Dialectologia 19 *(2017), 1-21.*
ISSN: 2013-2247

Received 8 September 2015.
Accepted 19 December 2015.

VARIATION, SHIFTING AND IDENTITY IN ARABIC

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Abstract

This paper examines different ideological and identity construction functions of linguistic variation and shifting in Arabic through the analysis of the existing literature on language, politics and national identity, arguing that linguistic variation and shifting may be used for constructing/reconstructing, locating/relocating and/or shifting/abandoning identity, and divided/split identity. A few major cases will be surveyed to exemplify this. It is shown that variation and/or shifting in Arabic may reflect different levels of sociopolitical, ethnic, sectarian, and religious grouping/ divisions. In such contexts, language and/or varieties of language serve as markers of identity and as boundary-setters between groups.

Keywords

variation, shifting, identity, boundary setting, nationalism

VARIACIÓN, CAMBIO Y IDENTITAD EN ÁRABE

Resumen

Este artículo examina diferentes funciones ideológicas y de construcción de la identidad de la variación lingüística y de cambio en árabe a través del análisis de la bibliografía existente sobre el lenguaje, la política y la identidad nacional, argumentando que la variación lingüística y el cambio pueden ser utilizados para construir/reconstruir, localizar/relocalizar y/o cambiar/abandonar la identidad, y dividir/escindir la identidad. Se encuestarán algunos casos importantes se encuestarán para ejemplificar lo citado. Se demuestra que la variación y/o el cambio en árabe pueden reflejar diferentes niveles de agrupaciones/divisiones sociopolíticas, étnicas, sectarias y religiosas. En tales contextos, la lengua y/o las variedades lingüísticas sirven como marcadores de identidad y como creadores de fronteras entre grupos.

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Palabras clave

variación, cambio, identidad, creación de fronteras, nacionalismo

1. Introduction

Variation studies of Arabic have frequently focused their attention on studying the correlation between language variation and the traditional socio-economic, cultural and stylistic variables such as age, sex, education, background, etc. In such cases usually a quantitative analysis of collected data is performed to establish these correlations. Then the results show patterns of sociolinguistic tendencies in the distribution of the observed variation. There is no doubt that such a process is the first and fundamental step in discovering these patterns of variation in the linguistic behavior of speakers. Without this it will be subjective and impressionistic to make any subsequent conclusions or generalizations or to give any explanations. Having said this, we can proceed to say that in explaining the findings, some form of qualitative analysis is deemed necessary to identify the factors of, or forces behind these different patterns of observed variation, e.g. ideological, political, social, and cultural, etc. Accordingly, the objective of this paper is to survey previous studies of variation in Arabic to offer a qualitative analysis of the significance, meaning, and function of this variation, with special reference to the function of locating identity.

Furthermore, this geographic area (the Arab world) has its own special characteristics, where the political scene intersects with the religious, cultural, social, ethnic, and national and all of which exhibit themselves in the linguistic situation and behavior as our friend Yasir Suleiman (2006) refers to this in his chapter “Charting the nation: Arabic and the politics of identity”. This area is different in that political, social, religious, ethnic, and sectarian issues/classifications/demarcations are important issues as they are deep seated in the consciousness and awareness of the individuals as well as groups. They are special as they cause a lot of polarization and pluralization.

In most, if not all Arab countries, the ruling powers starting from the imperial colonizing ones to the regimes that took over from the colonizers carrying the same

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policy of their masters: the main policy being "divide to rule" and thus they have been encouraging/fostering these divisions and splits and all types of conflict which are again linguistically realized in different ways. This has given rise to a set of terms such as *?iqliimiyya* 'regionalism', *jihawiyyia* 'localism', *Ta?ifiyya* 'sectarianism', *3unSuriyya* 'racism', *3ilmaaniyya* 'liberalism/secularism vs salafi/religious/theological'; pan-Arab nationalism (Arab nation or *Al watan Al-Arabi* or *al-Umma al-Arabiyya*) vs State nationalism (Omani, Egyptian, Jordanian, etc.).

This has often given rise from time to time to different types of movements, such as the call for the use of *3aammiyya* (colloquial Arabic) rather than *FusHa* (standard Arabic). Two clear cases can be mentioned here: in the fisrt half of the 20th century there was Egyptian National Movement: calling for Egyptianization of language and one in Lebanon calling for Lebanonization of language.

