-tents (*byūt ša‘ar*).³⁴ Though the scene is different today, more and more nomads have left their precarious existence in the desert for permanent homes in the cities (Frazer 1969: 657). In fact, ‘nearly 99 percent of the country’s population is settled, and Kuwait hardly contains any Bedouin who practice a nomadic or pastoral lifestyle’ (al-Nakib 2014: 6).

As far as one can observe, the major social and linguistic division in Arabic-speaking Kuwait is that between *ḥaḍar* and the Bedouin communities, from the point of view of phonology and morphology, and less of lexicology. ‘These are usually referred to in the literature as the *badawī* or ‘Bedouin’ (B) type, and the *ḥaḍarī* or ‘sedentary’ (S) type’ (Holes 2007a: 212). Holes (2006b: 25) argues that the ‘sedentary’ dialect type, which is ancient, ‘was once probably more widespread than it is now, having gradually been replaced by the ‘Bedouin’ type over at least the last 1000 years’.³⁵

In local taxonomy, the ‘Arab or pure desert Bedouin roughly divide themselves into two tribal classes: Sharīf or superior (aristocratic) tribes, and non-Sharīf or inferior tribes.’³⁶

³² According to Dresch (2005: 25), ‘[t]here are commonly reckoned three circles of identity in Gulf society beyond that of *muwāṭin* or fellow citizen: *khalījī* or Gulf, then Arab, then *aḡnabī* or foreign’.

³³ A third dichotomy, Muslims and non-Muslims, is discussed in Longva (1997: 56-59).

³⁴ In Arabic, *al-bādiya* means ‘the nomad-inhabited desert’; *al-badu* or *al-bduwi* (feminine *al-bduwiyya*) ‘the desert-dwelling nomad’, whom in English is called the Bedouin. The nomad naturally does not refer to himself as a Bedouin, but rightly styles himself an ‘Arab (Dickson 1949: 27). As one of the Bedouin social systems, Dickson (1949: 108, 662) also notes the so-called ‘Arabdar group; an ‘Arab who is half Bedouin and half townsman, which does seem to hold in present-day Kuwait, at least amongst the urbanites.

³⁵ In Arabic dialectological studies, ‘the labels ‘Bedouin’ and ‘Sedentary’ are not used to classify the speakers of the dialects according to their lifestyle, but according to the provenance of their dialects. By convention, those dialects that originated during the second stage are called ‘Bedouin’, those that emerged at the first stage are called ‘Sedentary’. These are diachronic labels corresponding to what is now known about the historical layering of the Arabicization process’ (Versteegh 2011: 543).

³⁶ The word *qabīla* ‘tribe’ is often used as a descriptive term to delineate social groups (Clark 1980: 485).

Historically, the former are known to be pure in blood and origin (i.e. *aṣīlīn*) and claim descent from the Patriarchs Ishmael and Qaḥṭān. The latter are not *aṣīlīn* (Dickson 1949: 111; al-S‘aydān 1970: 88).³⁷ Within this social system, I may add the widespread notions of *ḥamūla*³⁸ and *baysiri* (pl. *baysiriyya*); the former is ‘a group of families that trace descent back five or seven generations to a common ancestor’ and the latter is said to be derived from Persian, meaning ‘without a head’ and designates ‘a group of families that trace descent to nobody or that of unknown descent and origin and sometimes applied to non-Arabs in general’ (al-S‘aydān 1970: 249; al-Ayyoub 1982: 145-147).³⁹

With respect to the permanent populations of Kuwait, Dickson (1956: 40) observes that the great majority are Arabs of the ‘Utūb, ‘Awāzim, Rashāyda, Banī Khālid, ‘Ajmān, ‘Aniza, and Dhafīr tribes, besides Ḥasāwiyyah, or Arabs from al-Ḥasa, and Baḥārnah.⁴⁰ Al-S‘aydān (1972: 1164) adds the following major tribes of Kuwait: Duwāsir, Sib‘ān, Šammar, Faḍūl, Suhūl, Gaḥṭān,⁴¹ as well as ‘Adāwīn, and Hawājīr. The tribes of the longest standing would seem to be the non-Sharīf tribes of ‘Awāzim and Rashāyda ‘whose dialect is in many ways very close to that of the settled population’ (Ingham 1982a: 12, 73).⁴²

Let us go back to my enquiry regarding the urban-Bedouin dichotomy. It is absolutely crucial to distinguish between the *ḥaḍar* ‘urban’ and the *badu* ‘Bedouin, rural’ communities because this dichotomy carries implications for dialect variation and change in the area. Longva (2006: 172) rightly distinguishes the urban-Bedouin dichotomy as follows,

In present-day popular speech, the term *hadhar* designates Kuwaitis whose forefathers lived in Kuwait before the launch of the oil era (1946) and worked as traders, sailors, fishermen, and pearl divers. In contrast, the term *badu* designates a specific group of newcomers: these are immigrants, mostly from Saudi Arabia, who used to live on animal pastoralism; they moved to Kuwait between 1960 and 1980, after Kuwait had become an independent, oil exporting nation, and have been granted Kuwaiti nationality over the years since then.

³⁷ Today, the concept of *aṣīl* and non-*aṣīl* is being applied to a breed of horse that originated in the Arabian Peninsula.

³⁸ Also known as *ayāwīd* ‘nobly (tribally) descended communities.’

³⁹ Longva (2006: 182) observes that ‘Kuwaitis under forty years of age, regardless of their social background, have no or very limited knowledge of tribes, tribal history, and tribal organisation’.

⁴⁰ According to Dickson (1956: 41), the leading families in Kuwait, in order of number of living males, are as follows: Jnā‘āt (Qinā‘āt, Suhūl Arabs), Āl Khālid, Āl Zāyid (Āl Ghānim), Āl Saif (including Ibn Roumī and Āl Shamlān), Āl Bader, Āl Jalīl, Āl Šālīḥ, and Āl Šaqīr. See also al-Qinā‘ī (1987: 67) and Abu-Hakima (1988: 57).

⁴¹ Clark (1980: 499) argues that the most important subtribes in the area were the Āl Khalīfa, the Jalāhmah, and the Āl Šubāḥ. ‘The ‘Awāzim and Rashāyda, Dhafīr and Muṭair tribes either had their tribal headquarters in this locality or utilised water holes and pastures. The ‘Awāzim tribe were particularly important in fishing off the coast, an occupation that was combined with nomadic herding’.

⁴² A map of general locations of tribes in the Arabian Peninsula can be found in Dickson (1949), Lebkicher et al. (1960: 62), Kochwasser (1969: 145), al-S‘aydān (1972: 1163-1164), and Clark (1980: 489). See also Clark (1980: 495-497) and Meinke (1985: 62) for the major tribal groups of Kuwait.

With respect to the notion of *aṣīlīn* and non-*aṣīlīn* ('original vs. non-original') amongst the families of Kuwait, Longva (2005: 121, 2006: 174) notes that the Nationality Law of 1959 differentiates between two social groups: *kwētiyyīn bil-aṣil* 'Kuwaitis by origin' or *kwētiyyīn bit-ta'sīs* 'Kuwaitis who carry *ḡinsiyya 'ūla* ('first-level citizenship') and *kwētiyyīn bit-taḡnīs* 'Kuwaitis by naturalisation' (i.e. 'newcomers').⁴³ So it is a matter of 'purity of origin' rather than simply 'origin'. In his social description of the Kuwaiti dialect, Holes (2007c: 608-609) has made this distinction nicely:

There is a sharp social distinction between Kuwaitis who have full citizenship, including the right to vote (if male over 21)⁴⁴ – urban, mainly mercantile, and descended from the Najdi tribes that arrived in the area from the mid-18th century – and other Kuwaitis, mostly recently sedentarised Bedouin who roamed the borderlands of Iraq and Saudi Arabia until the early 1950s, who have a lesser form of citizenship. There is an even sharper distinction between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, with certain residential areas of Kuwait City being reserved for Kuwaiti nationals only.

Kuwait's population is highly concentrated in the capital, Kuwait City. Longva (2006) demonstrates that Kuwait is a society that is divided into two sections: an outlying rural area and a central urban core, both of which are inhabited by two socially distinct classes, the *ḥaḍar* and the Bedouin.⁴⁵

Moreover, it has been argued that the distribution of the population is characterised by two related trends (Mitchell 1980: 591; 'Azīz and al-Moosa 1981: 129-147). In many areas, citizens and immigrants live apart from one another (Ḥawallī is the extreme example). Also, Kuwaitis have become suburban while non-Kuwaitis reside in the inner city and the older, less planned and more crowded suburbs.⁴⁶

As roads are the lifeline of a nation, Kuwait attaches special attention to its roads, which are designed to meet the pressures of urbanisation and the great increase in traffic. After the

⁴³ The category of naturalised Kuwaitis includes Shī'a (from Southern Iraq and al-Ḥasa, and mostly from Iran), a few Sunnī (Ḥwala) Arabs from Iran and other countries in the Middle East, and some Christian Arabs from Palestine and Southern Iraq (Longva 2006: 174-5). Al-Nakib (2014: 12) adds, [w]hile members of the two categories held equal rights to employment, land ownership, and welfare benefits, naturalized citizens could not vote or run for parliament until thirty years after their naturalization'.

⁴⁴ In May 2005, the Kuwaiti parliament granted female suffrage. Four years later, four female candidates won parliamentary seats in a general election.

⁴⁵ There is a presence of the so-called 'stateless', popularly known in Kuwait as the *bidūns* (from *bidūn ḡinsiyya* 'without nationality'). The *bidūns* fell neither under the category of Kuwaitis nor under that of non-Kuwaitis in the sense of expatriates, i.e. nationals of other countries with temporary residence in Kuwait (Longva 1997: 50). Many *bidūn* were Bedouin, belonging especially to the Šammar and 'Aniza tribes (Crystal 2005: 175). Al-Nakib (2014: 13), however, observes the misconception in present-day Kuwait whereby the *bidūn* people who came from Syria, Jordan, and Iraq 'destroyed their original nationality papers'.

⁴⁶ Al-Moosa and McLachlan (1985: 29) report that the main areas inhabited by immigrants are Ḥawallī, Sālmīyya, Farwāniyya, and Kuwait Town.

roads in Kuwait having been divided into seven ring roads, the distinction between the ḥaḍar and the Bedouin has become surprisingly clear-cut as Longva (2006: 175) points out:

The concrete dividing line between the two social worlds is generally considered to be the Sixth Ringroad [...]. Between the First and the Fifth Rings lie the undisputedly ‘hadhar’ neighborhoods. The area between the Fifth and the Sixth Rings is a zone of transition with a mixed population of hadhar, badu, and foreign migrants. The area south of the Sixth Ringroad was, until recently, ‘badu territory’.

It must be emphasised that the term *ḥḍiri* ‘ḥaḍari’ ‘is part of the traditional Bedouin vocabulary’ (Dickson 1956: 594). Longva (2006: 176) reports that the term ‘ḥaḍar’ is not used as a self-reference term among urban Kuwaitis. However, the phrase *ahl s-sūr* ‘the people from within the wall’ is sometimes used by the citizens of Kuwait when they emphasise their collective identity as against the Bedouin in line with the wall that bordered Kuwait Town in the past. Even though the wall was knocked down in the 1950s, it ‘is still a powerful trope in the discursive construction of hadhar identity (ibid.)’.

5.3.1.2 The Migrant Communities in the Population

We have seen from the official population statistics that Kuwait is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society. Although Kuwait is ruled by the Kuwaitis, it was in reality built and maintained by the migrants. In fact, it has been reported that there are expatriates from 120 different countries residing in Kuwait⁴⁷ (Ministry of Information 1988: 41; cf. al-Ḥanaḥī 1964: 304). In the Arabian Gulf, Bassiouney (2009: 255) notes that ‘the present linguistic situation is critical. Due to immigration to these oil countries, a vast number of language minorities exists’.⁴⁸ The migrant communities in the population of Kuwait are classified into two groups: Arabs and non-Arabs. Arabs come from all over the Middle East, the largest group being Egyptians.⁴⁹ Non-Arabs are mainly from the Asian subcontinent (Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India), Southeast Asia (mostly Filipinos, but also Indonesians and Thais), and from Iran (Longva 2005: 120). Relatively recently, there has been an influx of Ethiopian nannies, Nepali baristas, and domestic workers from Sierra Leone.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ By April 1982, the Kuwaiti authorities were calling for joint action by the Arabian Gulf states to control the growth of the foreign labour force (al-Moosa and McLachlan 1985: 3).

⁴⁸ The tremendous influx of foreign labourers brought their cultures and languages to the area. Among the largest non-Arabic languages are Hindi, Malayalam, Konkani (spoken by Indians), Punjabi, Urdu (Indians and Pakistanis), Bengali (Bangladeshis), Sinhala and Tamil (Sri Lankans and Indians), Farsi (Iranians), and Tagalog (Filipinos).

⁴⁹ See, for example, al-Moosa and McLachlan (1985: 52-58) for a discussion on Egyptian immigrants in Kuwait and in Egypt.

⁵⁰ The inflow of Ethiopians, Nepalis, and Sierra Leoneans added a new category of immigrants with different languages, cultures, and social habits.

No doubt, the principle motivation for immigration into Kuwait is for employment;⁵¹ a trend that has remained to the present day (al-Moosa and McLachlan 1985: 35). A large proportion of the immigrants into Kuwait can be classified into two groups: Arabs from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, and Arabs from the desert. In the 1950s, Johnstone (1967b: xxviii) observes that immigrants from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq have had a significant influence on the Kuwaiti dialect, especially in the educational field, since most of the teachers in Kuwait's many schools are Egyptians or Palestinians.⁵² Thus, in line with Johnstone, Mitchell (1975: 76) observes:

Kuwait is a country that should be visited, since teachers of all nationalities currently go there to make their living. It therefore offers the opportunity to observe the language of, say, Egyptian, Jordanian, Lebanese, and Syrian teachers using the same English and Arabic lesson material to teach Kuwaiti children.

It should be emphasised that the immigrant labour force in Kuwait is characterised not only by nationality, but also by a wide variety of ethnic groups, cultures, and educational and professional standards.⁵³ A significant number of the professional Arab migrants bring to Kuwait a level of education and expertise that is not there in the original population. So, migrant communities are aligned not only by ethnicity, but also by social class and demographic factors (Freeth 1972: 32; al-Moosa and McLachlan 1985: 6).

In the early 1950s, Case (1952: 786) reported the following non-Kuwaiti population of Kuwait while he was passing through the well-known Şafāt Square in the heart of Kuwait town: Iranians, Iraqis, Baluchis, Indians, Najdis, Ḥiġāzis, Omanis, and Arabs from all over the peninsula.⁵⁴ At that time, the Iranians were the second largest group of foreigners after Palestinians and Jordanians ('Azīz and al-Moosa 1981: 45-46) 'because of the great number

⁵¹ Kuwait also has attracted immigrants due to its policy of providing free education and free health services at a standard generally above the nearby states (Bonine 1980: 248).

⁵² The first educational mission came from Palestine in 1936. This was followed by others from Syria and Egypt (al-'Arabī 1989: 54). According to al-Moosa and McLachlan (1985: 24, 33-34), '[t]he Kuwaiti student finds real difficulty with the different Arabic used in teaching, especially during primary education, but slowly becomes familiar with the language as he proceeds in his education and becomes more mature'. Cf. Daniels (1971: 84); Harvey (1979: 165). See Ingham (1994: 109) for the non-Arabian dialect influences on Najdi Arabic.

⁵³ Al-Moosa and McLachlan (1985: 33) state that 'Kuwait is highly regarded among the Gulf States for encouraging expatriate students to enrol in technical studies'. In fact, until last year, Syrians and Egyptians have usually scored outstanding results in all stages of study. In the 2013/14 high school examinations, the best ten students were immigrants.

⁵⁴ Most of the Asian communities congregate on Fridays (mostly Muslims) and Sundays (mostly non-Muslims) in the Murgāb area, marking a religious and social occasion for many of them. This might sound strange, but Murgāb has a population of 5 Kuwaitis and 7,230 non-Kuwaitis as of 2014 <<http://www.paci.gov.kw>>. Indeed, Murgāb has been a non-Kuwaiti area since the 1980s (al-Moosa and McLachlan 1985: 117).

of illegal Iranians who get into Kuwait through a well-developed smuggling system’ (Bonine 1980: 247).

In sum, it is important to realise that ‘the desire for rapid economic growth, the presence of an abundance of surplus wealth from oil revenues and the small size of the local populations’ have resulted in the importation of foreign professional, technical and clerical workers, and even common labourers (Magnus 1980: 392-393). During the 1960s, there were nearly 700 doctors in Kuwait, but only 33 were citizens (Frazer 1969: 667). By 1973, there were 11 hospitals and sanatoria, 42 clinics, 47 dental clinics, 11 mother and child centres, 12 preventive health centres and 270 school health clinics – all for a population less than one million in number (Shaw 1976: 129). Before I conclude my discussion, it will be advisable to cast a glance at the regional context of the Kuwaiti dialect in order to gain a better foundation for my observations.

5.4 The Kuwaiti Dialect

The main languages of the Arabian/Persian Gulf are Arabic and Persian; these terms include both the standard languages and the colloquial dialects. As has already been established in the previous chapters, it goes without saying that Arabic is not only the official language but the most common language in Kuwait, and there are large Persian-speaking émigré populations in Kuwait (Ingham 1980: 314; Holes 2007a: 210).

According to Johnstone (1967b), the Kuwaiti dialect belongs to the Eastern Arabian dialect group. In addition, Versteegh (2014: 192) establishes a connection among the dialects in the Arab world. He begins his argument by talking about the distribution of different dialects in the Arabian Peninsula and points out that ‘[i]n pre-Islamic times, there was probably a division into Eastern and Western dialects [...] but subsequent migrations have changed the geographical distribution of the dialects considerably’. In his discussion of the number of groups of dialects, Versteegh argues that ‘[r]ecent attempts at classification by Ingham (1982) and Palva (1991) distinguish four groups’ (ibid.):

1. North-east Arabian dialects
2. South(-west) Arabian dialects
3. Ḥiǧāzī (West Arabian) dialects
4. North-west Arabian dialects

Amongst these four groups, the Kuwaiti dialect is listed under the North-east Arabian dialects as described by Versteegh (2014: 192):

These are the dialects of the Najd, in particular, those of the large tribes ‘Aniza and Šammar. This group is divided into three subgroups: the ‘Anazī dialects (including the dialects of Kuwait, Bahrain (Sunnī) and the Gulf states); the Šammar dialects (including some of the Bedouin dialects in Iraq); and the Syro-Mesopotamian Bedouin dialects (including the Bedouin dialects of North Israel and Jordan, and the dialect of the Dawāgrah, a pariah tribe in northern Sinai littoral).

This means that Kuwaitis speak a dialect variety originated from the ‘Aniza tribe, and this tribe speaks Najdi Arabic. As already stated in Chapter 2, Holes (2007c: 609) holds a similar view regarding the typology of the Kuwaiti dialect: ‘Kuwaiti Arabic is typologically similar to the Bedouin-descended dialects of other Gulf States, such as those of the ‘Arab population of Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates’, he adds, ‘though containing some distinctive local features which ally it with the dialects of nearby southern Iraq’. Al-Ḥanaḥī (1964: 2) also notes that the lexicon of KA shows a perceptible resemblance to that of Bašra and Zubair in southern Iraq, though not exclusively to either (al-Shirbāšī 1953: 257; Johnstone 1967a: 16, 1967b: 18; Ingham 1976: 80).⁵⁵ We will discover in Chapter 7 the extent to which the Kuwaiti dialect has a cultural and linguistic link with other Gulf dialects and southern Iraq when I analyse the natural conversational material. In a nutshell, the predominant dialect spoken in Kuwait (and other groups down the Gulf) is a development of the Najdi dialects which are spoken by tribally descended groups in the Gulf littoral. These dialects are historically and typologically “badu” in character.

5.5 Summary of Key Events

The main goal of the current chapter was to determine the motivations for the socio-historical and socio-economic change in Kuwait and how they are reflected in the patterns of dialect use. It was proposed by Ehteshami (2013: 243) that the three interrelated drivers of change in the 21st century Arabian/Persian Gulf, including Iran, have been the political economy, conflict, and revolution. However, it has conclusively been shown that the common factor in dialect change in the contemporary Arabic-speaking Middle East is urbanisation (Holes 1995a: 285; Miller 2004: 177). For the Arabian Gulf States, Holes (2011: 136-137) picks out the following factors of language change, all of which will have contributed over a long period: (i) physical communications, (ii) the media, (iii) education, and (iv) employment

⁵⁵ Blanc (1964: 6) argues that the Bedouin dialects of the Šāmīya, on the one hand, and the dialects of Kuwait and Khūzistān, and the Persian Gulf are, on the other, closely related with the so-called *gelet*-dialects (named after the form for ‘I said’, reflecting the old Bedouin dialects of the Arabian Peninsula).

patterns. For Kuwait, it was found, as it seemed to me, that there are three key events that have helped shape the direction of change, namely, the discovery of oil in 1938, the independence from Britain in 1961, and the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990. It is therefore against this general background that I shall examine each key event separately, albeit briefly.

5.5.1 Discovery of Oil

Any investigator attempting to find out the factors affecting the development of modern civilisation in any human society will undeniably take into consideration the fact that oil, locally known as ‘the black gold’, is a strong influence and a basic factor behind every instance of progress (Ministry of Finance and Oil 1970: 7). As sketched out above, the impact of this source of energy is decisive proof that oil creates a social revolution capable of changing the standards and habits which dominated this society prior to its discovery.

The emergence of Kuwait as a major oil supplier to the industrial nations radically transformed the economic infrastructure of the country. This post-oil urbanisation has meant a significant shift away from seafaring occupations such as pearl diving to white-collar office jobs. In an investigation into this theme, Ismael (1982: 102) found in the 1950s that the traditional seafaring industries were essentially obliterated by the dynamic expansion of the oil sector. Additionally, Kuwaitis earned a living from the sea through patience, perseverance, and struggle. The pearl trade, highly important in the days when Kuwait helped supply the rich markets of India and Europe, declined in the 1950s, and the pearl diving described here ceased in Kuwait in 1959 (Case 1952: 788). The reason is that a means of culturing pearls artificially and cheaply was invented in Japan in 1930 (Case 1952: 788; Cooke 1970: 30; al-S‘aydān 1972: 1297; Holes 2005b: 44; Jamāl 2009: 117-118). Al-Shamlān (2000: 16) points to the fact that ‘the younger generation of the people of Kuwait, the Gulf, and Oman know no more of pearling than the word itself’.

Kuwait Oil Company Limited (KOC), the oldest concessionaire operating in Kuwait, was granted a concession on 23 December 1934 (Lebkicher et al. 1960: 122; Chisholm 1975: vii; McLachlan 1980: 202).⁵⁶ However, the first test well, drilled north of Kuwait Bay in 1936,

⁵⁶ It was under the late Sheikh Aḥmad al-Jābir al-Aḥmad al-Ṣubāḥ (1921-1950) that the foundation of the oil industry was laid in 1934 when he granted a concession to the KOC Ltd. Sheikh Aḥmad appointed H. R. P. Dickson to be the Chief Local Representative for the KOC Ltd. (Frazer 1969: 659). Also, it may be interesting to note that the first Kuwaiti woman was employed by the KOC in 1960. Additionally, the founding of the oil industry in the Persian Gulf area dates back to 1908, when oil was discovered by the D’Arcy concessionaires at

was unsuccessful. The second test well, in the Burgān area south of the Bay, discovered oil in April 1938, and ‘opened up what is perhaps the most prolific single oil field in the world’⁵⁷ (Lebkicher et al. 1960: 123).⁵⁸

Indeed, the basis of the economy of Kuwait has completely changed and it is now dependent on oil revenues, and economic and technological innovations, rather than deliberate policies promoting social change, ‘have been the main motive force behind the social changes in the region’ (Magnus 1980: 392). What is extremely important to the scope of my study, however, is that ‘the great change in conditions which has come about as a result of the exploitation of the oil resources of the country has brought about corresponding change in the local dialect’ (Johnstone 1967b: xxvii). This statement will be largely reflected in my analysis of the semantic innovation and change in the dialect in Chapters 7-8.

5.5.2 Independence of Kuwait

The socio-political developments of Kuwait have had, and continue to have, profound effects on spoken Kuwaiti Arabic. As Holes (1995a: 286) points out, ‘[r]ecent political events have if anything served to reinforce this trend to emphasize what makes Kuwaitis different from their neighbours’.

Officially, until the end of World War I, Kuwait was part of the Ottoman Empire. During the reign of the late Sheikh ‘Abdullah al-Sālim al-Ṣubāḥ (1950-1965), Kuwait became a fully-fledged independent sovereign Emirate on 19 June 1961 which abrogated the 1899 Treaty.⁵⁹ Until then, Kuwait was a British-protected Sheikhdom when it entered into treaty agreement with Britain in 1899 during the reign of the late Sheikh Mubārak bin Ṣubāḥ al-Ṣubāḥ, the only ruler in Kuwait’s history who came to power by force.⁶⁰ Immediately after Kuwait gained its independence, the country transformed from being a Sheikhdom into being a State

Masjid-i Sulaimān (Khūzistān Province) in southwest Iran (McLachlan 1980: 199). See Lebkicher et al. (1960: 112-127) for the Middle East oil concessions.

⁵⁷ The first cargo of Kuwait crude oil was shipped on 30 June 1946. Because of the war, drilling activities were suspended in 1942, and resumed in the latter part of 1945 (Case 1952: 783).

⁵⁸ Oil started flowing from Bahrain in 1924, from Qatar in 1949, from Abu Dhabi in 1962, from Dubai in 1969, and from Sharjah in 1974 (Balfour-Paul 1986: 158).

⁵⁹ Although Kuwait attained independence from Britain on 19 June, the National Day of Kuwait is commemorated yearly on 25 February. The reason for this is that Sheikh ‘Abdullah al-Sālim al-Ṣubāḥ’s reign was essential to the development of contemporary Kuwait. When he passed away in 1965, the National Day was designated to be 25 February 1950, the date on which he had ascended the throne.

⁶⁰ In 1896, Sheikh Mubārak killed his two brothers, Muḥammad I and Jarrāḥ, who he thought were leaning too much towards Ottoman Iraq.

within two and a half centuries. In this respect, a chronological look at these events might be pertinent here. Al-S‘aydān (1985: 9) shows this transformation as follows:

Name of the country	Title of the leader
1. <i>mašīxat l-grēn</i> ‘Sheikhdom of Grane’ (until 1871)	Sheikh of Grane
2. <i>mašīxat l-kwayt</i> ‘Sheikhdom of Kuwait’ (1871-1937)	Sheikh of Kuwait
3. <i>‘imārat l-kwayt</i> ‘Princedom/Emirate of Kuwait’ (1937-1961)	Emir of Kuwait
4. <i>dawlat l-kwayt</i> ‘State of Kuwait’ (1961-present)	Emir of the State of Kuwait

A series of events took place immediately after Kuwait declared its independence. For example, the Kuwaiti Dinar became the official currency in Kuwait, replacing the Indian Rupee. Kuwait began to take its international position by becoming a member of the Arab League on 16 July 1961, and by joining many of the international organisations. In September 1961, the new flag of Kuwait was hoisted on all governmental departments and establishments. Two months later, Kuwait Television started its transmission for only four hours a day. In 1962, an Emiri Decree was issued providing for the division of the country into governorates. In the same year, the late Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh ‘Abdullah al-Sālim al-Ṣubāḥ ratified the first Constitution of Kuwait. In 1963, Kuwait became a full member of the United Nations. Gulf-wide, the main aim of all Gulf governments in the years since independence is pointed out by Holes (2005a: 52) as follows:

[It] has been to create a sense of national identity and shared history out of the mix of diverse elements in their populations, so that the nationals of these countries no longer think of themselves in the first instances as a member of this or that tribe, community or sect, but as citizens whose first loyalty is to the state in which they live.

The sphere of higher education is considered part of the welfare system of Kuwait.⁶¹ Kuwaitis enjoy free education in all its stages from kindergarten to university. The first university of Kuwait was inaugurated on 27 November 1966, making it the first university in the whole Gulf region,⁶² with a motto from the Holy Qur’ān that poignantly expresses the nation’s hope for its youth: ‘Lord, increase me in knowledge!’⁶³ As a result, the level of literacy has

⁶¹ One of the more important of the Ministry of Education’s tasks is the provision of education for adults who missed it when they were younger (Ministry of Guidance and Information of Kuwait n.d: 24).

⁶² On 22 December 1911, al-Mubārakiyya School, the first formal school in Kuwait, opened (Shihāb 1984: 38). According to al-Nourī (n.d.: 22), the first teacher in Kuwait was an Iranian national called Mulla Qāsim who taught calligraphy in 1883.

⁶³ University enrolment statistics tell the story of the advancement of women in Kuwait; in 1966-67 there were 175 girls and 243 male undergraduates; in 1967-68 girls numbered 407 against 467 males; in 1968-69 the

effectively risen (indeed has only been made possible by industrialisation and urbanisation) (al-Sab‘ān 1983: 60-64). In fact, the population of Kuwait today is ca. 4 million, of whom 26,180 are illiterate.⁶⁴ Literacy, in an Arabic context, means a functional ability to read and write Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) (Holes 1995a: 272). Accordingly, the influence of MSA on speech is apparent. Labels like ‘Educated Kuwaiti Arabic’ (EKA) have emerged which ‘describe varieties of Arabic in which, whatever the level of MSA influence, the most salient features remain the local ones – in this case, the bundle of (mainly phonological and morpho-syntactic) dialectal features which Arabs associate with Kuwait’ (Holes 1995a: 272).⁶⁵

In the sphere of language contact, the languages of the imperial colonial administration left their imprint on virtually all dialects of the Arab world, albeit in different measures, and Kuwait is no exception. ‘Britain had long appreciated the importance of the Persian Gulf to managing a global empire and, prior to the Second World War, had integrated this area into its considerable geographical reach across the Indian Ocean’ (Ehteshami 2013: 25). Today, English is the major language of wider communication in the area. According to Holes (2007a: 216), ‘[t]he English language first arrived in the area in the 19th century as the language of the British imperial authorities’. Additionally, Smart (1986: 202) notes that the English language involved is of three varieties: British, American, and Indian. Many university subjects, such as engineering, business, medicine, science, are normally studied in the medium of English. Moreover, Longva (1997: 34) highlights the fact that ‘[w]ith the ‘Asianization’ of its labor market, Kuwait society underwent important transformation. The most obvious change was the growing use of English as a common language’, (cf. Ehteshami 2013: 88-105).⁶⁶ As a consequence, English in Kuwait serves as the lingua franca between Kuwaitis and the large multinational communities of educated expatriates they play host to, ‘from Filipino nannies to European bankers to American military personnel, and between such groups’ (Holes 2007a: 216; cf. al-Sab‘ān 1983: 28).

comparison was 628 females and 709 males; in 1969-70 there were 838 girls and 875 males but in 1970-71 the female majority arrived – 1,032 compared with 956 males (Shaw 1976: 143).

⁶⁴ PACI <http://www.paci.gov.kw/stat/en/Publications/popu_en.pdf>.

⁶⁵ The terminology used to refer to Educated Arabic has not yet been codified. ‘Educated Spoken Arabic’ (ESA) is the most widely-used term. According to Ryding (2006: 668), researchers also use a range of other terms: ‘Formal Spoken Arabic’, ‘pan-Arabic’, ‘Standard Spoken Arabic’, the ‘inter-regional standard’, ‘urban cultivated Arabic’, ‘middle Arabic’, ‘inter-Arabic’, the ‘inter-Arabic koiné’, ‘supra-dialectal L’, ‘the koinéized colloquial’ and ‘the elevated colloquial’, the ‘international koiné’, and ‘prestigious oral Arabic’.

⁶⁶ Most street signs and all shop signs are now in both Arabic and English; Kuwait Television (KTV2) has a channel with programmes in English; Radio Kuwait has an exclusively English-language (FM 99.7) station. In expatriate-dominated districts, such as Ḥawalli and Jilīb l-Shyūkh, street signs are sometimes found in Urdu and Hindi which remind us that public life here is largely foreign.

5.5.3 Gulf War

Ṣaddām Ḥusain, in the early hours of 2 August 1990, invaded Kuwait with over 150,000 troops, which devastated all its vital facilities, and ruined and damaged its historical, cultural and civilised landmarks. Al-Yaḥyā (1993: 88) reports that '[f]rom the first day of the invasion the Iraqis issued a series of resolutions aimed at eradicating the name of Kuwait itself'. The Revolutionary Command Council issued a resolution 'annexing' Kuwait to Iraq and designating it 'the 19th governorate' and renaming Kuwait City as Kāḍma.⁶⁷

Fortunately, this did not happen. On 26 February 1991, Kuwait was liberated.⁶⁸ However, the war caused a total reconsideration of Kuwait's future development. For example, the expulsion of the Palestinians in the course of the invasion created a vacuum which Longva (1997: 244) reports was partly filled by the Egyptians. But the most remarkable change was the switch away from Arab to Asian migrants, 'with the result that Asians today dominate the local labor market' (ibid.). As a result, this had linguistic implications, the most important of which is the birth of the so-called 'Gulf Pidgin Arabic' (Smart 1990; Miller 2004: 195; Tosco and Manfredi 2013: 509-512).

This briefly gives the picture of the historical background which now has as its foreground the development of oil, together with one of the most rapid municipal and social developments which the world has seen (Southwell 1953: 31). In section 7.5.1, I will highlight the notion of the 'Discursive Threshold' by linking it to the three important episodes in Kuwait's recent history. Modern Kuwait City is now firmly on its feet after a period of staggering growth and change. In a nutshell, Freeth (1972: 191), embracing her personal vision for Kuwait, states the following:

Has any other people, emerging from a life of medieval simplicity been able to adapt to the twentieth century with such enthusiasm and zest? More important still, has any other country been able to go through the process of change so peacefully, without revolution or bloodshed? This is Kuwait's achievement.

⁶⁷ In 1958, the Hashemite regime in Iraq was overthrown and General Qāsim came to power. In 1961 he stated that Kuwait was 'an inseparable part of Iraq' and tension increased steadily in the border area (Shaw 1976: 25).

⁶⁸ Under the patronage of the late Sheikh Jābir al-Aḥmad al-Ṣubāḥ, Kuwait celebrated extinguishing the last of more than seven hundred oil wells which the Iraqi troops set ablaze on 6 November 1991. Kuwait commemorates its liberation on February 26 of each year, which is known as *'īd t-taḥrīr* 'Feast of the Liberation', and the phrase *'īd t-taḥrīr* is among the post-war expressions which did not exist before. Following the liberation of Kuwait, the noun *taḥrīr* 'freedom, liberty' began to be used as a first name, Taḥrīr (cf. the English first name 'Liberty'), which was given to baby girls who were born during or immediately after the liberation. The same is also true of the given name 'Istiqlāl 'independence (of Kuwait)'.

Chapter 6

Obtaining Data in the Speech Community

6. Introduction

Because I am looking at a highly fluid, changeable dialect, I needed to obtain data from native speakers of the Kuwaiti dialect. Therefore, the material presented is taken from the speech of thirty-one informants recorded in Kuwait City during the course of my successive visits to the country in 2012 and 2013; two Kuwaiti informants were recorded in the United Kingdom when they were postgraduate students in 2012.

The first fieldwork investigation and data collection were carried out during the Easter break of March 2012. Because this trip was brief and quick, I recorded only three informants. Thereafter, the rest of the fieldwork investigation and data collection were carried out during the summers of 2012 and 2013. At Ramadan¹ (June-August) 2012, semi-structured interviews and spontaneous group conversations were recorded with twenty informants; the topic choice was left to circumstance. The 2012 recordings provided data for the pilot study, and were subsequently included in the corpus for the main research project. The remaining informants were recorded at Ramadan (July) 2013. I was also able to do a second recording of some of the previously recorded informants in 2013, which helped me to collect data to study minor lexical change by focusing on some semantic domains.

Dialectologists have collected spoken (lexical) material in Kuwait by tape-recording native speakers (Holmes and Samaan 1957; de Jong 1958; Johnstone 1967b; Maṭar 1969, 1970; Yassin 1975; Ingham 1982; al-Sabʿān 1983; al-Najjar 1984; Brustad 2000), and thus this technique was employed to carry out this research project. The type of recorder used to audio-record informants was the Olympus WS-811 Digital Stereo Voice Recorder. I was able to compile a corpus comprising 22 hours (approx. 1,348 minutes) of spoken material, and the setting and situation described are that of urban Kuwaitis speaking in relaxed conversational circumstances. In the study of Kuwait City, a method of data collection was used which was supplemented by observations and note-taking, i.e. the spontaneous group conversations of 31 informants.

¹ Ramadan, the local pronunciation is *rmuḏān*, is the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar during which all Muslims are required to fast.

The spontaneous group conversations were mostly recorded in an all-male social gathering place known locally as *dīwāniyya*² and in the houses of the participants in Kuwait and Sheffield. The stages of collection and preparing of data can be divided into:

1. Selection of informants
2. Data collection
3. Preparing the data for analysis

6.1 Selection of Informants

The research paradigm for this research project is qualitative (i.e. field notes, audio recordings, and transcripts) and ethnographic. I seek to explore semantic innovation and change in a speech community, since participant responses affect how questions are asked and which questions researchers ask next. The sample is probably best described as a convenience sample.

Essential to my discussion in this respect is the type of relationship between the fieldworker and the members of the community under investigation. Being an indigenous male researcher has a number of obvious implications for access to knowledge in Kuwaiti society. I was a participant observer, which involved me participating and living in the community to observe and note particular types of linguistic data. Perhaps the greatest advantage that I have as a participant observer is my familiarity with Kuwaiti social etiquette and an awareness of norms of interaction.³

The informants were selected on the basis of their familiarity with me and their willingness to participate in my research project, and the fact that I was confident I could reach a reasonable group of people who would interact on a regular basis. The majority of the informants are my relatives and close friends. In addition, a couple of my close friends introduced me to their friends who also took part in this study. In other words, the factors that are involved when diagramming the relations of my speakers are sex, generation, affinal (marital), consanguineal (blood) and friendship factors. This consequently allowed me to participate in

² From Persian *dīwān* (< Middle Persian *dēwān* ‘archive, collected writings’), and by extension, ‘royal court, hall, reception room’.

³ According to Rampton (2007: 595), in linguistic ethnography, ‘participant observation plays a major role and the processes involved in learning and adjusting to different cultural practices are regarded as themselves instructive and potentially consequential for the analysis’.

genuine casual interactions. In most cases contacts in the community started at the family level.

For ethical reasons, I informed my speakers that I was interested in recording conversations for the purpose of language study. I acknowledged that there was the danger of the observer's paradox (cf. Milroy and Gordon 2003: 68-72).⁴ However, the way that I sought to overcome it was by recording particular individuals and their groups multiple times in contexts where they would eventually forget about the audio-recorder being there. It was observable that as they became used to the procedure, they appeared not to pay such close attention to it. In addition, I assured them that all their personal information gathered in this research project would remain strictly confidential and that they would be identified anonymously throughout (see section 6.4.2 below). Additionally, it seemed to me that the informants were not influenced by my presence, simply because I am a friend to some peer groups, and a relative to other groups, or as they told me: *inta minna u finna* 'you're one of us'. Also, owing to the fact that my material contains many swear words and expletives, especially from the younger male speakers, this presumably would not have happened if, say, the fieldworker was an outsider. Therefore, the presence of an audio-recorder did not prohibit me from collecting natural speech. Moreover, concealing the audio-recorder caused the informants to forget that they were being audio-recorded. Accordingly, this allowed me to gather samples of the vernacular language I wanted. In the case of some of the older female speakers, the audio-recorder was sometimes put on the dining table, which possibly made them orient to being observed and recorded. However, the recorder was still recording when we moved from the dining area to the living room, but it was clear that the speakers forgot that they were being recorded because I noticed that their style started shifting from sounding serious to being fairly relaxed. Additionally, the majority of the recordings were conducted at the informants' houses, i.e. in normal surroundings, and I believe this helped to reduce the effect of the observer's paradox. Another determining factor for overcoming the observer's paradox was the adoption of the social network approach in collecting my data (cf. Jabeur 1987). In this respect, two approaches were adopted for the selection of informants:

1. Selection from family members and friends
2. Selection from residential areas of Kuwait City.

⁴ In obtaining sociolinguistic data, the key problem has been described by Labov (1972: 113) as the Observer's Paradox: 'we have to observe the way people use language when they are not being observed'.

6.1.1 Selection from Family Members and Friends

As indicated earlier, the informants were selected on the basis of their relation to me. With respect to the family members, I recorded my relatives, including male and female first and second cousins from my father's side as well as my mother's. Regarding the friendship group, I was able to record my friends whom I have known since at least 2007. I was even fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to record, observe, and collect material from my friend, who will be identified throughout as KAS6 (see section 6.4.2 below), and from his parents, his sisters, his maternal aunts, as well as his best friends. For me, this will be hugely important when I discuss KAS6's social network in Chapter 8 (see section 6.2.2 below). The only condition for selection was that the informants must have been living in Kuwait City for the past fifteen years. This ensured that only Kuwaitis resident in Kuwaiti City were selected as this investigation is about semantic innovation and change among various Kuwaiti groups living there.

Although the informants share some traits, such as religion (i.e. Islam), nationality (i.e. Kuwaiti), and language (i.e. Arabic), other factors set them apart from each other. The Muslim population of Kuwait is divided into two sets of social groups based on tribal and sectarian allegiances:

1. Tribal = ḥaḍar vs. badu
2. Sectarian = Sunnī vs. Shī'ī

Although my material contains at least one informant from each of these social groups, my spoken data is, however, not representative because the data collected from women and older people is not extensive. Additionally, my corpus does not contain speakers from minority communities such as the Shī'a 'Ajam.

The criterion I used to attach each informant to a tribal or sectarian group was the family name of the informant. The family name of a person in Kuwait would ultimately give enough information on his or her ethnic background. In other words, it is possible, on the basis of the information in the surname of each speaker, to determine to which group he or she belongs. This is predictable, for every Kuwaiti bears the name of the tribe (origin) to which he or she belongs. For instance, surnames like al-Ghānim, al-Shāyī', al-'Abduljādir etc. refer to Kuwaitis of the Sunnī, Ḥaḍari, group; surnames such as al-Sahālī, al-'Utaibī, al-Faḍlī refer to Kuwaitis of the Sunnī, Badu group; and surnames like al-Baghli, al-'Aṭṭār refer to Kuwaitis

of the Shī‘ī, Ḥasāwī group. Members of the Shī‘ī, ‘Ajam⁵ group either have tribal prototype names of their town, such as Lārī, Bu-Shehrī, etc. or lack any specific tribal name. Equally important is the fact that certain given names refer to members of the Shī‘ī, ‘Ajam group, e.g. Ḥaidar, ‘Abbās, Mahdī, Zahrā’, Ḥawrā’, etc.

Overall, my thirty-one speakers who were recorded in spontaneous group conversations originally come from the following tribes of Arabia, namely, Suhūl, ‘Utaiba, Faḍūl, ‘Aniza, Ḥasāwiyyah, Khawālīd, ‘Ijmān, and from the following localities in the Arabian Peninsula: Najd and al-Ḥasa, both of which are in modern Saudi Arabia.

One of the main advantages of the present data is the inclusion of male and female speakers. This gender distinction will allow us to closely examine certain patterns of innovation and change, owing to the fact that there are divergent communities for whom a particular utterance is legitimate or acceptable. Having this gender distinction allows us to hypothesise whether the male group is more innovative than the female one regarding the polysemy in certain semantic domains. However, the majority of my material comes from young men. This is due to the fact that most of the data were gathered from heterogeneous groups of male friends, and most of them are in their mid-20s to early 30s. This might be seen as a limitation, but there is something which mitigates against this limitation: my data contains material from some older people and female informants.

6.1.2 Selection from Residential Areas in Kuwait City

Kuwait City was the site of my research. Despite the fact that old Kuwait Town disappeared entirely (see Chapter 5), it was and still is a contact zone for different classes. Even though most of the speakers were recorded in (New) Kuwait City, they nonetheless come from six different *muḥāfaḍāt* ‘governorates’ of Kuwait as listed in section 5.1 of Chapter 5.

