Social and Psychological Considerations of the Glottal Stop Status in Jordanian Arabic

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Abstract:

The present study approaches studying the status of the variable (qàf) and its dialectal realizations in the Jordanian city of Amman. The nucleus of the research concentrates on the dialectal realizations of (q) including the urban [ʔ] and the rural [g]. In addition to our focus on the process of dialect contact, our profound province is to shed light on the main motives which make the natives accommodate to and adopt the outsider's variety mainly the urban Palestinian. The study brings the result that in a search for power and social status, gender proves to have a big influence on shifting and retention. Age also plays a significant role in parallel with origins and ancestry for the fact that old people are preservative and youngsters work for linguistic transition especially when influenced by other environments than the family.

Key words: Amman, dialect change, glottal stop, social and psychological factors.

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I- Introduction:

Since the global community is increasingly characterized by migration and contact between differing cultures, languages, and dialects, the study of linguistic contact can provide convenient sociolinguistic insight[1]. In most research of quantitative variationist sociolinguistics, there has been a relative lack of attention placed on jeopardized municipal majority dialects. Besides, leaving blanks in the comprehension and investigation of lesser-known speech communities leads to an incomplete account of language variation and change as we may find exceptions or completions for the rules[2].

Dialectal change can be a consequence of acculturation and adopting an urban identity through linguistic forms. This is very common in the Arab world. The phenomenon of linguistic urbanization, as Abdel Jawad[3] dubs it, is growing in many Arabic speaking settings[4]. In most countries, like Jordan, some urban forms/ dialects are considered more prestigious than the rural ones[5]. This is why attempts to appear more prestigious and urbanite are in prominent development, especially with the influence of age, gender, geographical area, etc.

The variable (q), with its differing dialectal realizations, is a vivid case to explain the previous idea. In fact, *qàf* has been investigated in a number of Arabic speaking countries from different perspectives. Abdel Jawad[6]showed that the variable (q) has different realizations in Amman including [q], [g], [k] and [ʔ] as in [qaːl, gaːl, kaːl, ʔaːl] 'say'. Precisely, "merger of *qāf* with the glottal stop has been one of the most sweeping phonemic changes that many dialects of Arabic have undergone"[7]. This is why *qàf* is often described as the best studied sociolinguistic variable in Arabic. However, it is noticeable that our knowledge of the progression from Form A to Form B in relation to this variable has crucial gaps[8]. Therefore, one of the aims of the present research is to find an answer to this enquiry of how the process of dialectal change is realized and which reasons are mostly significant to explain this phenomenon.

II- A socio-linguistic background to Amman speech community:

1- Preface:

Amman is the capital and most populous city of Jordan, situated in north-central Jordan. The city has a population of 4,007,526 and a land area of 1,680 square kilometers[9]. Today, Amman is considered to be among the most liberal and westernized Arab cities[10]. Amman is situated on the East Bank Plateau, an upland characterized by three major *wadis* which run through it[11]. Al-Salt and al-Zarqa are located to the northwest and northeast, respectively, Madaba is located to the west and al-Karak and Ma'an are to Amman's southwest and southeast, respectively.