Within the same state: political divisions and conflicts are occasionally provoked causing differences, including linguistic signs, e.g. in Jordan: Jordanian vs. Palestinian. And in Oman Zanzibaris vs. Native Omanis (Arabs). The linguistic boundaries in such cases often coincide with political/power relations. Within the same community one may find divided towns, villages, border towns or different religions groups and/or sects. In some cases, these divided towns or regions may either:

a. belong to two different political systems: Iskenderun (between Turkey and Syria) or the case of many Palestinian villages where the so-called truce line in 1948 cut them in the middle, thus dividing them into an Eastern part belonging to Palestine/Arabs and a western part belonging to Israel; e.g. Jerusalem and *Bart'a*, among many.

or

b. are divided between two or more different Arab countries; e.g. Rafah between Palestine and Egypt, *alburaimi/al3ain* between UAE and Oman… where each one adheres to the varieties in their respective countries.

The overlapping cycles of identity may differ in order: pan-Arabism, nationalism with its two or more dimensions (the local/regional vs the Pan-Arab), religious, localism, which makes it difficult to establish the linguistic boundaries as they often overlap. For instance, there is both an overlap and a conflict between the so-called "Wider

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nationalism pan-Arabism" (*alqawmiyya*), and the narrower nationalism referring to the specific countries: Egyptian nationalism, Jordanian nationalism, etc. which require different symbols of identity such as a national anthem, flag, currency, etc. Yet each state considers itself as part of *al?umma il 3arabiyya* (Arab Umma), *alwaTan alarbi* (Arab Nation), and/or *al?umma il ?islamiyya* (Islamic Umma).

In the cases to be presented in this paper, it is hoped to show the complex roles linguistic/language variation plays in the formation of the overlapping, conflicting, and sometimes divided identities and loyalties among its speakers in the Arab world.

Quite recently, there has been an emphasis on the role of identity with its different types in determining language use, variation and shifting (cf. Suleiman 1994, 1996, 2004, 2006). Language with its different varieties has been used by groups to identify with one political, social, ethnic, religious, national, etc. group or another. It is a common practice that Arab speakers use language features from several language varieties in the same discourse in order to gain authority by tapping into specific language ideologies (Stadlbauer 2010: 8). This paper examines different ideological and identity construction functions of linguistic variation through a detailed analysis of the existing literature on language politics and national identity, arguing that linguistic variation may be used for integration/disintegration, identity re-construction/reconstruction, locating/relocating and/or shifting/losing identity, and divided/split identity together with the different overlapping cycles of identity (national, ethnic, religious, social, tribal, sectarian, etc.). Beside my own analysis, this study is based on several individual studies done independently around the wide theme of language and identity (see bibliography for a list of these studies). In the following sections, patterns of variation and/or shifting corresponding to different forms of identity formation will be presented.

2. Case one: Diglossic variation

Aside from the contextual domain distribution of the two polar varieties of Diglossic Arabic as outlined by Ferguson 1959, and shown in many subsequent studies (Schmidt 1974; Sallam 1980; Husein 1980; Abdel-Jawad 1981; Ibrahim 1986; Al-Khatib

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1988; Haeri 1996; Habib 2008, 2010, 2011 to mention just a sample), the use of these varieties may also be determined by the patterns of identity and ideologies speakers desire to associate with each "Speakers use language features from several language varieties in the same discourse in order to gain authority by tapping into specific language ideologies" (Stadlbauer 2010: 8). In this regard, Holt (1996) states that "the selective use of language features from different varieties signals as much information as the propositional content of the message: choosing features from one variety over another is a significant marker indexing the position of the speaker in society, their knowledge of political and religious values, or their aspiration for social mobility. Arabic is seen as an obvious and inevitable choice […] as it is the language of the Holy Quran and all the Arab States have a Muslim and Arab Majority" (Holt 1996: 11).