But most of them come from within the vicinity of the Capital Area, Kuwait City (see Figure 6.1 below). Hence, the speakers who live in al-‘Āṣima governorate come specifically from the following residential areas: ad-Di‘iyya, ad-Dōḥa, ar-Rōḍa, an-Nizha, an-Nahḍa, Bnēd al-Gār, ash-Shāmiyya, al-Faiḥa, al-Manṣūriyya, al-Qayrawān, Ḍāḥyat ‘Abdullah as-Sālim, and Shuwaikh. Speakers living in the Ḥawalli governorate come from the following residential

⁵ There are groups of Shī‘a in the Arabian Gulf states who are historically migrants from the other side of the Gulf (and known to Gulf Arabs as ‘Ajams ‘Persians’). The majority of the Shī‘a on the Arab side of the Gulf are ethnically and linguistically Arabs (Holes 2010: 283).

areas: al-Jābriyya, Bayān, and Ḥiṭṭīn. In contrast, speakers who live in al-Farwāniyya governorate come from the following residential area: al-‘Ārḍiyya. These residential areas are well serviced by nearby shopping centres. So my material does not include data from speakers from Lower Kuwait, i.e. al-Aḥmadī and Mubārak al-Kabīr governorates, and from Upper Kuwait, i.e. al-Jahra governorate, but is mainly from central, littoral Kuwait. Before I discuss how the data was obtained, in the following paragraphs, I shall list the social characteristics of my 31 informants who were recorded in spontaneous group conversations, including information on their sex, age, education, and occupation (see Appendix B for more details).

We may divide my 31 informants according to sex: 23 males and 8 females. The youngest informant is 18 and the oldest is 89, but we may divide them according to age groups:

Age group	No. of informants
15-24	5 (16.13%)
25-34	12 (38.7%)
35-44	1 (3.23%)
45-54	9 (29.03%)
55-64	3 (9.68%)
65+	1 (3.23%)
Total	31 (100%)

Table 6.1: Age groups of the informants

There are four stages of education in Kuwait and in most Gulf states: elementary, intermediate, high school, and university. Some educational institutions in Kuwait offer diplomas, which are higher than a high school degree and lower than a bachelor’s degree. The majority of the informants, undergraduates and postgraduates in particular, are attending/have attended prestigious institutions in Kuwait, e.g. Kuwait University, the American University of Kuwait, the Australian College of Kuwait, the Arab Open University, and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training; and in the UK, e.g. Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Essex. In the following, we may divide the informants according to their level of education:

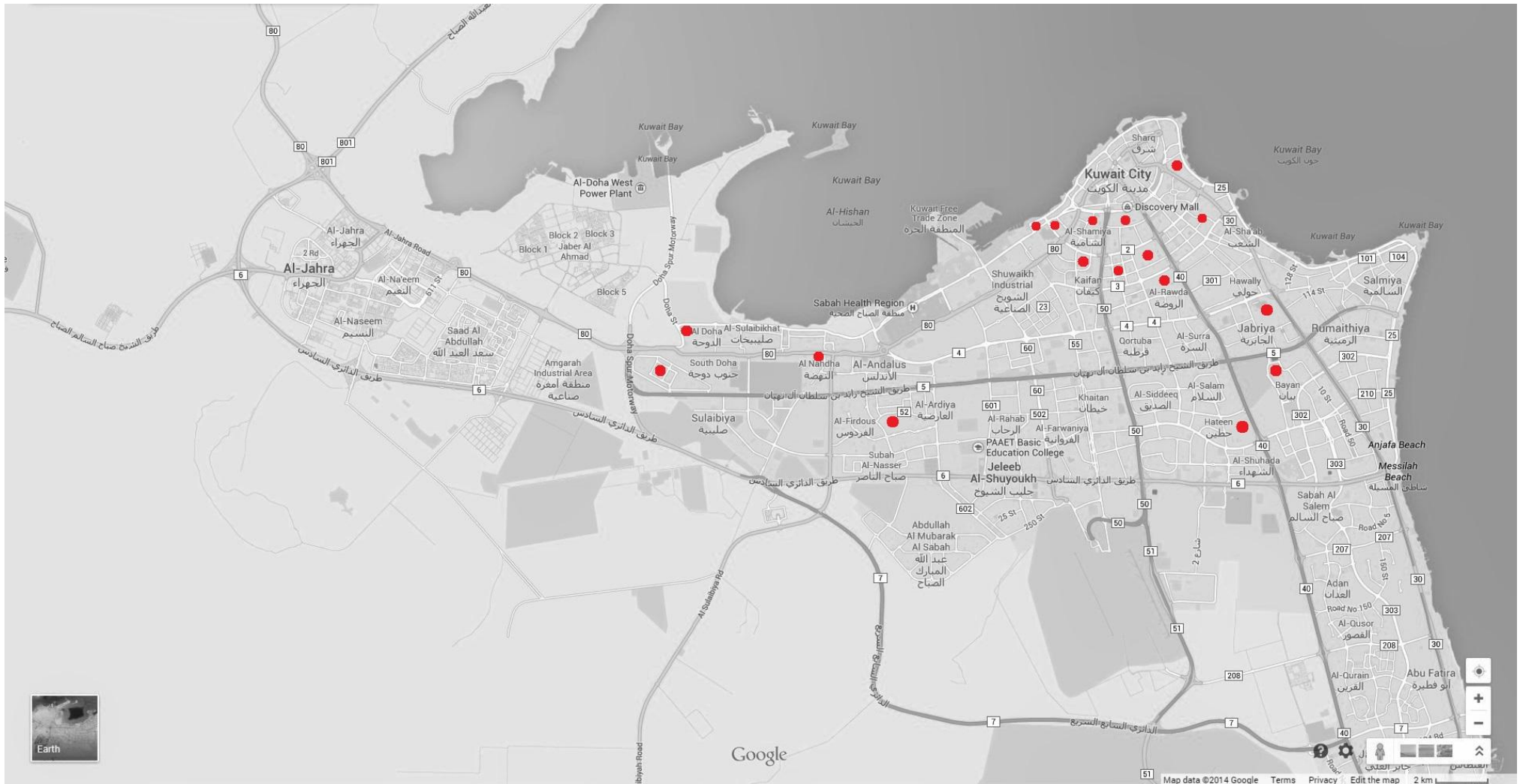


Figure 6.1: Map of urban Kuwait City showing the residential areas (highlighted in red circles) of my informants.

Level of education	No. of informants
Secondary school	1 (3.23%)
High school	6 (19.35%)
Higher diploma	2 (6.45%)
Undergraduate	19 (61.29%)
Postgraduate	3 (9.68%)
Total	31 (100%)

Table 6.2: Level of education of the informants

We may further divide the informants according to their current occupation:

Occupation	No. of informants
University student	5 (16.13%)
Employee in public sector	12 (38.7%)
Employee in private sector	6 (19.35%)
Retired	6 (19.35%)
Housewife	2 (6.45%)
Total	31 (100%)

Table 6.3: Occupation of the informants

6.2 Data Collection

Having selected the speakers and secured their cooperation, the next step was to obtain the required data.

6.2.1 Group Recording

The material for my study was collected mainly from various social gatherings in Kuwait City. These gatherings took place in different locations and on three occasions, namely, *dīwāniyya*, *yam'ah*, and *zwārah*. A total of 18 social gatherings were recorded and attended by the researcher (see Table 6.4). As a native Kuwaiti and a participant observer, this entailed my long-term involvement in this community and primarily required local cultural knowledge of these gatherings (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 68). I will define these gatherings separately and indicate the speakers who were recorded there.

6.2.1.1 Dīwāniyya

A *dīwāniyya* (pl. *duwāwīn/dīwāniyyāt*), known in some parts of the Gulf as *maġlis/maylis/dār*, is one of the most important gathering places in Kuwaiti social life. It is the gathering spot for younger and older generations. It is inextricably woven into the culture of Kuwait and symbolically represents a microcosm of the Kuwaiti society, a space where male Kuwaitis of all educational backgrounds, social classes, and occupations can mix. Although the people who frequent the *dīwāniyya* are all Kuwaitis, it is still a reasonably diverse group because they have various sectarian or tribal identities and origins and therefore there are multiple accents.

These *dīwāniyya* gatherings mostly occur in a place located on the premises of the *rā'ī d-dīwāniyya* 'owner of the social-gathering place', in the annexe of the house specially built for such an occasion (al-Ayyoub 1984b: 43-44, 75), or in the basement of *rā'ī l-bēt* 'owner of the house'.⁶ Because *dīwāniyyas* are always male-dominated events, Stephenson (2011: 183) points out that '[t]he *dīwāniyya* is the Kuwaiti man's realm. It is where he does business, discusses politics and spends leisure time with his friends'. In addition, '[n]o description of the Kuwaiti man's world is complete without mention of the 'diwaniya'' (Whelan 1985: 51). Ingham (1982: 107) also defined the *dīwāniyya* in Kuwait when he visited the country in 1977 as follows: 'a social gathering of men for the purpose of exchanging news and with a strong bias towards older cultural forms such as poetry recitation, storytelling and music'. Furthermore, al-S'aydān (1971: 609) stated that the *dīwāniyya* was a like a men's club where old Kuwaiti men congregate to exchange news about their seasonal adventure of pearl-diving in pre-oil Kuwait. Urkevich (2015: 168-9, 336) also notes that in Kuwait, '[m]odern sea bands are affiliated with *dīwāniyyas*'. In addition, Dickson (1949: 628) defines *dīwāniyya* in Kuwaiti Bedouin society as the following: 'a portion of tent or house where male guests are received'.

Therefore, we can notice that all of the authors stress that one would expect only male guests in these *dīwāniyya* gatherings (Calverley 1958: 182; de Jong 1958: 6; Sapsted 1980: 23; Wells and al-Bāṭinī 1987: 11). In Kuwaiti society, social gatherings are segregated along gender lines. Women and female guests are not usually received in *dīwāniyyas* but, rather, in

⁶ Dickson (1949: 646) glosses *rā'ī l-bēt* as 'householder; master of the tent; head of the family'. He (1956: 602) also gives the feminine form *rā'yat l-bēt* 'lady of the tent'. Cf. Altoma (1969: 102).

rooms designed especially for the general guests known in Kuwait City as *dār l-xiṭṭār*⁷ or *dār ǧ-ǧiyūf* ‘guests’ room’ (Johnstone 1967b: 241), and in Kuwaiti Bedouin life, women’s quarters in tents are called *margad l-ḥarīm* (Dickson 1949: 640).

The regulars who frequent the *dīwāniyya* are usually fathers, their sons, and close male friends. Since the majority of the recordings were obtained during the holy month of Ramadan, they were all conducted after the Tarāwīḥ prayer,⁸ roughly between 8pm and 12:30am, and this is usually the prime time for *dīwāniyya* meetings in Kuwait. However, we have different realisations and applications of a *dīwāniyya*.

The centre, or the chief, of each these particular *dīwāniyya* “networks” puts his own particular stamp on his friends or guests. In the case of the older generation, they may do some more traditional activities. Certainly, there would be football watching for all generations, but not video games. In the case of the younger generation, which is the focus of my research, the most common activities involved in these *dīwāniyya* meetings include mainly but not exclusively: playing video and board games, playing *ḡanḡifa* ‘card games’, chitchatting (a genre of talk known locally as *suwālif*),⁹ watching (European) football matches, surfing the Internet, and having fast food meals. These practices are very strongly male-oriented and they are generationally-oriented, based on shared interests and have in some part to do with age. The majority of my informants were recorded in different male *dīwāniyyas*, but not necessarily together. This includes: KAS1, KAS2, KAS3, KAS6, KAS7, KAS8, KAS9, KAS10, KAS12, KAS13, KAS14, KAS18, KAS19, and KAS20.

⁷ An Iraqi borrowing (al-Ḥanafī 1964: 107-108). Abu-Haidar (1988: 158) records *xiṭṭar* ‘guests (a group of guests)’ as an example of plural of paucity and abundance in the Muslim Arabic of Baghdad, and *xəṭṭag* ‘guest(s)’ (1991: 199) in the Christian Arabic of Baghdad. Oussani (1901: 111) and Maamouri (2013: 164, 853) gloss *xuṭṭār* ‘guest(s), company’ in (educated) Baghdadi Arabic.

⁸ Recommended prayers performed in the month of Ramadan in mosques after *Ṣalāt al-Ishā* ‘night prayer’ and before *Ṣalāt al-Fajr* ‘dawn prayer’.

⁹ The term was first noted in the Syrian Desert area (Johnstone 1967b: 241). *Suwālif*, singular *sālfa*: the basic meaning of this word is ‘business, affair, job’. Jayakar (1889: 874) gives *sālfa* in his glossary of the ‘settled’ speech of the Muscat area with the meaning ‘truce’. For Kuwait, al-Ḥanafī (1964: 167) lists the meaning ‘story’ and Johnstone (1967b: 241) gives ‘to chat’, while al-S‘aydān (1971: 716) records both meanings. Ingham (1993: 5) defines *sālfa* as ‘the Arabian oral historical narrative’. Holes (2005b: 299) glosses *sālfa* as ‘chat, yarn, anecdote’ for Bahrain (cf. Qafisheh 1997a: 123). Buckwalter and Parkinson (2011: 288) list *sālfa* as one of the 5,000 most frequently used words in dialectal Arabic with the following senses: ‘chat, talk, discussion, story, tale; matter, affair’.

6.2.1.2 Yam‘ah

A *yam‘ah* (pl. *yam‘āt*) is an informal social occasion that takes place in private houses or, depending on the weather, outdoors. If a *yam‘ah* takes place in, say, shopping malls, coffee houses, or even in beach houses, this kind of gathering is locally known as *ṭal‘a* (pl. *ṭal‘āt*) ‘a hang-out’. There are three broad types of *yam‘āt* in Kuwait, viz. *yam‘at ahal* ‘family gathering’, *yam‘at šabāb* ‘boys-only gathering’, and *yam‘at banāt* ‘girls-only gathering’. I was able to observe and collect material from the first two gatherings. The following male informants were recorded in different *yam‘āt* and *ṭal‘āt*: KAS4, KAS5, KAS11, and KAS21. Regarding the family social gatherings, the following informants were recorded: KAS6, KAS8, KAS9, KAS10, KAS25, KAS26, KAS27, KAS28, and KAS29. The most common activities involved in these family meetings include: watching TV, having homemade food and desserts, discussing political, technological, and foreign matters, having *suwālif* ‘informal chats’ about childhood memories, gossiping, and they basically hang out with one another.

6.2.1.3 Zwārah

A *zwārah* ‘a (short) visit’ (pl. *zwārāt*) is a common social occasion in Kuwait. The social meaning of *zwārah* is when relatives or friends visit one another for the day, and this visit usually takes place in the ground floor of the host’s house (al-S‘aydān 1971: 702).¹⁰ For instance, most families in Kuwait regularly meet on Thursdays to have a family lunch or dinner, and this custom is known locally as *zwārat xamīs*¹¹ ‘a Thursday visit’. This meal-oriented *zwārah* is sometimes confused with another type of social gathering known as *tasyūrah*, whereby only the female members of the family get together for around an hour, which could be a daily, intimate gathering. Equally important is the social occasion of ‘*azīma* ‘lunch/dinner party’, but I was not able to attend or collect material from any of them. In an extended family *zwārah*, four succeeding generations get together: grandparents, parents, sons and daughters, and grandsons, as well as the in-laws who occasionally pay a visit. The following informants were recorded in different *zwārāt*: KAS15, KAS16, KAS17, KAS22, KAS23, KAS24, KAS30, and KAS31. Table 6.4 presents a breakdown of all the social gatherings according to time and place.

¹⁰ In Kuwaiti folklore, Wells and al-Bāṭinī (1987: 26) note that *l-zwārah* ‘the visit’ is the final wedding celebration that takes place four days later when the bride, accompanied by some of her husband’s family, goes to visit her own family.

¹¹ There is even a 40-episode Kuwaiti drama hit called “Zwārat Xamīs”, released in Ramadan 2012.

Gathering	Time and Place
1	Time: Saturday 31 March 2012 at 18:29 Place: KAS1's <i>dīwāniyya</i> in al-Manṣūriyya
2	Time: Monday 18 June 2012 at 17:18 Place: KAS4's house in Sheffield
3	Time: Friday 20 July 2012 at 21:33 Place: KAS6's <i>dīwāniyya</i> in Shuwaikh
4	Time: Monday 30 July 2012 at 22:09 Place: Kuwait Writers Association
5	Time: Tuesday 31 July 2012 at 22:43 Place: KAS12's <i>dīwāniyya</i> in Shuwaikh
6	Time: Wednesday 8 August 2012 at 23:55 Place: KAS17's house in ad-Di'iyya
7	Time: Saturday 25 August 2012 at 23:51 Place: KAS6's <i>dīwāniyya</i> in Shuwaikh
8	Time: Sunday, 26 August 2012 at 01:05 Place: KAS6's <i>dīwāniyya</i> in Shuwaikh
9	Time: Monday 27 August 2012 at 00:24 Place: KAS22's house in ad-Di'iyya
10	Time: Monday 27 August 2012 at 20:58 Place: KAS6's <i>dīwāniyya</i> in Shuwaikh
11	Time: Tuesday 28 August 2012 at 16:34 Place: in KAS25's car (to the Avenues Mall)
12	Time: Friday 12 July 2013 at 19:32 Place: KAS24's house in an-Nizha
13	Time: Saturday 13 July 2013 at 02:31 Place: KAS6's grandfather's house in Shuwaikh
14	Time: Tuesday 16 July 2013 at 01:41 Place: KAS6's grandfather's house in Shuwaikh
15	Time: Saturday 23 July 2013 at 21:12 Place: KAS12's <i>dīwāniyya</i> in Shuwaikh
16	Time: Friday 25 July 2013 at 02:06 Place: KAS6's grandfather's house in Shuwaikh
17	Time: Friday 26 July 2013 at 19:23 Place: KAS24's house in an-Nizha
18	Time: Wednesday 31 July 2013 at 22:28 Place: KAS12's <i>dīwāniyya</i> in Shuwaikh

Table 6.4: Time and place of the 18 social gatherings

Figure 6.2 shows a binary matrix indicating the presence (1) or absence (0) of each of the 31 speakers at each of the 18 meetings. The row headings name the speakers; the column headings name each gathering in chronological order (adapted from Breiger 1988: 88). Here, I am operationalising intensity with frequency of appearance with respect to the informants, and it looks like KAS6 was present at 7 social events out of 18, viz. gatherings 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, and 15, which makes him the most frequently recorded informant.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
KAS1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS6	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
KAS7	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
KAS8	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
KAS9	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS10	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS11	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS12	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
KAS13	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
KAS14	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
KAS15	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
KAS16	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
KAS17	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS18	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS19	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KAS24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
KAS25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
KAS26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
KAS27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
KAS28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
KAS29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
KAS30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
KAS31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

Figure 6.2: A binary matrix indicating the presence (1) or absence (0) of each of the 31 speakers at each of the 18 gatherings.

6.3 Preparing the Data for Analysis

We have seen in Chapter 5 that after the discovery of oil in 1938, complex social changes occurred throughout the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, because oil income greased the wheels of this change. Unsurprisingly, these rapid changes are having a serious effect on shaping the lexicon of the dialects spoken in that region, such as Kuwaiti Arabic. This research project traces these changes with the help of two key sociolinguistic concepts which will contextualise the understanding of semantic change in KA, since one of my goals is to explore the patterns of change in this speech community and how this is reflected in the productivity of polysemy of four verbs in KA. In addition, because multiple people have been recorded in multiple settings, as a consequence, I have used the following ideas and concepts in order to organise and prepare the data for closer analysis.

The first (anthropological) concept is **social network analysis**, which was used in Milroy's (1980) study of language and social networks, but which will be used here to identify the relationship of my Kuwaiti speakers in social gatherings (cf. Holes 1987: 200; Jabeur 1987: 33; Hachimi 2005: 115; Hajji 2014). Also, I will be employing the (sociological) concept of **community of practice** as exploited in Wenger (1998) because the community of practice allows us to explore the nature of the relationships contained within the social networks since it 'shares a good deal with the notion of social networks in sociolinguistics' (Meyerhoff 2003: 531).

Furthermore, the concept of community of practice will allow us to look at particular activities, particular shared interests, and the actual substance of the social gatherings. A community of practice normally refers to groups rather smaller than those indicated by the term **speech community**. According to Feagin, '[i]t is through an understanding of both the structure and dynamics of the local community that the structure and dynamics of the speech community can be understood' (2003: 22-23). It seems to me that the real key to understanding the relationship between polysemy and change will be the different roles of speakers in particular settings since 'the language user has to make it clear which sense of a polysemous word is being used at any one time' (Stock 1984: 134). These sociological tools will mainly enrich the social description of my study and allow us to study how the social network ties are maintained.

In seeking an explanation of the network ties of individuals, we are really looking at their daily interactions. How many people in a certain event know them? How well do they know one another? Milroy (1980) used this method in her study in Belfast where she collected data from three inner city communities during 1975-77. Her material is based on data collected from live speakers in everyday situations. She reports that once she was introduced to a family as ‘a friend of a friend’, and as her ties with the family grew stronger, she had no difficulty in recording the speech of members of the family whether in the house or outside it. This is true. Once I was introduced to KAS6’s family as ‘a friend of a friend’, and as my ties with the family grew stronger, I had no difficulty in recording the speech of members of the family in three different houses. My initial encounter with KAS6 occurred when his older cousin introduced us in 2007; we have been friends and cyber friends thereafter. Since then, our friendship has developed over time and KAS6 started to invite me to several social events where I was able to get to know members of his own intimate social network.

Regarding the notion of the community of practice, I aim to discuss my Kuwaiti speakers on the basis of their particular affinities, practices, and beliefs. It might be relevant to point out that the ‘community of practice is a comparatively recent addition to the sociolinguistic toolbox’ (Meyerhoff 2003: 526). Wenger (1998: 125-126) and Meyerhoff (2003: 530) suggest that a community of practice is characterised by (among other things): ‘the rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation’. The use of the community of practice also ‘enables us to focus on the way an innovation is coined, crystallized, and begins to spread because it focuses on the negotiation of meaning based on individual praxis’ (Meyerhoff 2003: 537).

The preliminary preparation of the data yields the following social description: we have one social network and one speech community, but we have multiple communities of practice. This allows us to ask if it is the case that within these communities of practice we have a ‘conservative group’ whose polysemy is restricted, and an ‘innovative group’ whose polysemy is open.

It is worthwhile noting that the speakers keep in contact with one another fairly frequently in Kuwait. The patterns of contact do not stop here. I noticed that the majority of the young informants try to keep in touch through well-known social media websites. Therefore, even if speakers are not co-located, these websites and smartphone applications are another way of operationalising or understanding the strength of ties amongst them because (i) they are in

pretty consistent contact daily, and (ii) they provide more evidence for the reciprocity and importantly the maintenance of the ties.

But in order for linguistic innovation to happen, we must have sufficient opportunity for contact. It is therefore noteworthy that communities of practice, by extension, are becoming virtual and mobile phone-based in the wake of technological progress. As a result, we could speak of a “Virtual Community of Practice” and a “Mobile Community of Practice” as novel perspectives for understanding the social significance of semantic innovation and change. According to Wenger (1998: 72-85), summarised in Meyerhoff (2003: 527), there are three criteria or dimensions that should be met in order to talk of a community of practice:

1. Mutual engagement of the members
2. Members share some jointly negotiated enterprise
3. Members’ shared repertoire

6.3.1 Mutual Engagement of the Members

It is clear from a cursory reading that members of a community of practice need to get together to engage in their mutual practices (Meyerhoff 2003: 527). With the help of the social network analysis, we can detect those informants who are possibly linked to familial or friendship groups. Within the friendship group, we may possibly distinguish among primary friends, secondary friends, and peripheral members/friends.

It seems to me that involvement in the *dīwāniyya*, *yam ‘ah*, or *zwārah* is a key element of their practice. However, it would be possible for somebody to go to a gathering but not be an active participant. In fact, whether in a familial group or friendship group, it was noticed that several members were present during my visits to several gatherings, but they were not active participants. Even though they were not active, they may well shape the behaviour of the informants.

Because some of the social gatherings I attended were mixed and diverse, I wish to give two examples of what usually happens in these mutual engagements (i.e. visible indicators), namely, the rituals of serving coffee, and the habits of greeting, because it seems to me that the nature of these habits and rituals reflects, to some extent, the behaviours of the speakers. Following the model of community of practice provided by Wenger (1998), my subject group

is marked by their shared practices, habits, pastimes, inclinations and attitudes, as illustrated by their tendency to congregate during occasions such as drinking coffee.

The generic term for ‘coffee’ in Arabic is *qahwa*. However, in the dialects of the Arabian Peninsula and Southern Iraq, /q/ is most commonly realised as its voiced correlate /g/, hence, *gahwa*.¹² Nevertheless, the *gahwa* here denotes any kind of coffee, whether Italian coffee or American coffee. With respect to the Arabian coffee prepared in Kuwait and in the Gulf States and which is served in Kuwaiti *dīwāniyyas*, this kind of *gahwa* is always referred to as *ghawa* (part of the so-called *ghawa*-syndrome).¹³ Johnstone (1967b: 240) notes that the older *ghawa* in Kuwait seems to occur only when coffee is called for in *dīwāniyyas*, which corresponds to my field observation of the local custom of such *dīwāniyyas*. Unlike the American or Italian coffee, the *ghawa* usually serves as a ceremonial act of kindness and hospitality, which is often served with dates, and usually from a brass coffee pot called *dalla*, and the coffee cups called *fīnyān* (or *fīnyāl*) are small with no handles (Dickson 1949: 195-201).¹⁴

Regarding the local greeting, the ordinary Ramadan greeting is: *mbārak ‘alēkum š-šahar* ‘May the month of Ramadan be a blessed one for you’ and the usual reply would be: *‘alēna u ‘alēk* ‘Blessed upon us and you’. In addition, to show a sign of respect, members of certain gatherings, including myself, greet the host with a handshake, which is the most generally-used greeting in the Gulf, and a kiss on the top of his head. I noticed that this is usually done on two occasions: if the host or the owner of the house is of the ruling house of Kuwait, and if he or she is a patriarch/matriarch. Kissing on the cheeks is also normal amongst males. It is noticeable that some Gulf Arabs kiss on greeting one another. Usually, a foreigner will be greeted by a handshake only. Traditionally, the tribal people regard the kiss as the normal greeting for all comers (Ingham and Fayadh 2005: 37).

Although my informants do not necessarily work together, they see each other daily or weekly, they talk with each other all the time, and exchange information and opinions. Remarkably, KAS6’s generosity, for instance, contributed to building a friendship network

¹² For further examples of this kind of phonological change, see Johnstone (1963).

¹³ ‘The *ghawa*-syndrome is the deletion of /a/ in CaC non-final syllables where C2 is a guttural, and epenthesis of /a/ after C2, e.g. *nxala* (< *naxla*) ‘palm tree’, *yi‘arf* (< *yi‘arif* < *ya‘rif*) ‘he knows’, *māgarib* (< *māgarib* < *mağrib*) ‘evening’. This rule is now moribund as an active phonological process, although its results survive in a few common words, especially colours, e.g. *xāḡar* ‘green [masc.]’, *hamar* ‘red [masc.]’, and some proper names, e.g. *ḡamad* (< ‘*aḡmad*)’ (Holes 2007c: 612). See also Maḡar (1969: 60) for more examples.

¹⁴ Relatively recently, a Nubian waiter, in his ceremonial and the traditional Kuwaiti dress, is usually hired to serve this strong, bitter Arabian coffee in formal *dīwāniyyas*.

and keeping it going. Because he makes all these activities possible and available for the members in his cohort, he even pays for their meals. If the members of his community of practice do not meet face-to-face, they normally maintain their mutual engagement via exchanging electronic messages, or talking on the phone.

6.3.2 Members Share some Jointly Negotiated Enterprise

Meyerhoff (2003: 528) discusses the significance of negotiated enterprises: ‘[i]t is the pursuit of this enterprise that creates relationships of mutual accountability among the participants’. The joint enterprise in a social gathering involves being male (only in *dīwāniyya* gatherings), being able to speak Kuwaiti, having fun, and maybe becoming an expert at the popular Kuwaiti playing card game *kōt bu-sitta* or in the most-played video game, FIFA Football. The members of the younger group endeavour to stay in touch by exchanging each other’s phone numbers and social media accounts. What is noticeable in several *dīwāniyya* gatherings is that the host makes the place habitable for his friends. He does not have any *dīwāniyya* protocol. In his *dīwāniyya*, which is filled with the latest electronic gadgetry, the members stretch their legs, lie down on the cushions, take whatever they wish to eat from the refrigerator, control the air-conditioning thermostat, connect to the Wi-Fi, and become a couch potato.

Among these activities, football is seen as the most jointly negotiated enterprise in the younger speakers’ cohort – especially in KAS6’s gathering – whether by watching football matches on TV, or by playing football video games, or by actually planning to play football with their mates. Regarding membership, football is indeed crucial to the makeup of the young male group, but it is not the case that this group congregates because of football. It is, however, central to the topic and concern, but it is not the reason for the gathering of the group. At the other extreme, we find that video games are indeed crucial to the makeup of KAS1’s gathering, and it is actually the case that this group congregates because of video games. It is defined through their pursuit of it. This negotiated enterprise is reasonably specific and not very general, which contributes something meaningful to the members.

6.3.3 Members’ Shared Repertoire

What does the shared repertoire involve? It includes gestures, ways of doing things, actions, routines, words, etc. The seating arrangement even reflects relationships among members of the network. I noticed that in the majority of the social gatherings, there is no special or

formal seating arrangement; all comers are free to sit anywhere they like. Nonetheless, in KAS6's father's *dīwāniyya*, seating arrangements are profoundly important. In a U-shaped living hall, the father (KAS12) sits in the middle front with his son KAS6 on his left where they can see all the guests. The front left and right seats are reserved for KAS12's family, friends, and co-workers. Non-Kuwaiti guests visit and greet KAS12 but are usually received in another living room. The same situation is also applied in the female social gathering. I noticed that KAS6's family, from both sides, has photos of their late parents and grandparents on the wall in every room, which is a common practice. Additionally, I even noticed that Indian houseboys usually sit on a long seat outside the wall of a house known as *dačča* 'cement ledge' which is located by the entrance of the *dīwāniyya* (Dickson 1956: 37, 592).

To sum up, a combination of two methods of data collection was used to write about the social description of my speakers: spontaneous group conversations and participant observations. Regarding the spontaneous group conversations, recurrent topics in the friendship and the familial groups are as follows:

- Friendship group (young male social gatherings):
 1. Gossip about friends and relatives
 2. Academia
 3. Problems at work
 4. Sports, especially football: supporting European teams and playing video games
 5. Internet and technology
 6. Small businesses
 7. Politics (Egyptian presidential election)

- Familial group (older male social gatherings):
 1. Gossip about friends and relatives
 2. Problems at work
 3. Food
 4. What's new in the Kuwaiti shopping area

- Familial group (female social gatherings):
 1. Gossip about friends and relatives
 2. Family problems

Interestingly, Jabeur (1987: 84-85) lists ‘gossip’ and ‘football’ as the most recurrent themes in his sociolinguistic study of spontaneous group conversations recorded in the city of Rades, Tunisia. It came as no surprise that football is one of the most negotiated enterprises among my male youth speakers.¹⁵ That is why football was not discussed in the female group, because it is not one of their shared interests. Some social gatherings are generational and traditional. For example, any Kuwaiti male who wishes to visit a *dīwāniyya* is expected to wear the traditional men’s uniform and to eschew taboo words in favour of the *dīwāniyya*’s practice. I noticed that the host of the *dīwāniyya* (KAS12) and his close friends and co-workers (KAS13 and KAS14) were allowed to use informal or dismissive expressions such as *xalla ywalli* ‘let him go hang’, but we, as visitors, were not. Gossiping, or as we call it, *ḥašš*, is really common in these gatherings, particularly among the female gatherings.

With reference to the participant observations, it is through the ‘friend of a friend’ informal social relationship (after Milroy 1987: 47-48) that I maintained a first-order network tie due to my direct contact with a number of informants and sometimes with their family and friends. My contact with them was maintained through my successive and daily visits to their house and *dīwāniyya* before and during my fieldwork study in Kuwait. For instance, KAS6’s family even threw a birthday party for me for being a welcoming member of their family. This is why I consider myself as a member of the first-order network zone. Since I am well integrated into, say, KAS6’s social network, I was socially positioned to access and observe multiple communities of practice.

6.4 Participants and Data

This section briefly shows the manner in which this research project complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University of Sheffield Ethics Policy 2003 as approved by the University Research Ethics Committee. In 2012, I confirmed:

my responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield’s policies and procedures, which include the University’s ‘Financial Regulations’, ‘Good Research Practice Standards’ and the ‘Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue’ (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder (University Research Ethics Application Form for Staff and Postgraduate Researchers 2012).

¹⁵ There is no doubt that football is Kuwait’s most popular sport. In the Arabian Gulf, Kuwait was the first Gulf State to have participated in the World Cup tournament 1982 held in Spain. The Gulf Cup – the local Arabian Gulf tournament – was launched in 1970. Kuwait has dominated the competition over the years, having won it 10 times out of 20 tournaments (Sapsted 1980: 26-27; Holes 2010: 229-231).

6.4.1 Informed Consent

Each participant was given an informed consent form (see Appendix C), the signing of which indicated his or her free and voluntary consent to participate and consent to the recording process. Where this was not possible, because one of my informants cannot read English, their oral consent was audio-recorded and obtained in the presence of at least one witness, in accordance with the University of Sheffield's Research Ethics Policy Note no. 2.

The stages for obtaining permission were as follows. First, I took permission from the interviewer/participant to be recorded for the purpose of studying linguistic aspects such as sounds, grammar and vocabulary. Then, I made sure that the audio recordings would be used only for analysis and for illustration in a PhD study. After that, it was clarified to the informants that no other use will be made of the recordings without their written permission, and no one outside the project would be permitted to access the original recordings. Moreover, all the informants agreed for the data gathered from them to be used in future research.

6.4.2 Assurance of Anonymity and Confidentiality and Data Protection

All the personal information gathered in this research project from the spontaneous group conversations was coded and remains strictly confidential. Each participant was given an arbitrary identification number (hereafter, KAS 'Kuwaiti Arabic Speaker') which is used whenever I refer to an interview with him or her in the thesis. Where relevant, I will be identified as KAS0. The access to the codes is restricted to my principal supervisor and to me. As a result, the collected data remains securely stored.

6.5 Brief Notes on Selected Speakers

This section discusses the incidence of certain salient linguistic features in the speech of selected speakers. It sheds light only on the lexical, phonological, and morphological idiosyncrasies that some of my speakers share, which are not equally shared among the rest of the speakers in the sample. In other words, the following linguistic notes are unique to their speakers. The selected informants are identified anonymously by their code, sex, and age (e.g. KAS24/F/89), and are ordered chronologically.

- **KAS4/M/40 and KAS5/M/29**

KAS4 and KAS5 are the only Shīṭī informants in this study. They are Kuwaiti by nationality but tribally Ḥasāwiyyah. According to Dickson (1956: 90), Ḥasāwiyyah (i.e. the Ḥasāwī tribe) is a cultivator tribe in Hufūf, a major urban centre in the al-Ḥasa Oasis in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (cf. al-S‘aydān 1970: 417). KAS4 is an educated engineer who lives in Kaifān (al-‘Āṣima), while KAS5 is a PhD student in the UK who lives in al-Jābriyya (Ḥawalli). They were recorded together in Sheffield, in KAS4’s rented house. The phonotactics noted here is the replacement of *š* by *č* in the verb *čāf*, *yčūf* ‘to see’ (cf. Yassin 1975: 12). Holes (2005b: xxxii) explains that this replacement is ‘possibly originally via phonological reanalysis of *tš* in forms like *tšūf* ‘you see’ as *č*, and then its generalisation to all parts of the verb’. Additionally, al-S‘aydān (1971: 787) notes that the replacement of *š* by *č* in the verb *čāf* is mostly attributed to the type of Kuwaiti dialect spoken by *ahal Sharg* (‘the people of Sharg quarter’) in Kuwait City which was inhabited mostly by the ‘Ajam community until the early 1950s. Although KAS5 replaces *š* by *č* in the verb *čāf* ‘to see’, he nonetheless does the opposite when he pronounces ‘Manchester’ as *ṃānšister*.

Moreover, although Johnstone (1965: 238) notes that the pronunciation of *ğ* as *y* is a feature of the dialects of al-Ḥasa, KAS4 retains the relic pronunciation of such Classical Arabic words, e.g. *xēr b-wağhik* ‘May your face bring goodness’, *il-ğim‘a* ‘Friday’, and the irregular verb *yīğīk* ‘he comes to you’. However, KAS4 replaces *ğ* with *y* in *wāyid* ‘a lot’. In his material on Southern Mesopotamian Arabic, Ingham (1997: 50) also notes that ‘reflexes of *wāğid* are used, *hwāya* in the ‘Amāra area and in Baghdad *wāyid* along the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab and in Khūzistān’.

In terms of plurality, the suffix *-āt* usually functions as a general device for the pluralisation of ‘nouns of foreign origin which have not been assimilated into Arabic beyond the phonological stage’ (Smeaton 1973: 36). Accordingly, KAS4 uses *sitta kēlu* ‘six kilos’ as opposed to the Kuwaiti anomalous plural *sit kēluwwāt*; KAS5 similarly uses the feminine form *arba‘a bāwnd* and not the expected *arba‘ bāwndāt* ‘four pounds sterling’. In addition, KAS5 pronounces the feminine form *tis‘a malyōn* as opposed to the masculine *tisi‘ malāyīn* ‘nine million’. He also uses *d-dōr l-arba‘a* instead of *d-dōr r-rābi‘* ‘the fourth level’ while describing a football league, *xams kilmāt* and not *xams kalimāt* ‘five words’, and *arba‘*

sanawāt as opposed to *arba* ‘*snīn*’ ‘four years’.¹⁶ He also pronounces ‘Lebanese pl.’ as *lebnāniyyīn* and not *libnāniyyīn*. Most of these phonological features are not shared by the rest of my Kuwaiti speakers – except for *wāyid* – because they are probably unique to the Ḥasāwī colloquial spoken in Kuwait.

- **KAS6/M/23 and KAS10/M/28**

KAS6 is a university student and of the ‘Utaiba tribe who lives in Bnēd al-Gār and Shuwaikh (al-‘Āṣima) while KAS10 is of the ‘Aniza tribe who lives in al-‘Ārḍiyya (al-Farwāniyya), and is an employee in the private sector. Both speakers attended private English schools, from kindergarten to university, and became close friends thereafter. Some speakers have /p/ in borrowings which others pronounce with /b/. Nonetheless, due to their educational history, both KAS6 and KAS10 pronounce the non-Arabic phoneme /p/ fluently in words like ‘PlayStation’, ‘password’, and ‘peanut butter’.

- **KAS7/M/25 and KAS9/M/26**

KAS7 and KAS8 are brothers, holders of BA degrees, and employees in the public and private sectors, respectively. They are of the ‘Utaiba tribe who live in al-Qayrawān (al-‘Āṣima). A few oddities that need explaining are that both speakers pronounce the English borrowing ‘bank’ as *benk* as opposed to the common Kuwaiti form *ḥbank*. Moreover, a couple of phonological examples are noted for the occurrence of the *ǧ* variant of *g* in English borrowings by KAS7, whose English is fair, viz. *ǧalaksi* ‘(Samsung) Galaxy’, *katalōǧ* ‘catalogue’. Additionally, KAS8 gives the anomalous plurals of the Persian borrowing *istikāyin* ‘small tea-glasses’ and the Arabic *lawā’īb* ‘(football) players’ instead of the common plural forms *istikānāt* and *lā’ibīn*, respectively (cf. Johnston 1967b: 86).

- **KAS24/F/89**

KAS24, the oldest speaker in my material with little education, is of the Suhūl tribe and lives in an-Nizha (al-‘Āṣima). Like many women of the older generation, KAS24’s dialect is different from the rest of my informants. For instance, in terms of lexical peculiarities, she

¹⁶ Some Kuwaiti enumeration systems have been influenced by Iraqi, Egyptian, and Lebanese dialects (Johnstone 1967b: 87-89).

uses the following old-fashioned words: *čtāya*¹⁷ ‘Gulf white headdress’ as opposed to the modern form *gitra* (al-S‘aydān 1972: 1070; al-Ayyoub 1982: 302), and *gigāra* ‘cigarette’, which is also noted by de Jong (1958: 147) for Gulf Arabic,¹⁸ as opposed to the modern English borrowing *zigāra* (Maṭar 1969: 19). Another lexical idiosyncrasy includes the Turkish borrowing *xāšūga* ‘spoon’ (Johnstone 1967b: 57; al-Ayyoub 1982: 303), which is also noted by Holes (2001: 139) for the spoken Arabic of uneducated Bahrainis. Younger Kuwaiti speakers would normally use the Persian borrowing *gaḫša* ‘spoon’, which is also common in Eastern Arabian dialects. This form of lexical stock is typical of the speech of the older generation of Kuwaiti speakers which might be virtually unintelligible to a younger generation of media-savvy Kuwaitis.

Phonologically, Kuwaiti has three short vowels, /a, i, u/, and five long vowels, /ā, ē, ī, ō, ū/. KAS24 has a tendency to raise final vowel *-a* (or *-ah*) to *-e* but not categorically. She does it frequently when the vowel in the preceding syllable is high, especially when it is long, or when it is preceded by *y*. Some examples will make this clear:

1. <i>ūdhe</i>	‘its stick’	as opposed to <i>ūdha</i>
2. <i>iḡraybe</i>	‘shortbread-type biscuit’	as opposed to <i>iḡrayba</i>
3. <i>harīse</i>	‘meat porridge’	as opposed to <i>harīsa</i>
4. <i>min inte</i>	‘who are you (m.s.)?’	as opposed to <i>min inta</i>
5. <i>nabīthe</i>	‘female name Nabīha’	as opposed to <i>nabīha</i>
6. <i>rābḫe</i>	‘female name Rābḫa’	as opposed to <i>rābḫa</i>
7. <i>rūḫ lahe</i>	‘go to her (m.s.)!’	as opposed to <i>rūḫ laha</i>
8. <i>šīniyye</i>	‘tray’	as opposed to <i>šīniyya</i>
9. <i>tašrībe</i>	‘a dish of broth, bread, and meat’	as opposed to <i>tašrība</i>
10. <i>zalābye</i>	‘doughnut-shaped pastry’	as opposed to <i>zalābya</i>

¹⁷ An Iraqi borrowing (al-Ḥanafī 1964: 84) Al-Maghribī (1986: 98), however, reports that the Ḥasāwiyyah community first introduced the word *čtāya* into the Kuwaiti dialect. Abu-Haidar (1991: 186) glosses *čtāyi* ‘women’s white headscarf trimmed with small beads’ for the Christian Arabic of Baghdad.

¹⁸ First noted for Kuwait by the Kuwait Oil Company (1951: 119). Also noted by Qafisheh (1977: 7) for Abu Dhabi, by Holes (2001: 89) for Bahrain, and by van Ess (1917: 131) and Maamouri (2013: 739) for Iraq. Greenblatt (2011: 353) similarly records *jigāra* (f.), pl. *jigāre* ‘cigarette, cigar’ for the Jewish neo-Aramaic dialect of Amədyā. In Baghdad, Blanc (1964: 149) gives the form *jīgāra* for the (M)uslim, (J)ewish, and (C)hristian Arabic of Baghdad and *jigāra* for the J dialect (pl. *jegāyer*). Blanc (ibid.) states that the term is common to most of the area, including Anatolia (in Turkish *cigara*; in more modern usage *sigara*). He explains that ‘the initial affricate is probably a result of the Turkish treatment of [ts], as in Greek *tsigaro*’ (Blanc 1964: 149).