Figure 1.Map of Amman's location
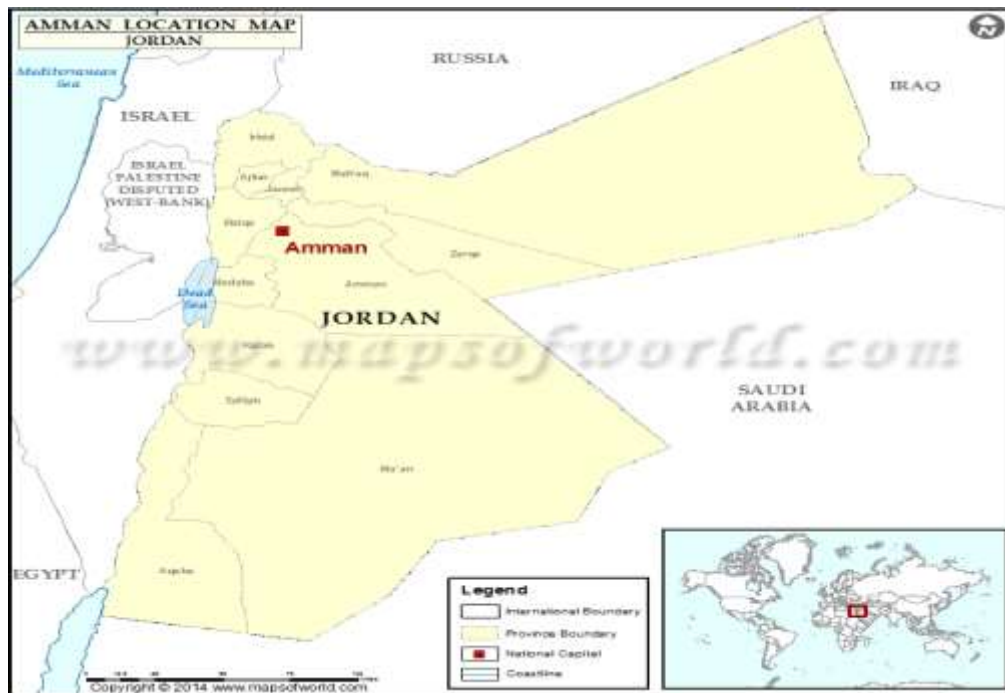
Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=amman+map&client=firefox-b-d&sxsrf=ALeKk00PJ8IjR-4kgZaLOW9cHtoOvn4FkQ:1626461482140&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjz0IiXoejxAhUR5uAKHb0mCDcQ_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=1366&bih=643#imgrc=_CRrmP8UZNMNeM (2021)

2- The linguistic situation:

Until the 1930's, Amman was a little town with a population of about 10.000; half of Amman's population included migrants from the Jordan city of Sult, and the other half consisted of Circassians, migrants from the Palestinian city of Nabuls, and a handful of families from Syria. Therefore, the whole population of Amman can be considered as migrants. Consequently, there had been no obvious native traditional dialect since the linguistic situation, until the 1980's, was characterized by unsystematic features from a mixture of varieties. Although there is a common Jordanian dialect, there are regional distinctions in various parts of the country with unique pronunciation and lexical specificities. Broadly speaking, Jordanian Arabic (JA) falls into three main groups: Rural (R), Bedouin (B) and Urban (U). Yet, with time, the most influencing ones were Jordanian dialects and urban Palestinian dialects. In the same line of thought, Abdel Jawad[12] claims that the urban dialect, for which the major feature is the pronunciation of [ʔ], is mainly spoken by city dwellers who came to Jordan from neighboring urban locations including Palestinians, Lebanese, and Syrians who reside mainly in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid as well.

The variation in the use of *qàf* in Amman and other Jordanian areas thus involves two variants: [g] and [ʔ]. Interestingly, in his article *"The emergence of an urban dialect in the Jordanian urban centers",* Abdel Jawad[13] states that "there is a gradual process of language urbanization, i.e., the emergence of spoken, urban dialects which are spreading". Correspondingly, many empirical data suggest that the [g] ~ [ʔ] variation has spread horizontally (to more geographical positions) and vertically in the sense that it is increasingly found in the speech of more social groups within the same speech community, which indicates that a change from [g] to [ʔ] may be in progress[14]: a situation for reconsideration in the current work.

3- Research Questions:

With regard to the linguistic situation in Amman, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1.   What is the nature of the linguistic situation that we analyze?
2.   What are the factors that govern this dialect behavior: social or psychological ones?

III- Methodology:

For ethical consideration of research, it shall be noted that the data have been collected in the spring of 2017 when the researcher used to live in Jordan. Data have remained as raw as they have been gathered in both hand-written and voice-recorded forms.