However each of the two polar varieties stands for different sets of values:

a) H variety serves as a neutral, corrective /reference and pan-Arab unifying model, aiming to transcend the boundaries of individual nation-states, while at the same time stands for conflicting drives: Religious, political, national, or ethnic, which determine the direction of change, patterns of variation and/or conflict. This is consistent with "Standard Lang. Ideology" (Lipi-Green 1997) which refers to a cluster of beliefs about the value of linguistic homogeneity. Holt (1996: 11) writes that "it is Islam whose sacred language has retained its original form and still become a national and official language". Similarly, Haeri (2003: 43) states that this H "socializes people into rituals of Islam, affirms their identity as Muslims and connects them to the realm of purity, morality, and God" and therefore attributes of this variety are equated with the moral virtues of the user.

Furthermore, H is Tribally neutral. In a TRIBAL Arab world, where the tribe is a very strong social and political unit, this H variety has been neutral and universal and has no association with tribes or tribal viewpoints. So membership to it is open to all equally. So Arabic carries "no tribal connotations" (Holt 1996: 13).

b) Diachronically speaking, SA is neutral as it is not based on any of the local dialects thus it stands at equal distance from all Arabs. Holt (1996: 21) argues that "In the Arab world one could argue that all are equally distant from the standard and that on-one therefore benefits from a linguistic advantage".

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Holt (1996), Haeri (2003) Suleiman (2004) and Stadlbauer (2010), among others, have shown that ideological forces gave rise to linguistic conflicts which reflect identity conflicts, such as:

Religious conservatives, who are often referred to as "purists", argue for the purity, supremacy and sacredness of H variety and therefore call for the maintenance and use of this variety as a symbol of Muslim Arab history, morality, and identity as an Muslim Umma (Nation).

In contrast, *pan-Arab nationalists* call for a reformed modified modern and (religiously neutral) form of the H variety of Arabic as a united Arabic language, widely referred to as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) to be the neutral unifying force of all Arabic-speaking people in the Arab world of all backgrounds, religious denominations, and affiliations.

Furthermore, *modernists* at this era of IT and globalization, tend to advocate increasing use of English in many social domains in order to connect to the international community. They believe that the H variety is a carrier of tradition and religious morals but has not been able to reflect scientific and economic progress so English has to be used as symbolic capital link to the "prosperity" and modernity of the West (Stadlbauer 2010).

At the other extreme, stand the Nationalists (state nationalism) who call for the use of national forms of Arabic for different Arab countries thus they seem as promoting separatism. Two clear cases were active in the first half of the 20th century: one in Egypt (Egyptian National Movement: Egyptinization of language) and one in Lebanon. (Lebanese Christian ideas: Lebanonization of language).

c) Power maintenance: Furthermore, SA has often been used by the older forms of power represented in the ruling families to maintain their power. Holt (1996: 20) explains that such families have seen "it in their interests to appeal to the masses in a language with great symbolic function and which gives them greater legitimacy rather than promoting a vernacular populism". To them, "the emotional and symbolic appeal of religion would be more successful than appealing to the masses on the basis of nationality" (Holt 1996: 20) which may be served by upgrading local varieties into standard ones. This is evident in recent years and events as major political parties,

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especially religious-oriented ones, promote the use of standard not as a national language but a pan-language with wider appeal where religious affiliation is seen as more appropriate that tribal or local/ national affiliation.

d) Prestige: All in all, SA has an overt prestige while the non-standard ones have covert prestige.

e) Religious vs. political: It is interesting to note here that SA can stand for at least two major values/drives…: Religious and political. If seen from a religious point of view, it is acceptable by all Arabs and non-Arabs and even minorities/ethnic groups within the Arab countries accept it as a marker of Muslim identity (as in the case of Kurds, Berbers, etc.). However, when it is seen as a political symbol as marker of national (Arab identity) so it is used as the official language in these countries, then it is looked at like any other language and is resisted so Kurds call for the use of their native language as the official one in their areas and so do the Berbers, etc. (process of inclusion vs. exclusion).

