



Language and Identity in Oman through the Voice of Local Radio Broadcasters

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Declaration

I have read and understood The University of Edinburgh guidelines on Plagiarism and declare that this written dissertation is all my own work except where I indicate otherwise by proper use of quotes and references.

Signature:

Date:

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1. Introduction

Oman, a rapidly modernising state, provides a fruitful site for sociolinguistic investigation. This is especially true for the language of Omani radio broadcasters in local channels who through their voice present an identity that is assumed to be a local one. Yet there are sociolinguistic and socio-political pressures that seem to influence the linguistic choices of the broadcasters which lead to their divergence from the local dialect.

Omani broadcasters have a binary choice of variants. Choosing one and not the other is not random; instead there is a relation between their choice of variants and social identity. Through their choice of Gulf Arabic instead of Omani variants, many broadcasters do not present the linguistic reality in Oman. They adopt linguistic features from Gulf Arabic which is the socially dominant dialect in the Arabian Gulf. This phenomenon was observed at least since the 1980s not long after the creation of modern Oman in 1970 (Holes, 2004).

The current study focuses on two variables. The first is the variable /q/ an uvular plosive and has the variants [q] an uvular plosive or [g] which is a velar plosive. The second variable is the alveolar affricate /dʒ/ and its variants are [dʒ] an alveolar affricate or [g] a velar plosive again. (Holes, 2004).

The reason for choosing these variables is because their realisations seem to be hallmarks of the dialect of Oman. The variables are also interesting because they each have one variant that coincides with al-Fusha¹ Arabic; which is [q] and [dʒ]. Moreover the variables share the same variant, [g], which is used as a realisation of two different variables in two different communities as this study will show. Although the sound is the same, one seems to have regional prestige, while the other is stigmatised.

¹ Al-Fus'ha is the term used here to refer to both Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Speakers of Arabic as a first language do not seem to distinguish between the two and refer to them as Al-Fusha (pronounced al-fus-ha where the S and H do not make the 'Sh' sound). If translated into English the term Al-Fusha literally means 'eloquent'. (Haeri 1996, Haeri 2000, Miller 2004, Bassiouney 2009).

The study focuses on Omani Hadari Arabic (hereafter OHA) which is the dominant dialect in Oman and investigates how its lack of regional prestige causes the broadcasters to speak in Gulf Arabic instead due to its regional prestige.

This study aims at answering the following questions:

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1. How do the broadcasters realise the variable /q/?
2. How do the broadcasters realise the variable /dʒ/?
3. Do the broadcasters represent the Omani audience linguistically?
4. Do the broadcasters converge or diverge in their speech while interacting with members of the audience?
5. What are the overall implications of the way in which the broadcasters speak?

These questions are answered by analysing the speech of 5 Omani broadcasters and comparing it to that of their callers in regards to the two variables. One objective of the study is to examine the linguistic behaviour of the broadcasters in terms of the variables to understand if it converges or diverges from the linguistic behaviour of the audience. The second objective is to try to understand reasons for any convergence or divergence. Based on this, further socio-political implications are interpreted. Achieving these objectives lead to a better understanding of whether the linguistic public image of Oman is different from reality and possible reasons for its current situation.

The study is divided into five sections. The first is a review of the literature and relevant studies and background. The second is the methodology which explains the process of data collection and informants' profiles. The quantitative results are presented and described in the third section. The fourth section is the discussion which discusses the main interpretations and implications of the results. Finally the concluding remarks are in the fifth section.

2. Literature Review

This section presents literature that is relevant to this study. It is divided into further subsections and discusses the various issues that contribute to the overall understanding of the study.

2.1. 'Prestige' and 'Standard' are not equivalent in Arabic sociolinguistics

Al-Fusha Arabic is the official language in all 22 Arab countries (Bassiouney, 2009). It is the standard form of Arabic and the most prestigious variety of Arabic and the one associated with literacy, education and high social class (Miller, 2004). However, research done in the Arab World revealed that al-Fusha is not the only prestigious variety in the region. Ibrahim (1986: 115 in Bassiouney 2009: 18) states that “the identification of H [i.e. al-Fusha] as both the standard and the prestigious variety at one and the same time has led to problems of interpreting data and findings from Arabic sociolinguistic research”. Similarly, Abd-el-Jawad (1987), argues that the terms ‘prestige’ and ‘standard’ should not be equated in the Arab World; because this could lead to false assumptions. Equating these two terms assumes that the other non-standard spoken varieties have no prestige although in reality they do. Abd-el-Jawad (1987: 359) argues that in the Arab World, besides al-Fusha, there are “also other prestigious local or regional varieties which act as local spoken standards competing with MSA in informal settings”. Indeed it can be a source of ridicule if one speaks entirely in al-Fusha in informal settings (Abd-el-Jawad, 1987). Unlike early Arabic linguists that considered the non-standard varieties as something that should be ended “exactly like poverty and disease” (Najeeb Mahfouz² in Dawwarah 1965: 286 in Haeri 2000: 63), in the second part of the twentieth century studies on Arabic sociolinguistics have acknowledged the fact that when al-Fusha is not in use, there are other spoken forms that do have prestige. Al-Fusha is seen as the variety that unites Arabs but these non-standard varieties are “true symbols of local national culture, and transnationally divisive because unlike Classical Arabic, they differ from country to country” (Haeri, 2000: 63). These local national dialects are often seen by Arabic conservative linguists as varieties that divide Arabs and that it is standard Arabic that unites them.

² Egyptian poet.

Abd-El-Jawad (1987: 359) argues that most sociolinguistic studies done in the Arab World “assume the existence of a sociolinguistic continuum with a local vernacular at the bottom and a prestige standard at the top, with the linguistic movement of individuals generally in an upward direction”; he explains that this assumption is an influence by research done in the West especially in regards to English. While the terms ‘prestige’ and ‘standard’ are very often used interchangeably in such studies, using them in the same way for Arabic-based sociolinguistic studies can lead to inaccurate results and assumptions (Abd-El-Jawad, 1987). There are indeed, varieties of spoken Arabic that do have local prestige which is independent of the prestige of al-Fusha (Abd-El-Jawad, 1987).

This fact has been shown in studies done in some parts of the Arab World, where some communities replace some standard linguistic features with non-standard ones because the latter has more local or regional prestige. Findings of three important studies in the Arab World support this view. The communities studied are in Palestine, Iraq and Bahrain. They will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The dialect of Nablus has a distinctive feature of realising the variable /q/ as it is; hence [q]. This variant is a voiceless uvular stop in Al-Fusha Arabic, and Nablus-dialect speakers pronounce it in the same way as Al-Fusha. However, in other parts of Palestine the variant [q] is usually realised as one of three different variables: [k], [g] or [ʔ], where the first is a feature of rural Palestinians, the second of Bedouin and rural Jordanians and finally the glottal stop is a feature of urban dialects (Abd-El-Jawad, 1987). However, research by Annuri (1979 in Abd-El-Jawad 1987) showed “that there is an increasing tendency among Nabulsi speakers to abandon the “pure [q] in favour of the urban variant [ʔ]” (Abd-El-Jawad, 1987: 361).

The second case is in Iraq, where a study showed that the realisations of the standard variables /q/ and /k/ moved to the non-standard forms. In most parts of Iraq /q/ is realised as [g], and /k/ as [tʃ]. However, in the north part of Baghdad and in Mosul city, the two variables are realised as they are unchanged from al-Fusha; hence [q] and [k]. Similarly, Iraqi Jews and Christians realise the two variables like they are in al-Fusha. However, studies by Blanc (1964) and Al-Ani (1978) show that non-Muslim Iraqis are abandoning their standard features [q] and [k], which are not only their local features but also standard in Arabic, and adopting the dominant linguistic

features instead, that is [g] and [tʃ] respectively. Blanc (1964: 9 in Abd-El-Jawad 1987: 363) states that:

“J [Jewish Arabic] and C [Christian Arabic] are spoken respectively by Jews and Christians largely at home and with coreligionists, while M [Muslim Arabic], the dominant dialect, is used in public and in intercommunal situations by the many Jews and Christians who have a command of it”

Blanc (1964) observes that this shift is more common among the younger generation of Jewish and Christian Iraqis. In the late 1970s, Al-Ani’s study came to confirm Blanc early 1960s findings. However, Al-Ani (1978) observes that the shift to the dominant Muslim dialect is more common among non-Muslim Iraqis; since as he notes, among the Muslim communities such as Mosul and Tikrit, who realise the variables /q/ and /k/ as they are in al-Fusha Arabic, seem to retain them instead of abandoning them for the non-standard but locally prestigious forms.

The third case is in Bahrain, where sect is an important social factor that determines linguistic variation. Shiite Muslims who are essentially from Sedentary origins, pronounce certain phonemes such as /q/ and /dʒ/ like they are pronounced in al-Fusha; hence [q] and [dʒ] respectively. On the other hand, the dominant Bedouin Sunnis pronounce the phonemes as [g] and [j] respectively. Studies have shown that the Shiites are abandoning these features and adopting more Bedouin features since they have more local and regional prestige (Holes 1983 in Abd-el-Jawad 1987). Shiites in Bahrain “preferred a nonstandard but locally prestigious variant to a standard but locally nonprestigious variant” (Holes, 1983: 447 in Abd-el-Jawad, 1987: 364). The variables discussed in the three communities are summarised below in Table 1.

	Palestine	Iraq	Bahrain
Original variables [+Standard] [-Prestige]	[q]	[q], [k]	[q], [dʒ]
Adopted variables [-Standard] [+Prestigious]	[ʔ]	[g], [tʃ]	[g], [j]

Table1. The abandoned variables and the adopted ones in Palestine, Iraq and Bahrain.

Therefore, as seen Table 1, in Arabic it is not always the case that speakers prefer to speak using al-Fusha features. However, it should be noted that these varieties have a prestige that is independent of al-Fusha. Abd-El-Jawad (1987: 360) states that, “all speakers of all backgrounds, classes, and geographical locations agree that MSA is the high standard variety in contrast to the colloquials. Attitudinal studies indicate that MSA is favored over colloquials”. However, there are certain colloquial varieties that do have a local prestige. This is perhaps the result of not using al-Fusha Arabic in informal settings or for daily communication. Having this situation allows a non-standard variety to gain more local or regional prestige when al-Fusha is not used. In other words another variety finds its way to ‘occupy’ the prestige category in cases where al-Fusha cannot be in used due to its high formality. As discussed, in many cases certain local [+al-Fusha] features are replaced by [-al-Fusha] features which may well be non-standard but are locally prestigious.

2.2. The dialect typology of Arabic and the GCC

To understand the prestige of non-Standard spoken varieties, it is useful to understand the dialect typology of Arabic in general. There are two main classifications of Arabic dialects: Bedouin (*Badawi*) and Sedentary (*Hadari*) (Holes 1989, Holes 1996, Suleiman 2004, Miller 2007, Bassiouney, 2009). Since Bedouins are Arab nomads and sedentary are settled Arabs, this dialectal classification “reflects the historical settlements in the area” (Bassiouney, 2009: 19). Rural and urban dialects of Arabic are usually classified as a type of the sedentary dialect (Bassiouney, 2009). It should be noted though, that the terms Bedouin and Sedentary do not

reflect the lifestyle of its speakers any longer. In other words, most Bedouins are not nomads nowadays and they are settled in cities (Holes 1989, Miller 2007, Bassiouney 2009) yet members of each category still refer to themselves as either Bedouin or Hadari until today (Holes, 1989, Miller 2007, Patrick 2009). The terms are used often in Arabic linguistics since they are useful in distinguishing linguistic features which seem to correlate with either of the lifestyles (Holes 1996, Miller, 2007). Note that not all cities in the Arab World speak in an urban dialect, in fact many of them; especially in the Arabian Peninsula speak a Bedouin dialect instead; in these cities the Bedouin dialect is more prestigious than the sedentary one (Bassiouney 2009, Holes 2011).

The states of the Arabian Gulf are among those who speak a Bedouin dialect in their cities. This dialect is known as *Khaleeji* in Arabic which literally means ‘Gulfy’ (Holes, 2004). This indicates that the dialect is seen as a regional one and not one that is specific to one country or nationality. Khaleeji, or Gulf Arabic, is the socially dominant dialect in most cities of the six states that constitute the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The GCC was founded in 1981 and it includes six states from the Arabian Peninsula region: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman. The GCC was created because there was a sense that these Arabian Gulf countries share a lot in common; especially in politics and economy (Patrick, 2009). The statement in the GCC website which describes its goals explains that this organization aims at maintaining and strengthening the bonds and ties between these countries since they already share a lot in common historically and in the present. The GCC came to bond the states involved in different spheres besides politics and economy, other areas include: trade and transport, education and culture, social work and health, media and tourism, agriculture and create bonded research centres³. Although these six Arab states are also members of the Arab League, the relations between them after the creation of the GCC became stronger and more bonded compared to their relation to the other non-GCC Arab countries. Holes (2011) explains that the young Gulf identity is more local and perhaps loyal to the nationalism of the GCC more than to the pan-Arab nationalism.

³ <http://www.gcc-sg.org/>

Although the socially dominant dialects spoken in the GCC states are Bedouin dialects, this was not the case historically (Holes, 2011). Until recent history both sedentary and Bedouin dialects existed in the Arab Gulf side by side. For example, Holes (2011) notes the case of Bahrain where he observed that the dialects spoken by Shiite and Sunni communities in Bahrain were very different. Four decades ago, the Shiite Bahrainis spoke a rural dialect called *Bahrani*, while the Sunnis who migrated from Saudi Arabia in the 17th century spoke a Bedouin dialect (Holes, 2011).