In other phonetic environments, however, she sometimes raises final *-a* to *-e* and she sometimes does not. However, she does not raise final *-a* to *-e* in *gahwa* ‘(Arabian) coffee’. On the basis of this small amount of evidence, it looks as if there is phonological conditioning, depending on nearby vowels and possibly the consonantal environment (cf. Ingham 1997: 70; Holes 2005b: xxx, xxxix; Al-Wer 2013: 260). Although the raising of final *-a* is typical of eastern Arabian dialects (most probably, the traditional dialect used to raise final *-a* in all contexts, like in most Iraqi dialects), this feature is unique to this particular speaker and is not shared among the rest of the speakers in the sample.

Additionally, KAS24 pronounces *gi‘di* in the suffix of the imperative and not with a diphthongal quality *gi‘day* ‘sit down (f.s.)!’, which is common in the dialect of Kuwait City and seems to be a north-eastern feature (Johnstone 1967b: 50; Ingham 1997: 84).

- **KAS12/M/53, KAS25/F/22, KAS26/F/52, KAS28/F/47**

KAS12 and KAS28 are husband and wife, KAS25 is their eldest daughter, and KAS26 is KAS28’s sister and KAS25’s maternal aunt. They are all from the ‘Utaiba tribe and live in Bnēd al-Gār and Shuwaikh (al-‘Āšima). KAS12 shows a tendency to preserve the voiced palatal affricate *ǧ* in words where *y* is the normal replacement in the Kuwait City dialect, e.g. he pronounces the irregular verb *yǧi* ‘he comes’ while the rest of his household pronounces it *iyi* (cf. Johnstone 1967b: 20). In Kuwaiti, the old Arabic glottal /ʔ/ disappeared initially and finally and was replaced medially by vowel length. Thus, KAS25, who is fluent in English, pronounces *yet* ‘she came’ with a short vowel as opposed to *yāt*, and she uses the word *suwa* ‘together’ and not the more common phrase *ma‘a ba‘aḏ*. The word for ‘hundred’ is a feminine noun *imyā*, with a dual *mītēn*. Multiples of one hundred from 300 to 900 are expressed by a phrase consisting of a units numeral in its combining form and the singular form *imyā*. KAS26, however, pronounces *xams-miyat dīnār* ‘five hundred dinars’ as opposed to the usual pronunciation *xams-imyat dīnār*. KAS28, who holds a BA degree in English, uses the first person plural of the imperfect verb pattern nCaCiC as in *xa-nḥasib* ‘let’s count’ instead of the common pattern naCCiC *naḥsib* (i.e. *ghawa*-syndrome). In Kuwaiti words, *k* may be realised as *č* in contiguity with the front vowels (Johnstone 1967b: 30); KAS28 thus pronounces *čbāb* (plural of *kubba*),¹⁹ bearing in mind that the form *čbāb* is rarely heard in Kuwait City (al-Ḥanafī 1964: 84). Holes (2007c: 610) observes that ‘[n]owadays, these

¹⁹ In Middle Eastern cookery, it is a mixture of minced meat, bulgar or rice, and seasonings. Muḥammad (2009: 70) traces its origin to Turkish and Persian.

affricated variants in even slightly formalized speech are replaced by the corresponding stops /g/ and /k/; some educated speakers do not use the affricate variants at all’.

- **KAS21/M/25**

KAS25, who lives in Dāḥyat ‘Abdullah as-Sālim (al-‘Āṣima), is a banker in a private bank in downtown Kuwait and is of the Suhūl tribe. He shows a tendency to use the Iraqi/Kuwaiti existential particle *māku* ‘there is not’, although the pan-Arab term *māfi* is now making some headway.²⁰ The external influence is easily noticeable in his speech; however, the original English word is intact. In other words, the foreign consonant /v/ is preserved in his pronunciation of Kuwaiti *l-avinyūz* ‘The Avenues Mall’ and in *sēv* ‘to save’.²¹ This latter English verb, among others, is fairly often used with some dialectal modification in morphology to indicate ‘to save a file’, although *sayyav* ‘to save’ is also common.²² The sound /p/ is also retained in his pronunciation of ‘operation’ and ‘processing’. He however replaces /s/ with /ʃ/ in French borrowings as in *ʃālōn* (< French ‘salon’). He also has a tendency to use vulgar terms such as *zagg* ‘shit’, which has the connotation of someone or something being ‘very bad’, and *xara* ‘shit, dung’ (as a dismissive interjection), as well as *ḥīzi* ‘my arse!’ The classical adverb of time *yawmiyyan* ‘daily’ was occasionally recorded instead of the dialectal form *kil yōm*. He utilises the plural suffix *-āt* which normally functions as a general device for the pluralisation of nouns of foreign origin in words like *teliksāt* ‘telexes’. This is the case for many foreign borrowings noted during my fieldwork, including *kambyūtar-āt* ‘computers’, *fāks-āt* ‘faxes’, *bēlar-āt* ‘boilers’, *sēnim-āt* ‘cinemas’, and more recently, *twīt-āt* ‘tweets’. He code-switches heavily between the Kuwaiti dialect and English when he starts talking about his career. For instance, *ṭaggēt transmit čān yiṭla li processing* ‘I clicked on transmit then the word processing appears (on the screen)’, *mā nigdar nšikk s-system illa lamma asawwi wriḡat shortage* ‘I cannot shut the system down unless I issue the shortage claim’, *haḡōl mā ysawwūn online li’anna bisim šarika* ‘They don’t do online (transactions) because they are a corporate client’.

²⁰ It has been observed by Johnstone (1967b: 243) that the koiné equivalent of *māku*, *mā fiḥ* ‘there is not’ occurs freely in what he termed “New Kuwaiti”.

²¹ The voiced labiodental fricative /v/ sometimes appears in Kuwaiti as /w/ in *wilf* ‘valve’.

²² In Cairo Arabic, Woidich (2006: 332) explains that new foreign terms enter with modern technology such as *yisayyif* ‘to save (on a computer)’. Pereira (2009: 549) similarly records *səyyəv* ‘to save’ for Tripoli Arabic.

6.6 Corroborating Evidence

Apart from including audio-recording as a primary data source, researchers working on the Kuwaiti dialect have been able to gather material from TV and radio shows (Yassin 1975; al-Najjar 1984) and by phone, fax, and e-mail (al-Ajeel 2002). My current study combines some of the data collection methods used in previous studies in addition to contemporary research techniques. In this research project, two corroborating pieces of evidence were gathered as mediated oral sources: Twitter posts and Kuwaiti television drama. In the following subsections, I will explain these sources in detail and provide justification for their selection.

6.6.1 Twitter Posts

Twitter has become one of the important microblogging sites in modern time and an important source of information on recent events. It is a tool for broadcasting news, expressing opinions, and merely communicating with friends. Short messages, known as *tagrīdāt* ‘tweets’, are usually informal, which include alternative spelling, slang, neologisms, and links, and mostly ignoring punctuation. Each tweet contains the following information:

1. Username – the author of the tweet.
2. Timestamp – time when the tweet was written.
3. Location (optional) – place where the tweet was written.
4. Posting method – how the tweet is published (e.g. iPhone, web, and others).

The type of language used in electronic communication is ‘hybrid, showing both speech-like and writing-like features, as well as features that are unique to the digital medium and are, to some extent, the result of its technological restrictions’ (Deumert 2009: 860).

As a matter of fact, prior to using Twitter as corroborating evidence, I was actually searching for an online dialect corpus of colloquial Kuwaiti. I accessed the acclaimed online Arabic corpus ‘arabiCorpus’.²³ This corpus contains five main categories or genres: Newspapers, Modern Literature, Nonfiction, Egyptian Colloquial, and Premodern. The total number of words of the whole corpus is: 123,854,642. Among the newspapers, I found one Kuwaiti newspaper (Al-Waṭan, 2002 editions)²⁴ which contains 6,454,411 words. However, one of the drawbacks is that the language of journalism in Kuwait is Modern Written Arabic. It is thus

²³ <<http://arabicorpus.byu.edu>>
²⁴ <<http://alwatan.kuwait.tt>>

hard to find spoken Kuwaiti colloquial material in daily newspapers and magazines, although some columnists code-mix between colloquial and slang terms within Arabic sentences. Therefore, I turned to Twitter to collect samples of language use of modern Kuwaiti colloquialisms for this study. However, all the information retrieval methods had to be done manually, unless I paid for the information to be retrieved. For example, if we consider a keyword like *dašš*, there are two ways of looking up any word on Twitter: (i) by using Arabic orthography دش, or (ii) for technical reasons, the tweets are sometimes based on a romanised Arabic chat alphabet, i.e. the romanised *dash* should be typed in instead of the phonemic *dašš*. This kind of language is known as ‘Arabīzī, a portmanteau word coined from ‘*arabī*’ (‘Arabic’) and *inglīzī* (‘English’) (cf. Holes 2010: 312, 2011: 139, 2013: 283).

However, when I typed in *dašš* (in Arabic orthography), I only got tweets with the perfect verb form of the 3rd person masculine singular *dašš*, without showing its derivations. I also received tweets on the word *dišš* meaning ‘a satellite dish’ and ‘douche’ (‘shower’), which are English and French borrowings, respectively. Regarding *xalla*, I mainly looked it up in Arabic but I had to type the following romanised forms in order to retrieve more examples of use: *khala*, *khalla*, *5ala*, and *5alla*. In this orthography, ‘5’ and /kh/ stand for the Arabic voiceless uvular fricative [خ] /x/.

In general, I followed three preliminary steps in using Twitter: (i) logging into the Twitter page,²⁵ (ii) entering the keyword in the search engine box, and (iii) collecting Twitter posts for analysis. I also used a Twitter partner application called Topsy²⁶ that maintains an index of hundreds of billions tweets.

I aim to concentrate solely on the way that some words occur regularly whenever another word is used, i.e., collocations, or as described by Firth (1957: 14), ‘actual words in habitual company’. This is because lexical items tend to co-occur more frequently in natural language use than ‘syntax and semantics alone would dictate’ (Krishnamurthy 2009: 97). Consequently, I mainly used Twitter to extract examples of present-day collocations and to see whether it is the case that the more established the meaning, the more reliant it is on collocation. I also aimed to look at the versatility of each of the verbs in terms of their ability to collocate with a variety of different expressions.

²⁵ <<http://twitter.com>>
²⁶ <topsy.com/tweets>

I selected Twitter for three reasons: First, it is an excellent source of urban, educated, literate Kuwaitis, and it is indicative of a new domain of use; it happens to be written though. Twitter is a hybrid mode of expression because Twitter users pay crucial attention to economy of effort (140 characters per tweet), which is contrary to talk where we could have a lot of repetition or pauses. In fact, Twitter is an innovative means of collecting colloquial data, but it should be recognised that this is a colloquial variety that appears in a new form and a new dimension.²⁷ Crystal (2001: 67) has highlighted the ‘strong, creative spirit’ that characterises the language of Internet users: ‘The rate at which they have been coining terms and introducing playful variations into established ones has no parallel in contemporary language use’. The second reason for selecting Twitter is because I could not guarantee that the four verbs under study would appear; my audio recordings and TV shows do not necessarily contain simple examples of *dašš*, *xalla*, *miša*, or *rikaḏ*. Third, the Arabic corpora available on the Internet do not contain spoken data from colloquial Kuwaiti. In fact, Twitter posts are seen as confirmatory data, so I believe the Twitter material can be used to answer the following questions: What is the capacity of the target verbs for collocation (the extent to which the four verbs are polysemous)? How robust (frequency) and persistent (stability) are the different senses of the four verbs?

By and large, Twitter is a dynamic corpus; it is constantly growing, compared to a stable corpus, which does not necessarily change in size (cf. Hanks 2013: 32). According to Baker et al. (2006: 64), ‘[d]ynamic corpora are useful in that they provide the means to monitor language change over time’. In this respect, I mainly emphasise the value of Twitter data for the study of meaning and I do not entirely reject introspective data. In many areas of semantics and pragmatics, ‘intuitions are strong and stable, across all native speakers, whether linguistically naïve or trained, and must be given the status of data’ (Stubbs 2002: 71). Despite this, I cannot vouch for its accuracy.²⁸

²⁷ See, for example, the presentation given by Jack Grieve, et al. 2014. ‘Big Data Dialectology: Analyzing Lexical Spread in a Multi-Billion Word Corpus of American English’ (Northern Arizona University: American Association for Corpus Linguistics).

²⁸ Also, it is difficult to discern the correct pronunciation of the tweets because the Arabic script is normally not or insufficiently voweled.

6.6.2 Kuwaiti Television *Tamṭīliyyāt*

In the broadcast media, there are two major types of Kuwaiti television drama, namely, *musalsalāt* (sg. *musalsal*) ‘series’ or sometimes equivalent to ‘soap operas’, and *tamṭīliyyāt* (sg. *tamṭīliyya*) ‘one-off plays’ (Holes 2005a).²⁹ The latter type is what concerns us here. The *tamṭīliyyāt* are usually set in local contexts, written by local writers, and performed in the local dialects. In Kuwaiti media, the Arabic spoken in *musalsalāt* and *tamṭīliyyāt* is certainly ‘Kuwaiti’ in the sense that a proportion of the indigenous population speak like that. This form of Arabic has been referred to as ‘Eastern Arabian’ (Johnstone 1967b) or ‘Sunnī’ (Holes 1986, after Holes 1981). It is a Bedouin-descended dialect, known locally as *l-lahġa l-ḥḍiriyya* ‘ḥaḍarī (urban) dialect’. Regionally, this is the prestigious dialect that is spoken in the Capital Area, since ‘the dialect of the capital city is sometimes taken to be representative of the speech of the country as a whole’ (Abu-Haidar 2004: 1).³⁰ Holes (2011: 134) describes this form of dialect as follows: ‘[o]n TV and radio, it is this homogenized form of speech which is heard in Gulf soap operas, talk shows and vox-pop interviews’.

The reason to include Kuwaiti *tamṭīliyyāt* in my data collection is to provide the basis of the structure of the key verbs as presented in old Kuwaiti serials over a period of forty years or so; this in turn allows me to look at the time depth of dialect development. In other words, they are additional historical contextual materials. Furthermore, it has been observed by Holes (2005a: 53-54) that ‘[n]ot only does linguistic detail allow us to follow and appreciate what is happening in *musalsalāt*, as in the rest of life, but it sometimes reveals patterns of change that are less apparent in ‘political’ events’.³¹

Consequently, I was able to download, transcribe, and translate the first three episodes of two local *tamṭīliyyāt* from the video-sharing website, YouTube™. I particularly focused upon these shows because they are highly popular and distinctively Kuwaiti and ran in two different periods: the 1970s and 1980s. The main reason behind choosing these periods is: (i) to observe how the target verbs were being used during the two decades, and (ii) to analyse the contexts in which these verbs occur.

²⁹ Derived from the Classical Arabic trilateral root *m-t-l*. Of this root, we can form the following words: *mumattil* ‘actor, movie star, representative, deputy’, *mumattila* ‘actress’, *mattal* ‘to act, play, represent, perform (a part, role)’.

³⁰ Cf. Holes (2012: 244) for a similar observation in Oman.

³¹ However, according to Trudgill (1986: 40), ‘the electronic media are not very instrumental in the diffusion of linguistic innovations, in spite of widespread popular notion to the contrary’.

The two *tamīliyyāt* selected for my study are *Darb z-Zalag* ‘Slippery Road’ and ‘*Ala d-Dinya s-Salām* ‘Peace to the World’. In the Arabian Gulf, the advent of home-grown TV production started first in Kuwait by Kuwaiti nationals for Kuwaiti nationals. However, the two selected shows have proved very popular with Gulf audiences and have been repeated several times and were imported to neighbouring countries on a regular basis. Holes (2007c: 609) states that ‘Kuwait has a thriving television production industry that makes and exports soap operas in the local dialect to neighboring Gulf States’. In the following sections, I will talk about each one of these home-grown serials, explain the main plot, and then show how the Kuwaiti dialect is represented in them.

6.6.2.1 *Darb z-Zalag*

The *Darb z-Zalag* show is considered an example of the all-time hit comedy *tamīliyya* in the history of Kuwaiti drama. First shown in 1977 in a poignantly tragic-comic fashion it dramatises the changes taking place in the lives of Kuwaitis as they try to adapt to life in the new ‘affluent’ Kuwait. It was filmed and produced in Kuwait using Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti actors.³² It ran to 13 episodes (30 minutes each) with a single plot line and dénouement at the end. A time-unspecified but definitely pre-oil Kuwait is the backdrop to the action. It mainly takes place in the old Kuwaiti quarter of al-Murgāb. The show stars ‘Abdil‘azīz al-Nimash (1931-2002), Khālid al-Nifīsī (1937-2006), Sa‘ad al-Faraj (b. 1938), ‘Abdulḥusain ‘Abdulriḍa (b. 1939) and ‘Alī al-Mufīdī (1939-2008). The secondary characters include Samīr al-Gallāf (b. 1953) and Fōziyya al-Mish‘al (b. 1949), the only Omani actress in the show.³³ It was written by the Kuwaiti writer ‘Abdulamīr al-Turkī (b. 1945) and directed by the renowned Egyptian director Ḥamdī Farīd (1916-1995).³⁴ The main characters are as follows:

- Bēt Bin ‘Āgūl (The house of Bin ‘Āgūl)
 1. Umm Sa‘ad (mother of two boys, widow, and housewife)
 2. Sa‘ad bin ‘Āgūl (the eldest son, in his late 30s)
 3. Ḥsēn bin ‘Āgūl (the youngest son, in his mid-30s)

³² Some Kuwaiti drama actors and actresses work part-time with other jobs outside the radio and TV stations, for there is not enough radio or TV drama work for them to concentrate solely on their radio and TV work.

³³ Her last TV appearance was in 1982, when she started wearing the ḥijāb and married an Omani. The shortage of women actresses was a factor against drama programmes; tradition in many families is still strongly against women taking part in public entertainment (Ministry of Guidance and Information of Kuwait n.d: 36).

³⁴ When Iraq invaded Kuwait, Ḥamdī Farīd immediately fled in terror to his home country of Egypt in 1990.

- Bēt Bu Šāliḥ (The house of Bu Šāliḥ)
 1. Bu Šāliḥ (an old man, father, widower)
 2. Šāliḥ (son, in his early 30s)
 3. Šālḥa (daughter, in her late 20s)

The Bin ‘Āgūl family and the Bu Šāliḥ family are divided only by a thin wall. They are neighbours in an old Kuwaiti quarter situated in a suburb in Kuwait Town. Sa‘ad bin ‘Āgūl is in love with Bu Šāliḥ’s daughter, Šālḥa. But Ḥsēn bin ‘Āgūl (protagonist) hates Bu Šāliḥ (antagonist), which complicates the situation and makes it awkward for his brother Sa‘ad to approach and propose to Šālḥa. What makes the plot more complicated is the star-crossed lovers Bu Šāliḥ and Umm Sa‘ad. Bu Šāliḥ particularly hates Umm Sa‘ad’s son, Ḥsēn. So the deal is as follows: Sa‘ad bin ‘Āgūl can only marry Šālḥa if, and only if, Bu Šāliḥ can marry Umm Sa‘ad. The brothers Sa‘ad and Ḥsēn (which by the way are their real names as well as their characters’ names) are government employees. Bu Šāliḥ, on the other hand, sells ice cubes just outside the main doorsteps of his house. His home business is called *falḡ bu šāliḥ* ‘Bu Šāliḥ’s ice’.³⁵

Linguistically speaking, a number of Kuwaiti catchphrases actually originated from this *tamṭīliyya*. In addition, a number of idioms and expressions are noted which are plainly designed to sound ‘traditional’. For instance, *aḷḷah yhadāč* is used in everyday courtesy formulas when giving advice and guidance (lit. ‘May God show you the right path’), *yabn l-ḥalāl* ‘O, good man!’ (lit. ‘Son of the legitimate marriage’), *l-ḡāyib ḥiḡḡita ma‘āh* ‘the absent party is not so faulty’, *ya ḥāfiḏ* ‘Good heavens!’ or ‘Gosh!’, expressions only used by female speakers, and *wēḏ aḷḷah min šarrik* is used on hearing of an unexpected event by older Kuwaiti speakers, while the younger speakers usually say *a‘ūdu billāh minnik/min iblīsik* ‘I seek Allah’s protection (from evil or from the devil [Lucifer])’ (al-Ayyoub 1997: 373). Moreover, a number of the so-called “bi-polar” forms of address are noted, including *yumma* ‘my dear son’, which literally means ‘my mother’; however, Yassin (1977: 197) points out that *yumma* is used in the Kuwaiti dialect as a monolexic bi-polar term that involves the use of a senior kin-term to address the junior.

³⁵ Note that ‘ice’ is unusually spelt *falḡ* instead of the more correct Kuwaiti form *talḡ*. The shibboleth *l* is a quintessentially Shī‘ī pronunciation, mostly pronounced by uneducated Baḥārna speakers in Bahrain as *f*, as in *falāfa* ‘three’ (Smeaton 1973: 33; Holes 2005b: xxxvii). In the Kuwaiti dialect, *ālūl* ‘wart, planter wart, verruca’ may be pronounced *fālūl* (sg. *fālūla*).

Because this *tamīliyya* attempts to reflect pre-oil Kuwait, a number of Kuwaiti obsolete and/or archaic lexical items are noted. Examples include *ṭigtāgī*, an onomatopoeic word for ‘motorcycle’, which is called in modern Kuwaiti *sēkal* ‘(< English ‘cycle)’; *raḥḥiya* ‘the Indian rupee’, which was the official currency of Kuwait in the late 19th century but was replaced with the Kuwaiti Dinar in the early 1960s; the Persian borrowing *dihrīz* (< Middle Persian *dahlīz* ‘portico’) ‘entrance to Arab house; vestibule’, a very old term used in the old mud houses of Kuwait Town which has given way to the pan-Arab term *madxal* (de Jong 1958: 6; al-Sab‘ān 1983: 190-191). Moreover, typical examples of dialectal *tanwīn* are found in this series including the unmodified noun *šayyin* (šayy + in) in the conventional phrase *bitšūf šayyin mā šifta* ‘I will give you a piece of my mind!’ which often indicates emphasis. This morphological feature is usually labeled ‘conservative’, harking back to Classical Arabic (see section 4.2.3).

6.6.2.2 ‘*Ala d-Dinya s-Salām*

The tragicomedy ‘*Ala d-Dinya s-Salām* is known locally by the names of the duo protagonists, *maḥḍūḍa w-mabrūka* ‘Maḥḍūḍa and Mabrūka’.³⁶ The first episode ran in 1987 and was filmed and produced in Kuwait using Kuwaiti actors as the main characters in a series which ran to 16 episodes (45-48 minutes each). This *tamīliyya* stars ‘Ali al-Mufīdī (1939-2008), Mariam al-Ghaḍbān (1948-2004), Ḥayāt al-Fahad (b. 1948), and Su‘ād ‘Abdullah (b. 1950). The secondary actors include Kādīm al-Gallāf (1949-2000), Samīr al-Gallāf (b. 1953), and Dāwūd Ḥusēn (b. 1957). It was written by the Palestinian writer Ṭāriq ‘Uthmān,³⁷ an eminent and leading screenwriter in Kuwait, and was directed by the abovementioned Egyptian director, Ḥamdī Farīd. It was filmed in different locations, two of which are part and parcel of the plot: the house of Bu Nabīl and *l-maṣaḥḥa* ‘sanatorium, convalescent home (i.e. a women’s mental (illness) hospital)’.

The main characters are as follows:

- The two sisters (protagonists):
 1. Maḥḍūḍa (eldest sister)
 2. Mabrūka (youngest sister)

³⁶ An example of irreversible binomials.

³⁷ He comes from the village of Kifl Ḥāris in the northern West Bank. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, Ṭāriq ‘Uthmān fled in panic to Egypt in 1990 and died there in 2004.

- The Bu Nabīl household (antagonists)
 1. Ya‘gūb (also called Bu Nabīl, a stingy uncle)
 2. Hayfā’ (also called Umm Nabīl, a nagging wife)
 3. Nabīl (also known by his pet name Bulbul, a mad son)³⁸

The secondary characters are the two psychiatrists:

1. Dr. Shargān
2. Dr. Bu ‘Aqīl

Maḥḍūḍa and Mabrūka lost their parents in a car accident when they were young; their paternal uncle, Ya‘gūb, adopted them. Years later, Ya‘gūb claimed Maḥḍūḍa and Mabrūka’s inheritance against their will. In order to get rid of Maḥḍūḍa, he admitted her to the women’s mental hospital because her paternal uncle Ya‘gūb and his domineering wife Hayfā’ believe that she is mentally retarded, which she is not. The younger sister Mabrūka lives with her paternal uncle Ya‘gūb and works unwillingly for Hayfā’ as her personal housemaid. Nabīl, Ya‘gūb and Hayfā’’s pampered and mollycoddled son, is deeply in love with his cousin Mabrūka, but Mabrūka loathes him. Later, Mabrūka is also admitted to the women’s mental hospital with her older sister Maḥḍūḍa because Ya‘gūb and Hayfā’ believe that Mabrūka is mentally unfit. The harrowing experience that both sisters endure may be explained by the fact that a certain irony revolves around the names of the protagonists. The proper name Maḥḍūḍa derives from the Classical Arabic noun *ḥaḍḍ* ‘luck, fortune, chance’, hence, ‘the lucky/fortunate girl’, and the proper name Mabrūka derives from the Classical Arabic noun *baraka* ‘blessing, prosperity, good’, thus, ‘the blessed/prosperous girl’.

To distinguish between the two *tamīliyyāt* linguistically, I will illustrate some of the salient linguistic features of *‘Ala d-Dinya s-Salām*. The existential particle *māku* ‘there isn’t’ occurs more frequently than the Arab-wide form *māfi*. A number of classical-sounding vocabulary items are noted, including *d-dinya l-ḡaddāra* ‘the perfidious world’, *ba’l* ‘husband’ instead of the expected form *rayil* or *zōḡ*, *nnaffid l-’awāmir* ‘we obey the rules’, *qaṭī’i* ‘my flock (of goats)’, *afwan* ‘I beg your pardon, excuse me’, *lākin* ‘but’ as opposed to the dialectal form *bass*. The dialectal preposition *wiya* ‘with’ occurs more frequently than the ‘educated’ form *ma’a*. Also worthy of mention is the fact that the pan-Arab term *šibbāk* ‘window’ is heard as opposed to the dialectal, Persian borrowing *dirīša*. Moreover, some lexical borrowings are

³⁸ He is commonly known today by his catchphrase *ḡāḡūḡa!*

noted: *kart* (< English ‘card’), *ḡūti* (< Hindi ‘shoe’), *sister* (< English ‘sister: senior female nurse’), *diktōr* (< English ‘doctor’), *azzūza* (< Egyptian ‘bottle’).³⁹ The following modern idioms are also found in this *tamṭīliyya*: *ṭagḡat ʿabdi* ‘I was really infuriated’, *ḡabbitik l-garāda* ‘May bad luck strike you!’, *aḡsil šrā ič* ‘I will beat the hell out of you!’ Compared with the linguistic notes of *Darb z-Zalag* given above, it can therefore be assumed that the Arabic spoken in ‘*Ala d-Dinya s-Salām*’ represents the semi-educated Kuwaiti dialect with many literary and foreign borrowings, whereas *Darb z-Zalag* reflects the pre-oil, uneducated variety of ‘conservative’ spoken Kuwaiti.

6.7 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explain how the data from this speech community were obtained. It has shown that two sets of data sources were used: audio-recording was adopted as the main data collection method, while Twitter posts and Kuwaiti TV dramas were designed to be corroborating pieces of evidence. The audio-recorded data were derived from spontaneous group conversations. The material from the spontaneous group conversations was taken as the primary source of data analysis for it is rich, diverse, as well as the most productive. The present chapter also provides additional details about the linguistic and socio-economic background of the informants. They are distinguished in terms of tribal/sectarian criteria and of social characteristics, including age, sex, education, and occupation.

In Chapter 7, I will be presenting the semantic analysis of the research results by reporting the uses of four verbs in my spoken material, namely, *dašš* ‘enter’, *xalla* ‘leave’, *miša* ‘walk’, and *rikaḡ* ‘run’. In Chapter 8, the aim is to discuss the research results in terms of the contexts of use of the key verbs, their users, and the social interpretation. The focus will be mainly on the users, i.e. agents of these innovations.

³⁹ Shraybom-Shivtiel (1993: 199) gives *qāzūza* as originally meaning ‘phial, drinking-flask’, to be used for ‘ampoule’ in the colloquial Arabic of Cairo. Cifoletti (2007: 458) notes that *azzūza* occurs in Egyptian Arabic as *gazzosa* ‘soda water’; also with geminated /dz/ as *kazōza* in Egypt and *gazūz* in Tunisia, all of which derive from the Italian *gassosa* ‘soda’.

Chapter 7

The Structure of Polysemy of Four Kuwaiti Arabic Verbs

7. Introduction

The goal of the chapter is to present the analysis of the research results. I report the uses of four verbs in my spoken material, namely, *dašš* ‘enter’, *xalla* ‘leave’, *miša* ‘walk’, and *rikaḏ* ‘run’. I went through the following stages to find word senses in my material: (i) I provisionally identified senses in my spoken data, (ii) I analysed examples in the corpus and identified distinct contextual features of each sense, and then (iii) I refined and finalised the inventory of senses.

It was found that there is greater polysemy in Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) than has hitherto been demonstrated in the lexico-semantic tradition. The evidence I uncovered suggests that these verbs are highly polysemous yet their contexts of use give them particular specificity.¹ What I am really interested in is to locate the site of innovation through examining the uses and users (agents of these innovations) in my data. In Chapter 4, I concluded that KA dictionaries documented the following meanings of the verbs:

- *dašš*: ‘enter, go in, go in for’, ‘go to, embark on’, ‘come into someone’s presence’, ‘insert into’, ‘interfere’, ‘begin (a month)’.
- *xalla*: ‘permit, allow’, ‘leave’.
- *miša*: ‘walk’, ‘move’, ‘make walk’, ‘stroll’.
- *rikaḏ*: ‘run’, ‘come in running’.

All of the above meanings occur in my data in addition to several other innovative uses with single or multiple instantiations. An example of an innovative use that occurs in my data includes *miša* in the sense of ‘to function, be valid, acceptable’. An example of a single instantiation is found in *dašš* in the sense of ‘to invade (country)’. Although single instantiations only occur once in my data, however, I have other evidence to suggest that some of them are really robust.

¹ Cruse (2011: 113) points out that ‘[t]he most obvious effect of context is to add semantic content, that is, to enrich a meaning or make it more specific’.

My material contains a total of 328 tokens collected from 18 social gatherings. The distribution of the frequency of occurrence is as follows: *dašš* occurs 130 times, *xalla* 123, *miša* 71, and *rikaḏ* 4 times only. All the examples were transcribed phonetically and translated idiomatically. I am not discussing them in depth here but they are reproduced in Appendix D.

Two things enabled me to do the idiomatic translation: the situational context and the linguistic collocation. In addition, my intimate knowledge of the social gatherings allowed me to attribute particular utterances to particular people, as I have a very recent memory of the recorded situations. There are other elements that go into creating this intimate knowledge such as my ability to read behaviour by observing the conversational speech of my informants, the interpersonal relationships, and the emotional temperature of the settings. As a participant observer, I was in a position which is legitimate and trustworthy from the point of view of research. This enabled me to gain an intimate familiarity with the groups by way of intensive involvement with the speakers and their cultural milieu. In fact, the actual task of idiomatic translation highlights the extent to which I was relying on my pragmatic competence to make an inference about what is being meant because semantics deals with the description of meanings while ‘pragmatics deals with the uses made of those meanings’ (Cruse 2006: 136).

Further analysis showed that the main senses of the verbs have many uses and instantiations that are given sharper reference by virtue of their collocations and contexts. In modern colloquial English, Firth (1957: 194) shows that part of the meaning of certain words can be interpreted by collocation. However, he (ibid. 195) argues that ‘[i]t must be pointed out that meaning by collocation is not at all the same as contextual meaning, which is the functional relation of the senses to the processes of a context of situation in the context of culture’. I will point out the role of context and collocation in determining verb senses. Indeed, context contributes to the shaping of identity and social relationship of the informants in the speech situation. We will see that interpreting an utterance mostly relies on the context. Collocations are also important in identifying the specificity of meaning and they are linguistically predictable to a greater or lesser extent. As Murphy (2003: 37) argues, ‘[s]emantic relations are not arbitrary [...] they are predictable, and therefore rule based’.

While there is growing research interest in this subfield of linguistics, systematic studies of collocations in Arabic are conspicuously lacking despite widespread evidence of the

phenomenon in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and modern dialects alike. Even though collocations have been dealt with lexicographically, they however ‘have been dealt with in a rather intermittent and modest way’ (Santillán Grimm 2009: 22).² As a result, previous studies have reported that studying aspects of meaning in terms of the word’s combinatorial properties and restrictions ‘has received little attention in historical semantics’ (Meinschaefer 2003: 136). However, I will pinpoint ‘the extent to which an item is specified by its collocational environment’ (Halliday 1966: 156). Also, as I delve into the material, we will notice that some of the uses of the key verbs are contextually-determined, e.g. *mū tamši b-nuṣ* in example (69) below does not translate into ‘don’t walk in the middle of...’, but rather, ‘don’t ride your bicycle in the middle of...’ Most likely, the speaker will have one reading in mind, and the hearer will be expected to recover that reading on the basis of contextual clues such as the background knowledge shared by the speakers regarding riding bicycles in London.

The dictionaries compiled by Qafisheh (1997b), Holes (2001), and Maamouri (2013) served as good models for organising the senses. I have categorised and interpreted the meanings and uses of the key verbs according to these sources. The first senses listed in these dictionaries are the primary or ‘common core’ senses. Cruse (2011: 116) observes that some senses have default status in the sense that they will be the preferred reading in the absence of contextual clues, ‘while the other requires some contextual pressure’. For instance, Holes (2001: li) organises his glossary as follows: ‘The most general senses of words are listed first, the more specific or technical last. However, where the commonest sense of a word is a localised one, this is listed first’. I will follow Holes’ (2001) approach in organising my senses because in each case, the most general uses and senses of the verbs are presented first. For example, amongst the educated speakers who formed the population sample for this thesis, the verb *xalla* normally means in MSA ‘to leave’, as in the following example: *xallānna u rāḥ* ‘he left us and went away’. However, the commonest sense of *xalla* in KA is the hortative/modal ‘let ...!, why not...?’, and thus is listed first.

This chapter mainly deals with the semantic structure of the polysemy of each verb. I will discuss the contexts of use, their users, and the social interpretation in Chapter 8. Also, the material from the corroborating evidence will be presented where relevant and necessary.

² In an investigation into the treatment of collocations in modern Arabic dictionaries, Hoogland (1993: 82) found that ‘[c]ontemporary bilingual dictionaries of MSA like Wehr’s (1979, 1985) do not contain enough collocational information to support learners of Arabic’. Cf. Buckwalter and Parkinsons (2013: 552).

7.1 The Structure of the Polysemy of *dašš*

Meanings of <i>dašš</i>	Occurrence
1. enter, go in, go in for a. to enter [23] b. to get in [18] c. to arrive at (place) [1] d. to board (tram) [2] e. to invade (country) [1] f. to try (restaurant) [6] g. to visit (webpage/place) [6] h. to log in (online) [4] i. to access (mobile applications) [2] j. to browse an iPhone® App [1]	64
2. go to, embark on a. to attend school [5] b. to join (company, gym) [2]	7
3. come into someone's presence a. to drop in on someone [5] b. to barge in [3] c. to introduce (a word into a language) [3] d. to send a message (electronically) [1]	12
4. bring in, insert into, enter something or someone into a. to kick a ball into the goal (i.e. to score) [10] b. to fit (size) [1] c. to penetrate; to put X into the anus (to enter someone's buttocks) [1]	12
5. obtain, get in (money) a. to invest [6] b. to reach a certain level [4] c. to get a financial support/to obtain money [2] d. to break a record (to enter Guinness World Records) [1] e. to negotiate a deal [1]	14
6. interfere a. to be involved in/with X [5] b. to intervene [1]	6
7. begin a. to start (school, season) [2] b. to get to know somebody (to start a conversation) [1]	3
8. change in character or condition; alter in function or nature a. to become an MP [3] b. to be elected [1] c. to stand for election [1] d. to specialise in [2] e. to enter a critical phase [1] f. to act as [1] g. to reach adolescence; to hit puberty [1] h. to have a particular skill [1] i. to fall into a coma [1]	12

Table 7.1: Meanings of *dašš* in my data

Table 7.1 represents all the senses and uses of *dašš* discovered in my data. The verb *dašš* occurs 130 times with 8 senses and multiple uses, and it was recorded in 14 social gatherings out of 18. What is noticeable is that for each main sense given in numbers (e.g. 1, 2, 3 etc. in all tables), we find three categories according to use: sub-senses, uses, and single instantiations given in letters (e.g. a, b, c, etc.). It is striking that the majority of the senses and uses of *dašš* appearing in my data have not been attested in KA dictionaries. Therefore, strong evidence of semantic innovation and change was found when examples of *dašš* were analysed systematically.

Sense 1 ‘to enter, go in, go in for’ is the most frequently used sense in my data and it is the first sense given in all the Kuwaiti dictionaries surveyed in Chapter 4. This observation implies that ‘to enter, go in, go in for’ is the default, prototypical sense for *dašš* in both my data and in the KA dictionaries. However, it should be stressed that the sub-senses and uses within sense 1, e.g. ‘to try a restaurant’, ‘to visit (webpage/place)’, ‘to log in (online)’, etc. are innovative uses. These uses and others have not been recorded in the local dictionaries. In other words, within the standard uses, we have all these creations and modern uses that are highly contextually-determined.

Before I continue, I believe it is important here to discriminate between ‘sub-senses’ and ‘uses’. According to Hartmann and James (1998: 133), a sub-sense (also ‘sub-meaning’, ‘semantic subdivision’) is one of ‘the distinct meanings of a polysemous word, often marked in dictionaries by means of numbered sub-entries’.³ Cruse (2006: 163), however, explains the meaning of ‘sense’ as follows: ‘We can say of a polysemous or homonymous word that it ‘has several senses’. Here, the word refers to distinguishable meanings, as they might appear in a dictionary’.

Regarding what is meant by ‘uses’, Evans (2009a: 294) demonstrates that ‘[p]olysemy emerges from the interaction between language use and contexts of use’. We will see how new contexts of use give rise to meaning extensions or new specifics of meaning. In the next chapter, we will also explore the extent to which those new uses are reused, shared, or spread among a group of users to the extent that they become candidates for conventional meanings. For now, I wish to give examples of each of the standard and the innovative uses to distinguish between the two angles.

³ A sub-entry is a ‘subdivision of the reference unit, e.g. the numbered senses of a headword within a dictionary entry’ (Hartmann and James 1998: 132).

7.1.1 Sense 1: ‘to enter, go in, go in for’

The most standard uses of *dašš* are those which describe the activity of coming or going into a place. This can be exemplified with senses (1a) ‘to enter’, (1b) ‘to get in’, and (1c) ‘to arrive at’. In other words, this is the ‘generic’ meaning of *dašš* which can be used in any number of contexts. For instance, consider examples (1-4):

1. *bass*⁴ *ḥarakta mū ḥilwa, dašš d-dīwāniyya wala ysallim wala šay* (sense 1a)

‘But what he did was unacceptable; he **entered** the *dīwāniyya* without greeting us or anything.’

2. *yit ‘awwar gōlčī⁵ ingeltra fa ydišš lik⁶ wāḥid min s-sikyuriti*⁷ (sense 1a)

‘England’s goalkeeper gets hurt, and someone from the security guards **enters** (the soccer field).’

3. *mādri āna⁸ ams rāyih l-fanār, b-adišš⁹ l-mašāfiṭ zaḥma* (sense 1b)

‘I have no idea. I went to al-Fanār (mall) yesterday. I was going **to get in** the parking lot (but it was already) full.’

4. *gabiḷ lā adišš l-ṡanṡaqa daggēt ‘alēk* (sense 1c)

‘Before I **arrived at** the area, I phoned you.’

⁴ *bass* is used here as the conjunction ‘but’, which is also used as an interjection ‘enough, stop!’ and as an adverb ‘just, only’. Frayḥa (1973: 10) traces its origin to colloquial Syriac and Persian. (Cf. Italian *basta* ‘Enough!’).

⁵ This is a rather unusual word combination. It a hybrid noun that consists of the English ‘goal’ attached to the Turkish suffix *-či* that Kuwait shares with Iraq (cf. Malaika 1963: 23; al-Ayyoub 1982: 17; Mansour 1991: 46, 91; Masliyah 1996: 295-300; Erwin 2004: 170-171). Words ending in *-či* or *-çi* are used for ‘denoting agents, occupations and professions. Several refer to persons who have a certain type of character or engage in habitual activities. A few relate to persons who are members of the indicated noun’ (Masliyah 1996: 295), for instance, *mḥāwišči* ‘someone who fights a lot’, *mṡayyirči* ‘pigeon fancier, man who raises and trains domesticated pigeons’, *kalakči* ‘trickster, tricky person, smooth operator’, *bančarči* ‘tyre repairman’ (< British English ‘puncture’ + *-či*), *kahrabči* ‘electrician’, etc. A relatively recent Egyptian borrowing is *baltāči* (< Turkish *baltacı* ‘pioneer’), now used in the sense of ‘gangster, rowdy, bouncer’. The pejorative term *ixwanči* ‘member of the Muslim Brotherhood’ is also common in political speech, and it has found its way into the *Oxford Arabic Dictionary* (Arts 2014: 9).

⁶ The so-called ‘ethic dative’ (otiose 2nd person pronoun) is frequently used in narrative as a means of involving the listener. See Holes (2005b: 32, 283) for similar examples from Bahrain.

⁷ English borrowing: ‘security’.

⁸ Typical urban pronunciation of the personal pronoun ‘I’, while the Bedouin counterpart would be *ana*.

⁹ The *b-* prefix to imperfects usually indicates a future, progressive, or habitual meaning. It is used here to indicate intention. According to Harvey (1979: 170), ‘[i]t is likely that the *b-* prefix is spreading under the influence of high prestige dialects such as Egyptian’.

Next, the remaining uses (1d-1j) within sense 1 are new uses in my data. Take examples (5-11):

5. *l-trām*¹⁰ *mfawwil*.¹¹ *šidaf wiyānna āxir bāb iṭṭaʿaw maḡmūʿa, daššēna. daššēna iḥna xaḷāš*

‘The tram was really busy. Luckily, a group (of passengers) got off from the last door, (so) we **boarded**. We (finally) **got on**.’ (sense 1d)

6. *awwal mā šār intixābāt l-xwān ʿisrāʿīl u b-ndišha u b-nšigha, w-ḥna b-nsawwi, u l-šisma*¹² (sense 1e)

‘As soon as elections started, the Muslim Brotherhood said, “Israel, we’ll **occupy/invade** it, and destroy it, and we’ll do the [...] what-do-you-call-it.’

Although Arabic is rich in terms of the lexicon of warfare, we notice in example (6) the absence of such pan-Arab terms such as *niḥtalha* ‘we will occupy it’, or *naḡzīha* ‘we will invade it’. Instead, we find the pan-Gulf form *ndišha* ‘we’ll occupy/invade it.’¹³ Arguably, the impact of the Gulf War on the spoken dialect of Kuwait is evident. My hypothesis is that following the Iraqi invasion, the Kuwaiti verb *dašš* developed a new use in the sense of ‘to invade’ in the late 1990s, or the Iraqi invasion simply helped revive this specific use (see section 7.5.1).¹⁴ In example (7), the complete meaning of *dašš* is contextually determined:

7. *wala maṛṛa daššēta. l-yāhāl rāḥaw yidiššūn yirūḥūn, āna wala maṛṛa daššēta* (sense 1f)

‘I **have** never **tried** it. The kids went and **tried** it; (however) I **have** never **tried** it.’