Standard Arabic (H) has served *a national function* during colonization. Holt (1996: 17) writes that "the symbolic function of written Arabic and developing it along nationalist lines during the *nahda*…"*.* It was a symbol of identity in the face of COLONIZATION… as a reaction and defense strategy.

f) On the other hand, all the L (non-standard) varieties stand for local, regional blocs, sub-national, and state values and identities. At the state level, each country sees itself as a nation state having what may be referred to as Sub-national varieties: Each country has its own form of "ARABIC" (though it includes many different dialects), e.g. Omani, Jordanian, Egyptian or Tunisian etc. Arabic. These are not geographical but territorial, political and therefore territorial Identity markers. Linguistically, there may be an overlap and similarity among them, e.g. northern areas in Jordan are similar to those in the southern parts of Syria, Northern Palestinian is closer to southern Lebanon than it is to Jerusalem one… but they are referred to as Jordanian, Palestinian, Syrian, or Lebanese Arabic. SA is not usually used for local/regional identification because it has no native speakers as it is seen as a pan-Arab variety. It is interesting to add that even names of such countries may indicate the kind of identity they desire to emphasize. E.g. Syrian Arab Republic, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, or Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, This

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division can be at a regional geographic level (blocs) as in the Gulf (Gulf council countries vs. non-Gulf or *al-itti7aad al magharibi* (Magrhribi (western) union).

An examination the names given to countries, papers and other entities in the Arab world shows these tendencies to relocate identity. Egypt was called, 'the United Arab Republic' during Naser's period to refer to a larger Arab entity but it was later changed to 'Egypt Arab Republic' limiting it to a narrower domain, indicating departing the unity dream. Similarly, the terms and names of newspapers, media, etc. are symbolic and indicate a wider scope of identification: *al-sharq al-awsat* Paper (Middle East Paper), *Al-Quds al-Arabi* paper (*Arab Jerusalem paper), The voice of Arabs (*radio Egypt during Naser's period*), Al-Jazeera channel,* and so on.

In conclusion, I would like to cite Holt (1996) who maintains that the

> linguistic identity in the Arab world is divided between 2 forms which are both independent of identity with the state….. Fusha with all what it stands for ... pan-Arab identity and 3ammiyya, although possessing a vitality and dynamism not echoed in Fusha, leads to an identity which runs deep and is regionally based, and yet politically and historically marginalized (Holt 1996: 23).

Shifting from one variety to the other serves these different identities and values. Shifting to SA is a shift to formality and distance while a shift to non-standard variety is a shift to informality, solidarity, in-group membership: sub-national vs. national (pan)culture. This seems to echo Labov (1966) who maintains that the use of non-standard features is controlled by the norms of vernacular subculture, whilst the use of standard features is controlled by the overt norms of the mainstream culture in society.

3. Case two: divided loyalty-political dislocation

Language is politically significant and is often used as a tool of penetration, participating, legitimacy, identity construction, and integration. Politically divided communities such as the case of many boundary towns: e.g. several Palestinian towns (*Barta3a*), Buraimi/*Ala3ain* between Oman and UAE, Rafah (Egypt and Gaza) may exhibit

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this political division linguistically. Such political boundaries may set the linguistic boundaries within the same community:

a) Rafah which was originally one town is now divided politically: the Eastern side is with Gaza while the Western side is with Egypt. This political division seems to reflect linguistically where in the Eastern part speakers tend to use a local Palestinian variety while in the Western side they speak an Egyptian variety and often adopt a regional Egyptian variety as their social standard.

b) Alburaimi is an Omani border town sharing a front line with its corresponding UAE town of *Al3ain* which were originally one town with the same families. However, the Omanis in Alburaimi believe (at least psychologically) that they use a Omani variety to mark themselves as Omanis, while on the UAE side, speakers tend to adopt a UAE variety to identify themselves as UAE. However, in case of social identification, the Omanis in Alburaimi tend to adopt linguistic features from *Al3ain* variety as they believe that it is more socially prestigious.

c) The third case (The case of Barta3a) deserves more attention as it sets a more relevant example

In a sociolinguistic study of the situation in a divided Palestinian Village (*Barta'a*), (Amara & Spolsky 1996) presented evidence of a "growing double identity" reflecting socioeconomic, political and religious factors.