Holes (2011) observes that Bedouins have been migrating to some parts of the Gulf. The areas in which the nomad Bedouins migrated to already had inhabitants who lived a rural life and spoke their own dialect. However, the Bedouins soon gained more power and influenced the local rural dialects linguistically and “swamped them socially and politically” (Holes, 2011: 7). The Bedouin influence in the Gulf is so powerful that it is difficult to imagine that at some point in recent history the dialects spoken in the region “were as different as chalk and cheese” (Holes, 2011: 5). For centuries, two types of dialects existed in the Gulf region: the sedentary dialect and the Bedouin dialect. These dialects according to Holes (2011: 7) are not just dialects but are “associated with different social structures, employment patterns and even different cultures”.

2.3. Dialect homogenisation and linguistic insecurity

These dialectal differences hardly exist today in the Gulf. Holes (2011) argues that there is a recession in dialect spoken in the GCC “whether tribal, sectarian or national in the face of a homogenised form of ‘Gulf’ speech which is not identifiable with any particular Gulf community” (Holes, 2011: 3). According to Holes (2011) this was not the case 40 years ago when Gulf countries had distinct dialects that are unique to each country. The general trend is that speakers of the rural dialects shifted to the Bedouin dialects because it is the socially and politically dominant dialect. Not only is there a shift from sedentary to Bedouin dialects in the Gulf, but the Bedouin dialects that were at some point spoken there have become homogenised in the sense that they do not specifically belong to one GCC country. In other words, Haeri’s (2000: 63) reference to national Arabic dialects as “true symbols of local national culture, and transnationally divisive because unlike Classical Arabic, they differ from country to country”, does not apply in the GCC to a great extent any more due to this homogenisation and an attempt

to nationalise the Gulf (Patrick, 2009). In light of this, Holes (2011: 10) states “the socially dominant dialect in Bahrain is now also the regionally dominant one in the Gulf. With minor variations, it is spoken in relaxed public speech contexts from Kuwait in the north to the UAE in the south and is even now making inroads into Oman”. Hole’s reference to Oman implies that the case of Oman is different and that it is actually surprising to see that this homogenised dialect is spreading to Oman.

This homogenised dialect did not spread in Oman as easy as it did in other GCC countries because Oman has always been the ‘odd one out’ in the GCC. Omanis speak and dress differently and the socially dominant people and the ruling family are not Bedouin, instead they are from sedentary origins. Oman is a country where people with Bedouin origins are the minority. Also, the majority in Oman are not Sunnis; which is the sect of the Bedouins; in Oman the majority and the ruling family are Ibadhi Muslims (Ghubash, 2006). By being part of the GCC, Omanis are constantly reminded that they are different, and that ‘different’ is not favoured because the people of the Gulf constantly repeat their slogan ‘*Khaleejona wahid*’ or ‘Our Gulf is One’ and when the differences are too many it is difficult to ignore them and claim that indeed they are ‘one’.

Omanis are generally aware that they are different from the rest of the GCC. An Omani person wrote in 2005 in a thread in an online discussion forum entitled ‘Why is Oman very different from all Gulf States?’⁴ He wrote:

“Why do they wear a *ghutra* and *iqal* and we don’t?

Why do all people of the Gulf speak the dialect while we don’t?

Why do all Gulf countries have skyscrapers while we don’t?

Why do all Gulf States have white plate numbers on their cars except Oman? Although white is so much better.

⁴ <http://om.s-oman.net/showthread.php?t=179682>

Why do all people of the Gulf love each other except for Omanis whom they look at from a different angle?

Why are all Gulf countries developed except Oman?

Why, why, why, etc.

Of course there are more things that are inappropriate to mention here in front of everyone.”

These comments made by this Omani are not uncommon. Many Omanis often feel insecure about how they are different especially linguistically from the people of the Gulf. It is interesting to see that although the Bedouin dialect is the not the dominant one in Oman, but nevertheless the dominant one in the region, many Omanis still feel peer pressured into speaking like their neighbouring Gulf countries. After all, the Gulf dialect has more prestige and it is “de facto the socially dominant dialect” (Holes, 2011: 10).

2.4. The dominant Omani dialect: Omani Hadari Arabic

The socially dominant dialect in Oman is different from the dominant dialect of the rest of the Arabian Gulf. For a start, it is a Hadari (Sedentary) dialect and not a Bedouin one. In his book *Eastern Arabian Dialect Studies*, Johnstone (1967) classified Oman as a distinct dialect group, different from the rest of the dialects spoken in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula generally. Also, on the home page of www.gulfarabic.com, Gulf Arabic is explained as, “the dialect of Arabic native to the Arab nationals of the Persian Gulf countries, such as the United Arab Emirates (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, etc.), The State of Kuwait, The Kingdom of Bahrain, The State of Qatar, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, most of Southern Iraq and to a lesser extent The Sultanate of Oman”. This ‘lesser extent’ is explained best in Holes’ (1989) study which attempts to survey the dialect geography of Oman. Holes (1989) argues that Johnstone’s decision on classifying Oman as a distinct dialect area is because of lack of literature and evidence that explains otherwise. There are indeed linguistic features that are shared by virtually all Omani dialects which are not found in dialects spoken in neighbouring countries (Holes, 1989). However, the distinction between the Bedouin and Hadari (Sedentary) populations in Oman is as distinctive as sect (Sunni versus Shiite) in Bahrain (Holes, 2011). The distinction between

Bedouin and Hadari in Oman is an important factor when doing a sociolinguistic study in Oman (Holes, 1989). Omani Hadari dialect is the dialect of the ruling family and for centuries Oman has been ruled by Hadari tribes and not Bedouins (Ghubash, 2006). The Hadaris are more dominant than the Bedouins in Oman and it is their dialect that is becoming Oman's national vernacular (Holes, 1987).

Based on studies done on parts of the Arabic World particularly in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Palestine, there are certain variables that act as hallmarks of either Hadari or Bedouin dialects. Holes (1989: 449) argues that these variables are “associated with the relative degree of ‘nomadicity’ or sedentariness of particular groups of speakers”. One of the distinctive features that distinguish Bedouin dialects from sedentary dialects is in realising the phonological variable /q/ as [g] in Bedouin dialects (Holes 1983, Holes 1989, Holes 1996, Holes 2004, Suleiman 2004, Miller 2007). Other distinctive realisations that reflect a Bedouin or sedentary origin are the reflexes of the al-Fusha Arabic variables /k/ and /dʒ/ (Holes, 1983).

Hadari Omanis are specifically aware that their dialect lacks prestige and that it is mocked and stigmatized in the region. For example the popular Emirati cartoon ‘Shaabiyat Al-Cartoon’ which is described as “a social comedy tackling the problems of the Gulf community through the lives of people from different cultures living in Dubai”⁵ portrays an Omani couple as being low class and emphasises a lot on their dialect and even magnifies and exaggerates its forms. Before that, another cartoon which is the Arabic version of South Park which was produced in Kuwait also had an Omani character who spoke in an exaggerated form of Omani Arabic for a comedy effect. It is specifically interesting to see non-linguist Omanis discussing the issue of their dialect informally as it gives great indication of the stigma of the dialect as well as their insecurity about it. This issue is discussed often in online discussion forums. Another Omani wrote a thread online in 2010 which begins in the following lines⁶:

“Sadly, our dialect has borrowed a lot from foreign tongues
which led to making it sound less Arabic. This led to

⁵ *Al-Akhbar* (Lebanon), September 5, 2008

⁶ <http://www.s-oman.net/avb/showthread.php?t=874563>

stigmatizing the Omani dialect by the neighbouring Gulf countries, to the point that some of us feel embarrassed and ashamed when listening to the neighbouring Gulf countries dialects' and comparing it to our own”

2.6. Attitudes of Omanis towards the variants of /dʒ/

An experiment⁷ was conducted to see what kind of social meanings are indexed by the variants of the variable /dʒ/ which are [dʒ] and [g]. The study used the matched guise technique (Lambert, 1967) where participants listened to two speakers who are almost identical in their speech production, except that Speaker1 pronounced all the lexical items that have /dʒ/ as [dʒ] and Speaker2 pronounced them as [g]. The participants then rated the speakers in terms of traits such as education, friendliness, wealth, etc. The findings of this study indicated that participants' attitudes are more favourable towards Speaker1 who pronounced the variable as [dʒ]. They perceived him as more educated than Speaker2 as less educated. This was also evident in the kinds of occupation they gave to both speakers, where they generally gave Speaker1 jobs that require more education and are higher on the social scale, such as doctor, lawyer or teacher. On the other hand, Speaker2 was given jobs that require little or no education as all such as driver, cook or farmer.

Despite the negative attitudes to Speaker2, the experiment revealed interesting attitudes towards the 'fake' trait. Although the participants showed negative attitudes towards Speaker2, they still nevertheless perceived him as more authentic in terms of 'Omaniness' than Speaker1 who received higher scores for the 'fake' trait. Since [g] is a feature of OHA which is becoming the national dialect of Oman (Holes, 1987), this kind of 'loyalty' to non-Standard features is not surprising since it has also noted in Abd-el-Jawad's (1986, 1987) and Hole's (1983) studies in other Arab societies.

⁷ This experiment was done as part of an assignment for a course called *Special Topics in Sociolinguistics* which is part of the MSc Applied Linguistics program at the University of Edinburgh in March 2011.

The findings of this experiment are significant to this study in several ways. First, it shows that the speaker who uses the standard variable is perceived as being more educated yet less natural or authentic by the respondents. This indicates that they are aware of the fact that Speaker1 is not representing the people and might not be representing himself either; instead he might be ‘putting on an accent’. Second, it shows that the social meanings indexed by [g] are more negative than the ones compared to [dʒ]. Thus, the respondents generally have negative attitudes toward the variable [g] yet they think that speaking in [dʒ] is fake and unauthentic since [g] indexes more ‘Omaniness’.

2.7. The phenomenon of Omani broadcasters speaking in Gulf Arabic: Referee design, a possible explanation

The experiment discussed above is also relevant because many Omani broadcasters in both local radio and TV adopt the homogenised dialect that Holes (2011) discusses. The Omani public often express their negative views towards these broadcasters.

On personal observation, at least two of these broadcasters do not speak in the same way when they are away from radio or TV. In other words, they *are* in actual fact ‘putting on an accent’. This phenomenon is not new to the Omani media. It has been noticed since at least the 1980s. Holes (2011) gives an example from the 1980s of a female interviewer on Oman TV asking a female caller from the public about the difficulties of moving to a new house. The two women speak in different dialects and Holes (2011: 12) comments on this by stating that the caller “speaks normal old-fashioned Omani [...]”; but the interviewer’s speech is peppered with imported forms which are typical of the speech of that more northerly Gulf States which is becoming, even in Oman, the ‘public’ dialect”. The first two differences between the women’s speech which Holes (2011) notes are the realizations of the al-Fusha /q/, which is realised as [q] in OHA and as [g] in the GCC. The other variable is the realizations of the al-Fusha variable /dʒ/, which is realised as [g] in Omani Arabic and as [dʒ] in the other GCC states. The homogenised Gulf variety of Arabic that is used in the Arabian Gulf countries “is even now making inroads into Oman, where the historically dominant dialect, that spoken [...] was very different” (Holes, 2011: 10).

Allan Bell's (1984) study on audience design is useful in understanding why many Omani broadcasters adopt a dialect that is not theirs while presenting. Bell built his theory on the Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) which was put forward by Howard Giles, a British social psychologist. SAT focuses on style shifts of speakers. Style is "variation in an individual's speech" (Meyerhoff, 2011: 32). SAT maintains that speakers alter their speech style according to their addressee. There are two kinds of accommodation: convergence and divergence. Convergence occurs when the speaker shifts their speech style to make it similar to that of their addressee. This is usually to seek approval, affiliation and solidarity in general (Giles and Powesland 1975 in Bell, 2006). Some speakers however, maintain their speech style instead of converging, while some choose to diverge. Divergence is when a speaker shifts away from the speech style of their addressee and this usually occurs if they "they want to differentiate themselves from other individuals or groups" (Bell, 2006: 96).

Bell (1984) explains that in audience design the speaker is the first person and that there are second and third persons as well. The *addressee* is the second person and is the one that is directly interacting with the broadcaster. Third persons on the other hand, are divided into three kinds: *auditor*, *overhearer* and *eavesdropper*. Auditors are listeners who are present but unlike the addressee, the speaker is not addressing them directly; however they are still acknowledged and ratified by the speaker. Overhearers on the other hand, are third persons whom the speaker "knows to be there, but who are not ratified participants" (Bell, 1984: 159). Finally, eavesdroppers are listeners whom the speaker does not know about (Bell, 1984).

Bell (1984) argues that the overhearer is the most important party from the audience. It is the party that has the least variation in its speech and in which all other parties converge to its speech. In other words, the auditor, the addressee and the speaker all converge to the overhearer's speech style; while the overhearer's speech is the one with the least variation and the speaker's speech is the one with the most variation; "the speaker accounts for most variation, the addressee accounts for less than the speaker, the auditor less again, and the overhearer least of all. The amount of variation decreases as we move out from first person, to second person, to the remoter third persons" (Bell, 1984: 160-161). Therefore, the overhearer is the most influential person of all persons involved and while it may seem *prima facie* that the speaker is

converging to the addressee it is actually not the case usually. Bell (1984: 161) states that the “most initiative style shifts occur as a response not to the immediate audience but to certain third persons not physically present. These are the reference groups, who are absent but influential on the speaker’s attitude”. These reference groups are called *referees* (Bell, 1984).