By saying *wala maṛṛa daššētah* ‘I have never tried it’ in sense (1f) above, it does not mean that ‘I did not enter the restaurant through the door’. What is meant is that ‘I did not have the chance/time to visit it’ or ‘to try a specific recipe’ (see conversation 11, ch. 8).

¹⁰ English borrowing: ‘tram’.

¹¹ English borrowing: ‘full’.

¹² *šisma* or *šisammūna* (lit. what its name) is an extremely common phrase when someone cannot remember the name of something.

¹³ It is interesting to note that for Dathina colloquial Arabic, Landberg (1920: 787) glosses *dašš* ‘demolish’ and gives the following example: *دشوا البلاد بمدافع ils ont démoli le pays avec des canons*. Dathina is (was) a tribal area in the Western Aden Protectorate bordering on Yemen, about 100 miles northeast of the port of Aden (Goodison 1958: 206). Landberg’s example is to some extent similar in usage to the Kuwaiti *dašš* in the sense of ‘invade/occupy’. Piamenta (1990: 150) also glosses *dašš* ‘to demolish’ for (Judæo-) Yemeni Arabic.

¹⁴ This linguistic change of meaning has also influenced our use of certain temporal expressions. Since 1991, there has been a watershed event between ‘before’ and ‘after’ the Iraqi invasion. In other words, Kuwaitis started dividing time into three periods: *gab l-ḡazu* ‘pre-invasion’, *ayyām l-ḡazu* ‘during the invasion’, and *baʿd l-ḡazu* ‘post-invasion’. People who were born in Kuwait during this time are typically known as *muwālīd l-ḡazu* ‘those who were born during the invasion’.

Examples (8-11) revolve around the domain of the Internet and technology.¹⁵ These uses show up in new contexts which acquire additional and specific meanings. On first use, one might argue that there is no problem understanding the ‘webpage’ to be a virtual location as in example (8). However, this sense of ‘entering a virtual location’ gives rise to senses (1h) to (1j) illustrated in examples (9-11), i.e. they are innovative instantiations of example (8).

8. *āna yaybat lik hāda čūd*¹⁶ *tidišš* ‘ala l-hadōl (sense 1g)

‘I brought this (visa application) for you, hoping you could **visit** those (Schengen Visa webpage and apply online).’

9. *dišš twitar tlāgīh hāt nafsa* (sense 1h)

‘**Log in to** Twitter, you’ll find him posting himself.’

10. *lamma ddišš mā yilga šay li’anna āy anlāykd*¹⁷ (sense 1i)

‘When you **access** (his Instagram account), he won’t find anything because I unliked (his photos).’

11. *taxayyal daššēt* ‘alēh ga¹⁸ ašūf šwarra (sense 1j)

‘Imagine, I **browsed** his (Instagram) account to look at his photos.’

7.1.2 Sense 2: ‘to go to, embark on’

Sense 2 is also about coming or going into a place, but this time, into a ‘specific’ place. In addition, some of the uses of this sense are attested in KA dictionaries but with different settings. In her analysis of the French noun *discours*, Meinschaefer (2003: 139) shows that ‘an innovative usage of a particular term can arise in the language of any speaker, but this usage will vanish from the language if it is not adopted by a larger community of speakers’. By comparing my data with the available KA data, I noticed the disappearance of several

¹⁵ McCarthy and O’Dell (2005: 60) record different collocations for computing and Internet in English.

¹⁶ A modal particle with epistemic force used throughout the Gulf and Najd and possibly connected etymologically with Classical Arabic *kāda* meaning ‘perhaps, perchance, probably’ (Holes 2005b: 128). Cf. de Jong (1958: 185); Johnstone (1967b: 15).

¹⁷ *āy anlāykd* ‘I unliked’ is an example of Kuwaiti-English code-switching.

¹⁸ *gā’id* (lit. ‘sitting’) is a common auxiliary followed by an imperfect to indicate the present continuous (Johnstone 1967b: 144). In rapid speech, *gā’id* becomes morphologically defective (it loses the morphological distinctions for gender and number) and phonologically reduced, cf. al-Najjar (1984: 125); Tsukanova (2008: 448). A *ga’-* construction is made negative by the negative prefix *mu-*, preceding *ga’-*. Erwin (2004: 139) similarly notes the prefix *da-* for Iraqi Arabic which functions exactly like *ga’-*. Cf. Holes (2010: 178).

uses of *dašš* related to old occupations and local customs and activities, namely, ‘to work at sea, put to sea, embark on a sea voyage’ and ‘to marry, consummate a marriage’ (see section 4.2.2.2). Despite being obsolete, these uses of *dašš* are still attested in KA dictionaries and some (older) speakers of the speech community know them. However, my data includes examples related to ‘going to school’ and ‘going to the gym’ as against ‘going pearl-diving’. In the Arabic dialect of Central Arabia, Kurpershoek (2005: 90) records the following example: *dašš dawām* ‘he went to his work at the office and spent his working hours there’. Therefore, the identification of the ‘place’ (or location) will determine the nature of this sense by virtue of collocation. For instance:

12. *awwal mā dašš l-ǧām* ‘a... *awwal mā dašš l-ǧām* ‘a *ubūh axaḍ lah šisma esel kašf*^(sense 2a)

‘As soon as he **attended** university [...] As soon as he **attended** university, his father bought him a convertible (Mercedes-Benz) SL (Class).’

13. *lo fīh xēr*¹⁹ *čān mā dašš nādi* ^(sense 2b)

‘If he has a spark of decency, he would not have **joined** the gym.’

Consequently, *dašš* collocates with *l-ǧām* ‘a ‘university’ in example (12) and with *nādi* ‘gym; club’ in example (13). Within the same meaning of ‘going to, embarking on’, Qafisheh (1997b: 219) notes a similar use in Abu Dhabi in the sense of ‘to enlist in the army’ whereas Holes (2001: 175) glosses the sense ‘to send to school’ in Bahrain which is also noted by Johnstone (1967b: 186) in his Bahraini material in the following example: *zēn, iw-daššēt il-mádrase?* ‘Good. And you went to school?’

7.1.3 Sense 3: ‘to come into someone’s presence’

In sense 3, *dašš* is usually followed by the preposition ‘*ala* with a pronoun enclitic in this specific sense, and it usually indicates ‘location on’ or ‘movement onto’. The syntagmatic grammatical relation between *dašš* and ‘*ala* is an example of what Siepmann (2005: 422-3) calls ‘collocations of verbs with locative prepositional phrases’. It is attested in KA dictionaries but with different contexts of use. Examples (14-17) below bear connotative meaning; ‘the entering’ is not necessarily permissible, it has a pragmatic force. It has arguably evaluative force as part of the speaker’s attitude to what is being talked about. Hence, we can argue that verbs are not concrete; they do not attach to objects, but they attach

¹⁹ *lo fīh xēr* is a common Kuwaiti idiomatic expression meaning ‘if he has a spark of decency.’

to activities, to mental processes, to communicative processes. My material contains the following instances:

14. *taxayyilay uxūč yidišš ‘ala sālīm* ^(sense 3a)

‘Imagine that your brother **drops in on** Sālīm.’

15. *nzēn,*²⁰ *tsawwūn lah mufāḡa ‘a? indišš ‘alēh l-klās*²¹ *w-nyīb lah čīs barrid bu-šārūx?*

‘Alright, how about we surprise him? We **barge into** his class and we bring a bag of rocket ice lolly?’ ^(sense 3b)

16. *fi muṣṭalaḡāt rāḡat. w-fi muṣṭalaḡāt misākīn uhma hamm*²² *daššat ‘alēhum* ^(sense 3c)

‘There are terms which have disappeared. And there are terms, poor guys, that have **entered into** them (=their language).’

Notice the ‘virtual’ use of *dašš* in example (17):

17. *maṛṛa nšidamt, dāšš ‘alēy wāḡid kān wiyāy bil madrisa pākistānī*²³ ^(sense 3d)

‘I was once shocked; a Pakistani guy **messaged** me (on Facebook) who attended school with me.’

Example (14) signifies that X is visiting Y without prior notice, while example (15) implies that X is walking into a classroom without being invited. Example (16) denotes that a term is starting to become involved in a language, whereas example (17) indicates that someone is interrupted by something. In the ‘elicitation’ questionnaire (see section 4.1.3.2), a respondent reported the following example: *daššat ‘alēy bil watsāb* ‘She **messaged** me on WhatsApp’, which is semantically related to example (17). Moreover, we can see from examples (14-17) that the combination *dašš ‘ala* sometimes denotes that someone enters a place or joins a group of people rudely or without an invitation. For example, this is construed in the presence of such words as *maṛṛa* ‘once’ which connotes ‘once upon a time’ in example (17). The word *maṛṛa* is usually used as a rhetorical attention-getting device, especially when describing

²⁰ The word *zain* means ‘good, OK, fine’. It is common to prefix *n-* to it when it stands on its own. The meaning is unchanged (Smart and Altorfer 2010: 24).

²¹ English borrowing: ‘class (room)’.

²² Persian borrowing: هم ‘also’, widely used in Iraq and Arabia. It seems to have been current in Iraq in the tenth century (Altoma 1969: 105).

²³ Only sophisticated Kuwaitis pronounce the phoneme /p/ fluently in loanwords; otherwise it is usually changed into its voiced counterpart /b/ because /p/ does not exist in the inventory of the consonant phonemes of Arabic.

events of what happened to somebody or of how something happened. Moreover, notice the use of *maṛra nšidamt* ‘I was once shocked’ in example (17) followed by *dāš* ‘alēy ‘he messaged me (on Facebook)’ and the use of the verb *taxayyilay* ‘imagine that’ in example (14) followed by *uxūč yidišš* ‘ala sālīm ‘your brother drops in on Sālīm’. This construction is also noted by Ingham (1982a: 152) for Khūzistān in the following basic sense *dašš* ‘alie ‘to come in’, by Qafisheh (1997b: 220) for Abu Dhabi, and by Holes (2001: 175) for Bahrain.

7.1.4 Sense 4: ‘to bring in, insert into, enter something or someone into’

The highly specific meaning of *dašš* in the sense of ‘to kick a ball into the goal (i.e. to score)’ has been recorded for Kuwait by al-Sab‘ān (1989: 124) only. In my data, I recorded ten tokens of this sense. The semantic domain of sports seems to be productive and a factor in the spread of innovative senses that generates a number of interesting examples of *dašš* collocations. An example from my data includes:

18. *l-hīn āna bil-findiḳ b-ḡurfiti gā ‘id aṭāli* ‘ *l-mubārā, yidišš gōl*²⁴ *hni, l-manṭaqa kāmla hhhhh čidi, šrāx, šrāx, okē,*²⁵ *čān yidišš gōl s-suwēd ‘alēhum, u dašš gōl s-suwēd t-tāni*
 ‘Now, I’m at the hotel watching the match; whenever the ball **scores**, the whole area goes mad, okay. Then Sweden **scores** a goal, and Sweden **scores** another goal.’ (sense 4a)

It can be argued that the phrase *dašš gōl* ‘score a goal’ is directional and very precise, because *dašš* co-occurs with the noun *gōl*. Therefore, the regularity with which *dašš* collocates with *gōl* establishes not just *score a goal*, but it is a *goal*, it is directional and has an achievement sense.²⁶ The other uses illustrated in examples (19-20) include ‘to fit (size)’, and the rude sense, ‘to penetrate; to put X into the anus (to enter someone’s buttocks)’, which are not recorded for Kuwait.

19. *talbis-hum haḳēla mustaḥīl ydiššūn* ‘*alēk li`anna lārḡ*²⁷ *āna ‘alēy šwayy fit*²⁸ (sense 4b)

‘Do you wear those (shirts)? They hardly **fit** you, because they look large on me, they look a little tight.’

²⁴ English borrowing: ‘goal’. In the Kuwaiti dialect, *gōl* also means ‘saying’. This type of meaning variation has been called ‘coincidental homonymy’ (Murphy 2010: 94). This phenomenon is also found in Indo-European languages such as English. For instance, Murphy (2010: 94) illustrates that the English *yen* (meaning ‘yearning’) as in *I have a yen for fine whiskies* coexists with the borrowed Japanese currency *yen*.

²⁵ Extremely common (American) English borrowing: ‘okay’ (Arts 2014: 1512).

²⁶ Cf. McCarthy and O’Dell (2005: 56) for different sporting collocations in English.

²⁷ English borrowing: ‘large’.

²⁸ English borrowing: ‘fit (i.e. suitable size).’

20. *ṣagīr mā yabīni akallim, dišš b-ṭīzi*²⁹ (sense 4c)

‘Ṣagīr doesn’t want me to call (her). (I say, why don’t you) **get into** my arse!’

There is an important distinction to be noted here. Sense (4a) is different from senses (4b) and (4c). The latter two senses are single occurrences of *dašš*. Sense (4c) shows a pejorative (denotational) change of meaning which is ‘a diachronic semasiological process’ (Geeraerts 1997: 99). A community of speakers exploits a particular pragmatic use and provides the means for disambiguation by virtue of the context and indeed the collocation. Sense (4a) is used almost as a fixed phrase which is often heard in football commentaries; it has become conventionalised and perfectly well-established, while senses (4b) and (4c) are conventionalised but also sociolinguistically restricted. Senses (4b) and (4c) are not fixed phrases. Instead, they exist by virtue of being used in a specific context with a particular group of people where the meaning is easily retrievable.

7.1.5 Sense 5: ‘to obtain, get in (money)’

None of the uses found under sense 5 are found in KA dictionaries. These uses are mostly related to the realm of business transactions and to the sense of achievement. The most productive of these uses are in the sense of ‘investing money (online)’. The use of *dašš* in the sense of ‘to invest, to get a financial support/to obtain money’ is interesting. This sense of *dašš* is particularly accompanied by numbers, figures, statistics, or any collection of information discussed in numbers. Holes (2001: 176) notes a similar use of *dašš* in the sense of ‘to obtain money’ as spoken by uneducated Bahrainis aged forty or over in the mid-1970s as follows: *arba ‘ta ‘šar, ‘ašrat ayyām yidišš fīh arba ‘in rabbiya* ‘in a fortnight or ten days, he would pull in forty rupees’. I will present one example from each context of use.³⁰

21. *āna l-ḥīn daššēt, daššēt l-ḥīn bass nāṭir flūsi tiḥawwal ōnlāyn*³¹ (sense 5a)

‘I have now **invested**, I have **invested** now, but I’m waiting for my money to be transferred online.’

²⁹ In Gulf Arabic, Holes (1990: 287) glosses *ṭīz* ‘anus’ as vulgar. Maamouri (2013: 369) gives the same word for Baghdadi Arabic with the meanings: ‘buttocks, rump’. It has also been reported for the neo-Aramaic dialect of Barwar as ‘bottom, fundament’ (Khan 2008: 1043). Hinds and Badawi (1986: 554) list it as a coarse term for Cairo Arabic with the following senses: ‘buttocks, rump, arse; rear end of any object; clumsy, oafish, thick’, cf. Rosenbaum (2004: 199). Qafisheh (2000: 395) glosses it for Yemeni Arabic as ‘anus, buttocks’ while Landberg (1923: 1654, 1942: 2240) lists the senses ‘rump, vulva, ass, uterus’ for southern Yemen. Issa (2002: 69) states that the phrase *bixiš ṭīzō* ‘to enter one’s anus’ occurs in the Lebanese dialect and is of Syriac origin (cf. Piamenta 1979b: 251, 2000: 116, 120, 223). See also Behnstedt and Woidich (2011: 177-181).

³⁰ Context of use is ‘an expression referring to a contextually obvious proposition, fact, situation, etc.’ (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2008: 46).

³¹ English borrowing: ‘online’.

Example (21) is contextually-conditioned. The expression *daššēt l-ḥīn* simply means ‘I (have) entered now’. There is no collocation here. However, words like *flūsi tithawwal ḥnlāyn* ‘my money to be transferred online’ contribute to the language context. The criterion that allowed me to translate *dašš* as ‘to invest’ is that I was present at this gathering and I listened to the entire conversation. In other words, example (21) suggests that the context supplies and disambiguates between simple ‘depositing’ and actually ‘investing’ money. One could ask what is there about context that invites the inference while talking about investment. In fact, example (21) is extracted from a dialogue between two speakers chatting about investing US dollars online (see conversation 1, ch. 8). So it is not just the use of the expression; it is the broader context of use that provides the means to understand what is going on. As Evans (2009b: 152-3) reminds us, ‘[t]he semantic contribution of a given word is always a function of a situated interpretation in a unique context of use’. In contrast, examples (22-25) are collocationally-determined:

22. *min yidišš d-dōr l-arba ‘a, mā ‘inda šay xaḷāš* ^(sense 5b)

‘When it (=football club) **reaches** the fourth league, he (=coach) has nothing to offer.’

23. *daššat ‘alēhum flūs. daššat ‘alēhum flūs, flūs* ^(sense 5c)

‘They (=Egyptian Government) have **gained** lots of money; they have really **gained** lots of money.’

24. *dašš mawsū ‘at ginis hal masyad* ^(sense 5d)

‘This mosque **entered** the Guinness (World Records).’

25. *dāššīn biš-šafqa mānčister u yuventus u siti* ^(sense 5e)

‘Manchester (United), Juventus, and (Manchester) City are **negotiating** a deal.’

The collocations noted above are the following: *yidišš d-dōr l-arba ‘a* ‘to enter/join/dominate stage four’, *daššat ‘alēhum flūs* ‘to receive (easy) money’, *dašš mawsū ‘at ginis* ‘to set/hold/break the Guinness World Records’, and *dāššīn biš-šafqa* ‘to agree on/close/ink a deal’. Although these collocations are not encountered in KA dictionaries, they are, however, semantically compatible and grammatically well-formed. In other words, they are becoming widespread in this speech community because I have evidence from social networking websites to suggest their currency and prevalence among contemporary speakers.

7.1.6 Sense 6: ‘to interfere’

Sense 6 concerns the act of intervening in unnecessary situations. In example (26), the collocation *dāš bis-siyāsa*, which has not been reported for Kuwait, suggests that the individual ‘who entered into politics’ is becoming active, engaged, or immersed in politics. The collocation *dašš ‘arḏ* in example (27) was only reported by al-Rashaid (2012: 247). What we understand from that is that the collocation *dašš ‘arḏ* ‘to interfere’ is a relatively recent addition to the Kuwaiti lexicon, because it was first recognised in 2012.

26. *inta ka raḡul dīn lēš dāš bis-siyāsa?* ^(sense 6a)

‘You, as a religious figure, why do you **get involved** with politics?’

27. *iḏa hāḏa hōmaway,*³² *u hāḏa l-fāyiz yibārīh hōmaway u ḥamad bi-dišš ‘arḏ hōmaway,*
āna mita iyīni d-dōr ^(sense 6b)

‘If this game is home and away, and the winner is home and away, and Ḥamad will **interfere** home and away-like, then when’s my turn?’

Arguably, some speakers might find the act of someone who *dāš bis-siyāsa* obnoxious and interfering. In example (27), the very common expression *dašš ‘arḏ* is firmly established and fixed, because its meaning is unpredictable by simply looking at the meanings of the individual words it contains. Hence, the literal meaning of *ḥamad bi-dišš ‘arḏ* is easy to understand: ‘Ḥamad will enter into an honour’, but it also has a common idiomatic meaning, i.e. ‘he pokes/shoves/sticks his nose into something’. In addition, we could substitute the human subject *Ḥamad* with an animal: *l-ḡaṭwa*³³ *daššat ‘arḏ* ‘the cat interfered’ in the sense of the cat gets in the way. Also, we could substitute the subject with an inanimate entity as in: *s-sayyāra daššat ‘arḏ* ‘the car got in the way’, meaning a car prevents someone from turning left or right. In order to corroborate the fixity and popularity of this expression, I used a Twitter partner application called Topsy to search for the uses and mentions of *dašš ‘arḏ* on Twitter. Figure 7.1 below shows 143 occurrences of the expression *dašš ‘arḏ* as evidenced on Twitter from October 10th to November 9th 2013.³⁴

³² English borrowing: ‘home (team)’ and ‘away (team)’.

³³ Portuguese borrowing: ‘gato’. Landberg (1942: 2512) records this for southern Yemen which he claims to be derived from Syriac ܩܬܘܢܐ.

³⁴ In American English, Dunkling (1990: 64) lists the word *buttinsky* as a ‘substitute name used by American speakers to someone who is butting in, or intruding, where he is not wanted’. In KA, al-Ayyoub (1997: 492) records the Kuwaiti lexeme *laḡaḇ* ‘to butt in on a conversation and ruin it’.

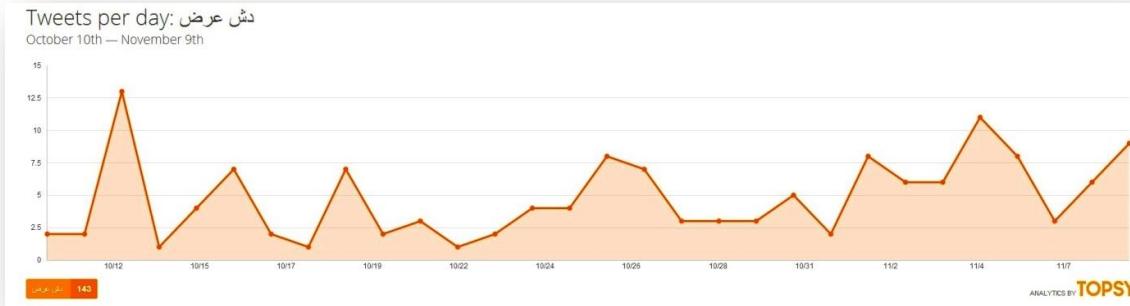


Figure 7.1: 143 tweets containing the expression *dašš arḏ* were tweeted within one month.

7.1.7 Sense 7: ‘to begin’

Sense 7 is listed in some KA dictionaries such as al-S‘aydān (1971: 577) and Khalaf (1988: 169-170). It mainly refers to temporal activities and is the least occurring sense in my data. For instance:

28. *āna šahar tis ‘a³⁵ badišš nšālla³⁶ qaddamt* (sense 7a)

‘In September, I will **start** attending (the Arab Open University), hopefully, as I already applied.’ [Inferred meaning: school starts in September.]

29. *yigūl lik³⁷ ida gidart t‘arif hagg³⁸ n-nās, tigdarr ddišš lah* (sense 7b)

‘They say if you can understand people better, you’ll be able **to get to know** him.’

7.1.8 Sense 8: ‘to change in character or condition; alter in function or nature’

From examples (30-38) below, it can be observed that most of the uses within sense 8 are related to the sphere of politics due to the presence of common political terms such as: *mağlis* ‘parliament’, *intixābāt* ‘elections’, etc. However, we also find other uses related to change in character or condition. It is worth mentioning that all the examples noted within this sense are considered modern examples of use because they have not been attested in KA dictionaries.

³⁵ Note the use of a numeral instead of the name of the month *sibtambar* (cf. Johnstone 1967b: 89).

³⁶ The extremely common expression, *nšālla*, consists of a blend of three items: ‘in ‘if’ šā’ ‘will’ *allāh* ‘Allah’. It generally means ‘I hope (that); I hope so; probably; it is to be hoped (that)’ (Qafisheh 1975: 121).

³⁷ Another example of the so-called ‘ethic dative’ (otiose 2nd person pronoun).

³⁸ A preposition meaning ‘for; to’. *hagg* (and *māl*) is also used as a possessive/partitive particle originated in a noun meaning: ‘property, belonging, right’.

30. *āna yōm sa ‘di inna hāda mā yiṭla ‘, mā ydišš l-mağlis* ^(sense 8a)
 ‘He will make my day if he doesn’t **become** a Member of Parliament.’
31. *‘ayal b-šigg ṭ-ṭanṭāwi awwal mā ydišš hāda mursi, ha?’*³⁹ (sense 8b)
 (I hear) Mursī will get on al-Ṭanṭāwī’s nerves once he **gets elected**, eh?’
32. *mā ydišš l-mağlis wala ydišš l-ntixābāt, ma ‘āy?* ^(sense 8c)
 ‘He **becomes** neither an MP, nor does he **stand for election**. Are you following?’
33. *ḥamad ṣaḥḥ dišš muḥāsaba fīha kādar*⁴⁰ (sense 8d)
 ‘Right, Ḥamad (why don’t you) **major** in Accounting; you’ll be entitled to the Accountants’ Allowance.’
34. *ydišš s-sūg, bidāyat šisma istiṭmār. ‘āš b-fatra, sawwa mablağ, dašš b-marḥalat l-xaṭar*
 ‘He **gets in** the (stock) market, at the beginning of the what-do-you-call-it [...] investment. He lived for awhile, made some money, and **went through** a critical phase.’
 (sense 8e)
35. *yuba*⁴¹ *hāda ga ‘ ydišš bristiğ*⁴² *wiyā-hum yā ġimā ‘a*⁴³ (sense 8f)
 ‘You know what guys; he is **acting** in a prestigious manner with them.’
36. *ī balağ ḥēl, ḥēl, hāda b- ‘unf dašš r-riğūla b-awsa ‘ abwāba* ^(sense 8g)
 ‘Yeah, he reached adolescence/hit puberty very quickly; he **became** a man all of a sudden.’ [Inferred meaning: he’s not acting his age because he developed early.]

³⁹ *hā?* is an interjection used to question or challenge a statement, or express surprise (Holes 2001: 536).

⁴⁰ English borrowing (via French): ‘cadre’, noted for Kuwait by al-S‘aydān (1971: 1027). It is a sum of money added to Kuwaiti accountants’ wages as a reward from the government to support the cadre of accountants. Cf. Badawi et al. (2003: 741).

⁴¹ *yuba* literally means ‘my father’. But it is used here as the so-called ‘monolexic bi-polar’ term that involves the use of a senior kin-term to address the junior. For more examples, see Yassin (1977: 297).

⁴² English borrowing (via French): ‘prestige’.

⁴³ A very common vocative phrase. Dickson (1949: 635) notes *yā ġam ‘a* ‘oh, my following’ for Kuwait which is also common in the Gulf (Holes 2010: 290).

37. *almānya yaxi*⁴⁴ *maḥḥad yigdar ywaggifhum. dāššīn karf čidi, čidi* (sense 8h)

‘No one can defeat Germany my friend. They **are** superbly **trained**.’

38. *sawwa ‘amaliyya u dašš b-ğaybūba* (sense 8i)

‘He underwent an operation and **fell into** a coma.’

Examples (30-38) contain meaning variation. They show incipient semantic change, i.e. spontaneous references that are co-created by the informants. They have not been encountered or codified in any of the KA dialectal dictionaries. The matter of translation suggests that key choices made about pragmatic force and connotative meanings are clearly supported by the contextual material. It also entails a judgment about the specificity, tone, and attitude of the utterance. For instance, examples (30-32) are given in the context of regional politics and the ‘Arab Spring’, while example (37) is quoted out of the sports context. However, example (38) is both contextually and collocationally conditioned, whereby the noun *ğaybūba* ‘coma’ normally co-occurs with *dašš* in the sense of ‘to fall into’, ‘go into’, ‘lapse into’, ‘sink into’, ‘slip into’, and the relevant context provided. Nonetheless, the collocation *ydišš s-sūg* in example (34) does not necessarily refer to the stock market, but rather, to any market in general. It is the social setting and the nature of the communication that provided me with enough contextual clues in order to arrive at the meaning that we have now.

⁴⁴ *yaxi* ‘my brother’ consists of the vocative particle *ya* + the KA kin-term for ‘brother’ *ax* + 1cs possessive (post-consonantal) pronoun *-i*. This term of address is used within the family to address siblings, but it may also be applied to intimate age-mates outside the family. Friends of the same age are addressed exactly as brothers are, by an appropriate kin-term which may be prefixed or followed by personal names (Yassin 1977: 130).

7.2 The Structure of the Polysemy of *xalla*

Meanings of <i>xalla</i>	Occurrence
1. let ...!, why not...?	51
a. to make suggestions [14]	
b. to make requests [14]	
c. to express a wish for something to happen [11]	
d. to introduce what the speaker is going to say or do [7]	
e. to offer help [5]	
2. permit, allow [3]	3
3. cause to be, render, make	14
a. to cause to make [10]	
b. to change [1]	
c. to transform [1]	
d. to convert (money) [2]	
4. get someone to do something, or make someone do something	28
a. to let someone go hang! (i.e. ‘the hell with him!’) [10]	
b. to demand [12]	
c. to ask [6]	
5. leave alone, leave aside, abandon [21]	21
6. keep, preserve, retain, hold	6
a. to keep [2]	
b. to beg (God preserve you) [1]	
c. to stay still [3]	

Table 7.2: Meanings of *xalla* in my data

The verb *xalla* occurs 123 times in my data with 6 senses and multiple uses. Noticeably, *xalla* is the only verb that occurs in all the 18 social gatherings. In fact, *xalla* is an extremely common verb in KA, in the Colloquial Arabic of the Gulf (Holes 2010: 216), and in other Arabic dialects (Firanescu 2014). It is striking that the majority of the senses of *xalla* in my data are used for making suggestions, offering help, making requests, expressing a wish for something to happen, and introducing what the speaker is going to say or do; thus, none of these have to do with the physical act of leaving. Instead, they are conversational and meta-communicative verbs. It should be mentioned that some of the senses and uses of *xalla* have been attested in KA dictionaries. However, KA dictionary writers offer little evidence regarding its wide range of uses, and this will be elaborated upon in my examination below.

7.2.1 Sense 1: ‘to let’

This extremely common use of *xalla* usually comes in the imperative (and hortative) form with a pronoun enclitic showing inclination, desire, or command, which is also associated with rhetorical and conversational function. It has been reported that the imperative form of *xalla* ‘presents the most complex situations from the perspective of the modal meanings conveyed’ (Firanescu 2014: 368). Most of the dictionary writers list this particular sense of *xalla* in Kuwaiti conventional proverbs such as that given by al-S‘aydān (1970: 517) in Chapter 4, which will be repeated here for the reader’s convenience:

39. *xall l-gar ‘a tir ‘a*

‘**Let** the bald ewe grow’ (i.e. let everybody do what they like).’

My material contains five different uses of *xalla* within sense 1 which will be presented below in examples (40-45). The form of the verb can be said to be hortative. For instance, example (41) (imperative) shows a single speaker asking the addressee to let someone go, while example (44) (cohortative) indicates mutual encouragement to check the spelling.

40. *xall adizza ‘indi grūb⁴⁵ bid-dawām l-badu* (sense 1a)

‘**Let** me send it (=electronic photo) to my Bedouin co-workers in the group chat.’

41. *xall yirūhūn yištirūn bil awwal sakkātī⁴⁶* (sense 1a)

‘First, **let** them go (and) buy on the sly.’

42. *xa-nšūf nawwāf ta ‘āl, ams rāwētni xa-nšūf* (sense 1b)

‘**Let’s** see (the mobile video) Nawwāf, get over here. Yesterday you showed me, **let** me see.’

43. *ī xall yig ‘ad vāldēz ‘ayal* (sense 1c)

‘Then **let** (V́ctor) Valdés stay (in the team) (i.e. I wish Valdés could stay).’

⁴⁵ A relatively recent English borrowing: ‘group (chat)’. This word is mostly associated with the mobile messaging application WhatsApp® Messenger.

⁴⁶ This is one of the *fa ‘āli* adjectival forms which occur widely in the Kuwaiti dialect and is especially used for describing bodily attitudes, e.g. *waggāfi* ‘in a standing position’, *rawwāsi* ‘head-first’ (e.g. *naṭṭ rawwāsi* ‘He jumped from the springboard of the swimming pool’). Also, *ša ‘ādi* ‘skyrocket firework’ is noted for Kuwait.

44. *xa-nšūf l-speling*⁴⁷ ‘*ašān ngūl lič*’ (sense 1d)

‘**Let’s** see the spelling so we can tell you.’

45. *xall ašawwur lik* (sense 1e)

‘**Let** me make a photocopy for you.’

7.2.2 Sense 2: ‘to permit, allow’

Sense 2 of *xalla* was first recorded for Kuwait by Holmes and Samaan (1957: 216), and none of the KA dictionaries examined have listed this meaning. Moreover, it is the least frequent sense in my data with three examples only (see section 4.3.1). My spoken data includes the following examples:

46. *txallīni arūh bil ġims* (sense 2)

‘Will you **allow** me to drive the GMC?’⁴⁸

47. ‘*ādi mxallīna?*’ (sense 2)

‘Did (IKEA) **allow** him (=African-American customer) to do that?’

7.2.3 Sense 3: ‘to cause to be, render, make’

None of the uses of sense 3 have been recorded in KA dictionaries. However, as I have shown in Chapter 4, this particular sense was identified by participants in the online questionnaire. Also, I illustrated in Chapter 4 that ditransitive verbs are made causative by the use of the verb *xalla* in KA and in other regional dialects. This can be demonstrated as follows:

48. *āna aḥiṭ li axalli, axalli l-štirāk mītēn dīnār* (sense 3a)

‘I’ll put (the prices) myself, I’ll **make** [...] I’ll **make** the subscription 200 (Kuwaiti) dinars.’

⁴⁷ English borrowing: ‘spelling’.

⁴⁸ The GMC Chevrolet Suburban (by General Motors Company) is widely known in Kuwait by the acronym *ġims*. Cf. Holes (2010: 191).

49. *inta mxallīh sāylant*⁴⁹ (sense 3b)

‘Did you **make** it (=Facebook notifications) silent?’

50. *l-arḍ t-tānya hāḍi mālat riyāḍ bass xallāha dīwāniyya* (sense 3c)

‘The other land belongs to Riyāḍ, but he **transformed** it into a dīwāniyya.’

51. *iḥna dibalnāha*⁵⁰ *xallēnāha min bāwnd lēy kwēṭī* (sense 3d)

‘We doubled it up and **converted** it from pound (sterling) to Kuwaiti (dinar).’

7.2.4 Sense 4: ‘to get someone to do something, or make someone do something’

It seems to me that this particular sense is highly expressive as it contains hortative and exclamative constructions. What needs a mention here is the frequent use of the dismissive expression *xalla ywalli* in my data. This expression is translated by Qafisheh (1997b: 199) as ‘the hell with him (lit. Make him go away or get lost)’ for the Abu Dhabi dialect. Ḥanḍal (1998: 215) lists this expression in the main entry of *xalla* as used in the United Arab Emirates. Holes (2001: 159) glosses ‘let him go hang!’ for the same expression in the Bahraini dialect. De Jong (1958: 184) also gives *xalli yuwellī* ‘let it go’ for the spoken Arabic of the Arabian Gulf. According to Johnstone (1962: 98, 1967b: 243), the phrase (*xallih ywalli* >) *xālliwālli* ‘it does not matter’ (lit. ‘let him (or it) go’) expresses disapproval or indifference and is a very characteristic Kuwaiti/Bahraini phrase. So the expression is a highly idiomatic expression used for communicative effect. It has been around in colloquial Kuwaiti for more than 50 years and yet it is not attested in any of the KA dictionaries listed in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, dialectologists have it attested in their corpus-driven dictionaries and dialect studies as indicated above. It is possible that the local dictionary makers are being very polite in including this expression. It is not obviously innovative, but certainly well-established. It is mostly encountered in a colloquial speech context, and it is arguable that the KA dictionary makers might infer that it is rude, or more lower-class than standard Kuwaiti.

Furthermore, this particular use of *xalla* is attested in the 1977 TV serial *Darb z-Zalag* in the following scene: Sa‘ad left his brother Ḥsēn alone and went back home. He enters his house while his hand is touching his back because of the backache:

⁴⁹ English borrowing: ‘silent’. It was first introduced in the Kuwaiti dialect with the advent of mobile phones.

⁵⁰ English borrowing: ‘to double’.

52. Umm Sa‘ad (mother): *wint š-ħagga xallēta?*
‘And why did you **leave/abandon** him?’

Sa‘ad (son): *āna xallēta yiwalli w-inħišt.*
‘I **left/let him go hang** and escaped.’

Examples (53-55) occur in my data:

53. *lā tħači fħ. xalla ywalli, tirka ‘annik* ^(sense 4.a)
‘Don’t bother talking about him. **Let him go hang**, never mind.’

Examples (54-55) contain *xalla* as a ‘modal semi-auxiliary’ (Firanescu 2014: 367) and have epistemic force with a prominent factitive-causative function:

54. *yōm*⁵¹ *tala ‘l-mağlis xallāhum yi ‘tamdōn māltā l-xamsīn malyōn sanawi* ^(sense 4b)
‘When the parliament was formed, he (=Emir) **made** them agree on his annual salary of 50 million (Kuwaiti Dinars).’

55. *nawwāf wildik, xall yiği yisallim, yig ‘ad* ^(sense 4c)
‘Your son Nawwāf, **ask** him to come and greet and stay (with us).’

7.2.5 Sense 5: ‘to leave alone, leave aside, abandon’

According to the KA dictionaries examined in Chapter 4, this sense of *xalla* is treated as the standard sense, i.e. the motion sense ‘to leave’, and 21 tokens are noted in my data. It appears that *xalla* in the sense of ‘to leave’ is used with animate and inanimate entities. In other words, this particular meaning of *xalla* can be used to refer to humans and objects that can be ‘left alone’, ‘left aside’, or ‘abandoned’. According to the results of the online questionnaire, the set of entities that are ‘left alone’, ‘left aside’, or ‘abandoned’ can be expanded to include abstracts, habits, animals, foods, and emotions.⁵² The following examples are noted in my data:

⁵¹ *yōm* basically means ‘day’, but it can be used as the conjunction ‘when, if’ and as the adverb ‘sometimes’.

⁵² Examples from the questionnaire include abstracts: *xallay tiqatič b-nafsič kbīra* ‘Have great faith in you’ (lit. Leave your confidence for yourself big). Habits: *lā txalli šalātik* ‘Never skip your prayer’ (lit. Don’t leave your prayer). Animals: *l-gaṭwa xallat ‘yālha u rāħat ddawwir akil* ‘The cat left her babies (kittens) aside

56. *ī xalla yirtāḥ* ^(sense 5)

‘Yeah, **leave** him **alone** to rest.’

57. *hni lā tšīlhum haḍōl ya m‘awwad*⁵³ *xalla* ^(sense 5)

‘Don’t move these (=cushions), man. I say **leave** it (=cushion).’

7.2.6 Sense 6: ‘to keep, preserve, retain, hold’

I explained in Chapter 4 that in everyday Kuwaiti speech, we find a number of fixed expressions that include *xalla* as the main verb. For instance, it can be used in the supplication of God as in *aḷlah yixallīk* which could mean either ‘God preserve you!’ or ‘please!’;⁵⁴ the latter is noted by Ingham (1994: 162) for Najd. Despite being common in this speech community, no special mention of this particular use of *xalla* was made in the KA dictionaries. Examples from my data include:

58. *bass xalla mā ‘indi illa kēnit*,⁵⁵ *xalla* ^(sense 6a)

‘It’s alright, **keep it** (=your money); I only have K-Net (i.e. I’ll pay by credit card). **Keep it** (=your money).’

In example (58), it is not easy to know what *xalla* means if shorn of any context. Firanesco (2014: 369) reported a similar usage in the Syrian dialect with the meaning ‘let the payment (of the bill be on me/us)’. Holes (2001: 159) records a similar usage for Bahrain: *xalli l-flūs ‘indik* ‘hang on to the money’. As can be seen in example (58), the words *ḥsāb* or *fātūra* ‘bill’ are not inserted in the sentence, but the imperative *xalla* was directed to me by the interlocutor asking me to keep/return my money into my pocket.

looking for food’. Foods: *xallēt l-akil makšūf* ‘I left the food uncovered’. Emotions: *xallēt galbi bil-kwēt u sāfart* ‘I left my heart in Kuwait and travelled’.

⁵³ Al-Ayyoub (1997: 59) lists *ya m‘awwad* as a vocative expression in KA. Maamouri (2013: 409) records it for Iraq as a term of address, often implying a degree of impatience, irritation, or dismay. He gives the following English equivalents: ‘Mac’, ‘buster’, ‘buddy’, ‘man’. See Maṭar (1970: 102-103) for its morpho-phonological structure. Altoma (1969: 104) glosses *m‘awwad* as ‘entrusted to God’ in Iraqi Arabic.

⁵⁴ *aḷlah yixallīk* is noted by Piamenta (2000: 134) as ‘thank you!’ in the intercommunal Jerusalem Arabic dialect. Masliyah (2001: 273) records the religious curse in the negative form *allah la-yxallīk* ‘may God not leave you [alive]’ for the Muslim Arabic of Baghdad. Yassin (1975: 68) observes that ‘KA abounds with a subcategory of idiom characterized by a ‘less tight’ fixity of its component parts’. A number of Kuwaiti idiomatic collocations have been reported by Yassin (ibid.) in which he lists the following everyday courtesy formulas (i.e. exhortations), such as collocations that involve invocations of *aḷla* ‘God’: ‘*akramak aḷla* ‘May God be bounteous to you’, *sallimik aḷla* ‘May God keep you safe’, *hadāk aḷla* ‘May God show you the right path’.

⁵⁵ Name of a credit card company based in Kuwait: ‘K-Net’.

59. *bass a!la yxallik ida aḥḥad s'alak gūl lah 'ala ḥsābna* ^(sense 6b)

‘But **please**, if anyone asks, tell him we paid for it (=trip).’⁵⁶

In example (60), Firanescu (2014: 371) terms this form of *xalla* as a ‘frozen form’ which is basically a pseudo-interrogative form:

60. *agūl ḥagg ḥamad wint xallik, xallik, xallik* ^(sense 6c)

‘I then told Ḥamad, “You **stay** where you are!”’

⁵⁶ According to Geeraerts (1997: 99), ‘the *discursive* (or ‘pragmatic’) meaning of an item involves its conventional value, such as the fact that *please* (basically a verb) can be used as an interjection indicating that an utterance has the pragmatic value of being a request’.

7.3 The Structure of the Polysemy of *miša*

Meanings of <i>miša</i>	Occurrence
1. walk, go on foot	19
a. to walk [18]	
b. to toddle [1]	
2. move, move away, leave	18
a. to leave a place [13]	
b. to get a move on [1]	
c. to go to [4]	
3. move along, proceed	11
a. to move along [2]	
b. to proceed in a queue [1]	
c. to drive (car) [4]	
d. to ride (bicycle) [1]	
e. to follow (instructions, system, etc.) [1]	
f. to pan (camera) [1]	
g. to go by (days) [1]	
4. associate, keep company [2]	2
5. court, go out with [1]	1
6. function, be valid, acceptable	12
a. to accept a banking transaction [2]	
b. to go through [2]	
c. to sell well [3]	
d. to work well [5]	
7. make work, make go, operate	1
a. to authorise [1]	
8. expedite, give priority to	6
a. to get things going/done [6]	
9. go for a walk, stroll [1]	1

Table 7.3: Meanings of *miša* in my data

The verb *miša* occurs 71 times in my data with 9 senses and multiple uses, and it was recorded in 15 social gatherings out of 18. There are three notable verb forms here: the intransitive *miša* ‘to walk’ (senses 1-6), the causative *mašša* ‘to make walk’ (senses 7-8), and the derived theme V *timašša* ‘to stroll’ (sense 9). What is interesting in this data is that the

majority of the senses noted are demonstrably considered modern and innovative. Therefore, the significance of this data will be highlighted below.

7.3.1 Sense 1: ‘to walk, go on foot’

As has been shown in section 4.4.2, this sense has been recognised in KA dictionaries and it is the most general sense of *miša* that has the physical meaning of walking on foot, which is illustrated in example (61). Nonetheless, example (62) refers to a two-year-old baby girl and it is about walking with short steps.

61. *gā ‘da tamši tabi umha, tamši ‘al-qanafāt*⁵⁷ (sense 1a)

‘She (=little girl) was **walking** and looking for her mother; she was **walking** on the sofas.’

62. *ī b-tamši muna* (sense 1b)

‘Yes. Muna started **toddling**.’

7.3.2 Sense 2: ‘to move, move away, leave’

This basic sense of *miša* is also listed in KA dictionaries. It has the physical meaning of walking on foot, but it involves walking towards a particular place.

63. *ḥazzat-ha*⁵⁸ *n-nifīsī b-yamši* (sense 2a)

‘At that time, (Khālid) al-Nifīsī⁵⁹ was about to **leave**.’