1- Population and sample:

The population of the study is divided according to the place where the research was administered. The selection of the sample was based on various social and linguistic variables. Accordingly, speakers of both rural and urban dialects (who live, work and study in Amman) formed the nucleus of our work. They are categorized under some basics including: gender, age, and ancestry. The whole number of the participants includes 135 from Amman (table 1). The sample is taken from a group of people easy to contact and to reach (eg. in public places including markets, malls, libraries, the street, etc.) This type of sampling is known as group sampling, availability sampling, or what is generally known as the convenience sample in the sense that people are available and willing to participate[15].

Table 1. Participants in Amman

Group		G1	G2	G3	G4	G5
Age		[5-11[	] 12-17]	] 18-35]	] 40-55]	] 60+ [
Gender	M	7	13	30	9	3
	F	22	13	30	6	2

☐ Males   ☐ Females

2- Tools and instruments:

In order to successfully and effectively conduct our study, the researcher used a triangulation of instruments which encompasses features of both quantitative as well as qualitative paradigms. These include multiple forms of data collection which are: community profile, direct and indirect observations, in -depth semi- and unstructured interviews, and a sociolinguistic questionnaire.

IV- Discussion and interpretation of findings:

1- Discussion of results related to the first research question:

Previous studies confirmed that speakers of different, but mutually intelligible, dialects may show some change in their way of speaking once their varieties come into contact. If this contact is of short period, then, speech will only notice temporary, situational, and momentary modifications. However, if it is prolonged in time, its effect will be remarkable where some new features of other dialects stick to the native one. Modifications in speech will be permanent especially when reinforced by the users' attitudes which are positive/ negative towards certain features that are

going to be adopted or neglected. Therefore, dialect contact may lead to differing outcomes just as the ones happening in the studied speech community.

Figure2.The frequency of occurrence of urban and rural varieties

Trudgill[16]claims that "speakers accommodate to each other linguistically by reducing dissimilarities between their speech patterns and adopting features from each other's speech". Following this statement, our participants tend to adopt features of other dialects regarding the use or nonuse of the glottal stop. The direction of accommodation followed by Amman inhabitants shows that most of the participants especially females tend to switch to and adopt the urban variety characterized by the use of [ʔ] as a variant. In other words, younger female participants shift from their native rural variant [g] to the urban [ʔ]. On the other hand, male speakers attempt to keep using the native Jordanian variant [g] in almost all conversational situations. Females- originally Palestinian- never switch to the rural Jordanian [g] unless they are already from fallaħi ancestry.

Figure3.Subjects' readiness of shifting
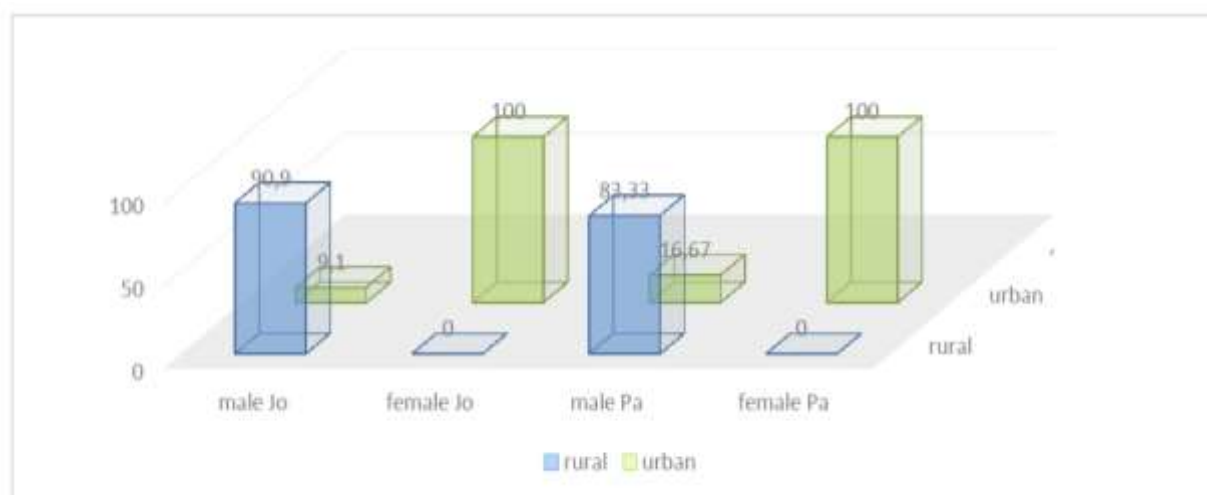
Amman female participants, in particular, manage to achieve a full accommodation as far as the [ʔ]-variant is concerned. This was only noticed through the collected data where accommodating to urban entails substituting [g] by [ʔ]. According to Wilson'sstudy[17], there are distinct types of accommodation that may form a continuum: from full accommodation (acquisition of full linguistic features of the host variety) to complete non-accommodation (no assimilation to forms of the host variety)[18]. The latter [lack of accommodation] implies native