In mass communication, referees are the most important factor that influences a broadcaster’s speech style (Bell, 1984). Referees are extremely influential and Bell (1984: 186) defines them as “third persons not physically present at an interaction, but possessing such salience for a speaker that they influence speech even in their absence”. The effect of the referees on the speaker’s style makes it seem as if the speaker is speaking to the referee and not the addressee. McEntegart and Le Page (1982: 105 in Bell, 1984: 186-187) state that “Each individual creates for himself patterns of linguistic behaviour so as to resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he wishes to be identified”; this is relevant because it suggests that those Omani broadcasters who speak in Gulf Arabic wish to be identified with the GCC and all the prestige that it carries.

Bell (1984) suggests that the first of the two types of referee design is labelled *ingroup referee design*. In this type of referee design, the speaker exaggerates local linguistic forms and it generally occurs in a “sociopolitical situation in which in- and outgroups and their linguistic codes are in conflict” (Bell, 1984: 187). An example is a Welsh bilingual speaker (in Welsh and English) speaking Welsh to an English monolingual (Giles 1980 in Bell 1984). This is a way to emphasise the local linguistic forms hence the local identity to an outsider and indeed a way to set boundaries between speakers.

The second type of referee design is called *outgroup referee design*. In this type speakers deviate from their own linguistic norms and adopt features that belong to other speech communities. Bell (1984: 188) describes it as:

“Speakers lay claim to a speech and identity which are not their own but which hold prestige [...] they diverge from the speech of their ingroup – and thus in some sense from their own

‘natural’ speech- towards an outgroup with whom they wish to identify”

This makes sense when considering the Omani situation. The GCC countries speak a more prestigious dialect while OHA is stigmatised regionally. Therefore, those Omani broadcasters who diverge from the local linguistic norm wish to be affiliated with the GCC. Unlike ingroup referee design, “in outgroup referee design both the speaker and addressee agree on the prestige of the outgroup language for the purpose, and that fact make its use powerful” (Bell, 1984: 188-189).

3. Methodology

This section explains the type of data obtained for analysis in this study as well as the background of the informants.

3.1. Data Collection

Data obtained from recordings of radio programmes is a rich source for linguistic and stylistic research (Bell 1982a, 1982b, 1984, 1991, Coupland, 2001, Cutillas-Espinosa and Hernandez-Campoy 2007). Similarly, the method used in this study to obtain data comes from recorded material directly from an Omani FM channel. The channel's name is *barnamej el shabab* or 'The Youths' Programme' (hereafter YP). YP is owned by the Omani government and is administered by the Omani Ministry of Information and the channel is broadcasted from the Omani capital, Muscat. Until recently, the Omani government controlled the audio and visual media in the country. In 2007, the first private radio station *Hala FM* came on air⁸ and in 2009 the first private TV station *Majan Channel* started working⁹.

The data comes from four shows on YP which are mainly about music. They are the only programmes that are concerned directly with music in the channel. The music genre was chosen because in a similar way in which American English is used by singers from the UK and New Zealand (Bell 1991), Gulf Arabic is a variety that is used by Omani singers as well. In fact, Arab singers from different nationalities tend to sing in Gulf Arabic to reach a wider audience since *Khaleeji* is a genre on its own in the Arabic pop music industry. The data is basically the speech of 5 broadcasters and their interactions with members of the audience. The programmes are broadcasted once a week for two hours from 9-11pm and recordings from the channel's online website were recorded during a week's time. The four programmes were recorded for one to two hours from the original website of the channel. Then 30 minutes of each programme was selected randomly to be analysed for this study. Any commercials, songs or other interruptions are removed and not counted in the data to allow adequate analysis. In other words, the thirty

⁸ <http://halasite.yourhifm.com/about.htm>

⁹ <http://www.majan-tv.com/majan.htm>

minutes are entirely the broadcasters' speech whether they are broadcasting generally or interacting with the callers. The data was listened to several times; marking the target variables, taking notes and transcribing relevant parts. For each broadcaster, the number of tokens of each variant were counted and compared as well as compared to the speech of the other broadcasters.

Cases in which both the caller and the broadcaster use lexical items that include the variables in their interaction are quantified and compared to see if the broadcaster attempts to converge to or diverge from the variant of the caller. As section 5 below shows, callers are given alphabetical letters along with numbers as a way to identify them. The letter A is chosen for the callers of the first broadcaster, followed by B for the second broadcaster and so on until E for the fifth broadcaster. The numbers given to the callers depends on the order in which their call is received, for example the first caller is A1 and his seventh caller is A7 and the same is done with the rest of the broadcasters and their callers' alphabetical letters.

Although all four programmes are music oriented, their structure differs. The similarity is though, that they are non-interview programmes and the fact that they all interact with the audience through phone calls and mobile text messages. The first programme is called *Ghanawi* ('songs'); in this programme, the broadcaster presents three songs at a time to the listeners and they call in or send mobile text messages to vote for one of the songs. The song with the highest votes is played. The programme continues this way for two hours, presenting the listeners with three songs at a time. The broadcaster of this show is Adnan, an Omani male in his twenties. He is usually the one who presents the programme on a weekly basis; however, he was on leave for a week and another broadcaster had to substitute him for that day. The substitute broadcaster is Salwa, an Omani female also in her twenties. The second one is called *al sundooq* ('the box'). In this programme Abdullah, the broadcaster has a pre-prepared song in which callers must call in and guess what the song is. Callers are expected to sing their guessed song on air. Abdullah is an Omani male in his early thirties. The third programme *bidoon ism* ('nameless') is broadcasted by Nada, an Omani female in her thirties. In this programme a caller chooses a song, Nada then chooses another one. Then other callers call the programme to vote for either the song chosen by the member of audience initially or the one chosen by Nada. Finally the fourth programme broadcasted by Iman, who is an Omani female in her twenties. Finally the fourth programme is

called *maghna* ('singing'). In this programme a song is played rapidly and members of the audience call in to guess the song. After the song is guessed and played for the listeners, facts are given about the singer of the song.

3.2. The Informants

Information about the informants is explained here.

3.2.1. The Broadcasters

The linguistic behaviour of 5 Omani broadcasters were analysed for this study; 2 of them are male and 3 are female as stated earlier. Adnan, Abdullah and Nada have been working as broadcasters in the Omani media for more than 10 years. For example, Adnan, started work as a child presenter for children's programmes on Oman TV in 1996¹⁰. Abdullah on the other hand, started in 1998¹¹. Nada has been working in the Omani media since the 1990s¹². In other words, they are 'known' voices and faces to the Omani public as they have been listening to them for years. Yet Salwa and Iman are relatively new broadcasters and they are recent graduates of Media Studies from the Sultan Qaboos University (Al-Saulti, 2011).

Linguistic research based on radio data does not usually consider the social background of the broadcasters in the traditional-linguistic research sense. Knowing the nationality is usually more than sufficient (Bell 1991, Cutillas-Espinosa and Harnandez-Campoy 2007). This is because as broadcasters, they are expected to represent the audience linguistically. In other words, they are expected to speak in the language of the audience and in the dominant variety of that language (Bell, 1991), in this case OHA.

¹⁰ <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:xt7y3fB-558J:adnan-fm.com/+%D9%85%D9%88%D9%82%D8%B9+%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk&client=firefox-a&source=www.google.co.uk>

¹¹ <http://www.seeb-city.net/vb/showthread.php?p=383294>

¹² <http://www.s-oman.net/avb/showthread.php?t=595598>

3.2.2. The Callers

There are 51 Omani members of the audience who participated in the four programmes of which 44 are male and 7 are female. Their calls lasted between 40 seconds to 5 minutes. Altogether the callers produced 267 instances of the variables (Table 4. and Figure 2.). Considering the language of the callers is important because first they represent the Omani public and second it is used to contrast it with the language of the broadcaster they are interacting with and this allows better interpretation and gives evidence to see if the broadcasters represent the audience linguistically or whether they are diverging from it. The phone calls were usually made while the callers are at work on listening to the radio on the road or simply at home. Callers are from various occupational backgrounds, from students to businessmen to unemployed. This information is understood from the interactions between the callers and the broadcasters when occasionally callers would give such information about themselves. The kind of data collection and the information available about the callers is similar to the rapid anonymous survey used by Labov (1966) in his classic study in New York because while the background information of the callers might seem restricted, it is nevertheless still representative and adequate for research. The point of collecting data from the callers is to have a representative sample of what the Omani public speaks like in general and this kind of data collection is sufficient for this purpose.

4. Results

This section presents the quantitative results of the study. The overall results of the variables /q/ and /dʒ/ and their variants produced by the broadcasters and callers are presented and described. The results are then divided based on gender of the broadcaster and compared.

4.1. Overall results of the broadcasters and callers

The overall results of the broadcasters are first presented below. After describing them, the results of the callers are then presented and described. Table 2 presents the instances of each of the variants as pronounced by the broadcasters.

Name of Broadcaster	Gender	[q]	/q/ = [g]	[dʒ]	/dʒ/ = [g]
Adnan	Male	55	53	97	0
Abdullah	Male	35	68	63	0
Nada	Female	43	48	58	0
Salwa	Female	38	1	55	2
Iman	Female	42	1	56	7

Table 2. The frequency of the tokens of the variables /q/ and /dʒ/ and their variants as produced by the 5 broadcasters.

Variable	Variants	Total #	Total %
/q/	[q]	213/384	55.5%
	[g]	171/384	44.5%
/dʒ/	[dʒ]	329/338	97.3%
	[g]	9/338	2.7%

Table 3. Scores of the 5 broadcasters.

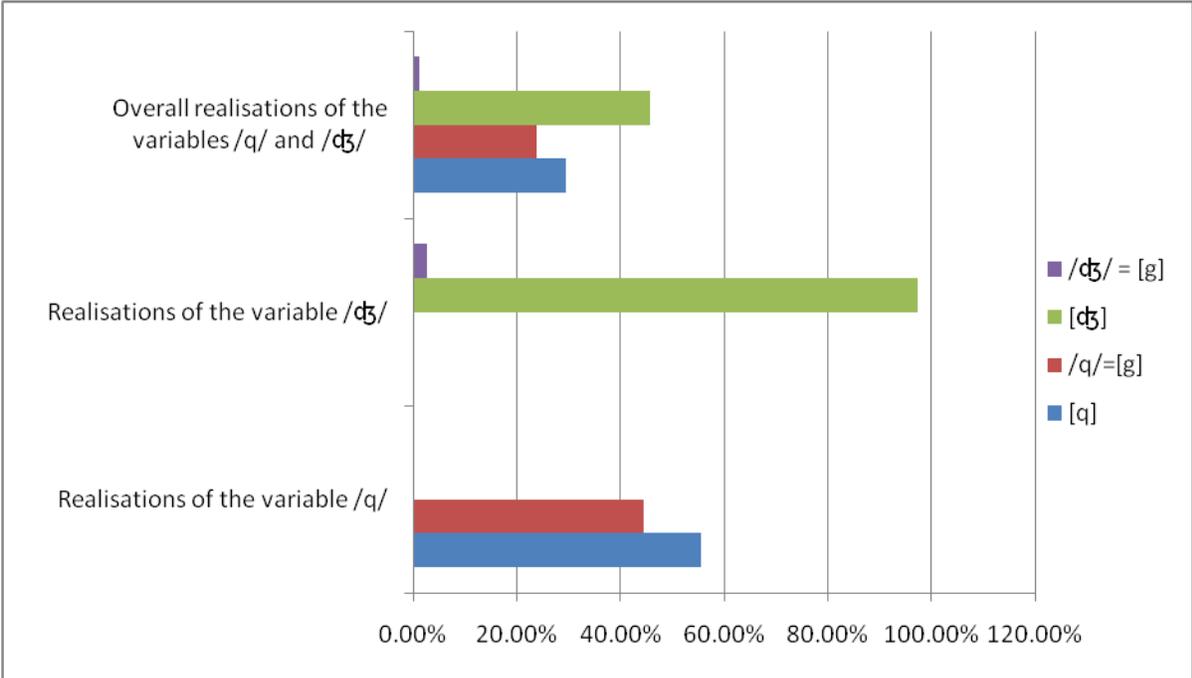


Figure 2 The percentages of the variants as produced by the 5 broadcasters.

The results in tables 2 and 3 as well as figure 1 show that the broadcasters treat the variables differently. The instant thing to notice is that [g] as a realisation of the variable /dʒ/ is not frequent at all even those who spoke in the ‘Omani’ [q] almost throughout their speech seem to use [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/ minimally. The other thing to notice is that the use of the variable [g] as realisation of /q/ drastically decreases at after Nada. Whereas the speakers Adnan,

Abdullah and Nada use the variable /q/ and its variants [q] and [g] often in their style, Salwa and Iman do not; instead each one of them only use the variant [g] once.

The variant [q] is higher in use for several reasons. For example, the repetition of a lexical item for several times which includes the variant increases its frequency. Thus, although it may seem prima facie that the variant [q] is used more than the variant [g] as a realisation of /q/ in the case of Adnan, this does not mean that he uses OHA. Another reason is that [q] is used by all broadcasters whether they use OHA or Gulf Arabic. In other words, [q] is part of the phonological inventory of both OHA and Gulf Arabic. This means that Gulf Arabic does realise both variants of /q/, i.e. [q] and [g]. Hence every broadcaster whether they speak in Gulf Arabic or OHA do recognise the sound [q] in their phonological system which in return leads to a higher frequency compared to [g].

While there is a great difference between the broadcasters' use of /q/ and its variants, this is not the case with the variable /dʒ/. Most broadcasters pronounce the variable /dʒ/ in its standard manner hence [dʒ]; with 97.3% of the instances of the variant. On the other hand, only 2.7% realise it as [g]. This is because OHA has the variants [dʒ] and [g] in variation and there is a lack of research about this situation in Oman. However, Al-Aghbari (2004) argues that the speech of many educated Omanis realises the variable /dʒ/ as [dʒ].