64. *yalla barrūk*,⁶⁰ *yalla imš ya ‘ni šis-sālfa* (sense 2b)

‘Come on Barrūk. What’s the matter with you? **Get a move on**, (will you?)’

65. *yalla yūsif imšaw l-gahwa*⁶¹ (sense 2c)

‘Come on, Yousuf. **Let’s go** to the coffee shop.’

⁵⁷ *‘ala* is sometimes shortened to *‘a-* before a definite article. *qanafāt* (sg. *qanafa*) is a Turkish borrowing: *kanepe* ‘sofa’ < French *canapé* ‘couch’.

⁵⁸ *ḥazza* is typical of eastern Arabian and central Arabian dialects (Holes 2005b: 62). The etymology of *ḥazza* is intriguing. Ingham (1994: 176) suggests that ‘a scratch of mark as on a piece of wood, used in the common expression *hal-ḥazzah* ‘at this time, at the same time tomorrow’ [...] It is difficult to know what the semantic derivation of this is, but it may come from an early way of reckoning time by making a scratch on a tree or the ground to mark a shadow line at a particular time of day’.

⁵⁹ A well-known Kuwaiti actor (1937-2006).

⁶⁰ A hypocoristic form of the male given name Mubārak.

⁶¹ The polysemous noun *gahwa* could mean in Kuwaiti: ‘coffee bean’, ‘coffee drink’, and ‘coffee shop’.

7.3.3 Sense 3: ‘to move along, proceed’

Sense 3 is the most productive and polysemous sense of *miša* in my data for it has seven different uses and instantiations. Sense 3 can have animate or inanimate entities and abstract or concrete nouns as its subject or object. However, none of the following examples are recorded in KA dictionaries. As is shown in Table 7.3, most of these uses occurred only once in my data. Examples from my data include:

66. *hā! čidi, čidi miša, ha?* ^(sense 3a)

‘Aha! Did he **move along** like this?’

67. *minu illi yamši gabi?* ^(sense 3b)

‘Whose turn is it **to proceed** first (in a queue)?’

68. *riğa ‘t gari⁶² ga ‘ad amši čān ašūf bēt bahman* ^(sense 3c)

‘I reversed (my car) and kept **driving**, then I saw Bahman’s house.’

69. *bass habībi mū tamši b-nuṣ⁶³ š-šāri ‘ nawwāf, lik hāra brūḥik* ^(sense 3d)

‘But dear, never **ride** (a bicycle in London) in the middle of the street, Nawwāf; (remember that) you have your own lane.’

70. *lā hāda mā-gdar amši ‘ala niḍāma* ^(sense 3e)

‘No. I can’t **be part of/follow** that system.’

71. *yibaṭlōn lik⁶⁴ l-bāb, l-kāmira⁶⁵ tamši* ^(sense 3f)

‘They open the door for you, (then) the camera **pans/zooms in**.’

72. *tamši l-ayyām* ^(sense 3g)

‘Days **pass** very quickly.’

Example (66) signifies someone is travelling in a particular direction while example (67) indicates the act of moving forward. Examples (68-69) entail that someone is in a car or on a

⁶² Turkish borrowing: *geri* ‘back, rear, reverse’.

⁶³ From the Classical Arabic *niṣf* ‘half’, but in colloquial Arabic, /i/ is changed into /u/ and /f/ is omitted.

⁶⁴ Another example of the so-called ‘ethic dative’.

⁶⁵ English borrowing: ‘camera’.

bicycle and travelling along on it controlling its movement. Example (70) shows a metaphorical extension of *miša* in the sense of obeying or acting as ordered by someone. The speaker in example (71) was describing a TV commercial and how the camera moves slowly from one side to another. Example (72) is particularly interesting. It highlights ‘the passing of time in motion’ (Cruse 2011: 248). In KA, we use the verb *miša* whereas English speakers use the verb *pass* to denote the passing of time. Both *miša* and *pass* are motion verbs. This use of *tamši l-ayyām* accounts for a different range of expressions such as:

- i. We are coming up on ‘Īd.⁶⁶
- ii. We are getting close to ‘Īd.

This particular example indicates that the thirty days of Ramadan are coming to an end quickly. A similar temporal example of use was noted by de Jong (1958: 182) as in *teqif wa temšī* ‘(the clock) stops and goes’ for the spoken Arabic of the Arabian Gulf.⁶⁷ Lakoff (1993: 218) explains this metaphor nicely:

The fact that time is understood metaphorically in terms of motion, entities, and locations accords with our biological knowledge. In our visual systems, we have detectors for motion and detectors for objects/locations. We do not have detectors for time (whatever that could mean). Thus, it makes good biological sense that time should be understood in terms of things and motion.

7.3.4 Sense 4: ‘to associate, keep company’

Sense 4 of *miša* is usually followed by the preposition *ma‘a* ‘with’. It is not attested in KA dictionaries. The following are the only two examples that occur in my data:

73. *wilak*⁶⁸ *l-walad aṭwaḷ min l-wad‘āni u fitnis*⁶⁹ *u mazyūn u saksūka ya‘ni l-walad mā fīh ‘alēh mazyūn, mišēt ma‘āh* (sense 4)

‘Look, the lad is taller than al-Wad‘ānī and he is fit and handsome and has a goatee, which means that the lad is incredibly handsome, I **followed** him.’

74. *illi māšī ma‘āh ḡilla ibn l-gaḥḥa šinu* (sense 4)

‘Is it his shadow that is **moving** with that son-of-the-bitch (=footballer) or what?’

⁶⁶ ‘Īd ‘feast or festival’ refers to religious holidays, cf. Dickson (1949: 218-231).

⁶⁷ In Amman colloquial, Piamenta (1979a: 64) records the following example with *rikaḡ* ‘run’: *yā salām, addēš-il-wa‘t burkod* ‘Goodness! How quickly time passes!’

⁶⁸ An Iraqi form meaning ‘look, hey you, say’ (Woodhead and Beene 1967: 426; Maamouri 2013: 541). Holes (2005b: 40) notes *wilkum* in Bahraini Arabic and argues that ‘*wil* + pronoun is a rather impolite way of addressing someone or attracting their attention = ‘hey you!’’.

⁶⁹ English borrowing: ‘fitness’.

7.3.5 Sense 5: ‘to court, go out with’

Holes (2001: 499) reports that this particular sense of *miša* is usually followed by the pronoun enclitic *wiyya* indicating association.⁷⁰ It is not attested in KA dictionaries. However, the following occurs only once in my material:

75. *fa gāl ḥagg aḥmad imš wiyyā* ^(sense 5)

‘Then he told Aḥmad, “Come with me.”’

7.3.6 Sense 6: ‘to function, be valid, acceptable’

This specific sense of *miša* is very interesting for several reasons. First, it usually takes an inanimate entity as its subject or object. For instance, Johnstone (1967b: 147) records the following example for Kuwait: *māšiyah id-durūs* ‘(my) studies are going well’. Second, it has not been attested in any KA dictionary, though has been reported for Bahrain (Holes 2001: 499). Third, as far as I can observe, the uses within this sense are constantly on the increase. Also, the settings for this sense mainly revolve around the banking domain, but we also find other settings related to marketing, both of which are subfields of business. The following examples will make things clear:

76. *ya ‘ni šinu mi ‘nātha? mišat. ya ‘ni mi ‘nātha miša* ^(sense 6a)

‘What does that mean? It has been deposited. This means that it has been deposited.’

77. *āna yāni mā miša čān agūl il-āybān*⁷¹ *akīd gaḷaṭ* ^(sense 6b)

‘(The cheque) came to me but it didn’t go through, then I assumed the IBAN is clearly incorrect.’

78. *bass tadri šinu illi māši b-mašir?*⁷² *kintāki* ^(sense 6c)

‘But do you know what’s selling well in Egypt? Kentucky (Fried Chicken).’

79. *mā- ‘tiqid*⁷³ *fi aḥḥad kroks*⁷⁴ *mā rikab ma ‘a rīla, miša ma ‘a l-kil* ^(sense 6d)

‘It seems to me that Crocs are designed to fit everybody, it works well with everyone.’

⁷⁰ *wiyya* replaces its ‘educated’ counterpart *ma ‘a*. The usual etymology given for it is the Classical Arabic *wa* plus *iyā* (Altoma 1969: 106).

⁷¹ English borrowing: ‘IBAN: International Bank Account Number’.

⁷² In Standard Arabic, ‘Egypt’ is pronounced *mišr*.

⁷³ *mā a ‘tiqid* ‘I don’t think that...’

⁷⁴ An American proprietary brand of shoes, Crocs, Inc.

7.3.7 Sense 7: ‘to make work, make go, operate’

This sense has not been glossed in KA dictionaries and it only occurs once in my data. However, it is somehow related to sense 6, especially when it comes to the business domain. I discriminate between senses 6 and 7 on the basis of the verb forms, i.e. examples (76-79) above show Pattern I *miša* ‘to walk’ while example (80) has the causative, Pattern II *mašša* ‘to make walk’.

80. *minu yigdar illi yimašših? l-operēšin*⁷⁵ (sense 7)

‘Who can **authorise** it? The operations (department).’

7.3.8 Sense 8: ‘to expedite, give priority to’

Again, sense 8 is very much related in context to senses 6 and 7 but with notable morphological differences. Sense 8 belongs to Pattern V verbs which are derived from Pattern II verbs or by the prefixing of *t-*. They are usually reflexive of Pattern II; they denote the state of an object as the result of the action of the Pattern II verb (Qafisheh 1977: 44). It has not been recorded for Kuwait, but has, however, been noted six times in my material.

81. *gāl li šrāyik tmašši hal mu ‘āmala?* (sense 8)

‘He told me, “How about you **get** this transaction **done**?”’

82. *galat li ḥsēn hāk abīk tmašši hal čēk*⁷⁶ *māl l-mudīr* (sense 8)

‘She told me, “Ḥusain, I want you to **get** this manager’s cheque **deposited**.”’

7.3.9 Sense 9: ‘to go for a walk, stroll’

Finally, only one example was recorded for this sense in my material, which was also recorded by al-Ayyoub (1982: 52) for Kuwait in the sense of ‘to go on a picnic, walk leisurely’.

83. *‘ādi tīmašša wēn mā tabi* (sense 9)

‘It’s okay to **stroll** wherever you want.’

⁷⁵ An ‘educated’ pronunciation of the English word ‘operation’.
⁷⁶ English borrowing: ‘cheque’.

7.4 The Structure of the Polysemy of *rikaḏ*

Meanings of <i>rakiḏ</i>	Occurrence
1. run, come/go in running	4

Table 7.4: Meanings of *rikaḏ* in my data

Two word forms of *rikaḏ* are noted in my material: the intransitive verb *rikaḏ* ‘run’ and the verbal noun *rakiḏ* ‘come/go in running’. It was recorded in 3 social gatherings out of 18. Unsurprisingly, *rikaḏ* seems stable and is the least productive verb that occurs four times in my data. Arguably, it has maintained its default, basic sense throughout the history of Arabic dialects (see section 4.5). Only two Kuwaiti dictionaries have recorded the sense ‘to run’ for *rikaḏ* (Holmes and Samaan 1957: 208; al-Ayyoub 1982: 108). To test the extent to which the meaning of *rikaḏ* is stable, I will compare my spoken data and the TV shows. First, the following are the four attested tokens of *rikaḏ* in my data:

84. *yāl darwīš ‘ād⁷⁷ šūfhum, yinazzil-hum ‘ind l-bāb w-yūn rakiḏ, kil wāḥid šāyil ḡanṭita⁷⁸ yarkiḏūn lēy š-šālēh⁷⁹*

‘So, see Darwīsh’s kids, he (=Darwīsh) drops them by the gate and they **come running**. Each one of them is carrying his schoolbag and they **run** towards the chalet.’

85. *gūl ḥagg l-aḡānīb tšaddig yrūḥūn yarkiḏūn*

‘Tell that to the foreigners and believe me, they will **go running**.’

86. *‘aṭa xams digāyig inn mā yāk yarkiḏ ičayyik⁸⁰ minu illi dašš*

‘Give him five minutes and he will **come running** to check who **got in**.’

Second, in the Kuwaiti TV shows, I was unable to find instances of *rikaḏ* in the first three episodes of the 1977 serial *Darb z-Zalag*. However, in the 1987 serial *‘Ala d-Dinya s-Salām*, I was able to identify one example of use of *rikaḏ* as illustrated in the following snippet. This

⁷⁷ A mild reproach, or disagreement. ‘*ād* is also an exclamation of emphasis used with commands meaning ‘now; mind you; dammit!’ e.g. *bass ‘ād* ‘That’s enough now!’ It is also used as an exclamation of emphasis in denying or rejecting a statement or proposal, meaning ‘but; well; even’, e.g. *‘ād ḥadda ‘aḡīb* ‘But it’s really amazing’ (cf. Maamouri 2013: 409).

⁷⁸ Persian/Turkish borrowing: *çanta* ‘bag’ (Johnstone 1967b: 85; Altoonji 1998: 55, 120).

⁷⁹ British English (via Swiss French) borrowing: ‘chalet’.

⁸⁰ English borrowing: ‘to check’, one of the longstanding borrowings that is in current use in eastern Arabia. It was first reported for Kuwait by the Kuwait Oil Company (1951: 111).

is taken as an additional justification to show that *rikaḏ* has maintained its basic sense, which is ‘to run’, throughout the modern history of KA.

While Hayfā’ is exercising on her bike, she hysterically yells at Mabrukā, but Mabrukā keeps looking down upon her.

87. Hayfā’: *yūzay ‘ann t-tiṭinniz lā anzil l-hīn w-afrikk xiššitič⁸¹ bil gā ‘ w-asawwīč xubz rgāg!⁸² yaḷḷa!*

‘Stop ridiculing me or otherwise I will get off (the exercise bike) now, rub your face on the floor, and turn you into flat bread! Knock it off already!’

Mabrukā: *lā waḷḷa⁸³ xuft! ixtara ‘t. hāda taḥdīdič l-mu ‘tād.⁸⁴ hādī ‘uṣṭuwānat ṣ-ṣibḥ. kil yōm asma ‘ minnič nafs l-kilma, u hādī **tarkiḏīn** u taḥdīfīnī bin-ni ‘il u māku⁸⁵ fāyda.*

‘Oh really? I’m scared to death! I’m actually frightened! You know, I am used to your everyday blabbermouth. This is “the morning music record” that I hear daily. Every day I hear the same thing from you, and that you **run** and hit me with your slippers. Don’t bother, it’s hopeless!’

7.5 Summary

The principal objective of the chapter was to explore the lexical semantic behaviour of four KA verbs and to detect the semantic innovation and change in them. I have hypothesised that changes never occur in isolation; explicit links between socioeconomic and language change are evident in my data. Therefore, the most interesting finding was that the majority of the senses of the four verbs are deemed innovative and creative from a historical semantic perspective because I encountered meaning development in the key verbs which have yet to be attested in KA dictionaries. Within each particular sense, we find new uses and instantiations. I have also found that new uses are associated with technological innovation. For instance, *dašš* previously denoted ‘enter’. In the wake of technical progress, *dašš* has

⁸¹ *xišša* pejoratively refers to somebody’s face, and by extension, to a car front view.

⁸² *xubz rgāg* ‘rounds of thin unleavened bread’ is a typical Kuwaiti type of bread which is mostly cooked with *tašrība* ‘a dish of broth, bread and meat’ at Ramadan.

⁸³ *waḷḷa* ‘honestly; really? by golly!’ (lit. by God, honest to God) is frequently used before or after words, phrases, and sentences for emphasis (Qafisheh 1975: 99).

⁸⁴ A classical-sounding word.

⁸⁵ A typical existential particle which Kuwait shares with Iraq.

extended to ‘log in’, ‘browse online’, etc. But we have also observed that traditional senses of *dašš* are dying out, especially those related to old occupations. In addition, studies have shown that ‘[s]emantic change is often considered to stand in close relation to socio-cultural and intellectual as well as to technological development’ (Meinschaefer 2003: 135-6).

Most of the senses and uses listed in Chapter 4 are attested in my data. However, my data contain evidence to suggest that there are new, creative, and single occurrences and uses that exceeded the examples of use listed in the KA dictionaries. But I am aware of these single meanings being present and circulated in the speech community. However, they are innovations in relation to standard and spoken usage, and in relation to the speech community as a whole. Furthermore, the status of these uses is that we see them attested in conversational settings; a number of senses are encountered in the dictionaries. But then we see a great deal of innovation, some of which is created on the fly, some of which is pragmatically conventionalised, and we will see in Chapter 8 that they are very much tied to particular speech communities of groups of speakers.

Any (contemporary) native speaker of KA knows that *dašš* means ‘enter’, *xalla* means ‘leave’, *miša* means ‘walk’, and *rikað* means ‘run’. We could possibly look them up in a dictionary. However, this chapter has shown that these verbs are polysemous, requiring particular contexts of use for their disambiguation. For instance, in example (76), we encountered the following phrase: *ya ‘ni mi ‘nātha miša* which literally translates into ‘This means that it/he walked’ but contextually translates into ‘This means that it has been deposited’. Additionally, polysemy is seen as a potential source of lexical ambiguity, and it is ‘one of the most pervasive phenomena in natural language’ (Pustejovsky 2009: 359). However, context is critical in avoiding ambiguity and solving the potential vagueness.⁸⁶ In terms of vagueness, multiple different interpretations can be expressed with one word. However, ‘those interpretations are instantiations of a single general sense, rather than distinct polysemous senses’ (Murphy and Koskela 2010: 122-123). I completely concur with Hanks (2013: 73) when he said: ‘Do meanings also exist outside the transactional contexts in

⁸⁶ It should be pointed out that a number of tests have been proposed to tell the difference between vagueness and ambiguity such as the ‘zeugma test’ (Murphy 2010: 85-7). For instance, Cruse (1986: 13, 2006: 192, 2011: 102) explains that *expired* in *Arthur and his driving licence expired last Thursday* has a zeugmatic reading and creates a punning effect. According to Murphy (2010: 86), a zeugma (or syllepsis/pun) is a ‘sentence in which two different senses of an ambiguous word are ‘activated’ at the same time’. In order to normalise the zeugmatic sentence above, Cruse (1986: 21) points out that this can often be done by ‘unyoking the items that have been inappropriately linked’. Thus, the oddness can be resolved by separating the two readings out as in *Arthur expired last Thursday; his driving licence expired that day, too*.

which they are used? I would argue that they do not'.⁸⁷ With respect to lexical ambiguity, Edmonds (2009: 226) elaborates that '[p]olysemy indicates only potential ambiguity, and context works to remove ambiguity'.⁸⁸ We have seen that some words have many meanings, or more precisely, the same word can have different 'readings' and can make different contributions to the meaning of a text or an utterance. Context disambiguates because it includes domain, variety, setting, syntactic behaviour, and collocational preferences.

These findings further support the idea that verbs are infinitely extendable and that their uses can be highly ephemeral. It is possible to make a contribution about semantic change and polysemy by looking at the relationship of the highly abstract conceptual core elements, and how they are attenuated and adjusted whenever there are specific lexical expressions that collocate with them. In terms of how native speakers manage to realise collocations, Stubbs (2002: 73) argues that 'native speakers' unconscious knowledge of collocations is an essential component of their idiomatic and fluent language use and an important part of their communicative competence'. In other words, I was able to account for the ways in which simple lexemes combine in collocation to form really complex meanings that are only recoverable in particular context. A typical example would be the very common expression *dašš* 'arǝ 'He pokes his nose into something' in example (27) or the dismissive expression *xalla ywalli* in section 7.2.4. Both expressions are learnt as one block of words rather than two separate lexical units because 'arǝ habitually collocates with *dašš* and *ywalli* normally co-occurs with *xalla* in order to arrive at the idiomatic meaning.

According to the viewpoint of structuralist semantics (i.e. the Saussurean tradition), there are two main ways of looking at sense relations: paradigmatically and syntagmatically.⁸⁹ As elaborated by de Stadler (1992: 411-412), collocations 'are syntagmatic relations between lexical items that have acquired such a high degree of idiomaticity that the relationship does

⁸⁷ An observation based on Patrick Hanks' 'Theory of Norms and Exploitations', 'a lexically based, corpus-driven, bottom-up theory of language' (Hanks 2013: 17). In other words, meanings created through exploitation may themselves become norms. Consequently, 'words do not have meanings in isolation', but 'they only have meaning potentials' which are activated when the words are used (Béjoint 2013: 632).

⁸⁸ In English, the noun 'bank' is taken by many linguists as an example to demonstrate ambiguity which will strike many non-linguists because of the shared experience, knowledge, and situation. Regarding this, Stock (1984: 134) offers the following comment: 'People do not, outside linguistics texts, confuse the senses of 'a place to deposit money' and 'one side of a river'. It must be rare indeed that the situation arises in which 'I'm just going to the bank' means 'I'm just going to the river bank''. Cf. Hanks (2013: 66-72).

⁸⁹ Murphy (2003: 8) distinguishes between paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations by defining the former as 'the set of words forms some sort of paradigm, such as a semantic paradigm that contains members of the same grammatical category that share some semantic characteristics in common, but fail to share others' and the latter as 'relations between words that go together in a syntactic structure'. Lyons (1995) uses the term 'combinatorial' sense relations rather than the Saussurean term 'syntagmatic' sense relations.

not follow from the meanings of the said items'. Collocations allow us to decode the polysemy, and polysemy is a key mechanism or factor in semantic change. Additionally, Hanks (2013: 171) emphasises that '[w]hen a word develops a new meaning, it develops new phraseological patterns and collocational preferences at the same time'. That is what we understand by the contribution of collocations to polysemy.

The current study also provides an insight into lexical semantics where I explore on-going meaning extensions of these verbs in the colloquial Arabic of Kuwait. An assumption that is based on the lexicographic works that I have looked at is that I have already noticed that *dašš*, *xalla*, and *miša* are highly susceptible to meaning extension, to meaning specification, and to metaphorical extension, that is to say, they are highly polysemous in particular contexts of use. For instance, *dašš* has semantically extended to mean 'attend school, join the gym, barge in, kick the ball, invest', etc.; *miša* has metaphorically extended to denote 'to follow instructions, to accept a banking transaction, to authorise', etc.; and some *xalla* meanings are specific to include 'making suggestions, transforming, converting money, offering help, permitting', etc. However, *rikaḏ* is not productive at all. Cruse (2011: 16) points out that '[a] striking feature of linguistic expressions is their semantic flexibility: beyond their normal contextual variability, they can be bent to semantic ends far removed from their conventional values'.

Given the huge productivity of verb senses, how ephemeral or how temporary are some of these meaning extensions? For example, ephemeral means that senses of *dašš* like 'to become an MP, to be elected, to stand for election, to enter a critical phase, to reach adolescence; to hit puberty, to fall into a coma' are not attested in dictionaries but my speakers use them and recognise them. Temporary means that a verb sense has been around for years but it just has not made it into a dictionary, such as the phrase *xalla ywalli* 'let him go hang', as it is very present in the speech community. The phrase might sound an unusual use of words, coined for rhetorical effect. It is a pity that KA lexicographers have a duty to ignore them. My data has shown senses of *dašš*, *xalla*, and *miša*, which are not listed as dictionary entries, so we could ask ourselves: Are they so tied to the context of use that they could not be transferred into another context? Or do they get established in a speech community such that my informants have no problem figuring out what is going on? Given the complexity of polysemous verbs in KA on the one hand, it is arguable that speakers are highly efficient at understanding and distinguishing among meanings, but to what extent should a dictionary

account for all the possible uses of a term? What are the implications for the dictionary making of a dialect such as this? This finding has important implications for developing a data-driven, context-based dictionary because the existing dictionaries provide insufficient evidence which does not reflect a complete picture of meaning change. Lexicographers have ‘tended to focus on conventions of meaning and to neglect conventions of phraseology, especially collocational preferences’ (Hanks 2013: 104). It is possible that dictionary compilers have particular criteria for the inclusion of senses. Some local dictionary makers are traditional and their dictionaries are probably based on hearsay and rely heavily on published material and on the compilers’ colleagues or predecessors (see section 4.1.1). That is to say, there has long been a need for a reliable and practical KA dictionary that contains many example sentences to illustrate Kuwaiti dialect usage. Corpus-driven lexicography will associate meanings with specific contexts or specific corpus patterns, and this will avoid including any concocted or unnatural sounding examples.⁹⁰

To sum up, it can therefore be said that *xalla* is the most common verb, *dašš* displays its most extensive polysemy in this study, *miša* is becoming a productive verb, and *rikaḏ* is the least polysemous and productive verb. In what follows, I wish to conclude this chapter by highlighting the notion of ‘Discursive Thresholds’.

7.5.1 Discursive Thresholds

Susan Fitzmaurice has brought to my attention the notion of a ‘discursive threshold’. In the literature, the term tends to be used in reference to a helpful way of conceptualising the way significant events result in shifts of discourse. For instance, we have seen in Chapter 5 that there are three important and highly traumatic episodes in the country’s recent history: the Discovery of Oil in the 1930s, the Independence in the 1960s, and the Gulf War in the 1990s. In the empirical study, I hypothesised that each of these events, particularly the Discovery of Oil, are ‘discursive thresholds’, which appear to be relevant in terms of change in meaning for the key verbs in this speech community.⁹¹

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by a ‘discursive threshold’. According to Pilosoff (2012: 118), ‘[a] threshold is a point of beginning or entry. It is something that, when

⁹⁰ Hanks (2013: 243) experimentally observed that ‘[a]mbiguities are plentiful in the literature of linguistics, because they are based on invented examples isolated from any real context of utterance, but corpus evidence shows that genuinely baffling ambiguity arises in remarkably few cases’.

⁹¹ The term ‘discursive threshold’ is mostly ‘associated with Gillian Whitlock and her use of it in discussing various forms of life writing’ (Pilosoff 2012: 118).

crossed, represents change or at least alteration'. For example, the discovery of oil marks a threshold, a moment; after the discovery, we got a shift in the nature of the discourse and there is something that triggers it which is the discovery of oil, since '[t]he name of Kuwait today is synonymous with oil and the international power the State's prosperity has bestowed on the country and its people' (Shaw 1976: 8).

There are certain implicatures that speakers generate on the fly in the domain of private conversations. As Fitzmaurice (2015: 333) puts it:

Once the threshold has been passed, these implicatures are conventionalised and emerge into the public domain to receive widespread and popular recognition. The threshold thus marks the waning of one discourse and the growing acceptance and use of another within the public domain.

This notion is a way of framing in which things shift, and wars or major cultural shifts like the Gulf War will constitute external events which in talk will represent a threshold. According to Holes (2012: 243), wars and invasions are prime examples of linguistic change in the region. This political upheaval has played a huge role in the shaping of the modern Arabian Gulf. The late Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jābir al-Şubāh, had indicated, even before the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, that 'Kuwait would enter into a new era after his return to power and that elections for the country's vibrant national assembly would be one of the cornerstones of his governments' post-liberation policy' (Ehteshami 2013: 153). Therefore, that gives rise to new social conditions which then generate different forms of discourse and in which we necessarily get rapid semantic-pragmatic change and the development of polysemies.

In section 7.1.1 above, we encountered the pan-Gulf term *dašš* in the sense of 'to occupy, invade'. My contention is that following the Iraqi invasion, the Kuwaiti verb *dašš* developed this sense in the late 1990s, or the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait simply helped revive this specific use. In addition, as we will see in Conversation 3 below, the switch away from Arab to Asian migrants following the invasion is taken to imply the recognition and spread of work-related jargons such as 'foreigner talk' and 'Gulf Pidgin Arabic' as transactional languages and the lingua franca used between the domestic Asian workers and Arabs in Kuwait.

Chapter 8

Contexts of Semantic Innovation and Change in Kuwaiti Arabic

8. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the research results in terms of the contexts of use of the key verbs, their users, and the social interpretation. In the previous chapter, I was able to locate the site of innovation through examining the uses of the verbs. I reported that meaning is both contextually and collocationally bound and that a verb's meaning is activated in different contexts. By context I mean the specific features of a situation in which the speakers happen to produce the senses of the verbs, such as: the time and place of the sense production, the social settings, the nature of the communication, and the relative social status of the speakers and addressees. In this respect, Cruse (2006: 35) puts forth the following semantic definition for 'context':

An essential factor in the interpretation of utterances and expressions. The most important aspects of context are: (1) preceding and following utterances and/or expressions ('co-text'), (2) the immediate physical situation, (3) the wider situation, including social and power relations, and (4) knowledge presumed shared between speaker and hearer.

In this chapter, the focus is mainly on the users, i.e. speakers in social groupings as the agents of these innovations as reported in my data. Therefore, my interpretation and analysis must comprise society, situation, and speaker because the material is not derived from written records, but from live speakers in social contexts. My hypothesis is that my social gatherings generate more evidence of semantic innovation and change with respect to the key verbs than other kinds of contexts. Regarding the sense selection, speakers and hearers need to select just one of the senses of each polysemous word in the expression.¹

As sketched out in Chapter 6, social network analysis provides us with a framework to examine the extent to which local norms are maintained. It also provides a setting for an examination of the ways in which the interactions facilitate language change (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 119). In this study, post hoc analysis revealed that we have one social network and one speech community, but we have more than one community of practice. Within these communities of practice, we find two groups: 'the friendship group' and the 'the conservative

¹ Taylor (2003: 145) states that '[s]peakers of a language are able to create an indefinite number of innovative expressions by combining smaller units (such as words) in prescribed ways. Hearers, on the whole, are able to interpret these newly created expressions appropriately, by drawing on their knowledge of the meanings of the parts from which they are composed and principles by which the parts are combined'.

group'. The friendship group turns out to be 'an innovative group' whose polysemy is open, while 'the conservative group' is 'the family group' whose polysemy is restricted.

What are the characteristics of each group in terms of their speakers in my study? The following may make the necessity for the distinction clear. On the one hand, the 'conservative group' is represented by the older speakers in two social gatherings, namely, KAS12's *dīwāniyya* (KAS6's father) and KAS6's family gathering. The former includes KAS12's close friends and co-workers (KAS13, KAS14), and the latter includes KAS6's mother (KAS28) and his maternal aunts (KAS27, KAS28). It is often the case that the old men and women are going to dictate what the conversations are about. In other words, the level of formality is evident in such traditional, generation-based gatherings such as KAS12's *dīwāniyya*. The linguistic nature of the members of the 'conservative group' is marked by their exploitation of well-attested uses of the key verbs, e.g. the very basic senses of *rikaḏ* 'run' or *miša* 'walk'.

In contrast, the 'innovative group' refers to the friendship group represented in one social gathering whereby the members are all young men who are roughly of the same age. The topics of conversation are indicative of the kind of talk that goes on and the degree of informality of the context which permits people to use highly colloquial and highly informal expressions. Additionally, as I shall explore later, the young men are the locus of most innovation with respect to the key verbs. Also, there is a great deal of pragmatic variation and meta-communicative work going on in the friendship group. That establishes the status of the verbs' uses as either new senses that are well-established, or are in the process of being established, or they are just occurring in a stream of speech. After all, the friendship group and the familial group that I am studying are found in three social gatherings. These social gatherings are self-selecting and they involve people that choose to take part in an activity as opposed to being chosen by someone else.

My data confirm that there is innovative use that I have observed in these communities of practice. However, I do not know that an innovative use noted to have entered a speech community is actually novel to those who are reported to carry the innovation. Even though some groups may be classified as innovative and as responsible for introducing such innovations to their communities, it is likely that the semantic change concerned has had long history elsewhere (cf. Milroy and Milroy 1985: 348). Also, we will see that some innovative uses of the verbs are not necessarily accepted by certain groups and therefore may not lead to

semantic change. Nevertheless, ‘a change is not a change until it has been adopted by *more than one speaker*’ (Milroy 1992: 171).

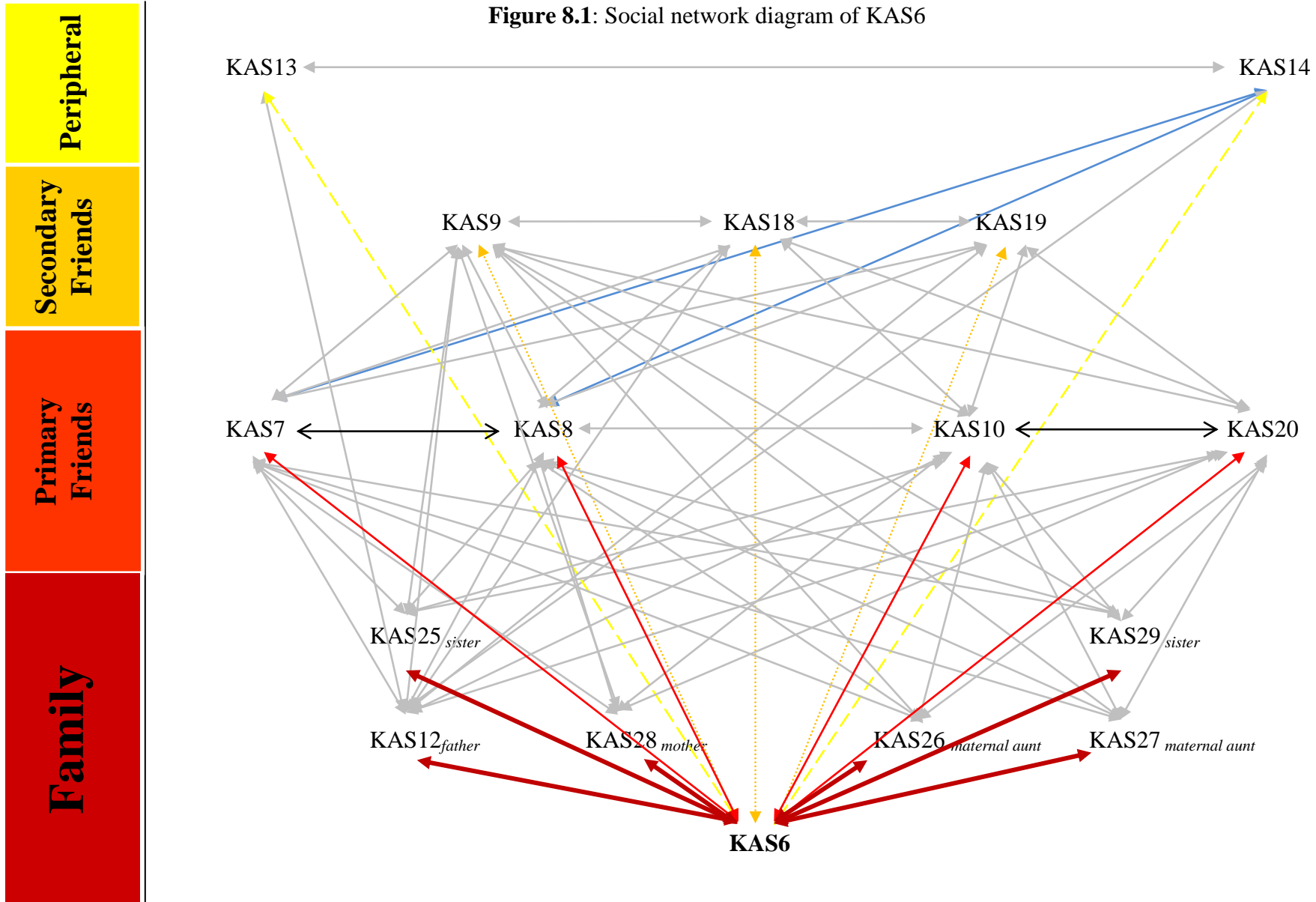
Furthermore, I may supplement my observations by distinguishing between the ‘conservative group’ and the ‘innovative group’ in terms of their habits of speech, which is correlated with extra-linguistic factors such as sex, age, education, and occupation. In addition, it is evident that speakers vary in terms of what they control for I have individual speakers who are prolific users and highly innovative.

The chapter focuses on three social gatherings representing three communities of practice within one social network. KAS6 is the focal point in this social network. In other words, what structures this network is the central position of KAS6 (see section 6.1.1). For example, I was able to record and observe him, his friendship group, and his familial group for over two years. Within the familial group, I recorded him at his father’s gathering as well as at his mother’s. This will allow us to link speakers with their practices and then put together a clear picture of the patterns of polysemy of the key verbs and to note how far these polysemies are shared by different speakers.

8.1 The Patterns of Polysemy: KAS6’s Social Network

KAS6 is the centre of the social network under study and he is the link that connects the friendship group to the familial group. He was born in Kuwait in 1989. He has four sisters and one brother. He is the eldest, or as we call it in the local dialect, he is *l-bičir* ‘first born child in the family’. All his life, he attended English schools in Kuwait and is now pursuing his BSc. in Marketing at the American University of Kuwait. I have known him since 2007. While I am in Sheffield, KAS6 and I stay in touch through social networking websites on a daily basis. This provides more evidence of the reciprocity and importantly the maintenance of the tie. I am also in touch with his parents, his brother and sisters, and his best friends who also eventually became my friends. So I am aware of his up-to-date activities and his whereabouts. This brief, autobiographical account of KAS6 will make it possible to reliably determine his social network and the social settings in which he and his cohort show up. In Figure 8.1, a diagram of KAS6’s social network is expressed graphically to show the social relationships amongst the speakers (see section 8.1.2).

Figure 8.1: Social network diagram of KAS6



8.1.1 Different Strength of Lines (weight of arrows)

Studies have shown that a social network ‘has the potential to elucidate the social dynamics driving language variation and change’ (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 120). In Figure 8.1, I use double (bidirectional) arrows to indicate that some of the speakers know one another and are in some contact, which entail that the tie is reciprocal. I will explain the depiction of each coloured arrow below:

- i. Bold, burgundy arrows show a kinship, consanguineal relation, i.e. KAS6 is connected to six speakers by blood.
- ii. Red arrows show that KAS6 is a primary friend with four speakers.
- iii. Broken orange arrows show that KAS6 is a secondary friend with three speakers, i.e. mutual friends.
- iv. Broken yellow arrows show that KAS6 is not closely connected to two particular speakers, i.e. they are his father’s friends.
- v. Grey arrows mean that they know one another very well.
- vi. Blue arrows mean they are father and son.
- vii. Black arrows mean they are brothers.

8.1.2 Measures of Network Bonds

The sociogram in Figure 8.1 is egocentric, i.e. it is defined from the standpoint of focal individuals; in our case, KAS6 is the focal point. According to Milroy’s (1980: 21) criteria, it is a high-density social network in which the majority of the speakers know one another. It also appears that KAS6’s personal network is multiplex, i.e. each tie represents different types of connection and more than one relationship exists. For example, KAS29 is KAS6’s sister who is also his classmate, and KAS12, KAS13 and KAS14 are friends and co-workers.

The Burgundy group (family group) represents KAS6’s family members who took part in this study. His parents are actually cousins, which entails that KAS6’s maternal aunts are KAS12’s cousins too, and they are on the whole blood relatives. They are the closest persons to KAS6 because they are the first members whom he encountered in his life. This relationship is known in Kuwaiti as *ahal* or ‘*āyla* ‘family’.²

² In KA, the word *bēt* ‘house’ stands for ‘family’. For example, *šlōn bētkum* literally means ‘how is your house?’ and socially means ‘how is your family?’ Cf. Dickson (1949: 113).

In terms of the friendship group, KAS6 is linked to two types of friendship: primary friends (KAS7, KAS8, KAS10, KAS8) and secondary friends (KAS9, KAS18, KAS19). I should mention the general factors that distinguish generic primary friendships from secondary ones. Firstly, the intensity and frequency of contact give us a very good idea of the nature of primary friends. This includes KAS7 and KAS8 (brothers), and KAS10 and KAS20 (brothers). Not only are they long-standing friends with KAS6, but also, their parents became friends (not all their parents were present in the gatherings). I know for a fact that KAS25 and KAS28 attended KAS7's wedding, and KAS28 and her children attended KAS20's graduation ceremony. This did not happen when KAS18 (secondary friend) graduated and (recently) got married. Secondly, the red colour (primary friends group) represents KAS6's childhood friends. I will explain why they are considered primary friends and not secondary friends; this is done through demonstrating the closeness of KAS6's friendship network which necessitates that it is reciprocal.

Below, I will outline seven indicators showing how close KAS6's primary friends' network is which signifies that they are friends at multiple levels. These characteristics show that the primary friends are 'members of a high-density, territorially based group' (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 121). This will also show that they participate regularly in collective activities. The following set of activities represents this coterie of friends:

- a) They spend most of the time in the *dīwāniyya* together.
- b) They share each other's secrets (by a self-report from KAS6).
- c) They frequently travel together.
- d) They regularly have meals together.
- e) They spend the weekend in the *šālēh* 'chalet' together.
- f) They all support the same football club (Arsenal F. C.).
- g) They are friends on social networking websites.

Thirdly, KAS6's father (KAS12) and KAS7 and KAS8's father (KAS14) are co-workers and close friends. Whenever KAS14 visits KAS12's home or beach house, he brings his two sons KAS7 and KAS8 to meet KAS6. Thus, KAS7 and KAS8 became friends with KAS6 simultaneously in the early 1990s. With respect to KAS10 and KAS20, KAS6 and KAS20 attended the same school and university. Then, KAS20 introduced his older brother KAS10 to KAS6. In addition, not only are KAS7, KAS8, KAS10, and KAS20 friends with KAS6, but also, they are friends with KAS6's family because I have observed KAS6's family and

his four friends being in contact more than once for the past eight years.³ This type of friendship is known in Kuwaiti as *rifīḡi rūḡ bir-rūḡ* ‘my heart and soul friend’ or *rifīḡi min ‘umur* ‘my lifelong friend’. That is to say, KAS6 would call, for instance, KAS7 *rifīḡi rūḡ bir-rūḡ* or *rifīḡi min ‘umur* to denote the close-knit ties between KAS6 and KAS7.

Another point worth mentioning here is that most of my informants are tribally-descended from the Najd area. In traditional terms, I assume that KAS7 and KAS8 are KAS6’s long-standing friends (including their parents) because they are distantly related, all ultimately being offshoots of the central Najdi tribe, the ‘Utaiba. Bassiouney (2009: 102-3) writes that ‘tribes form communities of practice. Individuals choose to belong to their tribe because this provides them with social strength and status. A clubhouse exclusive to tribe members is a community of practice’.

According to Eckert (2000: 36), ‘[w]hen describing social networks, analysts specify particular kinds of ties: ties that represent co-participation in a community of practice’. Thus, it should be emphasised that both the Burgundy and Red groups represent first-order network ties, ‘constituted by those persons with whom an individual directly interacts’ (Milroy 2003: 550). It is important here to distinguish between ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ ties of everyday life, ‘roughly ties which connect friends or kin as opposed to those which connect acquaintances’ (ibid.). Examples of the weak ties are given below.

The Orange group (secondary friends group) represents members who became friends with KAS6 either relatively recently, or through mutual friends. Those secondary friends are friends with KAS6 and with his primary friends too. For instance, KAS9 is a primary friend with KAS8 and attended university with him. In 2009, KAS8 introduced KAS9 to KAS6 and to the rest of the cohort. This type of friendship is known in Kuwaiti as *rifīḡ-rifīḡ* ‘friend of a friend’, which captures Milroy’s (2003: 553) ‘second order network contact of the people participating in the study’. KAS6 met KAS18 when he joined the American University of Kuwait in 2010, and he met KAS19 when he attended the Australian College of Kuwait in 2007. These secondary friends are not as closely connected to KAS6’s family as the primary friends are, as they are not KAS6’s childhood friends like his primary friends. Moreover, an axiom of the network analysis is symmetry: If KAS6 is connected to KAS9 by virtue of a

³ In order to show how deep and firm this friendship is in KAS7’s eyes, he officially named his newborn daughter after KAS6’s mother (KAS28). The tradition of naming someone after someone they like or are loyal to is a common practice in Kuwait.

shared friendship then KAS9 is connected to KAS6 as well. If the primary friends group and secondary friends group share KAS6, they are mutually related.

