

The Use of *q* and *g* by Female and Male Najdi Preachers in Religious Discourse

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Abstract

This paper describes the results of a study of linguistic variation in the religious discourse of six Najd-based Saudi preachers: three females and three males. The principal focus is on the use of the standard and colloquial variants of the variable /q/: the uvular stop /q/ and the voiced velar stop /g/. The study also accounts for the structural constraints in the use of the diglossic variant of /q/. The results show that both male and female preachers switch from one variant to the other and tend to use the Standard Arabic /q/ more frequently than its Najdi variant /g/. However, females tend to use the Najdi variant /g/ less often than male preachers do. Regarding the constraints of mixing within the same word, the Standard Arabic /q/ is used in the stem of the verb with a Najdi Arabic prefix. No examples were found of /g/ with a Standard Arabic prefix.

Keywords

Arabic diglossia, gender variation, linguistic variation, Najdi Arabic, standard Arabic, religious discourse, uvular stop

Introduction

Sociolinguists have long recognised the relationship between gender and linguistic variation. Since speech is so closely related to self-image and the image presented to others, it will be surprising if men and women do not differ in their speech patterns. As traditional societies begin to modernise and social roles begin to change, the reflection of that change in individuals' speech is a rich avenue of sociolinguistic inquiry.

In Saudi Arabia, Standard Arabic (henceforth SA) is traditionally used in formal discourse (e.g. religious and political speech) whereas the Low variety is used in daily life, such as at home, at the market or among friends. Religious scholars or preachers are expected to be fluent speakers of SA; however, the current study demonstrates that Najd-based Saudi religious scholars switch at

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certain points of their speeches from Standard Arabic to their Saudi dialect of Najdi Arabic (henceforth NA). This could be attributed to the diglossic nature of the Arabic language.

Language use varies according to the social context in which it occurs. Trudgill observes that “the same speaker uses different linguistic varieties in different situations and for different purposes” (84). Speakers tend to accommodate their speech to the settings they may find themselves in. The most familiar example concerns standard and regional dialect situations (Ferguson, “Diglossia” [*Language*] 429). Each variety has its own roles and functions in a particular speech community. This situation of two (or more) varieties is regarded as *diglossia* (from the French word *diglossie*). This will be explained further in the following section.

The principal focus of this study is on the use of the standard and colloquial variants of the variable /q/; the uvular stop /q/, and the voiced velar stop /g/. The primary purpose is to examine the variation in men’s and women’s speech and to identify possible correlations between variants of the selected linguistic variable /q/ and gender. The observed patterns of variation will be related to the diglossic nature of Arabic.

An additional aim is to interpret the findings against the background of apparently conflicting ones of previous similar studies on diglossic and nondiglossic speech communities in the East and West. This has been a controversial issue in sociolinguistics, as studies conducted in Western societies have shown that “women’s speech is closer to the standard, while studies in Arabic speech communities have concluded that men’s speech is closer to the standard i.e., SA” (Daher 185). This study also focuses on word-internal mixing by examining the possibility of having a combination of dialectal and SA elements at word level when /q/ and /g/ are used.

Diglossia in Arabic

Although Arabic speech communities have long been aware of the duality of their language, or the diglossic situation, the term *diglossia* was first used by the French linguist and Arabist William Marçais in 1930 to specifically describe the linguistic situation in the Arabic-speaking world (Boussofara-Omar). All the countries where Arabic is the official language are considered diglossic-speaking communities (Bassiouney, *Arabic Sociolinguistics* 10) where two varieties of Arabic exist side by side. The official language is SA but a prestigious vernacular exists in each country alongside non-prestige vernaculars (the dialects). The modernist view of Arabic diglossia considers it as the “bilingualism of the monolingual” (i.e., *fuṣḥā* ‘Standard Arabic’ and the colloquial are on a continuum conceived of as one system) (Eisele 19).