Variable	Variants	Total #	Total %
/q/	[q]	68/102	66.7%
	[g]	34/102	33.3%
/dʒ/	[dʒ]	51/165	31%
	[g]	114/165	69%

Table 4. Scores of the 51 callers.

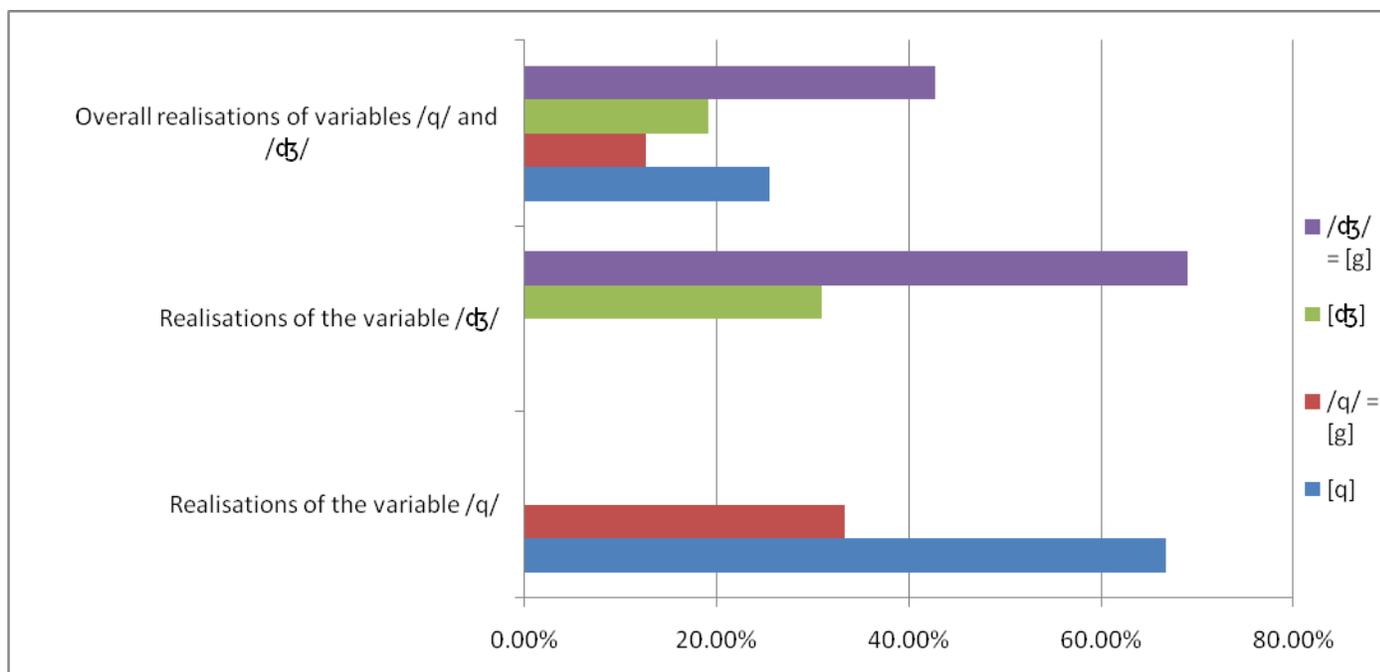


Figure 2 The percentages of the variants as produced by the 51 callers.

Table 4 and figure 2 shows that the callers do not treat all the variables in the way the broadcasters do. The frequency of use of the variant [q] is also high among the callers, yet [g] as a realisation of /q/ occurs less than it does in the broadcasters' speech. This is an important finding because the callers are 51 individuals while the broadcasters are 5; yet the latter produced more instances of [g] than the former. This shows that there is a radical divergence in the speech of the broadcasters towards the speech of the Omani public. The other thing to notice is that the variable /dʒ/ is realised for most of its instances as [g] by the callers. This does not match the way in which the broadcasters realise the variable. On the surface, this might seem like it is a radical divergence again. However the variable /dʒ/ is an interesting one and it might not be considered a severe divergence as much as /q/. These issues will be explained in section 5.

4.2. Results based on the gender of the broadcaster

The results show that male and female broadcasters treat the variables differently. This is shown in the tables below.

Variable	Variants	Total #	Total %
/q/	[q]	123/173	71%
	[g]	50/173	29%
/dʒ/	[dʒ]	169/178	95%
	[g]	9/178	5%

Table 5. Scores of the variables as produced by the 3 female broadcasters.

Variable	Variants	Total #	Total %
/q/	[q]	90/211	42.7%
	[g]	121/211	57.3%
/dʒ/	[dʒ]	160/160	100%
	[g]	0/160	0%

Table 6. Scores of the variables as produced by the 2 male broadcasters.

Female broadcasters seem to use both variants of the variable /dʒ/ in their speech, although the chart shows that they use [dʒ] most of the time. The only instances in which both variants are used (in the case of Salwa and Iman), it is due to convergence in accommodation while interacting with some of their callers. This indicates that female broadcasters represent the public linguistically more than the male broadcasters. It also shows that some female broadcasters are willing to converge to the language of their callers.

Male broadcasters use [g] as a realisation of /q/ more than females. This shows the extent to which male broadcasters speak in Gulf Arabic; since as mentioned earlier, [g] as a realisation of /q/ does not occur in OHA. This also shows that male broadcasters are less likely to converge to their callers. Table 8 is also interesting because none of the male broadcasters used [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/ in their speech. This contradicts the females' case. However this variable is not a strong identity marker like [q] and it is part of linguistic change in Oman as will be discussed in section 5.

5. Discussion

This section discusses the main findings and interpretations of the results presented in section 4 above. Section 5 is divided into four subsections, some of which are further divided into more subsections. The first subsection provides examples and discusses any instances of convergence or divergence in accommodation by each broadcaster and discusses the instances individually. The second subsection discusses the implications of using the variable /q/ and its variants; and the third subsection does the same for the variable /dʒ/. Finally the fourth subsection discusses the two types of referee design and their implications.

5.1. Broadcasters' Accommodation

This section discusses with examples whether each broadcaster converges or diverges in their speech styles when speaking to their callers. The case of each broadcaster is discussed individually.

Note that the figures presented for each broadcaster (Figures 3-7) only show the instances where both the caller and the broadcaster produce instances of the variables under study. Interactions in which either the broadcaster or the callers do not produce any instances are not included in the figures. This is useful in order to see how the broadcasters and callers treat the variables while interacting with each other. It also allows seeing whether the broadcasters are convergent or divergent in their speech styles when speaking to the callers.

5.1.1. Adnan

Analysing Adnan's linguistic behaviour shows that he is radically divergent from his callers. The results in section 4 show that Adnan speaks in Gulf Arabic while the public speak in OHA. The way in which Adnan and his callers treated the variables under study are presented and discussed in figure 3 below.

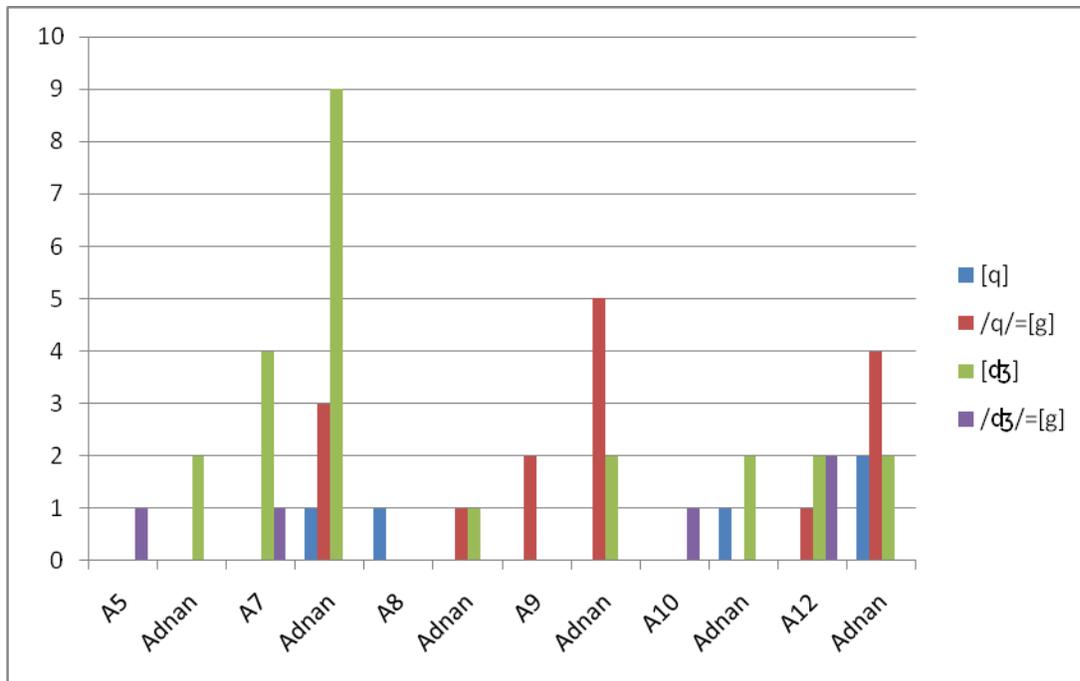


Figure 3 The realisations of the variables in interactions between Adnan and his callers

Figure 3 suggests that Adnan does not converge to all the variables of his callers. Because Adnan stylises his speech to make it sound like Gulf Arabic, he then by default only converges to the variables [dʒ], [g] as a realisation of /q/ and occasionally to [q]. The convergence to [q] is occasional because this standard variable does not originally occur in Gulf Arabic (Ingham 1994, Holes, 2004). The integration of the variable /q/ in Bedouin dialects occurs in Gulf Arabic today due to globalisation and the new technologies in specific which led to the creation of new terminologies. These new terms are born in al-Fusha Arabic and became integrated in the vernacular dialects but “remain largely unassimilated” (Holes, 2004: 66) to the phonology of the dialect. These words are like “implants on ‘permanent load’ from written Arabic” (Holes, 2004: 67). Ingham (1994: 15) agrees with Holes (2004) and also suggests that the words that have a [q] in Bedouin dialects are due to “Classical borrowings” Furthermore, Holes (2004) mentions that these kinds of words that have [q] are common in the media. Holes and Ingham’s suggestions seem to be unmistakable because indeed most of the words that have [q] and are produced by Adnan are from Al-Fusha Arabic. To give examples of a few: *naqil al sawt* (microphone) and *risala qaseera* (SMS). Examples that show Adnan’s accommodation behaviour are presented and discussed below.

[1]

A10: **awwagih** ahla tahiya masaa'iya lil mobdi

Adnan: **ywajih** lak ajmal tahiya hoowwa

A10: **I'd like to send** to greet the creative director with a very good evening

Adnan: he **greet**s you **back** with best regards

Example [1] shows divergence. A10 produces an instance with [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/. Adnan then repeats the same word but in a different derivative using [dʒ] instead. This shows that Adnan does not converge to [g] when it is used as a realisation of /dʒ/. It would be a weak argument to say that Adnan uses [dʒ] and not [g] because he wishes to speak in 'educated' Arabic; this argument is refuted because he does produce the sound [g]; only he does that as a realisation of a different variable which is /q/. The fact that he does produce the non-Standard sound [g] shows that his motivations are not to speak in a standard way, but to speak in Gulf Arabic.

[2]

A8: alheen fel **tareeq** tal'een min Ibri

Adnan: h'Allah h'Allah bel **tereeg** ya khooy

A8: I'm on my **way** now just left Ibri¹³

Adnan: be careful on your **way** brother

¹³ A place in Oman.

Example [2] shows another instance of divergence. A8 produces the first instance of the variant [q]. Adnan then repeats the same lexical item but with [g] instead of [q]. Again, this shows that there is a linguistic divergence from A8's speech. This matches the argument of [1] above because it shows that Adnan does use the sound [g]; but only as a realisation of /q/ and not /dʒ/. Therefore it is suggested that his intention is not concerned with speaking in a standard manner to reflect an educated identity as much as it is to project a Gulf Arabic identity rather than an Omani one. This is because [q] is the phoneme used in al-Fusha Arabic hence if Adnan's motivation is to speak in a way that is closer to al-Fusha, then it makes sense that he would converge to the caller. However, this is further evidence that Adnan is oriented towards Gulf Arabic and not OHA or al-Fusha. Adnan's divergence from [q] suggests that he prefers speaking in a non-Standard variable [g] rather than [q] which is standard and OHA at the same time. This is line with the previous studies which show that some speakers prefer to speak in variables of dialects with regional prestige, rather than speaking in variables that are essentially part of al-Fusha yet also part of a dialect that lacks prestige. The case of Gulf Arabic in Oman is especially compelling, however. This is because while it is used to some extent in Oman, it is far from being the dominant dialect socially or politically. The prestige and power of Gulf Arabic still nevertheless spread to Oman even though it is dominant in the other GCC states and not Oman.

[3]

Adnan: shakla ma mistawi'ib enno **ligat** ma'aak el khatt

A9: kel youm **yilgat. Ugob** ma'aak

Adnan: ya marhaba ya **Ugob**, ya hala feek ya **Ugob**.

Adnan: it looks like you did not realise that you **caught** the line.

A9: I **catch** the line every day. **Ugob** speaking

Adnan: hello and welcome **Ugob**, it's good to have you **Ugob**.