Barta3a is a Palestinian village which was divided following the 1948 Israeli taking over of Palestine where they set the border line in the middle of the village, thus dividing it into the Western part, annexed to Israel, and Eastern part, annexed to the West Bank of Jordan at the time. Accordingly, the two parts started developing economically, socially, politically and probably linguistically differently: one reflecting the Israeli system while the other the Jordanian Arab system. What deepened the split is the total political blockade where inhabitants of the two parts, in many cases members of divided families, where not allowed any contact of any sort and they were banned from establishing any links under legal punishment, i.e. there had been geographic and familial proximity but total separation and change of directions. In 1967, following the 6-day war, the West Bank fell under Israeli occupation. The official boundary between the

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two parts was removed and members were allowed to reunite. Yet, the two parts are still under two different jurisdictions.

d) Questions to be raised here:

-What is the impact of dividing the village for 20 years?

-What is the impact of reunifying the village after the removal of the official boundary?

Does this result in the removal of social and political divisions between the two halves of the village and so the "linguistic frontier" resulting from parallel social, political and cultural differences" continues between them.

What is the impact of rising political, religious, etc. movements such as the Intifada, feeling of abandonment, changing of attitudes with the resurgence of Islamic movements.

e) How does this reflect linguistically? Do the Political and economic dislocation result in Linguistic variation?

According to (Amara & Spolsky 1996) there seems to be a number of Processes OF IDENTITY at work:

Israelization: associated with modernization, urbanization and official authority. Are the Arabs in Israel undergoing a process of Israelization? (integrating or not).

Palestinianization: associated with the local, national, and cultural values and heritage: do they still identify with Palestinians (Palestinianization?).

Islamization: associated with religious values and the resurgence of Islamic movements. Accordingly, a third trend of identity is competing with the first two: i.e. Islamization.

Alienation / exclusion: recently, there has been changing in political attitudes and intentions where there have been calls to maintain "a Pure Jewish State" thus excluding all others, including Native Palestine Arabs who start rethinking their political identities.

Change of attitudes and alternating identities: Attitudes after 1967, and after Intifadas, the Western part, like all Palestinians west of the green line, were looked at as more modern, richer, and have more movement freedom as they are considered Israeli citizens who have freedom of movement unlike West Bank Palestinians who have always been under severe mobility restrictions.

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It was found that linguistic features distinguish each part of the village: lexical variation as many lexical items have been borrowed from Hebrew in the western part of the village. As well as the external linguistic influences may shape the local vernaculars of the two parts: (Arabic, English, and/or Hebrew?). Amara & Spolsky (1996) identify a large amount of linguistic variation between the two halves.

f) For the Western part Arabic is the national native language but is not the major official one since Hebrew is. Both Arabic and Hebrew are formally taught in schools and are informally used in daily interaction. Hebrew being a second language where almost everyone speaks, reads and writes Hebrew.

g) In the Eastern part, Arabic is the only official and formal language with English taught as a foreign language… but Hebrew was rarely taught or spoken pre1967. However after 1967, Hebrew stared to be used informally (spoken) by a growing number of laborers, prisoners and those who work with govt. offices who have become fluent in speaking Hebrew.

The authors highlighted several identities by posing the following question to their informants: How do you define yourself, i.e. who are you in terms of:

- Tribal (Hamula)
- Villagers (Rural)
- Palestinian (national)
- Israeli (political)
- Arab (pan-Arabic)
- Muslim (religious)

Accordingly, they established the following trends: older people, esp. born before 1967, show stronger national Arabism (pan-Arab), but the Palestinian identity becomes stronger after 1967 (also following the separation from Jordan and more specifically following the disengagement in 1987 and the establishment of the Palestinian authority)… so in the light of the developing political factors, a lot of locating and dislocating identities have taken place… Disappointment with the Arabs in recent years has led to rethinking of Pan-Arabism. When one group feels abandoned, marginalized, threatened, like Palestinians in Gaza they tend to turn off their alliance with the other

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groups. Nowadays the Islamic identity is growing, esp. in light of seeing that Muslim countries like Iran and Turkey support them more than the Arabs… Following their disappointment with their Arab compatriots and the secular PLO leadership they shifted towards Islamic movements…

Conclusion: Political changes lead to changing of identities and loyalties… Sociolinguistic variation (micro) may often reflect this. These identities intersect: which comes first and why? Changing identities depending on political and may be religious associations/considerations.