Lastly, the Yellow group (peripheral members) represents people on the periphery and only indirectly connected to KAS6. This type of friendship is known among Kuwaiti youths as *bēnna salām* ‘we only shake hands’ type of friendship, since they know one another via KAS6’s father, KAS12. Both the Orange and Yellow groups represent second-order ties constituted by those persons ‘with whom the link is indirect’ (Milroy 2003: 550). In what follows, I wish to argue in brief about the practice of forms of address in determining the intimacy of speakers. This is because I noticed how different members of the network are being addressed in each community of practice.

8.1.3 The Practice of Forms of Address in Determining the Intimacy of Speakers

Kuwaitis have a repertoire of terms to address their interlocutors. Such terms are used to indicate the degree of intimacy between the speaker and his relatives and friends. These terms are also key indicators which will help us define and understand the role and status of each of my speakers and their social distance with respect to KAS6 (cf. Yassin 1975, 1977b).

An addressee may receive one or more of the following forms. Normally, KAS6 would address KAS12 as *yuba* ‘my father’, KAS28 as *yumma* ‘my mother’, KAS25 and KAS29 as *ixti* (pl. *xawāti*) ‘my sister’, KAS26 and KAS27 as *xālti* (pl. *xālāti*) ‘my maternal aunt’, whereas both KAS12 and KAS28 address KAS6 as *wildi* (or *wlidi*) ‘my son’ (two-person dyads), both KAS25 and KAS29 address KAS6 as *uxūy* ‘my brother’, and both KAS26 and KAS27 address KAS6 as *wildixti* ‘my niece’. Regarding KAS6’s friends, especially KAS7 and KAS8, they are his childhood friends, so I noticed that KAS12 and KAS28 treat KAS7 and KAS8 as their sons, hence they would also call them *wildi* ‘my son’ or *yāli* ‘my children’. However, all members of KAS6’s friendship group would call KAS12 ‘*ammi*’ ‘my paternal uncle’ and KAS28 (and KAS26 and KAS27) *xālti* ‘my maternal aunt’. These kinship terms are used as relational sentiments or respect formulae, and not to denote blood relatives. Besides, KAS13 and KAS14 would address KAS12, KAS26, KAS27, and KAS28 by using ‘teconymous’ forms of address because it is conventional, and they would address the rest of the members by their given name.⁴

⁴ According to the OED, teconymy is ‘the practice among certain peoples of naming a parent from his or her child’.

After describing the social network of KAS6, which was useful in terms of measuring the strength, reciprocity, and domain of the tie or connection, we have seen that in KAS6's personal social network, he forms the 'anchor' of the network. It is therefore against this general background that I shall examine three selected social gatherings (henceforth, SG), namely, SG10, SG13, and SG15 (see section 6.2.1).

SG10 is KAS6's own *dīwāniyya* that took place in 2012. SG13 and SG15 took place in 2013; the former is a family gathering while the latter is KAS12's own *dīwāniyya*. SG10 and SG15 were hosted in the same house but the former was held on the first floor and the latter on the ground floor. All three gatherings took place in the same residential area in Kuwait City, Shuwaikh, within al-*Āṣima* governorate. I have selected these social gatherings because they contain more active speakers than any other gathering and because they represent four groups of speakers: young men, young women, old men, and old women. KAS6 is present at all three gatherings and is demonstrated to be a pivotal member in each one. Let us describe the social relations of the groups and then demonstrate the nature of these communities of practice.

8.1.4 SG10: KAS6's *dīwāniyya* (Ramadan 2012)

KAS6's social network is made up of different communities of practice, and those communities of practice are overtly performed in particular social gatherings. For example, SG10 is an instantiation of the friendship group which took place in KAS6's *dīwāniyya* in the first floor of the house during Ramadan 2012. This gathering place is typically known among KAS6's friends as *dīwāniyyat šwēx* 'Shuwaikh *dīwāniyya*', named after the residential area in which the *dīwāniyya* is situated. SG10 is a private, intimate gathering hosted by KAS6 for his friends only. In fact, I did not encounter any of KAS6's relatives during my recording and observation in any of his gatherings (SG3, SG7, SG8, SG10) where his clique of friends congregate. It is an informal gathering that takes place daily and not only at Ramadan. On normal days, people often come to KAS6's *dīwāniyya* roughly from 6pm and they stay up to midnight. But during the recording of SG10, the gathering was held at 9pm and people stayed as late as 2am, which is a normal timing during the month of Ramadan. It should be pointed out that SG10 lasted longer but I was able to record 100 minutes of this event. However, I stayed with KAS6 until he left.

The following informants were present in SG10: KAS6, KAS10, KAS18, KAS19, and KAS20. I was the oldest and KAS20 was the youngest. The sign that KAS6 or his friends are in is often the cluster of cars around the front door of the house. The absence of cars means there is no one in. Initially, KAS10, KAS18, KAS19 and I were the first comers to SG10. KAS20 joined us fifteen minutes later, while the host, KAS6, joined his *dīwāniyya* thirty-four minutes later because he was playing football with other people. This shows that KAS6 makes his friends welcome and at home by allowing us to attend any of his intimate gatherings even if he is not present.

The atmosphere of KAS6's *dīwāniyya* is convivial with on-the-floor seats as well as modern ones. Generally speaking, sitting posture is not at all important here. Also, no dress code is applied here as the dress of the peer group varies from casual western style clothes to formal Arab dress. In addition, when we order food for delivery, KAS6 pays because he is the host. When the food arrives, we are summoned by KAS6, *tifaḍḍilaw* 'Help yourselves (i.e. 'be at your ease and eat')', and the meal is served on the floor (cf. Francis and Frost 1981: 50-51). KAS6 officiates at the meal and makes sure everyone is looked after. When we finish eating, KAS6's friends and I say, *kattar alla xērik* 'may God increase your bounty' or *akramk alla* 'God be generous to you' (i.e. 'God will repay your kindness'); an acknowledgement of the generosity of the host. It is not necessary to shake hands or say goodbye to KAS6 when leaving, because we are going to meet the next day anyway. It should be realised that these are the characteristics of KAS6's *dīwāniyya* and this is a habitual practice and not only implemented at Ramadan. These characteristics are instantiated in SG10 though.

The TV was on all the time and KAS19 was flipping through the channels between the local news and the London Olympics. Thirty-seven minutes later, KAS6 invited KAS19 to play video games with him. In fact, the members who attended SG10 were mostly engaged in three activities: playing video games, surfing the Internet, or just having relaxed conversations. The notable subjects of discussion covered in SG10 revolved around academia, small businesses and investments, Internet and blogging, and football. These young male speakers are aware of the outside world, its economics, fashion, politics, and social behaviour. Access to satellite television, the Internet, cinema, and travel abroad have all contributed to broadening their minds and has led them to acquire many Western interests and habits (cf. Wheeler 2000). The increase of wealth in the country means more and more Kuwaitis are seeking higher education either at home or overseas. The informants in SG10

attend/attended prestigious universities in Kuwait and were taught under multinational teaching staff. All these factors are reflected in the informants' modern lifestyle and native dialect.

Let us now turn our attention to showing the extent to which the established uses of the key verbs are around in the speech community but let us also show you the specific social circumstances in which the innovations show up. They show up in particular social gatherings where the participants happen to be all male of a certain age, they have very close friendship affinities, and those affinities are constructed around a set of domains or topics which are presumably repeated *ad infinitum*. In SG10, the frequency of occurrence of the verbs is as follows: *dašš* occurs 25 times, *xalla* 14, *miša* 2, and *rikaḏ* 0. I will present an extract of conversation to show how the friends share common usages and to demonstrate the nature of the exchange. I aim to show the kinds of exchanges that go on in these recorded instances that illustrate the extent to which these new meanings and established meanings co-exist.

A couple of things should be noted here. The conversations in this chapter are numbered (1)-(11). Conversations (1), (3) and (4) include some taboo and rude expressions. For example, notice the use of the strong opprobrium expression *yxasi* 'to be unworthy' in conversation (1). Ingham (1994: 177) records *xasa* and *yxasi* 'to be unworthy' and *txasi* 'you could not do that' for Najdi Arabic which is said in answer to a threat or challenge. This and other expressions are not used in KAS12's mature *dīwāniyya* or in KAS6's family gathering. These expressions are highly colloquial and highly informal, but they are not considered rude in the eyes of KAS6's friends for several reasons. On the one hand, the kind of language used in this cohort is a language of camaraderie among close friends, so it is an index of ease, familiarity, and the casual nature of the interaction. On the other hand, the members of this gathering know one another well enough not to be offended; this is seen as a sign of solidarity among the peer group which allows them to talk with a degree of intimacy without the fear of offending or being offended.

The following recorded conversations are presented in the order in which they occurred in this event. Capital letters show that the speaker is shouting out loud or is amazed by something he heard or saw. The key verbs are boldfaced while their translations are boldfaced and underlined. There were some cases of speech overlaps including double talking and interruptions but some of them were outside the context of the key verbs.

However, irrelevant interruptions and long pauses have been excised (noted as ***** in the narrative).⁵ Points at which the recording was simply unclear are marked [*].

- **Conversation 1**

Conversation (1) occurred twenty minutes in, or exactly five minutes after KAS20 joined SG10. Although it is a dyadic chat between KAS19 and KAS20, KAS0 (self), KAS10, and KAS18 are within hearing. So we engage a little in this conversation. KAS19 is one of the active speakers in SG10, and it appears that he participates in most of his conversations or gets involved in others'. He wants to learn about the story which requires his engagement and contribution to the practices of his community, because learning is part of his participation in his community of practice. In addition, KAS19 chats with the two brothers, KAS10 (older brother) and KAS20 (younger brother), more often than with the rest of the group. Conversation (1) revolves around the practice of investment using the Internet. I will present this conversation below and give my comments on it afterwards.

1) KAS19: *šlōn l-biznis*⁶?
'How's the business?'

KAS20: *waḷḷa zēn*
'(nods) It's not bad.'

KAS18: *ay biznis?* [*]
'What business?'

KAS19: *šagḡāl?*
'Is it going well?'

KAS20: *šagḡāl ī*
'Yes. It is going well.'

KAS19: *l-ḥamdillāh*
'Praise be to God!'⁷

KAS18: *ay biznis?*
'What business?'

⁵ Irrelevant interruptions include people receiving a phone call during the recording of the conversation, while others left the room to go to the bathroom.

⁶ English borrowing: 'business'.

⁷ An expression used in giving thanks for success achieved.

- KAS19: *ma ga 'id t-talli*⁸?
'Aren't you making any profits?'
- KAS20: *illi gā 'id aṭal 'a gā 'id aṣḥiba*
'I instantly withdraw whatever money I make.'
- KAS19: *ya 'ni šwayya*⁹ *risk*¹⁰?
'Is it slightly risky?'
- KAS20: *mū risk, āna illi gā 'id adišš 'alēh l-hīn dahabb, šā 'id xamsa u ṭimānīn dōlār.*
'It's not risky, (the business website) that I usually **visit** is related to gold, (the stocks) have increased to 85 dollars.
- KAS10: *gūl lina šlōn s-sūg*
'(smiles) Tell us how the stock market is.' (joking with his brother KAS20)
- KAS20: *tadri lo dāš b-mītēn... l-hīn daššēt šarika tānya ḥagg ashum. bass xul-gaḥba*¹¹ *inšālla mā-štiri saham ib sittimiyat dōlār*
'You know, if I **had invested** 200 (dollars) [...] I **joined** another company now.' Over my dead body will I buy a share for 600 dollars!'
- KAS0: *minu? saham minu?*
'Which share?'
- KAS20: *saham āpil. aḡla saham bil 'ālam minu?*
'Apple's. What (do you think) is the most expensive stock in the world?'
- KAS18: *māykrosoft?*
'Microsoft?'
- KAS20: *lā yxasi, yxasi wa la māykrosoft aḡla saham bil 'ālam si 'ra xamsa u ṭalātīn alf kwētī saham wāhid. bērkšayar haṭaway mālat warin bafīt. dīšš 'alēh imya u sab 'a u ṭalātīn alf dōlār māy*¹² *čam*

⁸ The verb *ṭalla* 'means 'bring out, produce'. However, in the context of investment, it means 'earn, generate (profits).'

⁹ *šwayya* 'a little, a bit' has been traced to the Classical Arabic *šuwāya* 'portion' but its etymology may be sought in the diminutive of *šay*' (Altoma 1969: 103).

¹⁰ English borrowing: 'risk'.

¹¹ The taboo expression *xul-gaḥba* 'the whore's brother' is occasionally heard amongst young and old male speakers. Dickson (1949: 245, 1956: 601) notes *qaḥba* and *gaḥba* 'prostitute' for Kuwait. Landberg (1942: 2460) also notes *qaḥba* 'whore' for southern Yemen, which is also recorded for Jerusalem (Piamenta 2000: 117). Jayakar (1987: 22) gives *taqaḥḥab* 'to be whore' for Oman while Holes (2005b: 93) notes the denominative Class II verb describing states *gaḥḥab* 'to become like a prostitute' in Bahrain. Qafisheh (2000: 484) glosses *gaḥbeh* 'prostitute, whore' as used by male Ṣan'āni Arabic speakers in Yemen whose ages range between twenty and forty. See al-Jabboury (1998: 134) for its possible etymology.

¹² A short form of *mādri* 'I don't know'.

‘No, Microsoft could not afford it. The most expensive stock in the world costs 35,000 Kuwaiti (dinars) for one stock share. (The stocks belongs to) Berkshire Hathaway, owned by Warren Buffett. **Visit** (the website, I think the shares cost) 137,000 dollars or something like that.’

(*****)

KAS19: *inta dāš b-alf?*

‘Are you **investing** \$1000?’

KAS20: *dāš biḏ-ḏaḃt bi mītēn u tis ‘a u tis ‘īn dīnār*

‘I am **investing** exactly 299 (Kuwaiti) dinars.’

KAS19: *āna agūl lā ddišš marra tānya*

‘I advise you not to **invest** again.’

KAS20: *āna l-hīn daššēt, daššēt l-hīn bas nāṭir flūsi tiḥawwal ōnlāyn*

‘I have now **invested**, I have **invested** now, but I’m waiting for my money to be transferred/wired online.’

There are two groups of informants involved in conversation (1): main and secondary informants. The main informants include KAS19 and KAS20 because they engage the most in the conversation and KAS19 opens the situation which gives KAS20 an opportunity to discuss in some detail the practice of investment using the Internet. They are intensely interested in the stock market and in a particular way of accessing it. The secondary informants include KAS0, KAS10, and KAS18 because we are eavesdropping on the entire story more than speaking. However, KAS18 tries to engage with (or interrupts) KAS19 and KAS20 by asking them twice *ay biznis* ‘What business?’ but they do not respond to him, presumably because they are deep in the conversation. KAS10 also jokingly asks his younger brother KAS20 a rhetorical question about the stock market but the latter does not reply and continues his story. Nonetheless, when I asked KAS20 about the kind of shares that he is investing in, he directly replies.

What is interesting here is the steady co-construction of the senses of *dašš*. Conversation (1) is certainly topic-driven, but it is driven by the youngest speaker in SG10, KAS20, who uses *dašš* in three different ways. KAS20 firstly uses the sense ‘to visit a website’, then the sense ‘to invest money online’, and finally ‘to join a company’. They are all connected but in each token, *dašš* selects a preferable object in order to arrive at the intended meaning. For Cruse (2006: 156), there is no clear boundary between acceptable and unacceptable lexical items,

but what he calls ‘selectional preferences’. Therefore, the specificity arises not from *dašš* in isolation but from the direct object that follows it, e.g. *dāš b-mītēn* ‘I had invested 200 (dollars)’, i.e. it is collocationally bound and a normal choice of object to go with *dašš*. In addition, these uses of *dašš* are shared by KAS19 too when he said *lā ddišš maṛṛa tānya* ‘Don’t invest again’. It is not a case of ‘selectional restriction’ because *dašš* does not restrict itself to one direct object. As expounded by Hanks (2013: 116), ‘[i]t is preferable to think of them as **selectional preferences**. A restriction prevents or forbids you from doing something, whereas it is often the case that locutions excluded by a selectional preference are nevertheless perfectly grammatical, psychologically acceptable, and communicatively adequate’.¹³

Therefore, Internet and e-commerce are noticeable jointly negotiated enterprises amongst the members of SG10. Arguably, the use of *dašš* in the sense of ‘to visit a webpage’ has emerged as very prominent with a huge amount of currency. We do not need the specifics of ‘YouTube’ or ‘website’ to mean ‘enter’ in an electronic sense or for logging in or accessing the webpage. In fact, they are not nonce uses, but rather, they are shared.¹⁴

Furthermore, KAS19 and KAS20 attended the same university and they study in the same school, the School of Business. Their educational background is related to the domain of business and investment and might indirectly influence their lifestyle in which they have become interested in the stock market and are well aware of its details. It seems that KAS20 creatively uses *dašš* during his chat to denote:

- a. X *enters* the business world (metaphorically)
- b. X becomes interested in the online stock market
- c. X *enters* a business website (virtually)
- d. hence, X invests his money online by *entering* a business website

¹³ According to al-Ajeel (2002: 19), selectional restrictions ‘function to restrict the emergence of lexical items in higher syntactic combinations’. She further argues that ‘selectional restrictions specify the semantic features that can co-occur with different lexical items’.

¹⁴ As opposed to educated speakers, I would imagine that the computing sense of *dašš* is not accessible to older speakers such as KAS24 (in SG12 and SG17) because she has never browsed the Internet before, and because the computing sense is a modern, innovative use of *dašš*. Older generations would use *dašš* in the sense ‘to enter’ or the older sense ‘to pearl dive’ etc. because they lack knowledge about the Internet and computers, *not* because they lack proper knowledge about the meaning of ‘browse, log in, surf, etc.’

- **Conversation 2**

Conversation (2) occurs four minutes after conversation (1). I start this conversation by asking KAS10 about my distant cousin who works with him in the bank. KAS10 is talking about his work environment, and conversation (2) is oriented towards KAS10's experience as a bank teller. He is telling a story based on what happened at work at that day. But KAS19 is an eavesdropper and shares his opinion about the situation. In (2), KAS19 uses another sense of *dašš* which is 'to visit a bank', while in (1) he uses *dašš* in the sense of 'to invest online'. Additionally, KAS10 uses *miša* in the sense of 'to push paperwork through, get a transaction through' within the domain of banking and finance. Also, the use of *dašš* is contextually determined in (2) because KAS10 is talking about 'entering a bank'. Moreover, *xalla* is used imperatively in the sense of 'making someone change the IBAN number'.

2) KAS0: *šlōn ḥsēn? tšūfa?*
 'How's Ḥusēn? Do you see him?'
 (*****)

KAS10: *ḥazzat-ha lamma šār mnāḡar āna ḡala 't barra adig zigāra, zēn? DAŠŠĒT willa asma 'l-hidū' šway ya 'ni, l-waḡ ' šāyir mitkahrib.¹⁵ daššēt čidi...*
 'At that time, when the quarrel occurred, I went outside (the bank) to smoke a cigarette. **I entered** (the bank) and (the situation) was a little quiet. The atmosphere was very tense. **I ENTERED** like that (body gesture)...'
 (*****)

KAS10: *āna yāni mā miša čān agūl il-āybān akīd ḡalaḡ. l-mas'ūla ḡalat li tara¹⁶ l-āybān ḡalaḡ xall yiḡayra*
 '(The Syrian customer's cheque) came to me but it didn't **go through**, then I assumed the IBAN is clearly incorrect. The (female) supervisor told me, "By the way, the IBAN is incorrect, **have him** change it".'

KAS19: *ḡūl ḡagg s-sūri la ddišš marra tānya*
 'Tell the Syrian (customer) not to **visit** (the bank) again.'

¹⁵ *mitkahrib* (lit. 'electrocuted') is a youth slang term meaning 'tense, charged (atmosphere)'. It is also noted to be used in Bahrain (Holes 2001: 467).

¹⁶ *tara* 'you see, mind you' used as a parenthetical expression before a verb or a noun (Altoma 1969: 99).

- **Conversation 3**

Conversation (3) occurs eleven minutes after (2), in particular, two minutes after KAS6 joined SG10. KAS6 had already invited KAS18 to come with him to the chalet earlier that day. In (3), KAS6 is awaiting confirmation from KAS18 regarding whether he is going or not. But KAS18 had already booked his ticket to go to the cinema with his friends who will pick him up because his car is getting serviced in the garage. KAS6 starts yelling (in capital letters) at KAS18 because he refuses to go with KAS6 to the chalet. Then, KAS20 offers his car to KAS18 but he insists on driving his own car. Conversation (3) is very persuasive and forceful. However, there are irrelevant interruptions which are noted as (*****) in the text.

- 3) KAS6: *trūh?*
‘Are you going (to the chalet)?’
- KAS18: *b-arūḥ filim*¹⁷
‘I am going to the cinema.’
- KAS20: *š-filma?*
‘Which film?’
- KAS6: *uhwa bi-dišš*¹⁸ *filim wiya rab* ‘a’¹⁹
‘He (=KAS18) is **going to** the cinema with his friends.’
(*****)
- KAS6: *yaḷḷa š-giltaw?*
‘So (guys), what do you say?’ [Inferred meaning: Are you coming to the chalet or not?]
- KAS20: *rūḥ bil-hamar gawwād*²⁰
‘Why don’t you take the Hummer (=KAS6’s car), you pimp!’
- KAS18: *yimkin sayyārti xalḷiṣat*
‘My car might be ready (at the body shop).’

¹⁷ English borrowing: ‘film’. An anaptyctic /i/ is inserted between [l] and [m] to separate the -CC consonant cluster. This is evident in some English loanwords in Kuwaiti such as *sibring* ‘spring (twisted wire)’ as well as in proper names of Classical Arabic origin such as Bader (< Arabic *badr* ‘full moon’) and Fajir (< Arabic *fajr* ‘dawn’).

¹⁸ The prefixation of the particle *bi-* to the imperfect gives it a future meaning. The imperfect with *bi-* usually has the sense of volition (Johnstone 1967b: 143) and/or a marker of irrealis (Persson 2008).

¹⁹ *rabi* ‘is loosely any gang of which one is a member. In Kuwaiti, there are at least five words to designate a ‘friend’: *rifṭiḡ*, *ṣadīq*, *ṣidīḡ*, *ṣāḥib*, *xawiyy*.

²⁰ A very common abusive term used throughout the Gulf.

- KAS6: *xa-txalliṣ, xalha bil bēt*
 ‘(So what?), **let** it be ready, **leave it** at home.’
- KAS20: *xalha ixid sayyārti*
 ‘**Leave it**, take my car.’
 (*****)
- KAS18: *xa-nšūf*
 ‘**Let’s** see’
- KAS6: *ŠINU XA-NŠŪF*
 ‘WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY “**LET’S** SEE?”’
- KAS18: *b-trūhūn awwal šay intaw willa la’?*
 ‘First, are you really going or not?’
- KAS6: *B-NRŪḤ*
 ‘YES, WE ARE GOING!’
 (*****)
- KAS6: *‘ašān adig ‘alēhum agūl luhum yixallūna mbaṭṭal*
 ‘So that I call them (=houseboys), (and) I will tell them to **leave** (the chalet’s gate) open.’
- KAS18: *axalli ay aḥad yigiṭni ‘ādi*
 ‘I will **ask** anyone to drop me off, it’s ok.’

In conversation (3), KAS6 and KAS18 are still arguing about who will drop KAS18 off at the chalet. Twelve minutes later, they reach an agreement that KAS6 is willing to wait for KAS18 to get out from the cinema so that he can go and pick him up and head directly to the chalet in southernmost Kuwait. It is noteworthy that the verb *xalla* here is very productive as it is being used in three different ways: ‘to let’, ‘to leave’, and ‘to ask’. The first two uses of the verb are well-attested while ‘to ask’ is not. All these three uses are understood and shared by the young male speakers.

What is at issue here is that we have KAS6 saying that he is going to call the houseboy to ask him to leave the gate open, and he actually does that. In the following excerpt, which comes twelve minutes later, I will discuss a different addressee because KAS6 is obviously stepping outside of the intimate world of the *dīwāniyya* to talk to somebody else who is of a completely different rank. With respect to the use of *xalla*, KAS6 uses *xalla* but in two

different varieties. During the conversation, I noticed that KAS6 was not speaking ‘standard’ Kuwaiti with his Indian houseboy. On the contrary, he was using a distinctive form of Kuwaiti as exemplified below:

KAS6: *yalla iftaḥ š-šālēh āna yiḡi b-lēl ba‘dēn, inzēn? xalli bass wāhid bāḥ mbaṭṭal!*
‘Go ahead (and) open the *šālēh*, I will come later tonight, OK? **Leave** just one door open.’

Two (unusual) lexical forms are noted in the previous conversation: *yiḡi* ‘I will come’ and *xalli* ‘leave (m.s.)!’ In KA, the expected, usual forms would be respectively: *bayiy* ‘I will come’ and *xall* ‘leave (m.s.)!’ Smart (1990: 86) has observed that a native speaker of Gulf Arabic ‘may possibly modify his normal pronunciation in order to ease intelligibility’. In the same vein, Dashti (2013: 63) notes that this kind of language is ‘a simplified Kuwaiti Arabic form that Kuwaitis use when interacting with their domestic workers and which may be categorized under ‘foreigner talk’’. Interestingly, Bakir (2010: 208) records *iḡi* and *yiḡi* ‘to come’ for a form of Arabic known as Gulf Pidgin Arabic (GPA), which was also recorded by Næss (2008: 34) when he interviewed a Gulf Pidgin speaker in Oman. In GPA, it looks like the form *xalli* ‘to let, leave’ was first reported by Smart (1990: 100). What is interesting here is the use of a pidginised form of *xalla* by KAS6 and the comprehension of *xalli* by the interlocutor. KAS6 is obviously paying very close attention to the role and identity of that person. This observation yields some interesting insights into the understanding of *xalli* and the other string of words by a non-Kuwaiti speaker whose first language is not Arabic. Obviously, GPA is a transactional language and it is the lingua franca among the domestic foreign workers in Kuwait. It is used here socially vertically.²¹

• Conversation 4

Although conversation (4) is about one subject of discussion, it is made up of snatches of a conversation and contains short excerpts that focus mainly on the activity of playing video games. KAS6 is playing football video games with KAS19 while KAS20 is waiting for his

²¹ Furthermore, I was able to record a similar usage of the pidginised *xalla* in 2013 at KAS6’s grandfather’s house (a female *yam‘ah* - SG16) when I recorded KAS28 (KAS6’s mother) talking to her Filipino housemaid as follows: *leave this plate don’t wash it, xalli aside*. These were her exact words as they appeared in my material. They were entirely composed in English apart from *xalli*. Notice the hybrid phrasal verb *xalli aside* ‘leave aside’. Thus, it should be stated that KAS28 was talking to her Filipino maid in proper English because it is a widely known fact that, in Kuwait, Filipinos have a better command of English than the (uneducated, working-class) Indians do. In SG5, however, KAS12 (KAS6’s father) used the usual form *xall* while addressing his Indian houseboy as follows: *xall l-bāḥ maftūh* ‘Leave the door open’.

turn to play against the winner. After 44 minutes of the 100-minute recording have passed, KAS6 says the following:

- 4) KAS6 *ūff*²²...! *xul-gaḥḥa šlōn daššat*
'Ugh! How has the brother-of-the-bitch (ball) **scored**?'

Thirteen minutes later, KAS20 goes:

- KAS20: *kis 'arḍik,*²³ *xul-gaḥḥa ida hāda hōmaway, u hāda l-fāyiz yibārīh hōmaway*
u ḥamad bi-dišš 'arḍ hōmaway, āna mita iyīni d-dōr
'I curse your honour, brother of a bitch! If this game is home and away, and the winner is home and away, and Ḥamad will **interfere** home and away-like, then when's my turn?'

Two minutes afterwards, the following conversation between KAS6 and KAS19 occurs. KAS6 is frantically shouting at KAS19 because he was defeated at the football video game. KAS19 then shouts back at KAS6. However, this is not considered as a 'warning' or 'unfriendly' shout at all because I noticed this happening more than once in several of KAS6's gatherings but without hurting anyone's feeling because it expresses a surge of enthusiasm.

- KAS6: *RĪMĀĈ, RĪMĀĈ!*²⁴
'REMATCH, REMATCH!'

- KAS19: *LĀ LA, XA-TXALLIṢ, XA-TXALLIṢ, XA-TXALLIṢ*
'NO, NO (rematch). **LET** IT (=video game) FINISH, **LET** IT FINISH, **LET** IT FINISH.'

- KAS6: *lēš mā ddišš?*
'Why does it (=ball) not **score**?'

Twenty-four minutes later, KAS6 and KAS19 are still playing the football video game. KAS6 is finally defeated by KAS19 and he is blaming the ball for failing to score by saying the following three lines:

²² *uff!* is an interjection expressing displeasure.

²³ A coarse reference to the female pudenda, expressing contempt. This is considered an obscene phrase in all Arabic-speaking countries, to be strictly avoided in polite society. Holes (1990: 287) lists its meaning 'vagina' as a vulgar Gulf Arabic term, while Qafisheh (2000: 515) glosses *kuss* 'vulva, vagina' in his Yemeni Arabic dictionary which is also noted by Landberg (1923: 1657; 1942: 2572) for southern Yemen. Cf Frayḥa (1973: 153); Piamenta (1979b: 258, 2000: 116, 235); Masliyah (2001: 304); Rosenbaum (2004: 199).

²⁴ English borrowing: 'rematch'.

KAS6: *mustaḥīl bass... bass mā tabi ddišš l-kura*
'This is impossible! The ball doesn't want to **score**.'

KAS6: *LĒŠ mā ddišš bil gōl*
'WHY does it (=ball) not **enter** the goal?'

KAS6: *lēš mā ddišš*
'Why does it (=ball) not **score**?'

Football is an important subject of discussion in SG10, and in all KAS6's gatherings for that matter. The phrase *dašš gōl* '(the ball) scored' occurs persistently in (4). KAS6 here is actually playing a football video game and is so engaged in the game that it is as if he is playing football in reality. KAS6's examples of use are somewhat emotional, and he seems disappointed because he did not beat his PlayStation opponent. That establishes its meaning, because it is not an attempt to score a goal, and it is not actually a near miss, but it is an actual 'goal'. In eastern Arabia, it has been reported that English is 'a prime source for sports vocabulary' (Smeaton 1973: 51).²⁵ It is evident that Kuwaiti speakers who talk about football, irrespective of age, sex and education, tend to use the English loanword *gōl* 'goal' rather than its Arabic counterpart *marmā* or *hadaf*. Hence, *dašš* frequently coexists with *gōl* in that particular situation. Therefore, the 'score' sense in those examples gains primacy in the football domain. Football is seen as one of the most jointly negotiated enterprises in this cohort. In fact, the young men are increasing their use of the collocate *dašš gōl*; data collected by survey methods confirms this observation (see section 4.1.3.2).²⁶

Wenger (1998: 125) emphasises that the following characteristics, among others, are indicators that a community of practice has formed:

- i. shared ways of engaging in doing things together
- ii. the rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation
- iii. absence of introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an ongoing process
- iv. local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter.

²⁵ Cf. Zughoul (1978: 218); Holes (2001: 446).

²⁶ The domain of football seems to recur in most of KAS6's meetings. He uses this particular sense of *dašš* in SG7 as follows: *ōh daššat, ofšāyd, ofšāyd* 'Oh! It (=ball) **scored**. Offside, offside!' In addition, the football sense often occurs in male-only gatherings for it was recorded in SG2 by KAS5 as mentioned in Chapter 7 (example 18) and by his friend KAS4 as follows: *lo dāš hal gōl inša barra bass* 'If the ball **scored**, (the team) will be left out of the game'.

All these characteristics are applied to this friendship group. For example, in conversation (4), KAS6 and KAS19 are doing something together, which is playing video games. Conversation (1) seems to be a continuation of an ongoing story that did not emerge out of the blue. This can be shown by the absence of an introductory preamble because KAS19 directly asked KAS20 about a business that the latter was already involved in some time ago. Notice how KAS20 immediately replied: *walla zēn* 'It's not bad'. This indicates that both KAS19 and KAS20 were already involved in this same story, though in this gathering, I was able to hear part two of the story. Moreover, we find laughter and an inside joke in conversation (1). All these and others are indicators of a community of practice.

8.1.5 SG13: A Family *yam 'ah* (Ramadan 2013)

SG13 is a family (*yam 'ah*) gathering that took place at KAS6's grandparents' house at Ramadan 2013. The members involved in this gathering are KAS6, his friends (KAS9, KAS10), his sisters (KAS25, KAS29), his maternal aunts (KAS26, KAS27), and his mother (KAS28). KAS6's other sisters and his brother were there but in another room playing video games. In addition, trusted old retainers are admitted here. I noticed a couple of Yemeni traders selling clothing who stayed in a small room for half an hour. Occasionally, Arab foreign visitors may be admitted as being somewhat outside the system. The event took place in two sections of the house, in the dining area and living room, both of which are in the basement. The recorder was still recording when we moved from the dining area to the living room (see section 6.1). There were many instances of overlapping; however, I managed to extract three key conversations (5-7) to contextually illustrate the key verbs.

Old female speakers tend to exchange gossip and playfully mock their personal friends more often than (old) male speakers do. Also, as we shall see, KAS26 is an amusing raconteur. She tends to cite her friends in her narratives to add piquancy to the story, making her conversations more colourful and expressive. As a result, conversation (6) is accompanied by hearty and delighted laughs. This shows that KAS6's friends are not considered as guests or strangers, but rather, as family friends. Also, I noticed that the speech of women often involves patterns of repetitious phrase making (cf. Holes 2005b: xix).

This cohort is multi-generational and includes people from different social statuses, from middle-class to upper-class. The basement floor is spacious and luxurious with quality furniture, a plasma television, and seats all around the sides. Ornate bottles of perfume and

scent are found by the entrance, and this is a characteristic of a female gathering place. When I was first introduced to this gathering in late 2007, I was shown to a seat which is situated in front of where KAS28 often sits, and this has been my seat thenceforth. This women's gathering is very different from the austere environment of the men's as we shall see later in section 8.1.6. Nonetheless, the hostesses (KAS26, KAS27, KAS28) seem down-to-earth and genuinely friendly towards KAS6's friends and I. This greatly helped to facilitate the way we (KAS6's friends) spoke, sat, talked, and reacted. Generally speaking, it seems to be true that the closer KAS6's friends are to him, the more likely those friends are to feel at home when they are actually at KAS6's grandparents' house.

In the living room, the television is on all the time. KAS26 likes to watch local TV drama while KAS28's favourite channel is Sky News. The wireless Internet is accessible and KAS27 is browsing the Internet through her iPad. Some of the conversational settings are marked by the fact that they are very modern in that everybody is talking and browsing their iPhone devices at the same time. In other words, there are lots of chats but people are easily distracted too. Despite everybody being interested in their own smart phones, their attention can be caught by these raconteurs. Moreover, all the female speakers in SG13 are sharing a good laugh about different stories and are having amusing jokes. In fact, this is an intrinsic nature of this gathering where laughs and jokes occur habitually. Also worthy of mention is the fact that the intimate chats and conversations are endless in this gathering place. The old women show an inbuilt tendency for exchanging real-life and entertaining stories and humorous anecdotes, especially KAS26 and KAS28 who are full of chatter about family and local matters.

Twenty minutes after we had our late meal, we were served bottled water and some confectionery by the Filipino housemaid. Trays of delicious and fattening sweets are placed on the table in the middle of the room for self-service. We had time for one more round of water prior to daybreak which marks the beginning of the fast because Muslims abstain from drink and food until the sun sets. I left this gathering as soon as the Daybreak Prayer was called. On leaving, the valedictory phrase I used to address the group is *nšūfkum 'ala xēr* 'Until we meet again!', or 'See you later!', and KAS28 replied with 'Bye!'

What is described above is very characteristic of this family gathering. We may now proceed to examine the conversations. The frequency of occurrence is as follows: *dašš* occurs 7 times,

xalla 7, *miša* 7, and *rikaḏ* 1. Conversations (5-7) are presented in the order in which they occurred in this event.

- **Conversation 5**

Before conversation (5) started, which occurs ten minutes into the recording, KAS25 and I were chatting casually. Her brother, KAS6, then joined us. KAS6 and I are sitting with our legs crossed next to each other on the sofa and are engaging in a face-to-face conversation about social networking websites and technology. The domain of the Internet and cyberworld seem to be of interest with respect to younger speakers as I have solid evidence from my recordings to confirm this.²⁷ For KAS6's friendship group, social media, including Facebook, are really important and this is reflected in all of his conversations. Also, KAS6 and I both attended English-medium universities in Kuwait (and in the UK regarding myself). This is reflected in our conversations which contain noticeable English borrowings and code-switching whenever a chat about the Internet crops up.

In this family gathering, KAS6 plays a very active role. Regardless of the setting, he carries his language with him. He uses it and he is making it current in SG13. In other words, he activates the senses of the key verbs wherever he goes. He starts his conversation with the following straight question:

5) KAS6: *šinu fi āps*²⁸ *hilwīn?*
'Are there any good (iPhone) apps?'

KAS0: *fēsbuk masiğiz*
'Facebook Messages.'

Notice that as soon as I mentioned the Facebook app, KAS6 starts telling me about an incident that happened a few months back as follows:

KAS6: *maṛṛa nšidamt, dāš* 'alēy wāhid kān²⁹ *wiyāy bil madrisa pākistānī...*
'I was once shocked; a Pakistani guy **messaged** me (on Facebook) who attended school with me...'

²⁷ In SG3, KAS8 (KAS6's primary friend) reported the following example: *dīšš twitar tlāgīh hāt nafsa* 'Log in to Twitter, you'll find him (=KAS8's friend) posting himself'. In SG8, KAS6 provides the following example: *xall arid adīšš. āna ṭala't bass kā xann arid adīšš* 'I signed out, but let me sign in again'. In SG11, KAS21, who is in no contact whatsoever with KAS6's network, produced the following instance: *dīšš l-instigrām* 'Log in to Instagram'.

²⁸ An 'educated' pronunciation of the English borrowing: '(iPhone) apps'.

²⁹ An incomplete past act, whether frequentative or not, is usually expressed by the imperfect *kān* (Johnstone 1967b: 143).

- KAS0: *ṣiğğ?*
 ‘Seriously?’
 (*****)
- KAS6: *inta mxallīh sāylant*
 ‘(yawning) Did you **make** it silent?’
- KAS0: *šinu? l-fēsbuk?*
 ‘What? The Facebook?’

KAS6 is now browsing my iPhone searching for new downloaded apps. He is naming the new apps one by one, while KAS25 and I are having a small chat. Two and a half minutes later, KAS6 interrupts us by asking me about my iPhone wallpaper as follows:

- KAS6: *inta šinu l-wōlpēpar³⁰ mālik?*
 ‘What’s your wallpaper?’
- KAS0: *ayhu?*
 ‘Which one?’
- KAS6: *hāda māl telefōnik³¹*
 ‘The one on your phone.’
- KAS0: *l-azrag? mālah. māl hni*
 ‘The blue one? It’s built-in with this phone.’
- KAS6: *māku³² ‘indi. dišš*
 I don’t have it. **Access** (your mobile phone settings and check).’

³⁰ An ‘educated’ pronunciation of the English borrowing ‘wallpaper (the background on a mobile phone screen)’.

³¹ English borrowing: ‘telephone’.

³² The explanation of the existential particles *aku* ‘there is’ and *māku* ‘there is not’ has been rather contradictory amongst the Arabic dialect experts. Al-Ḥanaḥī (1964: 22) notes these particles for Kuwait and states that they are also used throughout Iraq; he believes that they were borrowed from ancient Sabaic, of ultimately Greek origin. Johnstone (1967b: 17, 146, 243) also records these particles for the dialects of Kuwait in the 1950s and takes them as ossified verbs or demonstrative particles. The particles are also noted in the dialects of Bahrain (Qafisheh 1997b: 14; Holes 2001: 14-15). However, both Kirkbright (1993: 8) and Holes (2010: 23) emphasise that these particles are unique to the dialects of Kuwait. Muḥammad (2009: 24) and al-Rashaid (2012: 47) claim that these particles are borrowed from Swahili. Many Mesopotamian dialect experts record *aku* and *māku* as lexical peculiarities of Iraqi Arabic (Malaika 1963: 57; Blanc 1964: 7, 32, 146-147; Altoma 1969: 92; Salonen 1980: 83-84; Abu-Haidar 1991: 184, 192; Mansour 1991: 45; Yona-Swery and Rajwan 1995: 12; Jastrow 2007: 423; Maamouri 2013: 16). In fact, Oussani (1901: 106) rightly calls Baghdad the ‘land of *akū* and *mākū*’. Furthermore, Drower and Macuch (1963: 15) list ‘*ka*, *ka* ‘there is’ and *lika*, *l’ka*, *laka* ‘there is not’ for Mandaic. Similarly, Müller-Kessler (2003) argues that *aku* ‘there is’ is a survival of a particle like Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic ‘*yk*’ or Mandaean *eka*. According to Potts (1990: 220), ‘the possibility of Mandaean influence in north-eastern Arabia is important, and is undoubtedly a reflection of ties between north-eastern Arabia and southern Iraq.’ Additionally, Buckwalter and Parkinson (2011: 429) gloss the interrogative *šaku māku* ‘What’s up?’ for Kuwaiti and Iraqi (cf. Blanc 1964: 53; Abu-Haidar 1991: 197; Mansour 1991: 91). According to Procházka (2009: 594), *šaku māku* (lit. ‘what is and what is not’) is an Ottoman Turkish calqué *ne var ne yok* ‘what’s new’.

In SG10, we saw that KAS6 uses *dašš* in the sense of ‘to go to’, ‘to score a ball’, ‘to enter’. In SG13, he is using *dašš* in the computing sense such as ‘to send an online message’ and ‘to access an electronic device’. In addition, KAS6 uses *xalla* in SG10 in the following senses: ‘to let’, ‘to leave’. In SG13, he is using *xalla* in the sense of ‘to make’ as in *inta mxallih sāylant* ‘Did you make it silent?’. KAS6 is indexical of different practices. Irrespective of the settings, he attempts to exploit the verbs’ senses effectively with his family and friends; this is especially true when we come to conversation (7).

- **Conversation 6**

KAS26 starts conversation (6) by telling a funny story about an annoying family friend called Ḥmayyid. He is annoying because he keeps calling KAS26 during fasting time in Ramadan and KAS26 prefers talking to people on the phone after the breaking of the fast every evening after sunset. This conversation, which is the longest, is mainly held between the three sisters (KAS26, KAS27, KAS28). However, KAS9 is also involved in the story and he is sitting between KAS26 and KAS28. The rest of the group are busy chatting to one another but are able to hear fragments of this story because they laugh at some parts of it.

Conversation (6) occurred twenty-two minutes after I came in and lasted for eight minutes. Three minutes after it was started by KAS26, KAS27 takes up the story from where KAS26 had left off. Before continuing the story, KAS27 actually says to me: *isma‘ yūsif s-sālfa* ‘Yousuf, listen to the story’, since we are sitting sideways.

6) KAS27: *čān yigūl iḥmayyid ta ‘āl, ta ‘āl xall yigra ‘ala gaḇuṛ š-šēx ḡābir*
 ‘He then said, Ḥmayyid come, come, **have** him recite (the Qur’ān) on Sheikh Jābir’s grave.’ (howling with laughter)
 (*****)

Two minutes later, KAS26 continues the story about Ḥmayyid visiting the cemetery:

KAS26: *git³³ lah imš čidi ‘ala s-sātūl ‘ala tūl*
 ‘I told him (=Ḥmayyid), “**Walk** next to the whole line and (you’ll find his grave) immediately”.’
 (*****)

³³ A short form of *gilt* ‘I said’. Johnstone (1967b: 77) notes that in the hollow verb *gāl*, the final radical may be assimilated by the *t* and *n* of the personal endings. In other words, CCC clusters that arise via suffixation, where the first two consonants are the same, are usually reduced. Holes (2007c: 611) reports for Kuwait that ‘[r]eduction in one high-frequency phrase is universal for all: *git* < *gilt*, ‘I/you [masc.] said’ in phrases like *git lik/lah* ‘I told you/him’. Cf. Mansour (1991: 66).