Example [3] is the only instance of linguistic convergence by Adnan. A9 is a speaker of Gulf Arabic. This could be because he is from a town at the borders between Oman and the Emirates where it is hometown to many Bedouin Omanis (Holes, 1989). A9 himself has a name that has the realisation of /q/ as [g] (*Ugob*). However notice that before Adnan knows who the caller is, he produces an instance of [g] instead of [q], which is *ligat* ('to hook' or 'to catch'). This shows that regardless of who the caller is Adnan would use the same variable. But A9 appears to be a Gulf Arabic speaker hence matches Adnan's style. Adnan uses [g] as a realisation of /q/ even though [q] is the al-Fusha realisation in addition to being the realisation that OHA recognises. This fact makes Adnan's divergence more radical; because he is diverging from a standard variable that also happens to be the way in which the Omani majority realise the variable; yet converging to a variable that is not local, but nevertheless carries regional prestige.

5.1.2. Abdullah

Abdullah is the broadcaster with the highest number of Gulf Arabic variants. Like Adnan, his style also does not represent OHA and he does not attempt to converge to it as will be discussed here. Abdullah received 8 calls in his program, of which one is an adult female and the other is a child female. The other six are males. The figure below shows Abdullah's interactions with his callers which include the variables under study.

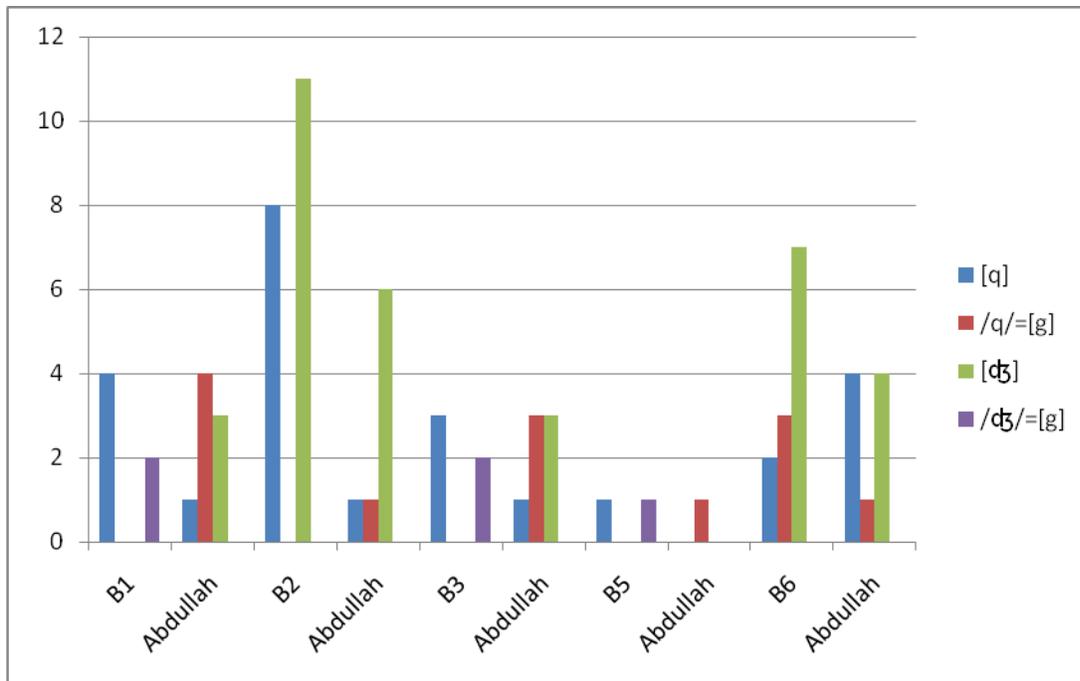


Figure 4 The realisations of the variables in interactions between Abdullah and his callers

Figure 4 shows that Abdullah is also radically divergent in his speech. The only exception is B6, and this is not surprising because B6 is Adnan, the broadcaster discussed above. Although most of his callers use OHA features, Abdullah continues to diverge by speaking in Gulf Arabic. For example, B1 who uses the OHA realisations of both /q/ and /dʒ/, is answered by Abdullah's Gulf Arabic versions of the variables. This is divergence. In fact, even when speaking to B3, who is a female Omani child, Abdullah does not converge even though she is clearly a speaker of OHA. B3 uses the al-Fusha pronunciation [q] and the non-al-Fusha for /dʒ/ (i.e. [g]) for all the words that have the variables in her speech. This shows how due to their prestige, Gulf Arabic variants of the variables are spreading to Oman and being used by its local broadcasters although the audience are mostly OHA speakers. The following examples illustrate Abdullah's linguistic divergence when speaking to his callers.

[4]

B1: ala fikra hathi thani marra itissil **qabil** etasalt oo kunt fil intithar oo **qata'atooh** faja'a ma'araf laish

Abdullah: ma **gita'anah** la **tgool gita'anah** [.] **ingita'a** [.] saar shay walakin **gita'anah** ta'akad azeez oo ghaly.

B1: by the way this is the second time that I call. I called **earlier** and I was in the waiting line but you **cut** the line suddenly I don't know why.

Abdullah: we didn't **cut** the line, don't **say** we **cut** the line. Say it got **cut** or maybe something happened, probably, but to **cut** it? Be sure that you are respected and valued.

In example [4], B1 who is a speaker of OHA produces two instances of [q] in his speech. However, Abdullah repeats the word *qata'atooh* ('to cut something') three times in two different derivatives with the phoneme [g] instead; hence *gita'anah* and *ingita'a*. He also uses [g] as a realisation of /q/ in another word which is *tgool*, 'you say'; which is an interesting lexical item. This is because *tgool* and other derivatives of 'say' are a prime marker in distinguishing Bedouin from Sedentary dialects or Arabic (Ingham, 1994). In fact, Bedouin and Sedentary dialects are sometimes distinguished by this variable; "*gilit* dialects [Bedouin], so called because of the form of the word 'I said' separating them from the *qeltu* dialects [Sedentary]" (Ingham, 1994: 8). Thus, by using [g] for the word 'say' Abdullah is emphasising his use of Gulf Arabic and strongly diverging from OHA due to the significance of this variable in general and this lexical item in specific. This also shows that while Abdullah is aware that the caller is not a speaker of Gulf Arabic, he does not attempt to converge. Instead he repeats the same lexical item four times but with a different pronunciation.

The next example is an interesting one because the caller, B3, is a child. She has participated in her voice to make different sound effects for Abdulla's program and the radio channel in general, in which the director uses every now and then. In these sound effects, B3 speaks in Gulf Arabic.

For example in one of the effects she says *yallah gulu waraya* ('come on say it with me') whereas in OHA the same would have been said as *yallah qulu waray*. However, when B3 calls and speaks more spontaneously with Abdullah, she shows a drastically different dialect to the one she uses in making sound effects. Example [5] illustrates this.

[5]

Abdullah: B3 ay saff enti alheen?

B3: **mu**?

Abdullah: ay saff ay saff? Saff kam enti?

B3: awwal. taw barooh awwal kint **qabel** dakhla saff thak

Abdullah: tamheedi. Hilwa thak

(Sound effect of B3 singing)

(a few lines of turn omitted)

Abdullah: yallah kaif **ngool**?

B3: enta **qayil batgeebly** halawa ma **gibt** li

Abdullah; hhhh insha'Allah **bajeeblik** halawa min oyooni el thintain insha'Allah **ajeib** lik ahla halawa.

(B3 sings)

Abdullah: shukran ktheer ktheer ya B3 oo salmi ala baba oo mama. Oo insha'Allah nisma'a indik el akhbar el hilwa ennik dakhalti el **jama'a** moo el saff el awwal. **Gooli** ameen.

B3: ameen. la la **mu tqooloh** enta baghi **tqooloh** shay.

Abdullah: hhhh khalas ma'a el salama ya B3.

Abdullah: B3 what grade are you in now?

B3: **what**?

Abdullah: what grade what grade? Grade what are you?

B3: One. I'll be in grade one now. **Before** that I was in that other grade.

Abdullah: Kindergarten. I like 'that other grade'.

(Sound effect of B3 singing)

(a few lines of turn omitted)

Abdullah: so shall we **sing**?

B3: **you said** you'll **bring** me candy but you didn't **bring** any.

Abdullah: hhhh I will **bring** you candy as I promised

(B3 sings)

Abdullah: thank you very much B3 and say hello to dad and mom. And I hope that we'll hear good news of you entering **university** not just grade one. **Say** amen.

B3: amen. what **say** it you wanted to **say** something to the director

Abdullah: hhhh no that's it. Goodbye B3.

Example [5] is important in two different ways. First, in terms of accommodation Abdullah does not converge to B3's speech; instead he diverges away from it. He keeps using Gulf Arabic features even though the caller is a child which means that there is a possibility that his way of speaking might hinder communication because of the child's possible limited knowledge of Gulf Arabic. This is further support that Abdullah radically diverges from his callers. Second, it shows that the child whose voice is used to record sound effects for the channel is 'naturally' a speaker of OHA which is shown from her use of OHA linguistic forms such as *qilt* ('you said') which classifies as a *qeltu* dialect feature (Ingham, 1994) that is explained earlier. Another supporting evidence that B3 is a speaker of OHA is her use of *mu* for 'what'; which is a typical feature of "old-fashioned northern Omani" (Holes, 2011: 12). However when she performs for short sound effects that are used in YP, she speaks in Gulf Arabic. This suggests that the channel wishes to project itself as a Gulf channel and not necessarily only Omani, at least in regards to music shows. Holes (2005, 2011) and Patrick (2009) argue that it is common in the GCC states to not present reality in its media. There might be an attempt by the GCC as part of their linguistic and national homogenisation to engage in a "deliberate process of 'identity management'" (Holes, 2011: 13) through its media. Holes (2011) gives an example of Bahraini soap operas which attempt to picture the nostalgic past in the Gulf before the discovery of oil; in an attempt to "resurrect the spirit of old heritage" (Holes, 2011: 13). In these series, characters do not necessarily represent the reality in the community; rather it is recreated to match the political preferences of the elites and not necessarily the reality of that time. For example, in Bahrain

vegetable sellers selling on their donkey carts used to be Shiites and therefore they spoke in the *Bahrani* dialect explained earlier in the paper. This is not shown in these Bahraini soap operas, instead these characters are portrayed as Bedouins hence speak in the Bedouin dialect. In other words, “although the aim of these highly popular television series is to conjure up the Bahrain, and indeed the Gulf, of a bygone age [...] there is no attempt to represent the social or linguistic realities of that period” (Holes, 2011: 14).

This is related to B3’s performances on YP because she is obviously asked to speak in Gulf Arabic. This is a denying OHA and intentionally diverging from it. Although YP is essentially an Omani channel and owned by the government, it nevertheless seems to be engaging in one way or another in the identity management process that Holes (2011) discusses. The difference is that in Oman it is more obvious because unlike Bahrain or the Gulf, the dominant dialect and indeed the elites do not speak in Gulf Arabic; and the constant attempts to present Oman as a Gulf Arabic-speaking country are compelling. This shows how the political, social and indeed linguistic power of the GCC led to gaining the Bedouin culture regional prestige; and since Oman is a member of it then it is being influenced the homogenisation process because “beyond the borders of individual Gulf states, there has been an attempt to develop a distinctive regional identity” (Holes, 2005: 52).

5.1.3. Nada

Nada’s linguistic behaviour is similar to Adnan and Abdullah in the sense that it represents Gulf Arabic more than OHA. By speaking in Gulf Arabic and not converging to her callers’ language, Nada diverges from the speech of the audience most of the time. The figure below shows how Nada and her callers treated the variables.

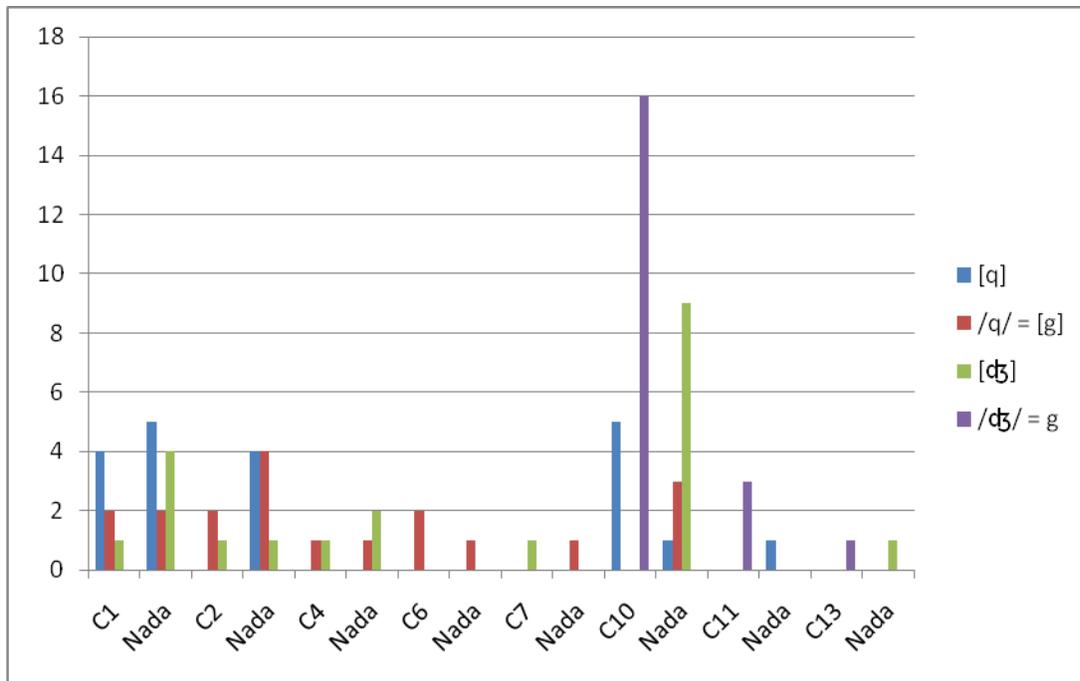


Figure 5 The realisations of the variables in interactions between Nada and her callers.