4. Case three: In-group vs. out-group

Local/internal Dialects may be in conflict: the case of Palestinian Vs. Jordanian groups in Jordan which shows that "language serves as a marker of identity and as a boundary-setter between the in-group (ourselves) and the out-group (others)" (Suleiman 2004: 7).

There is always "Interaction between language and national/ethnic identity in situations of intra- and intergroup conflict" (Suleiman 2004: 8). In Jordan, like in many other communities, there are patterns of variation other than diglossic: i.e. Jordanian vs. Palestinian linguistic markers.

Three principles govern this pattern according to Suleiman (2004):

First, "the power-language relationship is an important aspect of ideological contestation, and of identity assertion and negotiation in inter-and-intra-group interaction" (p. 13).

Second, language is a marker of identity" (p. 13).

Third, both one and two operate at the communicative and symbolic levels" (p. 14).

What is the Interaction between linguistic choices and political events/situations?

Language situation in Jordan is closely related to the political situation and political division: a case of ethno-political situation.

Linguistic division/boundaries represent group divisions: to go from one group to another you have to cross over these linguistic boundaries so variation or shifting here

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indicates divided political loyalty… (consider some Palestinian families residing in Jordan early in the 20th century and how they see themselves as Jordanians or Palestinians and how this is marked linguistically).

This shows how conflict in the Middle East (whether internal, regional, or...) can alter the linguistic map of a country and the dynamics of the sociopolitical evaluation…

Power and conflict are important factors in shaping the linguistic situation (same pattern applies to Bahrain (Cf. Holes 1980, 1983a 1983b, 1986a and 1986b).

The use of (Q) variants has been particularly motivated by / or motivate the use of ethno linguistic labels (*beljiki*) " (used to refer to a Palestinian in Jordan) as a boundary setting label" which is similar to ethnic group labels such as Bellushis, Zadjalis, Druze, Alawaites, etc. regardless of their background origin to distinguish them from the rest. Such terms have become "identity laden labels" (Suleiman 2004) which mark Insiders vs. outsiders, power imbalance, not equal share of power and employment, dominant group vs. dominated group or superordinate group vs. subordinate one

This is often accompanied by other symbols/artifacts of identity: Red-checked vs. black-checked head dress (Kufiyya vs. Hatta).

In many cases, this variation may distinguish the population in the same country as "nationals vs. naturalized" which has also given rise to a number of dividing terms such as "asli (original) vs. "naqli" (not original… borrowing terms used to describe spare parts), "mulHaq (annexed)" or even using electrical terms such 220 vs. 110 (220 referring to originals while 110 referring to incoming groups (naturalized)". This sociopolitical pattern of VARIATION corresponds to social stratification: first-class citizen, second-class with whatever linguistic and cultural markers associated with it.

In such communities (multi-ethnic) linguistic/cultural accommodation must be at play: it relates variation to ethnic/national identity in intergroup relations. At least three trends can be identified in this regard, which reflect patterns of identity as well:

a. Convergence: approval of the interlocutor and may be for gaining social and/or political acceptance (where outsiders converge to the insiders' norms, thus hiding their original identity and adopting the so-called insiders).

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b. Divergence: exaggeration of the difference (where the so-called outsiders maintain their marking linguistic as well cultural norms and even exaggerate using them to emphasize their group identity and challenge the others).

c. Maintenance: (no-convergence) each side maintains its own features (without any challenge or exaggeration involved) where tolerance governs the situation (as in Oman where groups are free to use their varieties or language tolerating each other but all must identify with Oman as a covering umbrella).

In Jordan, the [g] variant (of the voiceless uvula stop (q)) in Jordan has been established as the norm of the in-group, ruling and politically powerful group which has the full control, and so it is a symbol of POWER and STATUS. Switching to this variant may be integral or instrumental. Switching to [g] is considered by Suleiman (2004: 131) as related "to the formation of nation-state in Jordan". Jordanizing Jordan and de-Palestinization of Jordan This has been officially marked as Late king Hussein used a dividing term (with historical religious significance) to describe the Palestinian-Jordanian duality: Muhajiriin (immigrants… outsiders) vs. Ansaar (hosting group).