variant retention, and most male speakers –in Amman- retained their variant forms, i.e., native [g]. Expectation of complete accommodation[19] (Niedzielski & Giles' Change by Accommodation Model) by females in Amman is in continuous processing[20]. It would be achieved as change occurs at a community level where a particular new linguistic feature is adopted and used by speakers at the expense of the original variant that is threatened to be lost[21]. This idea needs to be expanded since complete accommodation does not stop at a phonological level but should touch other/ all linguistic levels especially morphological, lexical, and syntactic ones). This remains as an early expectation to suggest since total accommodation is a slow ongoing process that is not completed in a number of years[22]. It is only clear that the process of accommodation and dialectal change is taking two distinct directions in the studied speech communities.

2- Discussion of results related to the second research question:

Informal interviews as well as random indirect observations show very important results with regard to the reasons that push speakers to shift from their home variety to another one. These reasons are generally classified under two categories: social and psychological ones. The former can mainly be summarized in the widely discussed social variables including ancestry, gender, and age. They are also related to the contexts where the speakers are found. Context is used here as an umbrella term including: place, time, situation, topic, addressee, as well as the type of contact that is between the speakers of similar or differing tongues. The latter, i. e., psychological factors are related to the way speakers cognitively see and perceive the spoken dialect, in addition to their personal needs as reflecting masculinity and power for males and feminity for females, which lead them either to use or avoid their native variety.

2-1- Social factors:

In order to have a clear picture of the nature of accommodation that is happening in Amman, we ought to examine two essential factors: ancestry and the nature of the situation where the speaker is. Previous studies of dialect contact generally emphasize on how minority mobile groups use the speech features of the original inhabitants of the area they settle in[23-24] Contrary to these researchers and according to previous findings on Amman speakers[25-26], we found that native Jordanian speakers (females especially) participate in losing some of the original variety features in favor of the urban one though they form the majority group. Our focus is, as previously mentioned, therefore, on the majority group of originally rural (Bedouin) Jordanians and minority outsiders: speakers of an urban variety who are from different origins (Palestinians in our case); both groups of informants are inhabitants of Amman. Thence, while ancient studies provided how the minority could follow the majority and adopt/ accommodate to its variety, i.e., adopting new features of the host community, surprisingly, this study reveals the opposite.

Originally native rural Jordanian speakers (in Amman) have shown a certain degree in the use of *qàf*-realizations. Out of the whole female sample, a big proportion of originally Jordanians and originally Palestinians use the variant [ʔ] in their speech. By displaying variability in the use of [ʔ] and [g] we conclude that linguistic accommodation is remarkable as Jordanians especially females accommodate their speech by adopting the urban [ʔ] which is not present in the local 'rural, Bedouin' variety. Males, on the other hand, did not show that high degree of switching (male Palestinians use the rural [g]). Therefore, we deduce that origin of the speaker matters in the variety used since most of male Jordanian participants mention their pride towards their Bedouinity and view the [g]-variant as a symbol of identity.