Figure 5 shows that Nada is similar to Adnan and Abdullah in their realisations of the variables: she is oriented towards Gulf Arabic. Although the figure shows convergence to some extent, Nada in general does not represent the audience through her speech. Possible explanation for the convergence showing in figure 5 is that she received calls from speakers of Gulf Arabic more than the other broadcasters hence it matches the way she speaks. However even if that is the case, callers who speak in Gulf Arabic remain the minority as section 4 shows, which makes Nada linguistically divergent in her speech. Her linguistic behaviour is similar to Adnan and Abdullah, this is why one example is sufficient here for illustration and it is discussed below. The example is peculiar because it suggests hypercorrection which occurs when speakers adopt a speech style that is not their own.

[6]

Nada: ana qasdi bitaqtak eta'arif el jumhoor feek

C1: Imam al-**Mahrooqi**. Shoo hiyya el bitaqa?

Nada: yaani shoo habb el jumhoor ya'arif an Imam al-**Mahroogi**

C1: ya'arafoo enni Imam al-**Mahrooqi** min el Buraimi, talib fi killiyat al Buraimi.

Nada: I meant your card as in to introduce yourself to the audience

C1: Imam al-**Mahrooqi**. What do you mean by card exactly?

Nada: I mean what do you want the audience to know about Imam al-**Mahroogi**

C1: I'd like them to know that I am Imam al-**Mahrooqi** from Buraimi and a student in Buraimi college.

Example [6] shows divergence of a different kind. This is considered extreme divergence because first it occurs in the caller's name *al-Mahrooqi* and second because it suggests hypercorrection in Nada's speech. Note that C1 is not a speaker of OHA, this is clear from his use of Gulf Arabic forms as well as specifying his hometown Buraimi, which is at the Oman-Emirates borders and a place where Gulf Arabic is spoken (Holes, 1989). Nevertheless, he pronounces his name with a [q]. However Nada repeats his name with a [g] instead. This could be due to her hypercorrection which suggests her inability to recognise in a 'native-like' manner when to use [q] or [g] as realisations of /q/. Bell (1991) notes a similar kind of behaviour and suggests that hypercorrection may occur in cases when broadcasters are 'putting on a voice'. Bell (1991) argues that hypercorrection is less obvious when the addressee does not speak the variety in which the speaker is trying to adopt. In [6] however, C1 is a speaker of Gulf Arabic hence Nada's hypercorrection is noticeable.

5.1.4. Salwa

Salwa shows a different linguistic behaviour compared to the previous three broadcasters. This is because she represents the public and their use of OHA more than Adnan, Abdullah or Nada. To illustrate this better figure 6 shows the extent to which Salwa's speech and that of the callers is similar to a great extent; especially in regards to the variable /q/.

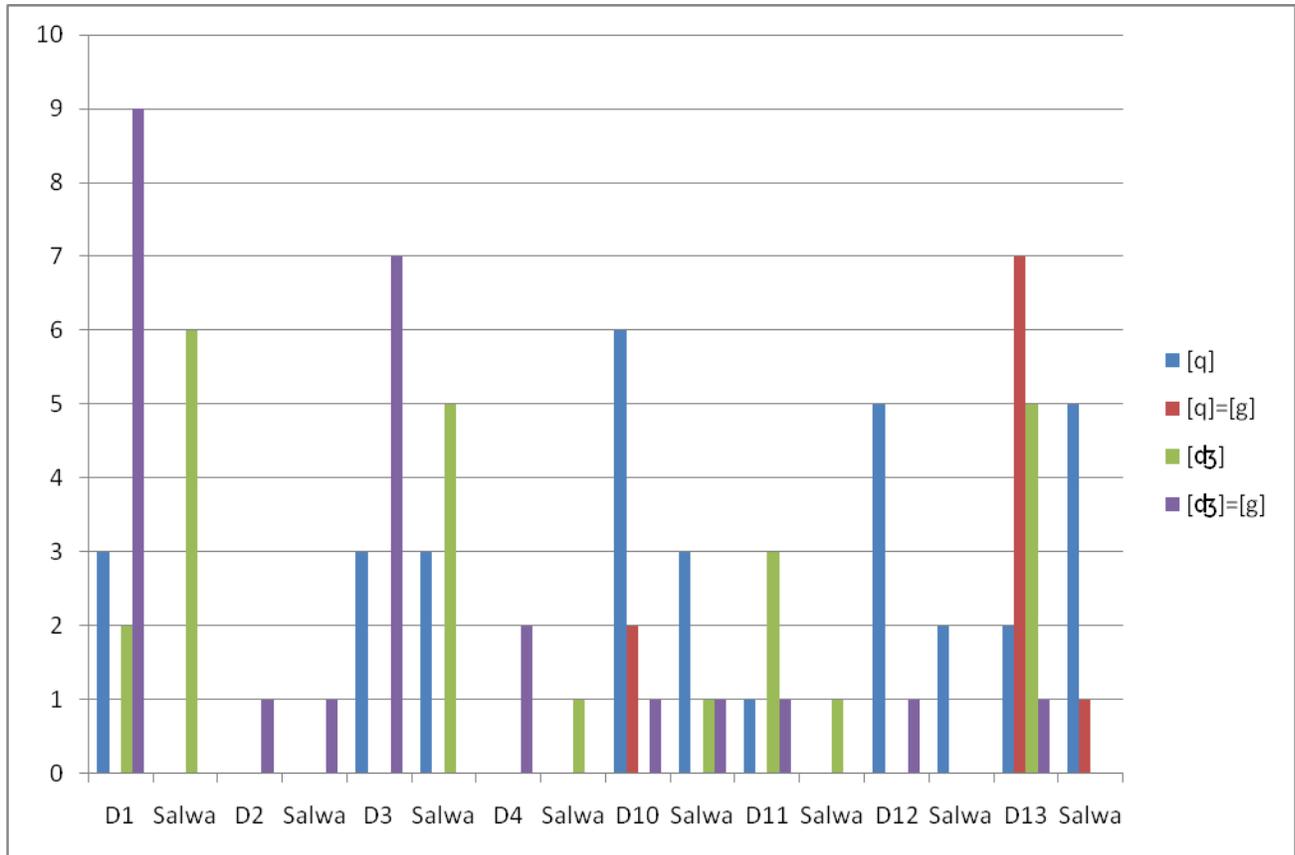


Figure 6The realisations of the variables in interactions between Salwa and her callers.

Figure 6 suggests several things. First, in regards to the variable /dʒ/, Salwa does not necessarily represent the audience or converge to them. This is because most of the time she pronounces it in a standard way hence [dʒ], whereas most of the callers pronounce it as [g] as illustrated in section 4. However, divergence from this variable is not as strong as diverging in /q/ like the previous broadcasters. The reason for this is that indeed there are speakers in Oman who do actually pronounce /dʒ/ as [dʒ]. In other words, [dʒ] does not sound very foreign in Oman and it

is the al-Fusha pronunciation after all. In addition, this variable is not a strong identity divisive compared to /q/ which is considered a hallmark that distinguishes the Bedouin from the Sedentary Arab people. Ibn Khaldun the Arab scholar, according to Suleiman (2004: 99) argues that [g] as a variant of /q/ is a “distinguishing mark of speech of the Bedouin Arabs that ‘no one else shares with them [...] those who wished to associate themselves with the Bedouin Arabs must accommodate to this variant’”. Thus although Salwa is in effect not speaking like many of her callers in regards to the variable /dʒ/, the effect of this divergence is not as severe as that of /q/.

Salwa in general converges more to her callers than the previous three broadcasters. The analysis of her speech shows that she converges to both the OHA variants [q] and [g]. However, she only converges to the latter variant twice, for the rest of the instances she diverges. The following examples are presented and Salwa’s linguistic behaviour is discussed.

[7]

D1: arashih **Magid** al Muhandis

Salwa: mafi **Majid** el Muhandis. Rashid el **Majid** oo Abdul **Majeed** Abdullah

D1: Rashid el **Magid** Rashid el **Magid**

D1: I’d like to vote for **Magid** al Muhandis¹⁴

Salwa: We don’t have **Majid** al Muhandis, we have Raahsid el **Majid** and Abdul **Majeed** Abdullah

D1: Rashid el **Magid** Raahsid el **Magid**

¹⁴ Majid al-Muhandis, Rashid al-Majid and Abdul Majeed Abdullah are Arab singers.

In [7], Salwa does not converge to her callers' realisation of /dʒ/ as [g] when pronouncing singers' names. Instead she pronounces it as [dʒ]. This could be because Salwa is careful about pronouncing Arabic names in a standard way. Salwa then, does not use this variable in her speech generally and her linguistic behaviour shows systematic divergence from this variable when used to pronounce singers' names. In two instances, Salwa does converge to the sound [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/. An example is [8] below.

[8]

D2: taba'an ana awwal marra asharik fi hal **barnamag**

Salwa: ana mahthootha enni asma'a soutak fel **barnamag**

D2: of course this is my first time to participate in the **programme**

Salwa: I am very lucky to have your call in the **programme**

In [8], Salwa converges to the [g] of D2 even though it is a realisation of /dʒ/. Convergence to this variant does not occur in any of the previous three broadcasters even though most callers use it. This shows that unlike the three previous broadcasters, Salwa is willing to converge to this variant occasionally whereas Adnan, Abdullah or Nada do not show any linguistic convergence to this variant at all. This suggests that Salwa represents the audience linguistically more than the previous three broadcasters hence she is more convergent towards the Omani identity and not the Arabian Gulf one.

Further evidence supporting the idea that Salwa represents a more Omani identity than the previous three broadcasters is her interaction with D13. In their interaction Salwa diverges from the Gulf Arabic speech of D13 however she still converges once to his speech before she diverges again. Example [9] illustrates this.

[9]

D13: Tah **galbi** wala **galbi** tah?

Salwa: la la tah **qalbi**

D13: **agoolik** Salwa

Salwa: **gool**

D13: yaateekom el afya ukhti Salwa ala hal barnamej el jameel haiy. Nehna mawjoodeen fel multaqa al Khaleeji ngoolhom yateehom el afya.

Salwa: **yqoolak** Idrees battim titkalam?

D13: Tah **galbi** or **galbi** tah?

Salwa: no no it's tah **qalbi**

D13: **I say** Salwa

Salwa: **say**

D13: thank you for you and the whole crew's effort in this nice program. We are now in the Arabian Gulf forum and I'd like to thank them for their efforts too.

Salwa: Idrees¹⁵ **says**, are you going to remain talking?

Example [9] is important in several ways. The first thing to notice is that she 'dared' to pronounce a Gulf Arabic song in OHA. The song is *tah galbi* ('my heart fell'). It is rather unexpected to hear an Arabian Gulf song's name pronounced in OHA. This is because the media is used to pronounce the names as they are pronounced by the singers. But Salwa pronounces it

¹⁵ The director of the program.

with a [q] instead of [g]; which suggests that she is emphasising her Omani identity through the use of [q] while challenging Gulf Arabic since the song is essentially a *Khaleeji* one.

Before D13 calls, Salwa appears to be confused about the song's name and is not sure whether it is *tah galbi* or *galbi tah*¹⁶. D13 calls and jokingly asks Salwa if she is settled about the song's name or not (the first turn in [9]). However he asks her this by saying the two versions of the song's name with a [g] instead of [q]. Salwa still nevertheless uses [q] in pronouncing the name of the song even though her caller uses [g]. This shows that Salwa is emphasising her 'Omaniness' through this variable and does not converge to the D13's pronunciation; instead she challenges it by diverging from it even though using [g] is the usual way in which the name of the song is pronounced.

In the same interaction though, Salwa does converge to [g] as a realisation of /q/ once. This is shown after D13 says *agool* ('I say'), which is another indicator that he is a speaker of the *gilit* dialect (Ingham, 1994). As a reaction to this, Salwa converges by saying *gool* ('say') instead of the OHA version of the word *qool*. This shows that although Salwa does not converge to the variable at the beginning of the interaction, she does afterwards. This could be an attempt to show friendliness since she clearly did not converge to the variable at the beginning of their interaction; and since the variable /q/ is a strong divisive and sets boundaries between people due to its association with different social groups, it is possible that Salwa then converges to 'break the ice' between her and D13. Yet after she converges once, Salwa goes back to pronouncing the variable as [q] in her utterance *yqoolak* ('he says to you'). This shows that Salwa's convergence to D13's [g] is only short-term and that she does not mean by it to affiliate herself with Gulf Arabic rather it is just a friendly act to mitigate foreignness and distance. Example [9] is further evidence that Salwa emphasises her Omani identity through the use of the variable /q/.

5.1.5. Iman

Iman is similar to Salwa in emphasising her Omani identity through her speech style. This is seen in her use of [q] for /q/ almost throughout her whole speech duration and in her relatively

¹⁶ The latter having the same meaning exactly as the former one; the only difference is the word order which would be translated into English as 'fell my heart'.

high use of [g] for /dʒ/ although she does realise it as [dʒ] most of the time. This is similar to the way in which Salwa speaks and therefore the explanation is the similar. Therefore Iman also represents the linguistic situation of Oman through her speech more than Adnan, Abdullah or Nada. This is especially true in regards to the variable /q/. Figure 7 shows the interactions between Iman and her callers in which the variables occurred.