With these political and group divisions, one has to consider Vitality (ethno linguistic validity) in this context where variables can be

a. Status variables

b. Demographic variables

c. Institutionally-supported variables

In such communities, in any political tension, each group resorts to its identity markers (linguistic and otherwise): East Jordanian sees himself as the majority, host, employer, ruling, while the Palestinian is a guest, annexed and not original. This has given rise to a number of political linguistic slogans such: Jordanians of all origins (*min shatta il-manaabiti wal-?uSool*), Jordan First (*Al-?urdu ?awwalan*), Jordan for Jordanians (unity slogan) (*al-?urdun lil-?uroniyyiin*) and so on. Thus one can refer to covert/overt policies of inclusion vs. exclusion as shown in the following points:

a. Political demographic classification which is linguistically realized (though all were under same jurisdiction up to 1987).

b. Pure Jordanians who have full citizenships with all it entails (national #).

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c. Jordanian of Palestinian origin which make up two groups: those who hold Israeli/Palestinian ID (believed to have two Identities) who have full rights except a very few technical ones. This group is marked by being given special yellow Cards (referred to as Bridge statistical card).

d. The third group is pure Palestinian who are seen now as foreigners but with some Jordanian links and so they are given a special passport (with no national number) and their bridge cards are green not yellow, while a blue card is given to Palestinians from Jerusalem.

e. In this context, identity controversial questions such as: Who is the Jordanian? How to distinguish oneself accordingly? Are often raised.

f. Furthermore, such complicated context also causes what may be termed as "identity conflict". For instance, how do the early settlers of Jordan of Palestinian origin (moved to East Jordan early in the 20th century) they see or identify themselves? How do they use lg. to identify with this side or that side and what accommodation processes they follow?

g. Jordanian women who live in big cities like Amman and Irbid normally use the urban variety (which is believed to have Palestinian origins) but switch to pure Jordanian variety in case of tension… (divided loyalty: covert prestige vs. overt prestige).

Conclusion: This is a clear case of SOCIO POLITICAL PATTERN OF VARIATION where linguistic variation serves as a marker of identity and as a boundary-setter between the "in-group (ourselves) and the out-group (others)" (Suleiman 2004: 7).

5. Religious identification and division: the case of Bethlehem

Different religious groups may use language variation or shifting as a way to change identity and affiliation. In a study done by Amara (2005), he found that among Christians in the city of Bethlehem who used to be the dominant group:

> Younger women and some Christian men are tending to adopt an urban pronunciation like that of nearby East Jerusalem, at the same time as the speech of younger educated Muslims is showing the growing influence of the standard

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> variety, of Arabic. By relating the use of linguistic variants to changes in identity, this study shows that Bethlehem is a town in transition, being transformed from its previous status as a Christian Arab town into an important Palestinian and dominantly Muslim city (Amara 2005: Abstract).

"By relating the use of linguistic variants to changes in identity, this study shows that Bethlehem is a town in transition, being transformed from its previous status as a Christian town into a Muslim one" (Amara 2005: Abstract). Bethlehem had been widely seen as a Christian town but now there is a transition into a Muslim town. Here, linguistic variation is shown to have produced new distinctions. A case of a town in transition, being transformed from its previous status as a Christian Arab town into an important Palestinian and dominantly Muslim city. This also provides a unique case for testing shifting of social identities: non-urban to urban. It illustrates how urbanization and migration are reflected in the sociolinguistic changes of the Arabic spoken in the town. One of the most salient linguistic features of this is the use of the variants of (q). Whereas most residents formerly used the common (k) Palestinian variety for the standard /q/, similar to that spoken in Palestinian villages, younger women and some Christian men tend to adopt an urban pronunciation like that of nearby East Jerusalem, while, at the same time, the speech of younger educated Muslims is showing the growing influence of the standard variety of Arabic. This linguistic behavior may be seen as a symbol of religious identification which may be traced in other Arab communities as well (cf. Blanc 1964; Holes 1983a).

6. The case of returning-immigrants variation: relocating identity; e.g. Zanzibaris in Oman

Many Arab Omanis and Omani families immigrated to Zanzibar over a long period of time in the last few centuries where they established themselves as the ruling and upper class. Then in the 60s of last Century they were forced to leave the country following a local revolution by the native Africans. Few of these (returnees/re-immigrants) identify with what they consider as native country; yet many still face what

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may be seen as "identity conflict" or "divided loyalty": whether they see themselves as Omanis returning home or Zanzibari Omanis immigrating to hosting Oman? This is also linguistically marked through the variant use of English-Arabic and Swahili.