In 1959, Charles Ferguson published an article titled “Diglossia” that motivated much research into the Arabic language. He drew attention to the

existence of two main varieties of the same language in the Arab world: a High variety (henceforth H) or SA and a Low variety (henceforth L) or colloquial varieties or *al-‘ammīyah*. The H variety unifies Arab communities while the L variety varies across communities, depending on phonological, morphological and syntactic rules. Ferguson also highlighted that people have different attitudes towards these two varieties (Bassiouney, *Functions of Code-switching* 5).

Ferguson (“Diglossia” [Word] 338) postulates that a diglossic speech community emerges from three conditions. First, there must be a language that closely relates to the natural language of the community and has a large body of literature that embodies the values of that community. Second, access to literacy among members of the community is confined to a small elite group. Third, centuries must pass following the establishment of the first two conditions. The Arabic language fits these three conditions and so can be characterised as diglossic.

According to Ferguson, diglossic communities have a highly valued H variety which is usually learned and not used in ordinary conversations, and an L variety which is used in everyday conversations. He stresses that both H and L have to be functionally in complementary distribution. H and L are both specialised and unique to specific situations, i.e., each have their own functional distribution and role. Diglossia in the Najd area is an example of Ferguson’s definition of diglossia as a quite stable language situation.

Ferguson (“Diglossia” [Word] 329) gives a list of situations in which only H is appropriate and others where only L is appropriate (see Table 1). For example, formal situations are associated with H, whereas L is associated with informal, day-to-day events.

Table 1. List of Situations and the Variety Used in Them (from Ferguson, “Diglossia” [Word] 329)

Situation	H	L
Sermon in church or masjid	√	
Instruction to subordinates, waiters, workmen, clerks		√
University lecture	√	
Speech in parliament, political speech	√	
Personal letter	√	
Conversation with family, friends, colleagues		√
News broadcast	√	
Newspaper editorial, news story, caption on picture	√	
Poetry	√	
Folk literature		√

Ferguson's original definition of diglossia generated strong reactions from some researchers regarding his characterisation of the linguistic situation in Arabic-speaking communities. Many linguists have proved with evidence the weakness of Ferguson's theories of the appropriateness of the H variety and the L variety of a language to different sets of situations (Sabbah 51). It has been criticised even by Ferguson himself (Ferguson, "Epilogue: Diglossia Revisited"). Myers-Scotton notes that "diglossic communities, in Ferguson's original sense, are really very rare" (408). Myers-Scotton also argues that under Ferguson's narrow diglossia, two conditions must exist:

- 1 The Low variety must be spoken as a mother tongue by nearly everyone or at least the majority.
- 2 The High variety is never used in informal situations.

However, it seems that it is not possible to meet these two conditions. For instance, Fishman's characterisation of diglossic communities do not meet these two conditions as two or more varieties exist as mother tongues (Myers-Scotton 409).

Since Ferguson published his article in 1959, linguists and Arabists have put forward various arguments to subdivide the continuum between the two extremes of SA and dialect into intermediate varieties. Ferguson himself ("Diglossia" [*Word*]) used the Arabic term *luġa wuṣṭā* to refer to the "intermediate forms of the language" that emerge in diglossic language communities to solve tensions concerning code choice which arise in situations where there is confusion in the functional distribution of H and L varieties. He defines it as:

...a kind of spoken Arabic much used in certain semi-formal or cross-dialectal situations [which] has a highly classical vocabulary with few or no inflection endings, with certain features of classical syntax, but with a fundamentally colloquial base in morphology and syntax, and a generous admixture of colloquial vocabulary (Ferguson, "Diglossia" [*Word*] 332).

Later, in his 1996 article "Diglossia revisited," Ferguson places stronger emphasis on register variation within and across H and L, which are viewed as the two poles of a continuum that also includes "mixed" or "in-between" varieties; this is also reflected in the metalinguistic labels of native language users: *al-fuṣṭḥā* vs. *al-'ammīyah* and *al-luġa al-wuṣṭā*, or the medium/intermediate/middle language (Mejdell). Mejdell strongly agrees with Ferguson ("Epilogue: Diglossia Revisited") that diglossia is the appropriate label since "the analyst finds two poles in terms of which the intermediate varieties can be described; there is no third pole" (59).