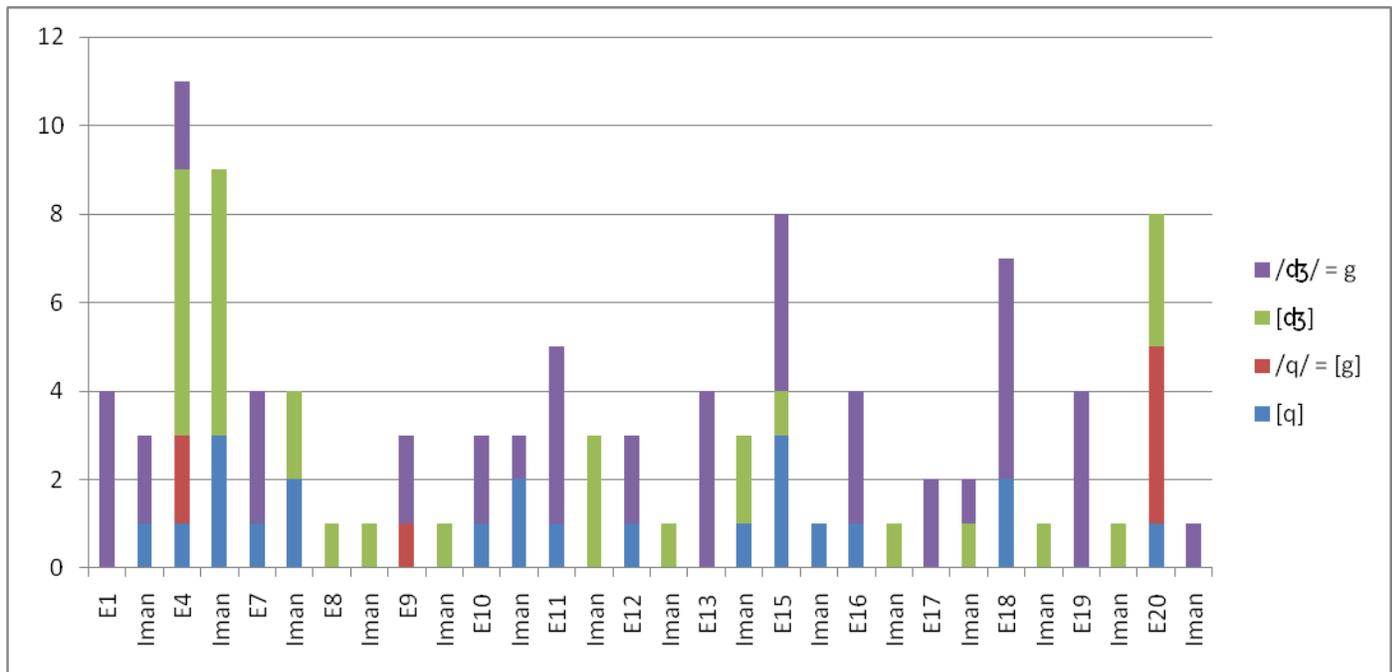


Figure 7 The realisations of the variables in interactions between Iman and her callers

Iman’s speech represents the public in terms of the variable /q/ and she converges to all instances of it. However in regards to the variable /dʒ/, Iman does not always converge but she still does more than the previous four broadcasters.

Iman is similar to Salwa when it comes to converging to the OHA variables and the Omani identity in general. What is interesting is that she also seems to diverge from the Gulf identity when she faces a caller who uses Gulf Arabic phonological features. Examples of Iman’s convergence and divergence are given and discussed below.

[10]

Iman: kaif youm el khamees ma'aak?

E1: wallah **ragi'i** min e'dawam mashay **egaza**

Iman: dawam? Mashay egaza el youm?

E1: mashay mashay **egaza**

(2 lines of turn omitted)

E1: ma Khaleegi hoowa sah?

Iman: la ma Khaleegi

Iman: how's Thursday with you?

E1: well I'm on my way back from work. No **holiday**.

Iman: work? You don't have a **holiday** today?

E1: no **holiday**, not at all.

(2 lines of turn omitted)

E1: it's not a **Gulf** song, is it?

Iman: no it's not a **Gulf** song.

In [10], Iman converges to the sound [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/ after the caller does at first. This shows that Iman is willing converge linguistically to her callers to express solidarity and friendliness, and most importantly to represent them through the media. This also suggests that she does not necessarily have a negative attitude towards this variant.

[11]

E10: aah masri, tayyib ana ma'a el **gama'aa**. Mohammed

Iman: Mohammed **Hamaa'ii**?

E10: aiwa, **Hamaqi**

Iman: hhh **Hamaqi**

E10: oh okay, then I'll follow **the rest**: Mohammed.

Iman: Mohammed **Hamaa'ii**?

E10: yes, **Hamaqi**.

Iman: hhh **Hamaqi**

Example [11] is significant because it highlights the variant [q] as an identity marker. First notice that the speaker is clearly a speaker of OHA because he produced an instance of [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/ in the word *gama'aa* ('the rest'/'group'). The interesting part begins when he chooses the singer Mohammed Hamaki who is an Egyptian singer. 'Hamaki' is an interesting name because it includes the al-Fusha /q/ but since he is Egyptian, this variable is often realised as a glottal stop [ʔ] in Egypt (Haeri 1996, Holes 2004). The realisation of his name with a glottal stop spread to other Arab countries including Oman and Iman herself first pronounces it as *Hamaa'ii* i.e. with [ʔ]. The caller then emphasises that the singer's last name is 'Hamaqi', using the OHA [q] instead of the Egyptian [ʔ]. This is a message from the caller which emphasises the Omani identity through this variable. Iman then accepts E10's version of the singer's name and repeats it using [q] instead of [ʔ]. This example is significant because it emphasises the existence and importance of [q] in projecting the Omani identity. It also suggests that Iman is willing to accept the caller's version of the name and converge to it.

[12]

E20: ya thal **nujoom**, Hussein Al-**Jasmi**; **agoolik** Iman ahib ahdi el ughniya **hagg** ubooy oo li asdiqaa'ii oo khasatan rfeejti **Majan**

Iman: elly **galsa** teth'hak alheen?

E20: ya thal **nujoom**, Hussein Al-**Jasmi**. I'd like to dedicate the song to my dad and friends and especially my friend **Majan**

Iman: **the one who** is laughing now?

E20 in [12] above is a speaker of Gulf Arabic. This is shown by her realisation of /q/ as [g] and [dʒ] for /dʒ/ for most of their lexical instances. It is also shown in her use of other lexical items such as *rfeejti* (friend, feminine). The word *rfeejti* is equivalent to the al-Fusha Arabic *rafeeqati*, but in some dialects spoken in the Gulf [g] is realised as an affricated sound (Johnstone, 1963, Holes 1996). This explanation is necessary because it provides more evidence that E20 is a Gulf Arabic speaker. However, Iman does not converge to E20's phonological features and instead she produces an instance of [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/. This shows that Iman is diverging from the Gulf Arabic of the speaker and does not affiliate to it. The fact that Iman speaks in [dʒ] most of the time yet uses the marked variant [g] with E20 suggests that Iman is challenging her caller by diverging away from her speech while emphasising her own Omani identity even when speaking to a Gulf Arabic speaker. This supports further that Iman represents the audience more than Adnan, Abdullallah and Nada.

Based on the discussion of the linguistic behavior of each of the 5 broadcasters above, a few assumptions are made. First, it appears that female broadcasters are more representative of OHA than male broadcasters. This is because the two males, Adnan and Abdullallah use Gulf Arabic systematically in their speech. This is also true for Nada's case; however the other two females,

Salwa and Iman seem to speak in a way that represents the audience to a great extent. This audience representation is especially noticed in the variant [q] in which Salwa and Iman use for almost all the lexical items that have the variable /q/. What is interesting is that the variable /dʒ/ is pronounced as [dʒ] for most of its instances by all the broadcasters. However, the interpretation of this is not the same as the variable /q/. This is explained in a different way and it is possibly due to language change in Oman as will be discussed later.

Female broadcasters also attempt to converge to the language of the callers more than male broadcasters. This is shown in Salwa and Iman's attempts to converge to the variant [g] as a realization of /dʒ/ in the speech of some of their callers. The male broadcasters and Nada however, do not seem to converge to the language of the callers. Instead they have shown systematic and radical linguistic divergence from the callers and convergence towards Gulf Arabic. The peculiarity of this case is that it does not follow the typical sociolinguistic findings of language change research. In such studies, it is usually the women who lead language change; Coates (2006: 64) states that a "robust finding of quantitative sociolinguistic research is that, where linguistic change is in progress, female speakers tend to lead in the use of innovative forms". However as the next few sections show, gender might not be the only explanation for this atypical linguistic behavior.

5.2. The Omani identity as presented in the Youth Programme (YP)

This section discusses implications and further interpretations of the linguistic behaviour of the broadcasters.

5.2.1. Interpretation of the use of the variable /q/

The variable /q/ is important because it has sociolinguistic and socio-political meanings in the Arab World. The variable /q/ and its realisations have long been an identity marker in the Arabic speaking world. For a start, it acts as an identification of either having a Bedouin or Hadari origin.

The variable /q/ has always been an important identity marker that distinguishes the Bedouin and Hadari Arab populations. Holes (1996: 37) states that "the prime historical distinction between the B [Bedouin] and S [Sedentary] dialects [...] is that the B dialects developed voiced reflexes of

OA [Old Arabic] /q/, whereas the S dialects developed voiceless ones”. This has been noted as early as Ibn Khaldun’s work (Suleiman, 2004 Miller 2007).

An interesting interpretation is in the way in which male and female broadcasters realise the variable /q/. Looking at the results and discussion of each broadcaster, it appears that male broadcasters use the variant [g] more than females. Indeed this does not match sociolinguistic research findings about language change which typically concludes that men are more loyal to the local linguistic features while women are more relaxed about change and innovation in language (Abd-el-Jawad 1986, 1987). However, [g] as a realisation of /q/ carries more covert prestige than [q] even though [q] is the al-Fusha realisation. This leads to the expectation that women would be more enthusiastic about adopting it. Yet this is not the case as the previous sections show. Most female broadcasters are the ones who speak in the OHA [q] while the males speak in [g]. A possible explanation for the male’s leadership in [g] is because this variant is associated with the socio-political power of the GCC and they possibly want to be affiliated with this power.

5.2.2. Interpretation of the use of the variable /dʒ/

The variable /dʒ/ is an interesting one. This is because almost all 5 broadcasters pronounced it as [dʒ] and not the ‘typical’ Omani [g]. However, this variable is not a strong identity marker compared to /q/ and one of the main reasons for using [dʒ] instead of [g] by the broadcasters is because this variable is ‘unstable’ in Oman as it is going through a process of language change. The current sociolinguistic situation in Oman shows that this variable does actually occur in variation with [g]. Lack of studies about it does not allow empirical reasoning for why [dʒ] is used more than [g] by the broadcasters. However, what could be ground for a reasonable explanation is that Al-Aghbari (2004) argues that the educated in Oman tend to pronounce both the variable /q/ and / dʒ/ in their standard pronunciations, hence [q] and [dʒ] respectively.

Another explanation could be related to the experiment discussed in the literature review. The experiment shows that /dʒ/’s variant [g] is generally perceived negatively by Omanis. While [g] is seen as more authentic and more representative of ‘Omaniness’, it is at the same time perceived as indexing a less educated personae. This matches what Al-Aghbari (2004) observes

about the variable. Al-Aghbari (2004: 20) notes that [dʒ] and [g] “alternate” in OHA. She explains that originally this was not the case in Oman, where only [g] was realised. This alternation between the variables is a product of education, modernisation, urbanisation, and contact with Arabs from other nationalities who live in the country as expatriates (Al-Aghbari, 2004). Holes (2004: 59) also notes that there is a variation between [dʒ] and [g] “to some extent in Oman”. This shows that this variable is unstable in Oman and therefore it is unlike the variable /q/, in which there is no variation in its use in OHA (Al-Aghbari 2004, Holes 2004). Holes (1989: 449) also argues that the speech of educated Omanis tends to “replace these typical Omani speech tendencies with their Gulf equivalents”; and since [g] is a typical Omani feature then it is not surprising to see that the broadcasters are not using it. This agrees with the findings of the matched guise experiment as well as Al-Aghbari’s and Hole’s observations. This variation is part of the linguistic ‘realignment’ process which is occurring in Oman currently. It could be because a new urban dialect is being formed in Oman but has not yet become ‘stabilised’ like the Cairene or Damascene dialects of Cairo and Damascus, respectively.

Because some Arab countries did not have an urban centre until recently, this kind of linguistic ‘instability’ occurs. This is also the case with *Ammani* Arabic, spoken in the Jordanian capital, Amman. Al-Wer (2007) explains that because there was no urban centre in Jordan until recently, the Jordanians gradually constructed a dialect which is now associated with their metropolis. This scenario is similar to the Omani one, and it could be even more compelling in Oman. This is because Oman, like the other GCC states only started having an urban centre after the 1970s in which “small desert towns and seaports have grown exponentially [...] since the advent of globalization during the 1970s” (Fox et al., 2006: 3).

The motivations of realising this variable as [dʒ] by the broadcasters are different. Based on the explanation about the variable /q/ above, it could be argued that for male broadcasters, it is a continuation of the same motivation, which is to be affiliated with the Arabian Gulf. This is also true about Nada. As for the other two broadcasters Salwa and Iman, it could be argued that the explanation is in line with previous sociolinguistic research about gender: they are more concerned about using Standard forms.