Kharusi (2012: 13) explains that "language choice among Swahili-speaking Zanzibaris is very much influenced by the individual's perception and interpretation of the label Zanzibaris, which in turn determines their acceptance or rejection of it". Accordingly, Kharusi identified three different subgroups of Zanzibaris: those who continue using Swahili in both public and private domains; those who use it only in private domains; and those who do not use or refuse to use Swahili in either domain and even they pretend they do not know the language.

This explains the different patterns of language shifting and use among them: the first group continue to use Swahili to the exclusion of Arabic, the second group is still using Swahili predominantly with a weaker version of Arabic though they have been in the country for most of their lives, while the third group has shifted to Arabic with the exclusion of Swahili. This pattern of linguistic variation is closely tied with the issue of identity for them. Many see themselves as pure Omanis descending from Omani tribes which maintain their existence in Oman and so they have integrated with these tribes; others feel that they have lost their tribal roots as a result of population mix and intermarriages so they have not fully integrated within the rest.

Psychologically, they have developed different attitudes. When they started returning to the country back in the last century, they were not well received by the people and they were even looked down on. Then at later stages when they started taking higher jobs because they were more educated and have more command of English, they started to feel superior to the others. It can be assumed in this case that their language behavior is one way of distinguishing themselves from the rest: i.e. a way of distinction and probably superiority (changing of attitudes). Psychologically, Kharusi (2012) explains this saying that the first group, which belongs to the upper class, uses Swahili predominantly as they do not feel that their identity is threated. However,

> [m]embers of the second subgroup, whose use of the language is domain dependent, associate themselves with the label only when they perceive the

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> context in which it is used as being unthreatening to their 'Arabness'. Among other Zinjibaris, individuals in the second subgroup readily identify themselves with the group, for it is within this context that they interpret the term to represent shared positive cultural values and a means of fostering solidarity. However, in the presence of non-Zinjibaris, they are concerned that the label might be used as a challenge to their Arab identity and, consequently, they might be disinclined to use Swahili in public (Kharusi 2012: 13-14).

As for the third group, members of this group reject to be identified as Zanzibaris and accordingly they totally shift to Arabic and abandon Swahili which they see as a marker of "inferiority". This group division according to Kharusi (2012: 16) "this collocates with social boundaries too: higher class, middle class and lower class respectively".

At all levels, the language issue is still at the center of this identity conflict for these returning or immigrating groups.

7. Conclusion

It is evident from these case studies that variation and shifting in Arabic in its different forms and manifestations fulfills different ideological and identity construction functions. It may be used for constructing/reconstructing, locating/ relocating and/or shifting/losing identity, and divided/split identity. At the diglossic level, each of the two polar varieties stands for different sets of values: SA can stand for at least two major values/drives and identities political and religious. It stands at an equal distance from all non-standard varieties, acting as a corrective and — reference model — umbrella. Non-standard varieties on the other hand stand for Sub-national, territorial, political identity markers. It may serve, on the one hand, to express unity, pan-Arabism, nationhood (umma), and Islam, and on the other hand, it may mark localism, regionalism, or sub-nationalism.

Within each state, variation may reflect different levels of sociopolitical, ethnic, sectarian, and religious grouping/ divisions. In such contexts, Language serves as a

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marker of identity and as a "boundary-setter between groups" (the case of Jordanians and Palestinians) where linguistic boundaries correspond to political divisions. Accordingly, with any political tension or conflict, each group resorts to its identity markers, including language, where in some cases language variation can save or cost life. Ultimately, political changes lead to changing of identities and loyalties. Religiously, Different religious groups may use Language variation as a way to relocate identity (the case of Bethlehem). Linguistic variation may also reflect political and economic dislocation and divided loyalties. Politically divided communities may present evidence of "growing double identities" which correspond to linguistic divisions. Yet, further complications of the picture will ultimately lead to start reconstructing of new political identities (the case of *Barta3a*). Finally the case of "The Returning-Immigrants variation" shows "identity conflict" or "divided loyalty".

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