The nature of the contextual situation proves to be of paramount importance in the operation of dialect change. Examples as travelling, marriage, topic of discussion, the addressee,

etc. were all involved in the speakers' answers regarding the circumstances that push them to switch.

2-2- Psychological factors:

a/ Speakers' awareness and linguistic choice:

It has been claimed[27] that the contributing factors in the framework of accommodation are the social and linguistic factors that are generally related to salience and socially marked features. Salienceis tightly related with the linguistic feature of a particular variety whose speakers are *aware* of to the extent that is more noticeable than others[28]. Hence, it is according to the degree of the language users' awareness (salience) and their cognitive perception that a certain variable may turn into a marker. If it is becoming stronger, it will turn into a stereotype[29]. In this vein, Trudgill[30] states four factors by which a particular linguistic variable is relatively high in the speakers' consciousness:

1. Forms which are overtly stigmatized in a particular community. This overt stigmatization is due to the high-status variant of the stigmatized form and this matches up with the orthography.
2. Forms that are currently involved in linguistic change.
3. Variables whose variants are phonetically radically different.
4. Variables that are involved in the maintenance of phonological contrasts.

If we are to apply what Trudgill suggested, the linguistic situation that is taking place in Amman works under his categorization. More precisely, if the source of salience is stigma, the variant is not likely to be adopted[31].In Amman, [g] is starting to perceive stigma attitude especially by females and therefore they are trying to shift to the urban variety by using the glottal stop. Interestingly, in the latter speech community, the degree of awareness about the salient variant is too high in both the native and non-native speakers' consciousness, and thus it is taking a "stereotype direction". This follow Siegel statement that "the prediction would be that a variant in D2 would be more likely to be acquired when the corresponding variation in D1 is stigmatized"[32]. This can be illustratively summarized as the following:

The variant [ʔ] of the variable (q) instead of the native [g] in Amman

Following the attitudes and opinions given by the participants, Amman subjects, especially females consider [g] as a not girly, shameful, strange behavior. They tend to use [ʔ] since it is salient and therefore adopted to because the majority of the speakers are aware of it. Some of the participants' answers show that they receive comments on their linguistic behavior especially in public places. This leads them either to reduce or enhance the use of the studied variants. In this respect, Trudgill states that "if a speaker accommodates frequently enough to a particular accent or dialect… then the accommodation may in time become permanent, particularly if attitudinal factors are favorable"[33]. This means that the strong attitudinal orientations (negative vs. positive connotations associated to the use or nonuse of the studied variants) of the speakers are the key to understanding their linguistic behavior.

b/ Stigma vs. prestige:

Although the choice may be highly contextually oriented, stigmatization is still having ground in people's attitudes towards the process of shifting. Our findings nearly contrast with Al-

Wer'sclaim that Amman participants shifting"is not an issue of one variant being prestigious while the other is stigmatized"[34]. If this assumption is true, why did some of our participants mention that they negatively perceive people who shift? Why do people, akin grand-parents, use the glottal stop while addressing and interacting with their grandsons? Why do some men switch to the urban variety in their places of work? Why do most intellectual people use the urban vernaculars as to increase their socio-economic opportunities? Why do most of the participants see it odd and vulgar if a girl speaks in [g]? Why do some males shift to use [ʔ] when they interact with their family members of female addressees? All these enquiries may provide some insights to review the attitudinal stigma-prestige dichotomy (especially in feminine speech) in Amman.

c/ Socialization:

Naturally speaking, children are culturally born and raised into languages, values, ideas and beliefs that socialization transforms into an inner reality[35]. The fact of transforming such patterns from family to children as new members in the society is generally known as socialization. Parents transmit cultural patterns to their children which take root in their unconscious knowledge as social norms reflected in their behavior. Among these patterns we find linguistic forms and the social connotations associated to them which are acquired and changed according to different socialization processes and environments to which the child is exposed.