Using standard forms also means that they wish to project an educated Omani identity. This argument is supported by the fact that for most of their speech they pronounced both the variables /q/ and /dʒ/ in a standard manner, which is apparently a feature of educated speech in Oman and a feature of the urban dialect that is being formed in Oman. The case of Adnan, Abdullah and Nada is different. These three broadcasters are more likely to have pronounced the variable /dʒ/ as [dʒ] because they wish to project a more Arabian Gulf identity through their speech style; which has this as a feature. This is because for the variable /q/, they have used its realisation [g] frequently; and in OHA, this realisation of the variable does not occur at all in its phonological inventory nor does it occur in al-Fusha Arabic. Therefore it is unlikely that education is a strong factor that affects their styles as much as seeking affiliation with the GCC and wishing to project a GCC identity rather than an Omani one. This is evident because if they wish to emphasise their education through their speech then it is more likely that they would pronounce both variables in a standard manner hence [q] and [dʒ].

Based on this discussion then, it could be possible to hypothesise the current linguistic situation in Oman in regards to the two variables as follows:

Variables	Variants	Educated OHA	General OHA	Gulf Arabic
/q/	[q]	+	+	+
	[g]	-	-	+
/dʒ/	[dʒ]	+	-	+
	[g]	-	+	-

Table 7. The possible realisations of the variable /q/ and /dʒ/ in the dialect of Educated OHA, General OHA and Gulf Arabic.

It is worth mentioning that besides gender, there is another social variable that seems to determine the linguistic behaviour of the broadcasters. It appears that the period in which the broadcasters spent working in the Omani media is an important social variable as well, in other words the professional experience they have as well as the ‘professional generation’ in which they are broadcasting. Although there is no empirical research supporting this view, it is assumed

that the older generation of broadcasters differ from the newer generation treat the variables differently and they both have a different referee in mind in which they are directing in their speech. Note that ‘older’ and ‘newer’ here do not refer to age, but to the number of years of professional experience. This is discussed in the next section.

5.2.3. Referee Design

This section discusses both types of referee design as noted in the study. The two types of referee design are ingroup and outgroup. It is interesting to see that both types of referee design exist in the data even though the radio programs belong to the same genre and are broadcasted from the same channel. This suggests that there is a competition between identities in Oman: the Omani identity and the Arabian Gulf identity as a whole are each struggling to project the image of Oman.

5.2.3.1. Ingroup referee design

Ingroup referee design is when a broadcaster emphasises the local identity (Bell, 1991). Based on this, it is argued that Salwa and Iman engage in ingroup referee design. This is especially shown in examples 9 and 12 where they diverge from the language of callers who are speakers of Gulf Arabic. In other words they “reject identification with the immediate addressee” (Bell, 1991: 129). They see such callers as a challenge and therefore need to emphasise their ingroup identity (Bell, 1991). Ingroup referee design is also shown in the fact that Salwa and Iman converge more to their callers’ language even though they do not use some of their features usually (examples: 8 and 10). Yet when speaking to callers who produce marked variables like [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/, Salwa and Iman show instances of convergence. This argument is supported by Bell (1991: 129) who states that “radio presenters who wish to establish their solidarity with local listeners commonly use local linguistic features”. Thus, ingroup referee design could be an explanation for the convergence of Salwa and Iman. Note that as stated earlier, their professional careers are relatively newer than the three other broadcasters and it might be an attempt from the new generation of broadcasters to promote an Omani identity instead of denying it and diverging from it as it has been the case with the Omani media for decades. In other words, to Salwa and Iman consider the Omani audience as their referee.

5.2.3.2. Outgroup referee design

Adnan, Abdullah and Nada who are from the older generation broadcasters choose to speak in Gulf Arabic instead of OHA. This non-random choice has socio-political implications. Bell (2006: 99) explains that in outgroup referee design the speaker intentionally uses linguistic features that are not his/her own and “claims affiliation with that group, its values and its characteristics”. This strongly suggests that the 3 broadcasters who speak in Gulf Arabic wish to be affiliated more with the GCC. Outgroup referee design then, and through its way of divergence in accommodation “signals foreignness” (Bell 1999 in Bell 2006: 99). Outgroup referee design is similar to ingroup referee design in terms of its socio-psychological process because it also involves the claiming of an identity. However the difference is that the identity it claims is not local hence it involves diverging from the local identity and converge to an outgroup identity. Broadcasters usually adopt an outgroup identity because it has more prestige than the local one (Bell, 1991).

The stylisation towards Gulf Arabic emphasises the power of this dialect which is also a manifestation of the socioeconomic and socio-political power of its native speakers. The three broadcasters are diverging from their direct audience (the Omani public) and converging to the GCC by using Gulf Arabic. In their case, it is the economy, politics and nationalism of the GCC that can be considered as “social forces that are at work” (Bell, 2006: 99) which renders Gulf Arabic as more prestigious than OHA and they are factors that determine the choice of linguistic variables of the 3 broadcasters. In other words, the referee is the GCC.

Because the issue of broadcasters speaking in Gulf Arabic to the Omani public in Oman is compelling it is often discussed by non-linguists. One understands better the divergent behaviour of the broadcasters after reading their responses in an interview for the Omani *Al-Watan* newspaper regarding this issue. Al-Alwai (2008) interviewed a few Omani TV and radio broadcasters about it. Nada and Abdullah are among the broadcasters interviewed.

The interview shows that many broadcasters seem to look at their job as an individualistic activity and one which is based on personal preferences, while hardly giving any importance to

the audience. For example, Khalid who is an important Omani broadcaster with long years of experience comments on this issue by arguing that:

“Radio listeners and TV viewers are influenced directly by the broadcaster’s personal culture. But does a broadcaster need to be dragged to what the preferences of the audience are in terms of dialect? This is something that should be left for the broadcaster to choose and he is the one who directs it depending on his personal choice and a broadcaster need not consider the dialect of the receivers because a broadcaster resembles himself only whereas the listeners or viewers come from different backgrounds and hence speak different dialects”

This is a direct and clear message from an experienced Omani broadcaster who is admitting that the audience should play a very minor role, if any in terms of the broadcaster’s linguistic choices. Based on this, one is not surprised to see that the media in Oman is fighting for an identity and is hardly representative of the Omani culture as a whole. Khalid is basically ignoring the fact that there is a dominant dialect in Oman and it is Hadari in nature.

In the same interview, Nada also reacted in a way that suggests that whatever the way the broadcaster chooses to speak in is a matter of personal choice. Nada argues that “I do not understand why you are excluding Oman’s dialect from the Khaleeji one, as if we are not part of the Gulf. We are part of the Gulf and we share with them a great history... do I have to pronounce the letter *qaf*¹⁷ as [q] and the *jeem*¹⁸ as [g] to be Omani?” Therefore Nada is actually explicitly acknowledging the fact that the dominant Omani dialect speaks pronounces *qaf* as [q] and *jeem* as [g]. She is also implying that there is no need to speak in this way to be Omani. This is another example of a well-known Omani broadcaster who is explicitly admitting that they are

¹⁷ The Arabic alphabetical letter in which represents the variable /q/ in this study.

¹⁸ The Arabic alphabetical letter which represents the variable /dʒ/ in this study.

diverging from the Omani dialect, yet acknowledging that it is the dialect of the majority in Oman.

Abdullah's views are similar to Khalid and Nada's. He sees that "diversity in dialects reflects diversity in cultures and there is nothing to be ashamed of. Only a minority of the audience see that diversity in dialects detracts from the Omani identity [...] what is important is the message that is being communicated".

Looking at the way in which Adnan, Abdullah and Nada -and indeed many other Omani broadcasters like Khalid- speak raises an important question: why would Omani broadcasters choose to speak in a way that is not indigenous to the community they are directing? The answer, according to Bell (1991) is that these broadcasters are engaging in outgroup referee design. Referee design is when speakers diverge from the dialect of the local community and converge toward another dialect which acts as a model (Bell, 1991). "Referee design is a rhetorical strategy by which speakers use the resources available to them from their speech community (Bell 1990, in Bell 1991: 127). It is common in referee design that the broadcasters adopt "features from the speech of other socioeconomic, ethnic or age groups; geographically in the dialects of other regions" (Bell, 1991: 128). Outgroup referee design is based on claiming an identity (Bell, 1991). Bell (1991: 130) best describes it in his own words:

"Here speakers lay claim to a speech and identity which is not their own but which holds prestige for them. They diverge from the language code of their ingroup –and thus from their own usual speech- towards an outgroup with whom they wish to identify"

In the case of the broadcasters studied here, they wish to be affiliated with the Gulf. In other words, the GCC is their referee although they communicate with the Omani audience. The broadcasters who wish to be affiliated with the GCC rather than Oman are a result of the homogenisation process of the GCC on national, cultural and indeed linguistic levels. This homogenisation is seen in the GCC's promotion of "the notion of *haweeya Khaleeji* (Gulf identity)" (Patrick, 2009: 31) as a collective unit in which Oman is politically part of.

5.2.3.3. Cultural implications of referee design

There is a preponderance of Gulf Arabic over OHA in music shows in YP. This shows that Oman focuses on the GCC and all the prestige and power it carries culturally and linguistically. This is shown in the speech of three broadcasters who prefer speaking in non-standard variables instead of standard and local variables because the former is associated with the GCC and its prestige, yet although the latter is associated with al-Fusha Arabic hence associated with education, it is nevertheless also associated with OHA, which is stigmatised. The case of Oman is similar to New Zealand because it is taking the local media a long time to realise that “this isn’t the BBC” (Bell, 1991: 1450; except that in Oman’s case YP needs to realise that “this isn’t the GCC”. Such a realisation is slowly becoming more common as this study shows by the attitudes of individual broadcasters, in this case Salwa and Iman. YP, is slowly realising that the GCC identity is not superior to the Omani one. This is possibly a result of the public’s frustration from having to listen to ‘fake’ identities that represent them for years.

There have been recent efforts to present the Omani identity in a realistic way in the Omani media; without having to diverge from it. One way in which these efforts are manifested is the Omani cartoon which is released recently in Ramadan 2011¹⁹. The cartoon is called *yoom oo yoom* or ‘a day and a day’²⁰ and the way in which they are advertising it, strongly suggests that they are aware of the negative stereotypes about OHA. In the trailer of the cartoon one could not but catch the phrase ‘the first Omani 3D cartoon with multi-dialects’ and ‘ten characters from different backgrounds’; the background being local. This strongly suggests that Oman is trying to eradicate the negative stereotypes about its dialects. This cartoon is also important because it shows that unlike a few decades ago, Oman is now confident enough to show its linguistic reality in its media instead of being in denial and using Gulf Arabic and falsely claim that it is how Omanis speak.

¹⁹ August 2011.

²⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-uxqqkq9LM>

6. Conclusions

By analysing the linguistic behaviour of five Omani broadcasters in regards to the variables /q/ and /dʒ/ and their variants [q],[g] and [dʒ], [g], respectively, this study attempted to see whether the broadcasters reflect the linguistic reality in Oman. The study showed that there is a difference between the speech of the audience and that of the broadcasters in terms of the variables. While most members of the audience seem to realise the variables /q/ and /dʒ/ as [q] and [g] respectively, this is not the way in which the broadcasters realise them.

The variable /q/ is not realised in the same way by all the broadcasters. The study discussed how the male broadcasters along with Nada realise the variable as [g]. This shows that that they are seeking affiliation with the GCC and not necessarily the Omani audience who are essentially targets of the radio channel. The prestige that the variant [g] carries when it is used as a realisation of /q/ is interesting because it is neither standard nor local, instead it is an imported sound that has not only managed to make its way to the speech of Omani broadcasters but also to be recognised as more prestigious than [q] which is a feature of al-Fusha Arabic.

The case of the variable /dʒ/ is different. Most broadcasters seem to agree on its pronunciation most of the time as [dʒ] but it is argued that their motivations are different. Adnan, Abdullah and Nada seem to realise it this way because it is in line with the pronunciation of Gulf Arabic. Yet Salwa and Iman are more likely to be pronouncing it this way because it is standard. Currently this variant seems to be occurring in variation with [g] in Oman while an emerging urban dialect is being formed. Therefore although most callers realise this variable as [g], it is argued that the divergence from this variable is not as radical as diverging from [q]; since the variable /q/ has been a hallmark for distinguishing Bedouin and Hadari Arabs for centuries.

The linguistic accommodation behaviour of the broadcasters is also discussed in the study. Broadcasters who choose to speak in Gulf Arabic, namely Adnan, Abdullah and Nada show that they are less willing to converge to their callers, instead they seem to diverge away from the callers' language. Salwa and Iman on the other hand converged to the callers' linguistic features more than the other three broadcasters. Their linguistic behaviour show that they do converge to local features that even if they are marked such as [g] as a realisation of /dʒ/. Salwa and Iman seem to converge to the Omani identity and diverge from the Arabian Gulf identity. However they also show a degree of convergence to the Gulf Arabic feature [g]

as a realisation of /q/ in some instances. Therefore, in general, Salwa and Iman seem to be linguistically more convergent than Adnan, Abdullah and Nada, who seem to be radically divergent.

The study attempted to interpret the findings in relation to gender as a social variable, but realised that there is another social variable that should be considered. The other social variable is the broadcasters' 'professional generation'. Professional generation is the point of time in which they started their careers as broadcasters in Omani media. This is important because while the Omani media has been diverging from the local identity for decades, it appears that the new generation of Omani broadcasters are willing to represent the Omani identity and linguistic reality instead of denying it. This appears to be an important step in overcoming the linguistic insecurity that has been evident in the Omani media for years. One could not but feel that the identities that the old and new broadcasters attempt to reflect create a chaos in the media at present, where each of them strives insistently to present the identity which they think is most ideal for the Omani public. Whether this identity competition will end in having more confident Omani broadcasters speaking in OHA, or more divergent Omani broadcasters cannot be predicted at the time being but would provide fruitful sociolinguistic research.

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