A few seconds later, KAS27 is looking at KAS9 while speaking the following line:

KAS27: *čān yigūl ḥmayyid, agil-lak, agil-lak*³⁴... *wāḥid māšī*... *mā t'arif hāda r-rayyāl 'aṭāh ḡahra u miša*...
'Ḥmayyid then said, "Excuse me" [...] somebody was **walking** [...] you don't know that man, he (the man) gave him his back and **left**.'

KAS9: (laughing out loud)

KAS27: *čān yiṭāl 'a čidi čān yihidda u yamši*
'He then looked at him like this, then left him and **walked away**.' (laughing)

A minute and a half later, KAS28 is expressing her feelings towards Ḥmayyid:

KAS28: *xalla ywalli, xalla ywalli, xalla ywalli* (joking)
'**Let him** (=Ḥmayyid) go hang (repeatedly).'

(*****)

Four minutes later, KAS26 continues the rest of the story. She cites KAS7 (I anonymised his name) in her narrative as the protagonist and the so-called Ḥmayyid as the antagonist. We may conclude that KAS7 is truly a family friend with respect to KAS6's family, and KAS26 in the last sentence considers KAS7 as a *maḥram* 'male guardian, chaperone', or in her terms, *xilwa šar'iyya*. Although this might be said in jest, these terms usually refer to a man's close female relative in Islamic law. Also, KAS26 uses some mild oaths in her narrative to make her story convincing. She opens her storyline with the exclamatory term *šufay* 'look (f.s.)!' to make KAS27 pay attention to what she is going to say.³⁵ But the rest of the group is also paying attention. In addition, KAS26 makes use of the historic present 'to mark out sudden dramatic phases in the narrative and changes in the course of events' (Ingham 1993: 24). This is exemplified by the copula *w-* as in *w-yiftaḥ l-bāb w-ydišš miṭl š-šārūx* 'he opened the door and entered like a rocket/spacecraft'. Using the historic present involves the independent subject pronoun and the copula *w-* typically preceding the imperfective verb.

³⁴ The speaker here is impersonating an Iraqi man called Ḥmayyid; hence, she utters the Iraqi verb form *agillak* (i.e. *gelet*-type) rather than the Kuwaiti *agūllik*, both of which are derived from *gāl* 'to say'.

³⁵ The most common verb 'to see' in Classical Arabic is *ra'ā*. In contrast, as the ordinary word 'to see', the Arabic dialects have *šāf*. The verb *ra'ā* appears in the Kuwaiti dialect only in derivative forms, e.g. *warra* 'to show'. Cf. Ferguson (1959b: 629).

KAS26: *šufay, dašš KAS7, āna gā ‘da, čān KAS7 yāy min l-mbārikiyya,³⁶ gāl li intay gā ‘da xa-nmurrič. l-muhum, uhwa gā ‘id hāt lah kirsi ‘ala d-dīwāniyya yiṭāli ‘rāyih u yāy. marr KAS7 taḡ la hirin,³⁷ sallam mā ‘araf KAS7. gāl lah, KAS7 yāy bis-sayyāra l-zgīra. čifat KAS7 ‘indina. uhwa KAS7 čifat ‘indina, l-hīn uhwa **yamši** ‘ala ‘ašāt, KAS7 čifat ‘indina, uhwa **yamši** ‘ala ‘ašāt, w-iḥna gā ‘dīn čidi mā yadri iḥna gā ‘dīn bil ḡurfa l-‘arabiyya. waḷḷāh l-‘aḡīm, han-ni ‘ma³⁸ u hal māy³⁹ illi aḡasil l-ḡayy wil mayyit, w-yiftaḡ l-bāb w-**ydišš** miṭl ṡ-ṡārūx, uhwa **dašš** miṭl ṡ-ṡārūx u yiṭāli ‘ni čidi. git lah šūf tara... gāl li, ‘ād⁴⁰ KAS7 gāl li tara sawwa čidi, gilt lah inṭir. ‘aṭa xams digāyig inn mā yāk **yarkiḡ** ičayyik minu illi **dašš**. waḷḷāh l-‘aḡīm inna illi taḡḡ brēk⁴¹ ‘ind l-‘āmūd illi ‘ugub. čān yigūl oh hāda intay, čān iyiy, čān aḡūl lah wēn ‘ašātik, git lah š-tabi. čān yigūl lā āna yāy bas b-asallim ‘alēč, git lah sallamt ‘alēy š-tabi? rayyāl **dāš** āna xilwa šar ‘iyya⁴² ma ‘a har-rayyāl*

‘Look, KAS7 **entered**, I am sitting, KAS7 was coming from al-Mubārikiyya. He told me, “**Let’s stop by** if you are still there”. Anyhow, he was sitting in a chair by the *dīwāniyya* and watching those who pass by. KAS7 passed by and honked at him; he saluted but didn’t recognise KAS7. He said... while KAS7 is coming in the small car. KAS7 barged in on us. He, KAS7, barged in on us – he currently **walks** with a walking stick – KAS7 barged in on us, he **walks** with a walking stick, and we were sitting like this and he has no clue that we were in the ‘Arabian Room’. I swear to God, I swear by this food and by this water which I use to cleanse the living and dead people, he opened the door and **entered** like a rocket, he **entered** like a rocket and stared at me like this. I told him, “Look, by the way”, he told me [...] KAS7 then told me, “He did like this [waving]”, I told him (=KAS7), “Hang on, give him five minutes and he will come in **running** to check who **entered** the place”. I swear to God, he slammed on the brake by the lamp post. He then said, “Oh, is that you?” He approached me and I told him, “Where’s your walking stick? What do you want?” He then said, “Nothing, I just came to say hi”. I told him, “You did your job. Now, what do you want? A man (=KAS7) **dropped in on** me, and I am allowed to be with that man (=KAS7)”.

³⁶ Souk Al-Mubārikiyya is one of the oldest souks in Kuwait City. It was the centre of trade prior to the discovery of oil.

³⁷ English borrowing: ‘(car) horn’.

³⁸ *ni ‘ma* ‘God’s blessing or grace’.

³⁹ A mild oath; KAS26 is swearing by the food that we were eating and by the water that she used for cleansing purposes. Holes (2005b: 197, 296) similarly notes this mild oath in Bahraini Arabic.

⁴⁰ *ād* ‘then, so, next’ used to mark a sequence in a narrative or conversation (Holes 2001: 367).

⁴¹ English borrowing: ‘brake’. Behnstedt and Woidich (2012: 444) note that *brēk* is used throughout the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine.

⁴² Islamic terminology, *xilwa šar ‘iyya* ‘seclusion’, refers to various practices designed to protect women from men in traditional Muslim societies.

In conversation (6), the older female speakers retain the well-attested uses of the key verbs which are shared amongst the three sisters. By well-attested uses, I mean those uses of the verbs which express mainly the physical act of motion and generally represent the dominant usage. Examples include *miša* ‘he walked’, *dašš* ‘he entered’, and *yarkið* ‘he comes in running’. These default senses of the verbs are used in the same gathering place where KAS6 is using the innovative senses of the verbs. Hanks (2013: 143) points out that ‘many lexical items have a default interpretation, which is invoked if expected collocational clues are absent’. That illustrates the extent to which new meanings and established meanings co-exist in one place and at the same time. It seems that not all members of the speech community are participating in the same linguistic changes at the same time.

Also, we find examples of direct and indirect speech reported in conversation (6) by the use of the verb *gāl* ‘he said’ and *yigūl* ‘he says’. Therefore, the three sisters are mainly talking about several events and stories that happened in the past with people they know. There are some affirmative imperatives noted here: *imš* ‘walk (m.)!’ by KAS27, *xall* ‘let (m.)!’ by KAS28, (and *šūf tara...* ‘See (m.)! Mind you...’) by KAS26. The pragmatic force here is that they are repeating their own attitudes towards what is going on. Furthermore, most of these imperatives are used by people from the same age group. Therefore, I did not come across younger speakers addressing older speakers with imperatives because the primary role of imperatives is to give orders.

Before I proceed to SG15, I wish to narrate a bizarre episode that took place in SG13 between KAS6 and his mother KAS28. I am interested in describing the nature of the interactions that I have observed between them and what the limitations are. We will see that some members are licensed or allowed to use highly informal language in certain circumstances, but they would not be allowed to do so in other circumstances.⁴³

- **Conversation 7**

KAS6 is really bothered about his irritating friend and is explaining to us (KAS0, KAS9, KAS10) how nosy his friend was:

⁴³ As a participant observer, it should be clarified that conversation (7) was jotted down as soon as possible in my field notes because the memory of my recorder was already full, and the episode occurred approximately twelve minutes after the recorder was switched off. According to Feagin (2003: 34), the downside of participant observation is that ‘there is no permanent record of the speakers, so that it is not possible to return to the evidence’. Even so, this may be counterbalanced by permitting the study of rare examples that are otherwise undocumentable.

- 7) KAS6: ...*hāda dašš b-axlāqi*...
 ‘... This (guy) **entered into** my moralities...’ [Inferred meaning: He stuck his nose into my business.]

All the members of SG13 are there. His mother was within hearing distance when KAS6 uttered this phrase. She was a bystander and obviously in the vicinity but KAS6 was not addressing her. However, he was sharply rebuked by her in front of his family and friends for uttering this phrase. She goes,

KAS28: *ŠINHŌ! ŠINU DAŠŠ B-AXLĀQI!?*
 ‘WHAT! WHAT IS **DAŠŠ B-AXLĀQI!**?’

I noticed that two things genuinely shocked his mother when she asked her (echo)⁴⁴ question: (i) the expression *dašš b-axlāqi*, and (ii) the fact that KAS6 uses *dašš b-axlāqi*. Here, we have a clear difference in practice. The mother does not use this expression, but has a good sense of what her son is talking about. In other words, this particular expression seems to be socially and conversationally inadmissible; she recognises it but she disapproves of it. However, it is connected with *dašš* ‘enter’; hence, it is a feasible extension, making use of the same feature, which is ‘entering’. In other words, it is the conflict of use and context that generates disapproval and shock. She knows precisely what he is saying, but she thinks that it is not socially sanctioned. Therefore, KAS6 was reprimanded for saying this expression.

But the question is: Are the sisters or the female speakers in general as likely to pick *dašš b-axlāqi* up as the brother? What factors might condition the likelihood of that being the case? Is it the nature of the context? As a matter of fact, I do not have any recorded evidence of the girls saying *dašš b-axlāqi*; however, I texted KAS25 (KAS6’s sister) and asked her the following questions:

- KAS0: Would you use the expression *dašš b-axlāqi*?
 KAS25: Yeeeeeah. Especially with *koko* (=KAS6’s pet name).
 KAS0: When and why?



Figure 8.2: A snapshot of KAS25’s text message.

⁴⁴ An echo question ‘repeats a previous utterance and amounts to a request for the repetition of that utterance...’ (Leech 2006: 35). Echo questions are ‘usually spoken with a rising intonation, and with a strong emphasis on the *wh*-word’ (ibid.).

KAS25: When someone is up your face, if he is so close to you. For example, standing in a queue and he is so close to me I would say *dišš b-axlāqi ba ‘ad* ‘why don’t you get into my moralities already!!!!’

We can deduce from Figure 8.2 that KAS25 would only address *dašš b-axlāqi* to her older brother, but not to her friends or any family members or even to her younger brother.⁴⁵ It is an in-group slang term conditioned by social factors, i.e. the interlocutor’s identity. Nevertheless, I have always wondered how mutual the use of this phrase is amongst different Kuwaiti speakers because nowhere else in the local KA dictionaries have I been able to find this expression. However, such radical, contextual and cultural changes seem to be implicated in the development of KA and these senses. Clearly, polysemy is part of everybody’s individual repertoire.

With respect to KAS6 and his social network, it seems to me that the friendship group shares the expression *dašš b-axlāqi* more often than his familial group. As expounded on by Katz and Fodor (1963: 179), in so interpreting a discourse, ‘a speaker may need to bring to bear virtually any information about the world that he and other speakers share’. Based on some Twitter feeds, it is evident that *dašš b-axlāqi* is becoming familiar among Kuwaiti contemporary speakers rather than older generations.⁴⁶ It also seems to me that KAS6’s usage of the modern argot is not warmly welcomed in his grandparents’ house.

Since both KAS6 and KAS28 come from a noble family, I would imagine that KAS28 expects her son to speak the most prestigious variety of the dialect and may want him to alter his speech habits in the direction of the acrolect as he gets older (i.e. the age-grading phenomenon). In the apparent-time studies of semantic change, we can always check the differences between the speech of two generations, i.e. parents and children. It is possible that this change is due to a change that is rapidly taking place within this speech community.

⁴⁵ On the same day in Sheffield, I asked a 27-year-old, educated, female Kuwaiti speaker the same questions and she emphasised that the expression sounds boyish: *mālat šabāb* ‘It belongs to young men’.

⁴⁶ I used Twitter to test the acceptability and sustainability of this expression. The earliest recorded example on Twitter is from four years ago tweeted by a Kuwaiti young female in reply to a Kuwaiti male tweeter. For technical reasons, the conversation is entirely based on a romanised ‘Arabic chat alphabet’. Twitter users are anonymised: A) *hmm u made up that word right? :p* ‘Hmm, you made up that word, right? :p’ B) *loool ta3beer majazi hatha ya3ni nafs lama tgonol dash ba5laqi* ‘Lol! It is a metaphor, like when you boys say *dašš b-axlāqi*’.

In terms of the diffusion of ‘speaker innovations’,⁴⁷ this episode appears to support the claim that ‘[a] speaker innovation may fail to diffuse beyond the speaker’ (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 347). KAS6’s *dašš b-axlāqi* was not accepted by his mother. But there is absolutely no problem saying that phrase within the friendship group, because, arguably, KAS6’s localised network is made up of persons of roughly equal age, sex, and education. Therefore, KAS6’s friends are willing to accept this and other phrases of equal type. It appears to be true that these kinds of expressions are more strongly associated with younger male speakers than older female speakers with careful speech styles.

8.1.6 SG15: KAS12’s *dīwāniyya* (Ramadan 2013)

SG15 took place in KAS12’s *dīwāniyya* at Ramadan 2013, ten days after SG13. It is a male-only gathering. The members of this gathering include two from the familial group, KAS6 and his father KAS12, and two from the peripheral group, KAS13 and KAS14 (KAS12’s best friends). Also, KAS12’s and KAS13’s younger sons are present but in a different room playing video games. Before going any further, a number of points should be illustrated here regarding the social relations. I removed my sandals as soon as I entered this particular *dīwāniyya*. Then, I (and every member) greeted every man in the room with *s-salām ‘alēkum* ‘Peace be upon you’ in an audible voice. The group then rose; a symbol of respect rooted amongst the Arabs of Arabia. It is customary that I have to make my way towards the host (KAS12) and greet him politely. The host is always the first one to welcome a friend or a guest by saying *ya hala, šlōnik?* ‘Welcome, how are you?’, *‘asāk b-xēr* ‘I hope you’re well’ (as a conversational opener). I then moved to those sitting on the right of KAS12, shaking hands with those who are the most senior members in turn and saying *massāk aḷla bil-xēr* ‘God make your evening good!’ to which they replied the same.⁴⁸ I am now part of this *dīwāniyya* and any newcomers will come and greet me. It is important to try adopting a compact sitting posture because it is unwise to cross legs or sit with my back to other people.

Wearing a *dišdāša* ‘Arab men’s long robe’, and *ḡitra* ‘headdress’ and *ḡāl* ‘head rope’ is essential because SG15 is a traditional gathering. Casual dress, such as T-shirts, is frowned upon. Moreover, KAS12 and KAS14 are holding their *misābīḥ* ‘rosaries/worry beads’ nonchalantly and smoking cigarettes for leisure. Coffee and tea are served in succession in

⁴⁷ This model of change proposes that ‘innovations flow from one group to another through ‘weak’ network links’ (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 343-344). It is designed ‘to offer a practical solution to an aspect of the actuation problem’ (ibid.: 344).

⁴⁸ The greeting *aḷla bil-xēr* can be used at any time of the day.

KAS12's gatherings. Five minutes later, we were served Arabian coffee by a Nubian coffee-server, and there is an element of formality in this practice in such traditional *dīwāniyyas*. It would be impolite to refuse a cup of coffee according to the conventions of hospitality. Also, the sugared tea was brought around on a tray in *istikānāt* 'small tea glasses'. Cambodian agarwood in incense burners were also carried around. In addressing KAS12, I observed KAS13 and KAS14 using the politeness formula *ṭāl!* *'umrik* (lit. 'May you have long life!'), which can often be used as a conversational filler.

What is also noticeable is that the son (KAS6) always refers to his father (KAS12) as *il-wālid* 'the begetter' in his presence, but he refers to him as *ubūy* 'my dad' in his friendship group. KAS6 and I were sitting next to each other and were browsing the Internet from our mobile phones. We came across a funny story online but we were unable to laugh out loud, because a polite chuckle is the norm in this *dīwāniyya*. Also, people do not raise their voices when speaking with KAS12; a quite measured tone is appreciated. A light badinage is acceptable though. It is evident that older men have the most authority in this group, so they dictate what the conversations are about. Upon leaving, the informal farewell expression would be *āna māšī* 'I'm taking off; I'm leaving'. However, in this specific gathering, I should address the host with the phrase *āna atraxxaṣ 'ammi*⁴⁹ 'I wish to take my leave, sir', which is noted by Dickson (1949: 120) as one of the laws of hospitality amongst the Arabs of Arabia (cf. de Jong 1958: 15). KAS12 would then reply with valedictory phrases such as *s-sā'a l-mbārka* '(your) hour is blessed', signifying that my visit has been welcome, and *fī amān illāh* 'in God's safe-keeping'.

After presenting this situational context of SG15, it is time to turn our attention to conversations (8-11) below which are presented in the order in which they occurred in this event. The frequency of occurrence is as follows: *dašš* occurs 9 times, *xalla* 7, *miša* 5, and *rikaḏ* 0.

- **Conversation 8**

Conversation (8) is the first dialogue recorded in SG15 and both speakers were already talking about somebody before my arrival. Here, we notice KAS12's use of the dismissive phrase *xalla ywalli* 'let him go hang' (which is also used by his wife (KAS28) in conversation

⁴⁹ The kinship term *'ammi* 'my paternal uncle' is commonly used to politely address elderly men.

(6) above). Also, KAS13 replied with the same expression *xalla ywalli* but with a laugh, so it does not really sound like a dismissive gesture.

8) KAS12: *lā yāxdik ‘azīz xalla ywalli*
‘Don’t let ‘Azīz take you, **let him go hang**.’

KAS13: *xalla ywalli ha?* (laughing)
Let him go hang, eh?
(*****)

The expression *xalla ywalli* ‘let him go hang’ is quite common in this group because it is repeated and shared by KAS12 and KAS13 who are close friends and co-workers. Thirty-five seconds later, the old men are talking about how time flies like an arrow, especially in Ramadan. But KAS12 was just making a statement to the group and KAS13 is agreeing with KAS12 while KAS14 ventured his opinion about it by using *miša* metaphorically (see section 7.3.3).

KAS12: *l-lēla xamista ‘aš*
‘Tonight marks 15th (of Ramadan).’

KAS13: *l-lēla xamista ‘āš⁵⁰*
‘Tonight marks 15th (of Ramadan).’

KAS14: *tināṣaf š-šahar*
‘We are in the middle of the month.’

KAS12: *yaḷḷa l-ḥīn l- ‘add t-tanāzuli*
‘Then, the countdown has begun.’

KAS14: *tamši l-ayyām!* (surprised)
‘Days **pass** very quickly!’
(*****)

The following extract occurs one minute later. Because SG15 took place in the middle of Ramadan, KAS13 is telling us that his children were happy to have collected *girgē ‘ān* ‘candy’.⁵¹ By uttering the presentative particle *willa* ‘lo and behold’, KAS13 expresses

⁵⁰ KAS13 pronounces *xamista ‘āš* with a long *ā*, no doubt for emphasis.

⁵¹ *girgē ‘ān* is derived from the quadrilateral verb *garga* ‘to clatter, bang, make a racket’. ‘It refers to the Gulf customs of children visiting houses in their neighbourhood on the night of the 15th of Ramadan to demand a treat, usually in the form of sweets (and if they didn’t get one, to play a trick), exactly as at Halloween’ (Holes 2004b: 104). Ingham (1994: 182) glosses *garga* ‘to rattle’ for Najdi Arabic, while Qafisheh (2000: 490) lists *garga* ‘to carry someone or something on one’s back’ for Yemeni Arabic. Holes (2004a: 141) notes ‘ar’a’

surprise to see his children with this amount of candy. Ingham (1993: 23-4) notes that the function of the particle *willa* ‘is to add dramatic atmosphere to the narrative, to highlight important phases of the action, and to involve the hearer in the story’. Also, it can be observed that KAS13 is using the basic sense of *dašš* ‘to enter’ as in the following collocate: *daššēt l-bēt* ‘I entered the house’.

KAS13: *ams mistānsīn, daššēt l-bēt willa š-kitir girgē ‘ān myam ‘in*
 ‘Yesterday, they (=my kids) were happy. **I entered** the house, lo and behold, I found out they collected a lot of *girgē ‘ān*.’

- **Conversation 9**

Conversation (9) occurs two and a half minutes after (8). It involves a heated discussion about how this season is not perfect for field agriculture, especially in an arid climate like Kuwait. KAS12 then raises his voice to KAS13 because he is insisting that KAS13 is wrong and he is right. Notice also that KAS13 refers to KAS12 by his tecnonym *bu-mbāarak* ‘the father of Mubāarak’ and not once have I heard KAS13 or KAS14 addressing KAS12 by his first name. In this instance, KAS13 is using *xalla* in the sense of ‘to let/allow’.

9) KAS12: *maḥḥad yizra ‘ l-ḥīn ḥaqli*
 ‘No one is doing field agriculture.’

KAS13: *nzēn bu-mbāarak xalni agūl lik s-sālfā*
 ‘Okay, Abu Mubāarak, **let me/allow me to** explain to you the story.’

KAS12: *ĀNA A ‘TĪK-IYYĀHA⁵² MIN L-ĀXIR!*
 ‘I CAN SPIT IT OUT FOR YOU!’

- **Conversation 10**

In conversation (10), which occurs three minutes after (9), KAS13 is talking about the punctured tyre he had on his way home. KAS13 is telling his story to the rest of the group about him driving on a new metalled road and that a small chunk of asphalt got stuck on the tyre tread which made his wheel skid. The meaning of *miša* here is interesting because it is

‘clatter, resound’ for Damascus and Cairo Arabic. For a further discussion on this custom, see al-Ayyoub (1984a: 79-82); Smart (1996: 181); Holes (2005b: 250); and Urkevich (2015: 118-119).

⁵² According to Johnstone (1967b: 66), ‘disjunctive forms of the suffixed personal pronouns are formed with the particle *iyāa-*, as: *iyāah* ‘him’, *iyāak* ‘thee’. These mainly occur as the second object of the verb ‘*aṭa[a]*, as ‘*aṭaak iyāah* ‘he gave you it’. As far as my Kuwaiti material is concerned, *iyāh* occurs with most of the verbs used every day. Cf. Erwin (2004: 144); Holes (2010: 279).

about ‘driving a car’ rather than ‘walking on foot’. Notice also that KAS14 is using the well-attested sense of *dašš* ‘to enter the road’ not on foot, but ‘by car’.

10) KAS14: *yimkin dāš... hāda tawhum hāṭṭīn fīh gār*
‘**You** probably **entered** (the road) where they have just made the surface with asphalt (=metalled road).’

KAS13: *ba ‘dēn ida inta tamši ‘ala il-hāda hāṭṭīn gār, tamši sarī ‘ mā yaḷgiṭ t-tāyir,*⁵³
illa ida wāgīf aw māši šway-šway
‘Then if you **drive** on it (=road), (bear in mind) it is covered with asphalt, but if you **drive** fast, the tyre will not pick chunks of asphalts, unless you stop or **drive** slowly.’

• Conversation 11

Conversation (11) occurs twenty-three minutes after (10). KAS12 is describing a television advertisement regarding a Levantine restaurant called as-Sāḥa that recently opened in the neighbourhood and is located two minutes within walking distance from where KAS12 and KAS6 live.

11) KAS12: *hāda dūd*⁵⁴ *‘alēh s-sāḥa msā ‘a. sayyārāt yāyya š-kiṭir*
‘The so-called as-Sāḥa was really swamped earlier today. Many cars are coming to this place.’

KAS6: *ī ‘indihum buḷēh*⁵⁵ *fuṭūr*
‘Yeah. They are popular for (Ramadan) buffet breakfast.’

KAS12: *bit-talvizyōn*⁵⁶ *yibaṭlōn lik*⁵⁷ *l-bāb, l-kāmira tamši*
‘On TV, they open the door for you, (then) the camera **pans/zooms in**.’

KAS6: *min kiṭir mā-hu grīb, wala marra daššēta*
‘Because it (=restaurant) is very close (to my house), I **have** never **tried** it.’

KAS13: *āna wala marra daššēta*
‘(me too) I **have** never **tried** it.’

⁵³ English borrowing: ‘tyre’. Behnstedt and Woidich (2012: 450) note that *tāyir* is also used throughout the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Jordan.

⁵⁴ *dūd* means ‘worms, maggots’ but KAS12 is using the term metaphorically to refer to a very busy place.

⁵⁵ French borrowing: ‘buffet’.

⁵⁶ English borrowing: ‘television’.

⁵⁷ An example of the so-called ‘ethic dative’ (otiose 2nd person pronoun), whose purpose is to involve the listener in the narrative. Ingham (1993: 22) observes that ‘the hearer is involved in the narrative by the use of the object pronoun *-k* ‘you’ or the complex *-lak* ‘to you’ suffixed to the verb’.

KAS6: *ya 'ni 'ibir bētna, wala maṛṛa daššēta.*
'Although it is across from our house, I **have** never **tried** it.'

KAS13: *l-bēt rāḥaw činna*
'I think (your) family has been there.'

KAS6: *l-yāhāl rāḥaw yidiššūn yirūḥūn, āna wala maṛṛa daššēta*
'The kids went and **tried** it; (however) I **have** never **tried** it.'

In conversation (11), it can be argued that KAS6 and KAS13 here are allowing their hearers to infer not that they have not been able to try this particular restaurant because they are not interested, but because they have not had the chance to eat there. They allow the implication that there is an underlying intention to do so at some point. Additionally, it is interesting to observe that KAS6 repeats the sentence *wala maṛṛa daššēta* 'I have never tried it' three times within one stretch of conversation. This novel use of *dašš* is well-attested in KAS6's lexicon because, presumably, I know for a fact that he enjoys eating out so he is used to expressing this by using *dašš*. Therefore, it is possible to prove that KAS6 also carries his language with him to his father's *dīwāniyya*, as well as to his mother's gathering place in SG13.

By and large, we can deduce from the topics of conversation in SG15 that they mostly revolve around daily, family, or trifling matters. The narratives above suggest that most of the verb senses used are well-attested in KA dictionaries. As Chapter 7 has shown us, senses like *xalla* 'let him' or *daššēt* 'I got in' come up in predictable settings. But we also find a few innovative uses of the verbs in narratives (9), (10), and (11), in which Chapters 4 and 7 have shown that these uses are indeed novel. However, notice in (11) that KAS6 first used *daššēta* in the sense of 'I tried/visited a restaurant' and then older speakers like KAS13 repeats KAS6's use of the verb. I may arguably state that innovative uses of the key verbs are very active and productive in the speech of young men. But we also find KAS12 using a new metaphorical sense of *miša* as in *l-kāmira tamši* 'the camera pans/zooms in', which is collocationally determined.

Given these points, it should have become clear that the type of collocational relationship found in this study is mainly between 'lexemes and semantic-pragmatic (contextual) features'. To explain, Siepmann (2005: 438) proposes the following definition for collocation that encompasses both linguistic disciplines, semantics and sociolinguistics: 'a collocation is any holistic lexical, lexico-grammatical or semantic unit normally composed of two or more words which exhibits minimal recurrence within a particular discourse community'.

8.2 Concluding Remarks

The present chapter was designed to determine the social patterns of use of four polysemous verbs, i.e. *dašš* ‘enter’, *xalla* ‘leave’, *miša* ‘walk’, and *rikaḏ* ‘run’, in small, well-defined groups. This study has found that *dašš* is extremely productive in KAS6’s social network while *rikaḏ* occurs only once. We can learn from this chapter that data-oriented, corpus-based studies enable us to study real contexts that activate several components of a verb’s meaning potential. In other words, every meaning corresponds to a specific context. Firth (1957: 7) emphasises that ‘the complete meaning of a word is always contextual, and no study of meaning apart from a complete context can be taken seriously’. Moreover, Beeston (1972: 138) argues that ‘[t]he ‘meanings’ of any word are a function of the contextual situations in which it occurs’. I have indicated the relationship between the innovating practices and the demographic makeup in three communities of practice within one speech community represented in one social network. However, the three types of communities (SG10, SG13, SG15) have different outcomes because their practices are formed by different relations amongst members. The research has shown that despite the small number of the members in the SG10 gathering, it is nonetheless the most active in terms of the dynamic uses of the verbs. Thus, the people for whom linguistic innovation is very central are located in SG10.

The retired older speakers in SG15 used to work together. Today, they see each other every day (by a self-report from KAS12) and they talk with each other all the time. The younger speakers in SG10 meet daily and they go to the same university. The female speakers in SG13 meet almost every day in the basement but KAS6’s friends occasionally visit. Therefore, the members in each gathering might arguably influence each other’s understanding very directly as a matter of routine. However, it should be realised that it is not because members of SG10 or SG15 meet, work, or study in the same place that they form a community of practice. It is because the mutual engagement is maintained by the informants organised around what they are there to do. Many interesting stories were shared amongst the friendship group in SG10. This has enriched the overall engagement and has generated several semantic domains. In contrast, we have seen in the formal gatherings (i.e. SG13 and SG15) that many contextual examples contain well-attested uses of the verbs. The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that younger male speakers are indeed more semantically creative than their older counterparts.

The innovations are likely to be transmitted from one friendship group to another friendship group, but not from a familial group to a friendship group. That is to say, the innovations are co-created and shared among KAS6's friendship group more often than among KAS6's family group. Milroy and Milroy (1985: 367) distinguish between 'innovators' and 'early adopters of an innovation'. The early adopters of the innovation are 'central members of the group, having strong ties within it, and are highly conforming to group norms; they frequently provide a model for other non-innovative members of the group' (ibid.). Therefore, once the central members adopt the innovations, it is possible to argue that an innovation is circulated from the inside outwards (at remarkable pace). For instance, in example (11), the use of *dašš* in the sense of 'trying a restaurant' might appear new in this data. In fact, this use of *dašš* in KAS6's *dīwāniyya* is well-established in his cohort. Therefore, it is possible to postulate that for this speech community, this sense was first used in KAS6's *dīwāniyya* and was then transmitted to KAS12's *dīwāniyya*.

Moreover, there are many negotiated enterprises in these three communities of practice. This could include certain personal aspects of the informants' lives. The practice of congregating in social gatherings such as *dīwāniyya*, *yam`ah*, or *zwārah*, reflects the informants' attempt to create a context in which to exchange information and opinions. 'Negotiating a joint enterprise gives rise to relations of mutual accountability among those involved' (Wenger 1998: 81). This includes what is important and what is not, what to leave unsaid and what to talk about, or in general, what to do and what not to do, and the like. Therefore, for members of SG10, accountability to their enterprise may include treating stories about academia or the workplace as something to be shared.

Furthermore, an important repertoire that is shared by our three communities of practice is the genre of talk known locally as *suwālif* (sing. *sālfah*) 'chats, talks, discussions'. As Ingham (1993: 8) notes, '[o]ne must see the *sālfah* in the context of a society where large gatherings of men are common and where the narration of events to an audience is an appreciated skill'. Examples from SG10 include narrative (1). SG13 may be represented by KAS26, KAS27, and KAS28 in conversation (6). In SG15, we find KAS12, KAS13, and KAS14 in conversation (8). The *suwālif* genre comprises the discourse by which members create meaningful statements about the world (cf. Wenger 1998: 83). Conversational features like gestures, words, and laughs are useful because they can be re-engaged in new situations and because they are recognisable in terms of their relation to a history of mutual engagement.

While one speaker is highly innovative, another demonstrates only the most established uses. The ‘conservative group’ and the ‘innovative group’ can now be distinguished in terms of their habits of speech, which are conditioned by the situation of use. Young male speakers use disapproving expressions more often, such as the pejorative sense of *dašš* ‘arḏ ‘to shove one’s nose into something’ in conversation (4). This highlights the fact that there are divergent communities for whom this is a legitimate or an acceptable utterance. Those pejorative expressions do not occur in SG13 or SG15 due to the fact that we only have young men in SG10. Those speakers are innovative and use these expressions very informally and colloquially as well as in more established senses. In contrast, in the family groups where we have the three sisters and older men and women, they only use them traditionally. However, even though, in the family group, the women are observed to use these senses only in the most established and traditional uses, they evidently know of these other uses such as illustrated in conversation (7) because: (i) the mother overheard inadvertently and (ii) I checked with KAS6’s sister (KAS25). Moreover, the imperatives are common among people of the same age. We find in (3) the following examples: *xa-txalliṣ*, *xalha bil bēt* ‘let it be ready, leave your car at home’, and in (4): *XA-TXALLIṢ* ‘LET IT (=video game) FINISH’.

The prototypical meaning of *dašš* is ‘to enter’. However, in the friendship group (SG10), *dašš* has the following realisations: ‘attend, fit, join, invest, visit, score, interfere, barges in’ etc. These instantiations of *dašš* do not occur in SG13 or SG15. These novel creations may come up several times in the history of *dašš*. Of course, this involves mechanisms of semantic change such as metaphor. Arguably, the sense ‘enter’ is the most basic in the SG10 group and therefore it is below the level of consciousness. But we have seen that excerpts with capital letters are indicative of the new conversational uses of very well-established expressions, but the speakers use it pragmatically differently. It is emphatic and clearly means that there is a great deal of pragmatic strengthening going on and that means it is a candidate for further strengthening and can be taken into other settings. This means then that some of the basic meanings are not peripheral by being basic; they make available pragmatic strengthening and therefore productivity. That is the conversational nature of semantic change that we are looking at. It is less than the fact that these verbs’ senses can be used as metaphor. But it is partly because they are being very well understood and speakers adapt them and apply them to new settings and that is the metaphorical shift.

Some hundred years ago, Meillet (1906: 9-13) identified social factors determining meaning development by distinguishing between three types of meaning change: changes owing to linguistic reasons, changes caused by historical reasons, and changes brought about by the social stratification of language. The first phenomenon can be exemplified by my discussion on collocation and context in Chapter 7. The second phenomenon is exemplified by the introduction of new concepts and things throughout history (i.e. the advent of the Internet, video gaming, etc.). The latter phenomenon 'is exemplified by concepts acquiring a specialized reading in a specific social group' (Geeraerts 1997: 90). Therefore, if we take example (7) which illustrates *dašš b-axlāqi* between the son and his mother, this expression acquires the restricted meaning 'He stuck his nose into my business' in KAS6's friendship group. Wenger (1998: 84) argues that 'mismatched interpretations or misunderstanding need to be addressed and resolved directly only when they interfere with mutual engagement'.

Worthy of mention is the fact that in the universe of discourse, there are particular meanings that come to the forefront depending on who is speaking; Fitzmaurice (2015: 333) terms this notion 'contingent polysemy' which 'captures the fact that while an expression may have multiple meanings at any time, some meanings will be more prominent or primed than others for particular speakers depending upon the temporal, ideological and experiential stance of those speakers' (ibid.). For example, we have multiple meanings for one verb, but the existence of those multiple meanings and the practice of those meanings are dependent on the background of the speaker, their gender, their age, their occupation, and the context in which they are speaking. In other words, the 'contingent polysemy' here is when we saw in Chapter 4 that *dašš* has a meaning that the old people use, which is 'to embark on sea voyage, put to sea', which is not available to contemporary, younger speakers. In our case, the 'contingent polysemy' is when KAS6 in conversation (7) uses *dašš b-axlāqi*, which is hardly ever used by older speakers.

To summarise, the empirical findings in this study provide evidence to support the fact that language change is still occurring and will continue to occur as long as this speech community is exposed to external and cultural influences. In this day and age, language change is inextricably connected with scientific progress. I conclude this chapter with the following statement of fact: 'Innovation and change are not conceptually the same thing: an innovation is an act of the speaker, whereas a change is observed within the language system. It is *speakers*, and not *languages*, that innovate' (Milroy 1992: 169).

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1 Synopsis

My research project was designed to investigate semantic innovation and change in Kuwaiti Arabic (KA). Particular regard was given to four verbs, viz. *dašš* ‘to enter’, *xalla* ‘to leave’, *miša* ‘to walk’, and *rikaḏ* ‘to run’. I illustrated that these are highly productive verbs which appear in several social settings. I also explored the structure and the plasticity of the Kuwaiti lexicon.

It was found that there is greater polysemy in KA than has hitherto been demonstrated in the lexico-semantic tradition. The evidence I uncovered suggests that these verbs are highly polysemous yet their contexts of use give them particular specificity. Further analysis showed that the main senses of the verbs have many uses and instantiations that are given sharper reference by virtue of their collocations and contexts. The majority of the senses of the four verbs revealed in the conversations analysed have yet to be attested in KA dictionaries. The data indicates that speakers are highly innovative and creative in their use of these verbs.

Furthermore, this research has traced these changes with the help of two key sociolinguistic concepts which contextualised the understanding of semantic change in KA and organised and prepared the data for closer analysis: (i) ‘social network analysis’ helped me identify the relationship of my Kuwaiti speakers in social gatherings and provided a setting for an examination of the ways in which the interactions facilitate language change, and (ii) the ‘community of practice’ approach allowed me to explore the nature of the relationships contained within the social networks.

The overarching question driving this research project was: How do we account for the patterns of polysemy of verbs in Kuwaiti Arabic? I elaborate on this question as follows.

1) What do we conclude about the historical treatment of polysemy in Arabic?

Although a strong relationship between polysemy/homonymy and semantic change has been reported in the Arabic literature since the medieval period, it has not been studied in a systematic way. Even though polysemy and homonymy are germane to historical semantics, Arab philologists neglected many aspects of multiplicity of meaning which now occupy a

prominent position in modern semantics. While contemporary Arab scholars apply descriptive terms such as ‘homonymous polysemic words’ and ‘homophony’ as comprehensive terms to cover both polysemy and homonymy, the evidence presented in this study suggests that the Arabic phrase *al-muštarak al-lafḍī* combines both features of polysemy and homonymy as far as Arabic literature is concerned. As shown in Chapter 2, although homonymy and polysemy are both recognised, there is divergence in their treatment among the lexicographical and philological traditions.

2) How are changes in the social structure of Kuwait reflected in the patterns of dialect use?

Kuwait has undergone radical changes in all aspects of life, especially when its first oil well gushed into being in 1938. Almost all of Kuwait’s population is urban. With the urban expansion, rapid modernisation, and social developments, the level of literacy has effectively risen. Nowadays, the standard form of language competes with the vernacular form. As a consequence of education and increased exposure to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and English, many older borrowings are now being replaced by MSA neologisms and English borrowings in the speech of educated younger speakers which typically undergo phonological and morphological modifications as they conform to the language system.

We have also shown that there are lexical differences that correlate closely with religious and sectarian allegiances as reported in geographically diverse varieties of spoken Arabic. However, these categories of variation do not seem to affect present-day Kuwait. In other words, no straightforward correlation can as yet be established between linguistic usage and socioeconomic class in Kuwait, though tribal divisions continue to play the major role in structuring phonological variation (Al-Wer 2009: 635). Nowadays, people from all provinces of Kuwait speak a form of ‘levelled’ Kuwaiti dialect (Holes 2007c). But if we look at the lexicon of the dialect, then we observe that verbs are subject to massive change.

My data contain evidence to suggest that there are new, creative, and single occurrences and uses of the verbs that exceed the examples of use listed in the KA dictionaries. They are innovations in relation to standard and spoken usage, and in relation to the speech community as a whole. I discovered that some are pragmatically conventionalised, some are created on the fly, and some are linked to particular speech communities or groups of speakers.

Consequently, it is relevant here to revisit the notion of the ‘discursive threshold’. As is elaborated on in Chapter 5, each of the three important and major episodes in Kuwait’s recent

history marked a threshold which resulted in a shift in the nature of the Kuwaiti discourse. They are: the Discovery of Oil in the 1930s, the Independence of Kuwait in the 1960s, and the Gulf War in the 1990s. For that reason, the sudden transition that Kuwait underwent during the second half of the 20th century has likely led to rapid semantic-pragmatic change and the development of polysemies.

3) To what extent do speakers share particular polysemies?

My interpretation and analysis of the key verbs encompassed society, situation, and speakers because my material was derived from live speakers in social contexts. I have indicated the relationship between the innovating practices and the demographic makeup in communities of practice within a speech community represented in a social network. It was shown that some of the new uses of the verbs are reused, shared, and spread among a group of users to the extent that they can become candidates for conventional meanings. The role of polysemy in linguistic change in the Kuwaiti dialect can be demonstrated through this incipient semantic change, i.e. informants co-create and co-construct uses and references in several situations as presented in Chapter 8. These new uses and references have not been encountered or codified in any of the KA dialectal dictionaries. The speech community has both innovative as well as conservative speakers, i.e. one speaker can be highly innovative, another demonstrates only the most established uses. This illustrates the extent to which new meanings and established meanings co-exist in one place and at the same time.

4) To what extent do speakers' meanings spread beyond the conversational contexts in which they arise?

We have observed that a community of speakers exploits a particular pragmatic use of the key verbs and provides the means for disambiguation by virtue of the context and indeed the collocation. As demonstrated in Chapter 8, context contributes to the shaping of identity and the social relationship of the informants in the speech situation. Within the standard uses, we have innovative instantiations and new applications that are highly contextually-determined. It is apparent that speakers are highly efficient at understanding and distinguishing among meanings. In the process of translating the Kuwaiti excerpts I observed that immersion in the context was necessary for the translator to ascertain the pragmatic force and connotative meanings supported by the contextual material. It also entailed a judgment about the specificity, tone, and attitude of the utterance.

5) To what extent should a dictionary account for all the possible uses of the key verbs?

Because existing dictionaries provide insufficient evidence which does not reflect a complete picture of meaning change, this emphasises the constant need for updating the available versions of dictionaries. In addition, I tested the utility of the dictionaries in Chapter 4 in terms of the manner of attestation and it was found that they lack evidence of actual use. I have also shown the patterning and the interaction of meanings in use in the speech community. Therefore, a KA dictionary could account for the possible uses of the key verbs which are shared and spread among a group of users, and which are adapted and applied to new settings by these speakers. However, there is not just the instantiations of the standard uses and the new applications of the verbs such as those meanings of *dašš* concerning the Internet and technology that should be taken into consideration; in addition, the much more personal, communicative uses might not be appropriate for inclusion into the dictionary.

9.2 Limitations of the Current Study

This thesis has produced a historical semantic study of four Kuwaiti Arabic verbs. When compared with Kuwaiti lexical material as evidenced in dictionaries, it gives evidence of dialect change in a diachronic span of over fifty years. My study has put forward a use-based theory of change that focuses on hitherto unrecorded spoken data from various speakers who come from different backgrounds and social statuses. However, the thesis is not comprehensive because I only looked at four verbs. My methodology and framework could not be easily applied to the lexicon more generally without extensive testing.

Although I used a convenient sample, my subject pool is not diverse, and therefore, it does not give us a complete picture. Accordingly, this study was limited by the absence of data from groups of women alone. Therefore, further work on a larger sample would confirm my observations. Even though the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the findings show that the Kuwaiti dialect, like any other Arabic dialect, is subject to continuous change.