Several studies have been conducted by Badawi, Blanc, Hussein, and Meiseles. They have all proposed the existence of several varieties, using different criteria to categorise them. On the other hand, studies such as El-Hassan and Mitchell assume the existence of a single variety called Educated Spoken Arabic

(ESA), which, as described by Mitchell (13), is “created and maintained by the constant interplay of written and vernacular Arabic.”

To summarise, it could be said that there are two main poles of Arabic, as explained by Ferguson (“Diglossia” [*Word*]): H and L. Diglossia still offers solutions although it is a widespread phenomenon in the world and is considered problematic for linguistic communities (Alfaisal and Aljanada 110). Diglossic speech can bridge the gap between listeners and speakers in order to make communication effective. However, an intermediate variety needs to emerge to meet communicative needs. There is no clear pattern or structure to describe this level of language. Each country in the Arab world has tended to develop its own middle variety alongside developing its own Modern Standard Arabic, which may indicate that the “intermediate variety” will vary from one Arab country to another.

An overview of the phonological variation of /q/ in Arabic dialects

Old Arabic, Classical Arabic, and Modern Standard Arabic share a number of linguistic features, one of which is the voiceless uvular stop *qaaf*, which is part of the language alphabet and phonology in written and oral media. The phoneme /q/ is a voiceless sound produced “from further back in the mouth – from the uvula, to be exact” (Holes, *Modern Arabic Structures* 10). Several Arabic dialects have preserved /q/ in daily speech, while some Arabic dialects include a number of substitutes for this phoneme. For several reasons, among them “dialect mixing and processes of Koineization” (Behnstedt 596), the uvular stop has undergone several changes within and across various speech communities. These changes involve a number of phonological processes, including raising, lowering, and affrication (Bahloul). For example, Holes mentions four different reflexes of [q] in Bahrain: the voiced velar stop /g/, the voiceless velar stop /k/, the voiced uvular fricative /ǧ/, and the voiced affricative palatal /dz/. Ingham describes the uvular /q/ of NA as voiced. As such, the voiced velar stop /g/ is used in central Saudi Arabia, including Najd, in place of /q/ which is a Classical Arabic/Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA) variant and is a reflex of the SA /q/. In fact, the voiced velar stop /g/ is not only common in NA but covers a large geographical area within the Arabian Peninsula and beyond (Bahloul). The capital cities of Riyadh, Baghdad, Kuwait, Manama, and Doha all exhibit the use of the voiced velar stop /g/. It is also common in eastern Jordan and eastern Syria. These substitutes of /q/ are observed within and across particular dialects, as illustrated in the following examples from Holes (*Modern Arabic Structures* 74), showing the SA verb *qāla* ‘he said’ and the noun *ṭariq* ‘road’ pronounced with different variants of the phoneme /q/:

CA/MSA	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	
qāla	’āl	kāl	Gāl	gāl	Gāl	‘he said’

ṭarīq ṭarīʾ ṭarīk ṭarīg ṭarīj ṭarīdz ‘road’

The main difference in the examples above is in the pronunciation of the uvular stop /q/, which is pronounced as a uvular stop /q/ in SA. In (A), it is pronounced as a voiceless glottal stop /ʾ/; this is common in Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem, which are considered ‘urban’ dialects. In (B), the phoneme /q/ is pronounced as /k/ in central Palestinian village “ruralite” dialects (Holes, *Modern Arabic Structures* 74). In (C), a voiced velar stop /g/ replaces /q/ in eastern Jordan and Muslim Baghdad, i.e., ‘Bedouin dialects.’ Type (D) is common in southern Iraq and the Gulf coast, which are considered “Bedouin” dialects. Type (E) represents the dialectal reflexes of /q/ in central Saudi Arabia, which are the “Bedouin” dialects spoken in Najd.