➢ **Primary socialization: The effect of family on dialect preservation/ transformation:**

Family does influence the acquisition of linguistic styles and cultural patterns; a fact that is understood as part of primary socialization. The results of our survey and parallel observations show that family has a big role in dialect production, perception, understanding, and using it in social contexts. In Amman inhabitants declared the same idea that they make their children use the urban variety when interacting. Results were confirmed by the behavior of the pupils in Amman who use the urban variety when responding to the researcher and interacting with each other. We deduce, here, that parents and the milieu where kids are raised are considered as a pillar in the acquisition and social use of the dialect. Family, as expected, plays a vital role in either the preservation of the native urban or the transformation towards the outsider urban of the variants selected.

The exception that was found is that male pupils in Amman use [g] as they were mocked once using [ʔ]. The post-adolescence stage is a natural risk-taking period, arising from the necessary development of autonomy and looking for power especially through public language use[36]. At this age, children come into contact with others of similar or older age. Their way of thinking is automatically influenced and shaped by what they experience and perceive outside family circle[37]. While general sociological theory puts the importance of peers in adolescence, others argue that peers are at the core of primary socialization since they are the center of children's development of self-understanding and identity. We explain this change in dialectal behavior, i.e., the shifting to the rural [g], in terms of the broader environment to which the children are exposed: what is socio-psychologically known as secondary socialization.

➢ **Secondary socialization: the effect of school and education on dialect shift:**

Secondary socialization is usually carried out by institutions and people in specific roles and positions where a child begins to interact strongly with other social environments than strictly the family[38]. Places akin schools impart knowledge of basic historical and cultural relationships, and their institutional practices convey cultural patterns and values, they also influence socialization by relating to gender, class, and ethnicity in various ways. "Contact with other children and with adults other than their own parents helps the child to understand that there is another social

universe outside the family"[39]: an environment that teaches them how to use what has been acquired at a narrower level. In addition, as they grow up, "children gradually loosen the direct control exercised by parents and seek to integrate into a group of colleagues/friends/acquaintances, this group being an important agent of socialization" [40]. This type of learning makes them aware of the social connotations associated to the things they are using. This pushes them either to enhance or avoid utilizing certain items (linguistic ones in our case).

Figure4.The frequency of occurrence of rural and urban varieties in the speech of participants aged 5-13

Our observation results in the confirmation of our assumption that school also affects dialectal accommodation and change. As previously analyzed, pupils attempt to use the urban variety. Those who used the [g] in their speech especially females were mocked at. Males too were mocked, for their use of the glottal stop in their speech. Our explanation to this was that participants are aware of their variants' use. School and its environment strongly affect the choice of variety and switching. Therefore, one of the points to be questioned, can education still be a factor influencing home language?

V- Conclusion:

As already designed at the outset of the research, the final objective of the present work has been to shed light on some examples of jeopardized municipal majority dialects. The results show that Amman inhabitants (originally Jordanian) are adopting an urban identity and therefore they are in continuous use of the glottal stop paving the way for an urbanization process.

As far as the sociolinguistic situation in Amman is concerned, the research findings are surprising as dialect accommodation and change are in a continuous processing not only among youths but also among children at an early age of exposure to schooling and external life. Awareness of the status of the glottal stop in particular and the urban dialect in general in addition to the search of power are the most salient parameters that affect and reinforce dialect change. These data need to be experimented by other researchers in order to trace the mechanisms of dialect change in the city of Amman. Comparisons can also be done for further discussion of the status of the realizations of qaf in the Arabic speaking world.

Margins:

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