9.3 Implications for Future Research

We have seen that central to the understanding of semantic change is the concept of polysemy. As a result, more data-driven or theory-driven studies are needed to better understand meaning proliferation. I would like to see further research be undertaken on

semantic innovation and change in more verbs with a bigger sample to substantially enhance our understanding of meaning change in this dialect. Changes never occur in isolation; explicit links between socioeconomic and language change are evident in my data. A great social upheaval has taken place in the area occupied by different social, tribal, and sectarian groups. Hence, it would be interesting to assess the long-term effects of this change in the context of very tumultuous social and economic change, as I am looking at it as a diachronic phenomenon.

Although my study focused on four verbs in different settings, my data could inform a much bigger and more comprehensive study of KA including borrowing and code-switching which provide some context for linguistic change. Some of the conversations in Chapters 7-8 and in Appendix D are marked, *inter alia*, by a degree of English code-switching which indicates that the habits of speech are constantly changing in this speech community. Words of English origin are strikingly common in Kuwaiti and in other Gulf dialects. From my data, I infer tentatively that my (young) male and female speakers do not differ from each other markedly in this respect. This indicates that these speech communities are highly innovative and responsive to their changing environment. It is not about the innovative uses of the key verbs, but also about adopting new terminology the whole time.

What initially motivated me to do this research project is that the dictionaries on KA really seem to lack evidence of actual use. I noticed that the older the dictionary is, the more difficult it was to try to figure out the principles of organisation of the entries. The implications for future dictionary work, and more particularly, the Kuwaiti dictionary, suggest that the use of my results in a dictionary project raises all kinds of theoretical and methodological questions that would be worth pursuing such as the classification of senses which are distinct from uses.

Furthermore, the present study aims to make a contribution to the study of meaning in a rapidly modernising Arab state. This is the first study to investigate the historical semantics of the Kuwaiti dialect. The methods used in this thesis may be applied to other Gulf Arabic dialects. It should prove to be particularly valuable to semanticists, sociolinguists, Arabists, and to those who work in Arabic dialectology and Semitics. It is valuable to semanticists because I am showing the dynamic structure of polysemy in a living dialect and demonstrating the points at which innovations occur and when speakers actually adopt these kinds of innovations. Also, I was able to locate semantic change in context, not in a general

way but with really specific examples and instantiations. It is valuable to sociolinguists in terms of the role of communities of practice in co-constructing and creating semantic change. It is valuable to Arabists because I am looking at the specificity of the Kuwaiti dialect and showing how dynamic it is and examining the control of different registers within a colloquial idiom.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the main objectives of this research project have been achieved through empirically investigating semantic innovation and change in Kuwaiti Arabic and laying the foundations for further research on related issues.

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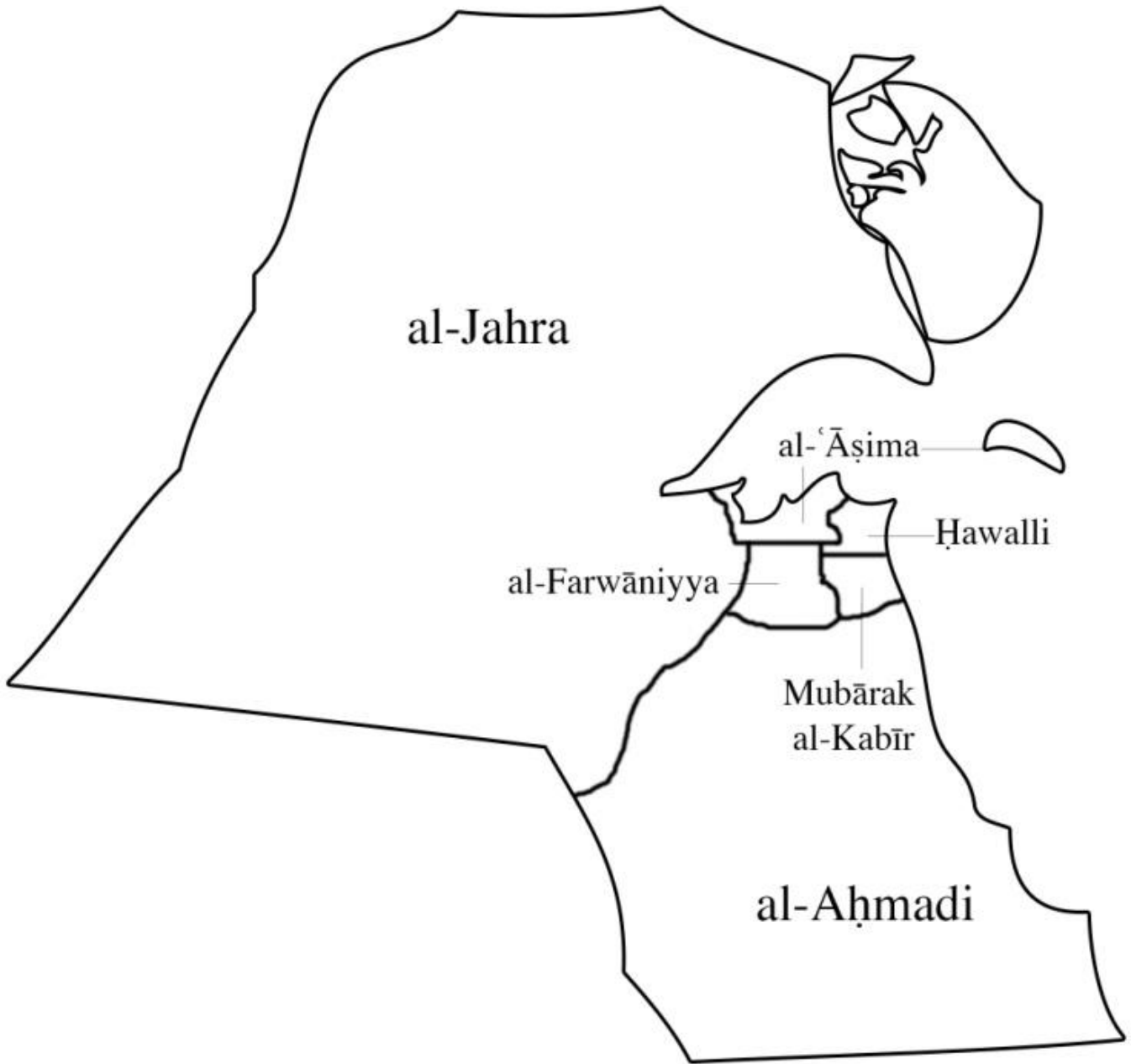
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Appendix A: Map of Kuwait showing the six major Governorates



Governorate	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total
al- Āşima	235,705	302,348	538,053
Ḥawalli	218,307	680,094	898,401
al-Aḥmadi	269,709	557,048	826,757
al-Jahra	176,626	319,889	496,515
al-Farwāniyya	228,937	865,639	1,094,576
Mubārak al-Kabīr	146,267	86,161	232,428
Not stated	306	4957	5263
Total	1,275,857	2,816,136	4,091,993

The total population size in each Governorate as of 31 December 2014¹

¹ The Public Authority for Civil Information
<http://www.paci.gov.kw/stat/en/Publications/popu_en.pdf>.

Appendix B: Biographic Information of the Informants¹

Informant No. 1

Code : KAS1
Age : 33
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : computer engineer
Town (governorate) : al-Mansūriyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 2

Code : KAS2
Age : 32
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : computer engineer
Town (governorate) : Bayān (Ḥawalli)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 3

Code : KAS3
Age : 30
Sex : M
Educational status : postgraduate degree
Occupation : university instructor
Town (governorate) : ad-Di‘iyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 4

Code : KAS4
Age : 40
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : engineer
Town (governorate) : Kaifān (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Ḥasāwī (Shī‘ī)

Informant No. 5

Code : KAS5
Age : 29
Sex : M
Educational status : postgraduate degree
Occupation : PhD student
Town (governorate) : al-Jābriyya (Ḥawalli)
Tribal affiliation : Ḥasāwī (Shī‘ī)

¹ Note that the town names given on this and the following pages conform to local pronunciation, regardless of how they are spelt in Arabic. For a genealogical description of these tribes and families of Arabia, see, for example, Dickson (1956: 41, 82-107); Clark (1980: 495-497).

Informant No. 6

Code : KAS6
Age : 23
Sex : M
Educational status : sophomore
Occupation : undergraduate student
Town (governorate) : Bnēd al-Gār and Shuwaikh (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 7

Code : KAS7
Age : 25
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : employee in public sector
Town (governorate) : al-Qayrawān (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 8

Code : KAS8
Age : 26
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : employee in private sector
Town (governorate) : al-Qayrawān (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 9

Code : KAS9
Age : 27
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : employee in public sector
Town (governorate) : ad-Dōḥa (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Faḍūl

Informant No. 10

Code : KAS10
Age : 28
Sex : M
Educational status : high school degree
Occupation : employee in private sector
Town (governorate) : al-‘Ārḍiyya (al-Farwāniyya)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Aniza

Informant No. 11

Code : KAS11
Age : 47
Sex : M
Educational status : high school degree
Occupation : employee in public sector
Town (governorate) : Hiṭṭīn (Ḥawalli)
Tribal affiliation : Najdī

Informant No. 12

Code : KAS12
Age : 53
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : retired from military
Town (governorate) : Bnēd al-Gār and Shuwaikh (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 13

Code : KAS13
Age : 53
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : retired from military
Town (governorate) : ar-Rōḍa (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Ajam (Sunnī)

Informant No. 14

Code : KAS14
Age : 52
Sex : M
Educational status : high school degree
Occupation : retired from military
Town (governorate) : al-Qayrawān (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 15

Code : KAS15
Age : 55
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : retired
Town (governorate) : ad-Di‘iyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 16

Code : KAS16
Age : 51
Sex : F
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : retired
Town (governorate) : ad-Di‘iyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : al-Ḥasā (Sunnī)

Informant No. 17

Code : KAS17
Age : 32
Sex : M
Educational status : higher diploma
Occupation : employee in private sector
Town (governorate) : ad-Di‘iyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 18

Code : KAS18
Age : 23
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : undergraduate student
Town (governorate) : an-Nahḍa (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Khawālid

Informant No. 19

Code : KAS19
Age : 28
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : unemployed
Town (governorate) : ad-Di‘iyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Ijmān

Informant No. 20

Code : KAS20
Age : 23
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : employee in public sector
Town (governorate) : al-‘Ārḍiyya (al-Farwāniyya)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Aniza

Informant No. 21

Code : KAS21
Age : 25
Sex : M
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : employee in private sector
Town (governorate) : Dāḥyat ‘Abdullah as-Sālim (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 22

Code : KAS22
Age : 59
Sex : M
Educational status : postgraduate degree
Occupation : employee in public sector
Town (governorate) : ad-Di‘iyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 23

Code : KAS23
Age : 56
Sex : F
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : retired
Town (governorate) : ad-Di‘iyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 24

Code : KAS24
Age : 87
Sex : F
Educational status : secondary school degree
Occupation : housewife
Town (governorate) : an-Nizha (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 25

Code : KAS25
Age : 22
Sex : F
Educational status : high school degree
Occupation : unemployed
Town (governorate) : Bnēd al-Gār and Shuwaikh (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 26

Code : KAS26
Age : 52
Sex : F
Educational status : higher diploma
Occupation : employee in public sector
Town (governorate) : Shuwaikh (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 27

Code : KAS27
Age : 51
Sex : F
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : employee in public sector
Town (governorate) : Shuwaikh (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 28

Code : KAS28
Age : 47
Sex : F
Educational status : undergraduate degree
Occupation : housewife
Town (governorate) : Bnēd al-Gār and Shuwaikh (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 29

Code : KAS29
Age : 18
Sex : F
Educational status : high school degree
Occupation : university freshman
Town (governorate) : Bnēd al-Gār and Shuwaikh (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : ‘Utaiba

Informant No. 30

Code : KAS30
Age : 26
Sex : M
Educational status : secondary school degree
Occupation : employee in public sector
Town (governorate) : ash-Shāmiyya (al-‘Āṣima)
Tribal affiliation : Qinā‘āt (Suhūl)

Informant No. 31

Code : KAS31
 Age : 55
 Sex : M
 Educational status : high school degree
 Occupation : employee in public sector
 Town (governorate) : al-Faiḥa (al-‘Āṣima)
 Tribal affiliation : al-Ḥasā (Sunnī)

Below is a list of the total population of the localities where my informants come from. The localities are organised in order of the total population size as reported by the Public Authority for Civil Information on 31 December 2014.²

Locality ³	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total
• al-Jābriyya	23,551	52,781	76,332
• al-‘Ārḍiyya	34,632	22,889	57,521
• Bayān	29,829	17,986	47,815
• ar-Rōḍa	22,138	15,840	37,978
• Bnēd al-Gār	908	33,467	34,375
• ad-Dōḥa	16,846	15,495	32,341
• Kaifān	15,444	13,152	28,596
• al-Faiḥa	12,755	10,604	23,359
• Ḍāḥyat ‘Abdullah as-Sālim	11,047	10,646	21,693
• ad-Di‘iyya	9515	10,492	20,007
• ash-Shāmiyya	9281	8370	17,651
• al-Qayrawān	11,072	6150	17,222
• Ḥiṭṭīn	11,387	5705	17,092
• an-Nizha	8132	6876	15,008
• al-Manṣūriyya	5014	4048	9062
• an-Nahḍa	4641	2316	6957
• Shuwaikh	2054	3582	5636

² <http://www.paci.gov.kw/stat/en/Publications/popu_en.pdf>

³ Shuwaikh and ash-Shāmiyya were established in 1956, Kaifān in 1958, ad-Di‘iyya and al-Faiḥa in 1962, ar-Rōḍa in 1965, al-Manṣūriyya in 1966, and an-Nizha in 1968 (Ibrāhīm 2009: 135).

Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: *The Semantic Complexity of Kuwaiti Arabic*

Name of Researcher: *Yousuf B. AlBader*

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
- 3. I give permission for the interview to be recorded for the purpose of studying linguistic aspects such as sounds, grammar and vocabulary.
- 4. I give permission for the research team to gather information concerning my regional, historical and personal linguistic identity.
- 5. I understand that my personal information will be kept confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
- 6. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
- 7. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Yousuf B. AlBader

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Appendix D

I present in this appendix the rest of the attested examples of use of the key verbs extracted from my Kuwaiti material. They are arranged as follows: contextual examples of *dašš* come first, then *xalla*, and then *miša*. With respect to *rikaḏ*, only four tokens are attested which are presented in Chapter 7. The following recorded conversations are presented in the order in which they occurred in each social gathering (henceforth, SG). The informants who produced these examples are indicated and coded as KAS (see Appendix B).

A. Examples of *dašš*

SG2

KAS5: *awwalan¹ li-šālih-hum u yidišš 'ala 'iṭlat ṣ-ṣēf*
'First, it's for their benefit, it (=election's day) will **begin** when summer vacation begins.'

KAS4: *waḷḷa² šārli min ams, min ams mā daššēt bēt-hum*
'I swear I haven't **been to** their house since yesterday.'

KAS4: *subhān aḷḷa! kil ma b-adišš bēt-hum n-nās tistaḡrib*
'Glory (be) to God! Whenever I was about **to get in** their house, people look at me strangely.'

KAS4: *šinu hāda ṭagg³ l-miftāḥ w-dašš dāxil*
'(Then people would say), "Did he steal the key and **get inside**?"'

KAS4: *l-ḡīl hāda illi dašš l-madāris min l-alfēn, ma 'āy? fa-fī muṣṭalaḡāt rāḡ ddišš 'alēk. l-hīn āna*
'indi 'yāli, fi kalimāt ingilēziyya mdaxlīn-ha 'ala l-luḡa
'(The people from) this generation who **attended** schools since 2000, are you with me? So there are terms which will **enter into** you (=your society). Now, regarding my own kids, (I noticed that) there are many English words which they made enter into the language.'

KAS4: *lo dāš hal gōḷ inṣa barra⁴ bass*
'If the ball **scored**, (the team) will be left out of the game.'

¹ An ordinal number in a form of an adverb by suffixing *-an*. Cf. Holes (2010: 308-310).

² *waḷḷa* consists of *wa-* 'the particle of oath' + *aḷḷāh* 'Allah' = I swear by the sanctity of Allah.

³ *ṭagg* normally means 'hit, strike, knock', but here it means 'steal'. Cf. Al-Ayyoub (1982: 346-348).

⁴ The adverb *barra* 'outside' is derived from Aramaic *br* (Malaika 1963: 33). Potts (1990: 195) reports that when the Kuwaiti island of Failaka was discovered by the Greeks, 'it already had an indigenous, Aramaic-speaking population'.

KAS4: *luġa daššat dāxil luġa*
'A language **enters into** another language.'

KAS4: *muškila d-dīn lamma yidišš fih s-siyāsa. waḷḷa muškila. d-dīn lay dašš bis-siyāsa muškila. 'ind kill t-tawā'if u 'ind kill t-tawaġġuhāt. čūf, āna il-islāmiyyīn mā widdi in-hum yidiššūn bis-siyāsa, li'an-hum ga⁵ yišawhūn l-slām. min ḡimin-hum 'ala fikra ḡatta 'ala maḡhab š-šī'a.*
'It's really complicated when religion **merges** with politics. I swear it is a big deal. If religion **merges** with politics, it gets complicated. This applies to all sects and denominations. You see, I don't want the Islamists **to engage** with politics because they damage the reputation of Islam. Including, by the way, Shī'a Islam.'

KAS4: *lākin wāqi'an⁶ mā šār amīr, mā dašš*
'But in reality, he didn't become an emir. He didn't **attain** (that rank).'

SG3

KAS6: *lā yākil xarā⁷ ydišš u mā-ysallim 'alēy waḷḷa yākil xara*
'Oh hell no! He cannot **get in** without greeting me, I swear to God, no way.'

KAS6: *ġūl lah iḡna illi šifnāh inna 'ēb ddišš bēt r-rayyāl u mā tsallim 'alēh*
'Tell him, "What we feel is that it is disgrace **to enter** the man's house without greeting him".'

KAS7: *āna w-mḡammad w-ḡamad, daššat waḡda yā ḡimā'a*
(Hey guys!) I (was with) Muḡammad and ḡamad, (and then) a (gorgeous) girl **came in**.'

KAS7: *āna bayiy, āna b-aḡkira bi-rūḡ ḡagg marwān, ndišš 'ala marwān*
'I want to go (with you), I will make sure he will go to see Marwān, we (should) **barge into** Marwān.'

⁵ A short form of the active participle *gā'id* 'sitting', but it is used with a following imperfect verb to describe actions that are going on continuously at the time of speaking. 'It has, when used in this way, no overtones of the original meaning 'sitting'' (Holes 2010: 178).

⁶ *wāqi'an* 'in reality' is an educated-sounding word (the normal dialect form would be *biš-šig*).

⁷ The phrase *yākil xara* 'he eats shit' is an expletive used here to show that someone is angry or annoyed. It roughly corresponds to British English 'shit'. Holes (2001: 144) glosses *kil xirā-k!* 'Get knotted!' as a vulgar idiomatic extension for the speech of old Bahrainis. Landberg (1920: 578) gives *akal xara* for southern Yemen, while Piamenta (2002: 534) lists *mākel xara* 'eating shit' in Jerusalem Arabic. In a similar vein, Holes (2005: 28) glosses in Bahraini Arabic the term of abuse *ba'rō* 'cattle dung' for a man lacking in manly virtues.

SG5

KAS8: *bass āna dāš ḥaddi mfaššil ‘araft illi dāš tawni gā ‘id min n-nōm*
‘But you know, I was very shy when I **entered** (the company), I **entered** immediately after I woke up.’

KAS8: *aw dišš muḥāsaba fiha xibra*
‘Or **major** in Accounting, you’ll gain experience.’

KAS7: *dāš d-dīwāniyya m ‘allig l-ḥāg⁸*
He entered the *dīwāniyya* wearing an (election) badge.’

KAS10: *tawni dāš gā ‘id cān yigūl xafḡi*
‘I have just **entered** and sat down, then he said, “(Let’s go to) Khafji.”’⁹

KAS7: *tara maḥḥad yidišša, šlōn gā ‘id tgūl mīt combani*
‘By the way, (in Egypt), people hardly ever **eat from** (McDonald’s), because it’s considered an upmarket restaurant as the Meat Company is.’

SG6

KAS17: *w-āna dāš cān tgūl li šūf šinu šarēt lik*
‘When I **got in**, she then said to me, “See what I bought for you.”’

SG7

KAS6: *daššēt l-maḥal?*
‘Did you **get in** the shop (in Dubai)?’

KAS8: *haḍōl mā-ydiššūn l-masraḥiyya illa nuš šāḥi nuš maynūn*
‘Those (actors) don’t **get in/step on** the theatre stage without being half sober and half crazy.’

KAS6: *dāš ‘ala ‘abdināšir darwīš fī masraḥiyya*
‘**I dropped in on** ‘Abdulnāšir Darwīš¹⁰ in a theatre play.’

KAS18: *w-inta dāš hā š-yāybik*
‘When you **barge in**, (they would probably say) “Oh! What brings you by?”’

⁸ English borrowing: ‘badge’.

⁹ A town located in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia along the Arabian Gulf.

¹⁰ A Palestinian actor and a comedian based in Kuwait.

KAS6: *qarart adišš l-ḥammām*
'I decided **to go to** the bathroom.'

SG10

KAS19: *tadri ihna lo dāššīn min l-bidāya ēyūkē, čān mu'addilik l-ḥīn trī poynt fāyv*¹¹
'Did you know, if **we** only **attended** the AUK¹² from the start, your GPA would have been 3.5.'

KAS6: *šift yūwēsif l-vīdyu*¹³ *l-xāl*¹⁴ *illi yidišš ikya stōrz b-landan*
'Yuwēsif,¹⁵ have you watched the video where the African-American man **enters** IKEA stores in London?'

KAS18: *nzēn šinu šī'ūrik w-int tāg 'indik w-uhu ydišš 'alēk*
'Well, how would you feel when he **bares in** while you're having an erection?'

KAS18: *yā ḡimā'a šiftaw hāda l-vīdyu illi aqwa ḡaḥka? dišš, dišš yūtyūb l-ḥīn awarrīk*
īyyāha
'Guys, have you seen that video that (shows) the loudest laugh? **Visit, visit** YouTube, I will show it to you.'

SG11

KAS21: *čān ašūfa yidišš nzēn dāk l-xibil, dašš 'ind l-mudīr*
'Then I saw that idiot **getting in**, ok? He **went in** (to see) the (bank) manager.'

KAS21: *čān yigūl li nzēn uhwa yabi yit'assaf li'anna yabi yidišš l-fir 'marra tānya*
'He then said, "Alright, he would like to apologise so he can **visit** the branch (of bank) again.'"

KAS21: *saww ḡagg waḡda folo*¹⁶ *xa-nšūf-ha dišš inistigrām*
'Follow a girl (electronically), **let's** see her. **Log in** to Instagram.'

¹¹ An 'educated' pronunciation of the English numerals *trī poynt fāyv* 'three point five'.

¹² The American University of Kuwait was founded in 2004 and is situated in the Sālmiyya area.

¹³ English borrowing: 'video'.

¹⁴ In Kuwaiti, *xāl* means both 'maternal uncle' and 'a person with black skin colour'. By extension, a skin mole is called in Kuwaiti *ḡabbat xāla* 'a dark pimple' (lit. 'maternal aunt's kiss' or 'black African woman's kiss'). Also, the ace in a playing card is called *xāl* in Kuwaiti. Holes (2005b: 41, 307) notes '*abd* 'people of black African descent' in Bahraini Arabic which is also common in the rest of the Gulf (cf. Dickson 1949: 497-504).

¹⁵ A hypocoristic form of the proper male name Yousuf.

¹⁶ The dummy verb *sawwa* 'to do, make' normally collocates with English loan verbs, especially in the Internet and computing domain, (cf. the Persian verbs *kardan* 'to do' and *šodan* 'to become'). It is used as a periphrastic device to avoid the need to inflect the English loans. For instance, *sawwa li dilīt* 'he deleted me (from his friends list)', *sawwa li anfolo* 'he unfollowed me (on Instagram)', *sawwa ritwīt* 'he retweeted my tweet', *sawwa lāyk* 'he liked (a photo on Instagram)', *sawwa ristārt* 'he restarted (the computer)', *sawwa šuddāwn* 'he shut down (the computer)', *sawwa dāwlōd* 'he downloaded (a file online)', etc. For a recent description of this construction, see Versteegh (2009).

SG14

KAS29: *iḥna māy¹⁷ šlōn daššēna mā šifnāk*
'We (still) don't know how we didn't see you when we **got in**.'

KAS8: *čān yiṭāli 'na čī¹⁸ čān ywaxxir. kammal dašš l- 'ašīr w-ṭala*
'He then looked at us like this, and then he moved away. He continued (walking and) **entered** the juice (shop) and (then) went out.'

KAS29: *šift lamma ddišš bilding¹⁹ [*] ba 'dēn faḡ' a 'ala š-šāri*
'You know when you **enter** a building [*] then it suddenly appears in the street.'

KAS29: *šift, šift lamma daššēt utēl²⁰ killa akwēryum²¹*
'You know when you **entered** a hotel surrounded by an aquarium.'

KAS8: *willa nāyif w-bašāyir tawhum dāššīn sūg šarg*
'Suddenly, Nāyif and Bashāyir have just **entered** Souk Sharq.'²²

KAS8: *daššat wara*
'(The insect) **went** behind (the sofa).'

SG15

KAS6: *awwal mā daššēt 'ummāl u gā 'id yiṭagṭigūn²³*
'Once **I got in**, the construction workers were working.'

KAS6: *imgaffaḷ l-bāb, bil ḡaṣub kān yidišš gabuḷ*
'The door was shut, it (=bus) could barely **pass through**.'

¹⁷ A short form of *mādri* 'I don't know'.

¹⁸ A short form of the adverb *čīḏi* 'like that, thus, so; approximately'.

¹⁹ English borrowing: 'building'.

²⁰ French borrowing: *hôtel* 'hotel'.

²¹ English borrowing: 'aquarium'. The term became widespread in Kuwait when The Scientific Center of Kuwait opened in 2000.

²² Souk Sharq is a major shopping centre in Kuwait City.

²³ A quadrilateral verb of the reduplicative kind, *ṭagṭag* 'to knock repeatedly'. Mansour (1991: 272) records *ṭagṭag* as an onomatopoeic sound for Jewish Baghdadi. Similarly, Qafisheh (2000: 386) glosses *ṭagṭag* 'to be noisy, boisterous' for Yemeni Arabic. Holes (2004b: 100) notes *dagdag* 'to knock repeatedly' for Bahrain. Erwin (2004: 163) gives *dagdag* 'to rap' for Muslim Baghdadi. For a glossary of quadrilateral verbs in Kuwaiti Arabic, see AlBader (forthcoming, in the proceedings of the 11th conference of AIDA).

SG16

KAS26: *waddēt taḥrīr, daššēt il-gift šob²⁴, ṭala 'na, ḥamad b-wayihna*
'I took Taḥrīr, I **entered** the gift shop, (and) we went out, (then) we saw Ḥamad.'

KAS27: *ihya daššat w-ḥna ṭala 'na*
'(When) she **got in**, we got out.'

KAS28: *haww²⁵ marra dašš 'ala 'ammi šuḇāḥ; dašš 'alēh bu-mbāarak*
'Huh! He once **came into** uncle Šuḇāḥ's **presence**; Abu Mubāarak **came in** (too).'

B. Examples of *xalla*

SG1

KAS2: *xal-ha twalli, xall arūḥ*
'The hell with it. **Let** me go (by myself).'

KAS2: *xall riyāḍ ya 'ṭih, inta lā ta 'ṭih*
'**Let** Riyāḍ give it to him, you don't give him.'

KAS1: *lā fawwāz, lā ḡassān. xalla ašwa inna mā ya*
'Neither Fawwāz nor Ghassān (are coming). **Leave** him **alone**; I'm glad he didn't come.'

SG2

KAS4: *xa-ndizla ṣ-šūra*
'**Let** me send him a photo (electronically).'

KAS5: *ṭab 'an²⁶ xall l-ḥīn ḥāḍa, xall š-širūṭ illi 'aṭāni-yyāha*
'Of course, **leave** this **aside**; **leave** the conditions that he gave me **aside**.'

KAS4: *lā inta tadbilha l-bāwnd txallīha dīnār*
'No, you double it up; you **convert** pound (sterling) into (Kuwaiti) dinars.'

KAS5: *xan-nis 'alḥa čam idfa 'at*
'**Let** me ask her how much did she pay.'

²⁴ English borrowing: 'gift shop'.

²⁵ *haww* is a common interjection used at the beginning of an utterance to show surprise or disagreement, and it is used mainly by female speakers.

²⁶ One of the very common adverbs in everyday speech that end with *-an*.

- KAS4: *l-ḥīn xa-nšūf t-ta 'ādul š-rāḥ ysawwi*
 'For now, **let's** see what the match tie will do.'
- KAS4: *w-xallēt-hum yisōlfūn*
 'And I **let** them talk.'
- KAS4: *xa-ngūl, xa-ngūl ba 'ad ḡl, xa-ngūl ba 'ad 'ašir snīn, l-luḡa hāḍi rāḥ taḡi*
 'Let's say, **let's** say after one generation, **let's** say after 10 years, this language will prevail.'
- KAS4: *xa-ngūl l-ḡl hāḍa*
 'Let's say it's this generation.'
- KAS4: *xa-ngūl min ba 'ad il-alfēn u xamsa*
 'Let's say after 2005.'
- KAS5: *aḥsan mumattil yiḥakkam b-ta 'ābīr wayha uhwa mistar bīn. hāḍa l-mīza illi xallita yiṭla*
 'The best actor who can control his facial expressions is Mr. Bean. This characteristic feature **made** him popular.'
- KAS4: *xall yinḡla 'ōn*
 'Let them go to hell!'
- KAS5: *fi kilmat ḡuḷm ihya 'adil, ṣaḥḥ? n-nās xallōha čidi*
 'There is a word which describes injustice but it's in fact justice, right? People **made** it like that.'
- SG3
- KAS6: *xalla ywalli āna bass mibtisim lah*
 'The hell with him, I was just smiling at him.'
- SG4
- KAS8: *xalla, wadda la y'ittik*
 'Leave it (=heavy book), take it away.'
- SG5
- KAS7: *int xall šiq l-binūk*
 'Leave the banks' business aside.'

- KAS9: *maṛṛa xaṛṛa 'na l-yāhil xallēnāh yabči ḡiddām umma*
 'We once scared a little boy and **made him** cry in front of his mother.'
- KAS7: *čān yigūl lah š-da 'wa²⁷ yuba b-balāš, čān yigūl lah la waḷḷa xallīh 'alay*
 'He then told him, "That's too much man, why don't you give me a free (ice cream)", then (the Egyptian salesman) said, "**Let** me pay", (cf. it's my treat).'
- KAS10: *mā git lah b-balāš, uhwa gāl xallīh 'alēna*
 'I didn't tell (the Egyptian salesman) that I want it for free, he first said, "**Let** us pay".'
- KAS8: *uhwa gāl xallīh 'alay, hāḍa gāl lah okay čān yamši*
 '(the Egyptian salesman) said, "**Let** me pay", then he said okay and **left**.'
- KAS10: *xalla ywalli*
 '**Let** (the Egyptian salesman) go hang.'
- SG6
- KAS17: *xall nidfa 'has-sina xamsīn*
 '**Let's** pay 50 (Kuwaiti dinars) this year.'
- SG7
- KAS8: *xalni agūl-lik šay, xalni agūl-lik šay, isma 'xall s-sālfā*
 '**Let me** tell you something, **let me** tell you something, listen, **leave** the matter **aside**.'
- KAS6: *xa-nšūf ta 'āl, ams rāwēt-ni xa-nšūf*
 '**Let's** see (the mobile video), come here. Yesterday you showed me, **let me** see.'
- KAS8: *uhwa māt tara inqaraḍ ba 'dēn ṭāriq l- 'ali ya šāla min afāh²⁸ xallāh yimaṭṭil*
 'He (=Kuwaiti actor) in fact has almost died out but then Ṭāriq al-'Alī²⁹ came and revived him and **made him** act again.'
- KAS8: *āna asawwi lik siḥir alḥīn axallī-kum ṭhibbūn ba 'aḍ u axalli z-zawāḡ yitim bsir 'a*
 '(An actor once said), "I will perform magic to you now and **make you** love each other and **make** the marriage happen soon."

²⁷ Qafisheh (1977: 193) glosses *š-da 'wa* as 'What's the matter?', 'What's wrong?' for Gulf Arabic.

²⁸ The expression *šālah min afāh* literally means 'He picked him from his nape', (cf. 'break one's neck').

²⁹ A Kuwaiti comedian and actor, born in 1966.

SG9

KAS23: *xall a 'īk l-bāḡi*
'Let me give you the rest.'

KAS22: *xalha, xalha*
'Let her (figure it out by herself).'

KAS23: *xall yiwaddīthum yirāwīthum brēṭānya*
'Let/Have him take them and show them to Britain.'

KAS23: *xall abī', xall abī'*
'Let me sell, let me sell.'

SG11

KAS21: *čān agūl laha lā xallīh āna ba-māšši mu 'āmala*
'Then I told her, "Leave it (=the cheque on the table), I'll get it done.'

KAS21: *čān yigūl li bass xaḷāš xalha, xalha 'alay*
'Then he told me, "Say no more. Leave the matter with me.'

KAS21: *gāl li l-ḥīn b-axalli l-fir' yiqaddim šakwa 'ala l-'amīl*
'He told me, "I'll make the branch file a complaint against the customer.'

KAS21: *xalla ywalli*
'Let him go hang.'

KAS21: *xalni agūl lik suwālfī*
'So let me tell you my stories.'

SG12

KAS24: *wēn bader xall yigra*
'Where's Bader? Have him read (the newspaper article).'

KAS24: *l-ḡaras, diggay-diggay xall iyūn*
'Ring the bell. Let them (=housemaids) come.'

SG14

- KAS26: *ixdi minha xall aḥḥad yišriba*
'Take (the bottle of water) from her, **have** someone drink it.'
- KAS28: *xar-rūḥ minni awaddīkum minni*
'**Let's** go here, I'll take you here.'
- KAS28: *čūd yiṭla 'min d-dawām. iḍa mā 'inda šay xa-ndig*
'He might have finished work (early). If he's free, **let's** call (him).'
- KAS8: *'ād šiğğ māfi mašāfiṭ xan-namši*
'The parking was really full, so **let's go**.'
- KAS28: *š-xallaw ḥagg il-awādim*
'They **left** nothing for the people.'
- KAS25: *lā txallīni atxayyal*
'Don't **make** me imagine.'
- KAS28: *ta 'alay ḥiṭṭi li flowlāyn³⁰, xall awarrīh l-li 'ba*
'Come and put Flow Line (on my iPhone), **let** me show him the game.'
- KAS28: *lāzim mā txalli*
'You shouldn't **leave** (a space in the game).'

SG15

- KAS12: *xall yixališ tābūgna l-abyaḍ yabn l-ḥalāl³¹*
'**Let** our white bricks finish, good man!'
- KAS12: *wad lihum yaxi³² mā 'ūn zḡayyir,³³ tatbīla bil-lōz u ḥāda u xall yišūfa bu-nawwāf*
'Take a small plate to them, season it with almonds and **have** Abu Nawwāf see it.'

³⁰ An iPhone puzzle game.

³¹ The phrase *yabn l-ḥalāl* literally means 'son of the legitimate marriage'. The stem *ḥalāl* 'halal' is habitually associated with the stem *ibn* 'son' (Yassin 1975: 62; Piamenta 1979b: 240).

³² A form of personal address used to address a person of equal age, hence *yaxi* (*yā + axī*) 'O my brother'. For more examples of this sort, see Yassin (1978); Holes (2010: 289).

³³ Diminutive of *šḡīr* (pronounced *zḡīr*) 'little'. Erwin (2004: 17) notes *šḡayyir* in the Colloquial Iraqi Arabic as spoken by educated Muslims in Baghdad whereas Holes (2001: 297) notes *šḡayyir* 'small' for Bahrain and lists *šugāyyir* 'very small' in Gulf Arabic (Holes 2010: 287).

KAS12: *āna rāh attişil fih. xālid, rāh agūl lah ş-da 'wa mā ğitna has-sina za 'lān yabn l-ħalāl ha? xa-nşūfa şi-gūl*
'I will call him. Khālid, I will tell him, "Why haven't you stopped by this year? Are you sad, yeah?" **Let's** see what he has to say.'

SG16

KAS25: *xall twalli, txāf*
'**The hell with her.** She's afraid.'

KAS26: *xar-rūh ş-şibh u nirġa ' bil-lēl*
'**Let's** go in the morning and come back at night.'

KAS28: *gūl-lay ħagg şabbūh xall yisōlif lič*
'**Ask** Şabbūh to tell you the story.'

KAS28: *xalla ywalli*
'**I couldn't care less.**'

KAS25: *uhwa gāl xall asallim 'alēh, xall asallim 'ala ummik*
'He said, "**Let** me greet, **let** me greet your mother."'

KAS25: *git-laha xar-rūh landan bil qiġār*
'I told her, "**Let's** go to London by train."'

KAS28: *yalla! xall yigittik mħammad*
'Chop-chop! **Let** Muħammad take you (home).'

KAS28: *xall yigittik s-sāyiq bāčir*
'**Let** the driver drop you off tomorrow.'

SG17

KAS24: *xall iyūn yişlūn ma 'ākum, xall iyūn*
'**Let** them come and pick up (the plates) with you, **let** them come.'

KAS24: *xall yigūm yişib čāy*
'**Have** him pour some tea.'

SG18

KAS14: *xalla ya 'īk t-ta 'līmāt*
'Ask him for the instructions.'

C. Examples of *mīša*

SG1

KAS3: *ī lo arūh maši ashal*
'I'd rather go **on foot**.'

SG2

KAS4: *il-yōm w-āna yāy gāt l-yahhāl l-madrīsa, ga 'ad amši willa a'ūf b-wahyi*
'While I was taking the kids to school today, I was **walking**, lo and behold, I saw this thing (=bird) before my very eyes.'

KAS4: *w-āna amši 'ūfha šlōn tāli ' li*
'While I was **walking**, see how it (=bird) suddenly appears.'

KAS5: *msawwīna min taḥat ṭabaqat hāda yifid hagg l-kwēt ida mišet bil-gār*
'It (=shoe) is formed of bottom layers and seems compatible with Kuwait (weather) when you **walk** on the asphalt.'

KAS5: *subḥān aḷḷa! lābis gūti³⁴ w-kil šay tamši 'al gār*
'Glory (be) to God! (Even though) you're wearing shoes, (it feels like) you're **walking** on the asphalt.'

KAS4: *muškilta mā gidart amši fih wāyid li 'anna yišīr fačča*
'The problem is that I couldn't **walk** with it (=Crocs shoes) because it makes a hole (when I walk).'

KAS4: *yxtar 'ōn lik³⁵ kilma, w-mišaw fīha, mišaw fīha*
'They create/coin a word for you, and (before you know it), it **works** very well.'

KAS5: *iqtīšād mašīr māši 'alēh*
'The economy of Egypt **depends on** it.'

³⁴ Hindi borrowing: जूते 'shoes'.

³⁵ An example of the 'ethic dative', a device to involve the listener in the unfolding narrative.

SG5

KAS10: *‘ugub-ha b- ‘ašir tuwāni čān **yamši** ayād*
‘Ayād **left** after ten seconds.’

KAS19: *čān yigūl li istamti ‘ b-yōmik, hadni u **miša***
‘(The Egyptian salesman) then told me, “Have a nice day”, he then **left**.’

KAS6: *waḷḷa w-ḥna rāyḥīn l-mamša talāt banāt, waḥda aḥla min t-tānya ga³⁶ **yamšūn***
‘I swear, on our way to the *mamša*³⁷ (we saw) three girls, you wouldn’t believe how beautiful they were, they were **going for a walk**.’

SG7

KAS8: ***imšaw** yaḷḷa, **imš** yaḷḷa³⁸*
‘C’mon! **Let’s go** (to coffee shop). C’mon! **Let’s go**.’

KAS18: *minu hāḍa, ḥammūd? **miša**?*
‘Who was on the phone, Ḥammūd? Has **he left** already?’

KAS8: *yaḷḷa **imšaw**. yaḷḷa*
‘C’mon! **Let’s go**. Get a move on!’

SG9

KAS22: *awwal mā bida **miša** ba ‘dēn gaṭṭ l-fūṭa*
‘He threw away the towel the first time that he started **walking**.’

SG11

KAS21: *waddita ‘ind wāḥid tāni **yimašši** l-mu ‘āmala*
‘She took it to another teller to **get** the paperwork **done**.’

KAS21: *čān **yidišš** ‘ind l-kwēṭi marra tānya, čān šinu, faḡ’ a bass **miša***
‘And then he **went to** the Kuwaiti (manager) again, but he suddenly **left**.’

³⁶ A short form of the progressive particle *gā ‘dīn*.

³⁷ *mamša* translates into English as ‘walkway, passageway, corridor, pathway’. However, in Kuwaiti, *mamša* denotes a paved walkway within residential areas where people casually stroll and go jogging.

³⁸ Ingham (1994: 32) notes *ya-allah na-mši* ‘let’s go’ in Najdi Arabic. Piamenta (1979a: 8) records the following meanings for *yaḷḷa* in colloquial Arabic: ‘well...’, ‘quick!’, ‘come on!’, ‘go on!’, ‘take it easy!’, ‘I wish...’, ‘hardly’. He also notes that in Tangier, the plural of *yaḷḷa* ‘let’s go; quickly!’ is *yaḷḷāho* (Piamenta 1979a: 15).

KAS21: *hāḍi hudā, hāḍa l-mudīr w-tmaššīha. ya 'ni l-ḥīn miša čam marra? marritēn!*
'(Huda was like), "This is the manager, and you have to **deposit** the cheque." Now, how many times did it **go through**? Twice!'

KAS21: *inti b-ddif'īn dāmič inti maššētay l-mu 'āmala*
'(I told Huda), "You should pay as long as you **got** the paperwork **done**."

KAS21: *gāl mū tamši 'ašān nitlāga ba 'dēn w-nrūḥ*
'He said, "Don't **go away**, so we can meet later and go together".'

KAS21: *ga ' ašūfaṭnēn yamšūn biš-šāri'*
'I saw two people **walking** on the street.'

SG12

KAS30: *hāḍa illi miša ma 'āy āna. il-ḡiyasam³⁹ hāḍa illi yamši*
'That's what **worked** well with me (=my mobile phone). The GSM seems to **work** very well.'

SG13

KAS9: *sā 'tēn w-iḥna ga ' nsōlif, āna b-amši čān trid ihya 'ala s-su 'āl*
'We were chatting for two hours, when I was about to **leave**, she replied to the question.'

SG14

KAS8: *lāḡa lay s-sayyāra yigūl r-rayyāl b-yamši w-killina wāḡfīn*
'I followed him to his car, he said, "The man is **leaving** and we're all standing."

KAS28: *git-laha imšay 'adil*
'I told her, "**Walk** properly."

KAS28: *git-laha l-ḥamdillā wiš-sikir lillāh fi aḡḡad yamši čīḍi*
'I told her, "Good Lord! Who **walks** like that?"'

KAS8: *čān barrūk yigūl liḡa, liḡa. 'ād šīḡḡ māfi mašāfiṭ xan-namši*
'Then Barrūk said, "Follow him, follow him." The parking was really full so **we left**.

KAS8: *āna ayiy tisi ' u amši tisi ' u nuš, 'ašir*
'I (usually) come at 9:00 and **leave** around 9:30 (or) 10:00.'

³⁹ English borrowing: 'GSM (Global System/Standard for Mobile Communication(s))'

KAS28: *int 'abāllik l-baḥrēn māšya 'ala šinu? fis-su 'udiyya wil-kwayt*
'**On** what do you think Bahrain **depends**? On Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.'

SG16

KAS28: *xall yigittik mḥammad... baḥla b-yamši?*
'**Let** Muhammad drive you home. Isn't he **leaving** at all?'

SG17

KAS31: *lēš mā yigdar yamši? git lah yamši*
'Why couldn't he **move**? I (already) told him to **move away**.'