While several dialects exhibit one variant of *qaaf*, other dialects have two or more variants. For example, Bahraini dialects shows the use of the voiced and voiceless velar stop /g/ and /k/ (Bahloul 250), as shown in the following examples:

- a. gaber kabar ‘tomb’ (Holes, *Dialect, Culture and Society*)
- b. gabil kabil ‘before’ (Bahloul)

In addition to these reflexes of SA /q/, Bahloul (252) notes that Palestinian Arabic “exhibits five variants of the uvular *qaaf*: /q/, /g/, /k/, the glottal stop /ʾ/ and the voiceless uvular palatal affricate /č/”. The voiceless uvular palatal is shown in the following examples:

- a. čeel ‘he said’ b. čalb ‘heart’

Similarly, in NA, the voiced velar stop variant /g/ is used as in (E) above and in a manner consistent with words exhibiting the phoneme /q/ in SA. Other possible variants in Najdi dialects are the use of /dz/ instead of /q/ at the end of nouns as in *ṭarīdz* ‘road’ and in other cases as /k/ in the middle of nouns as in the word *birtīkan* ‘oranges,’ which is pronounced in SA as *birtuqāl*. The use of /k/ is rare overall and usually common among older people.

According to Ingham, NA differs from Classical Arabic in its sound inventory. Among the new NA sounds is the voiced velar /g/, which results from the fronting of the uvular /q/. There are also two new units, the voiced affricate ġ [dz] and the voiceless affricate c [ts]; and these characterise the Najdi variety and result from the fronting of /g/ from Classical /q/ and Classical /k/, respectively. As a result, NA now has an opposition between g/ġ and k/c. This is limited in scope because in most cases the fronted variants occur in front vowel environments (Ingham).

To conclude this discussion, it is important to note that the variants /q/, /g/, and /ʾ/ are the most common variants of SA /q/ in many different countries; /g/ is omnipresent followed by /q/, which appears in twelve dialects. The glottal stop /ʾ/ comes in the third place, appearing in seven of the eighteen Arabic dialects. This distribution is evident in Table 2, from Bahloul (263).

Table 2. Distribution of Major Reflexes of *Qaaf* across Arabic Dialects

	/g/	/q/	/ʔ/ ²
Morocco	+	+	+
Algeria	+	+	+
Tunisia	+	+	-
Libya	+	-	-
Egypt	+	+	+
Sudan	+	-	-
Palestine	+	+	+
Lebanon	+	+	+
Jordan	+	+	+
Syria	+	+	+
Iraq	+	+	-
Kuwait	+	-	-
Saudi Arabia	+	-	-
Bahrain	+	-	-
Qatar	+	-	-
UAE	+	+	-
Oman	+	+	-
Yemen	+	+	-

The focus of the study is on the use of /q/ and its variants in NA.

Previous studies on gender differences in the pronunciation of /q/ and its variants

Several studies have been conducted on the phoneme /q/ and its reflexes (e.g. Abdel-Jawad; Al-Wer; Belhadj-Tahar; Daher).

Abdel-Jawad reports that the standard /q/ phoneme is used more frequently by men than women, regardless of their level of education or age, or the place of articulation or speech formality. According to Abdel-Jawad, the pronunciation of Old Arabic/Classical Arabic/Modern Standard Arabic /q/ as /g/ in Jordan seems to have an association with “Bedouin” masculinity and toughness, whereas the realisation of /q/ as /ʔ/ is associated with softness, femininity, and sophistication.

Daher, in his study on language variation, reports that men use the SA variant more frequently than women because it indexes the identity of the educated, literary or religious male. On the contrary, women lean towards the Damascene variant /ʔ/ because it represents “urbanization, modernization, and progress – values that women often hold in higher regard than men do” (AlBirini 196).

² Bahloul uses /ʔ/ to refer to the glottal stop /ʔ/

Similarly, Al-Wer found that Jordanian men use SA /q/ and /g/ in their speech whereas women are more inclined to use the urban Palestinian /ʔ/.

Most of these studies reveal that women, especially young women, prefer the urban way of speaking and modernisation and softness whereas men seem to prefer traditional forms and local Bedouin or rural dialects.

Labov suggests that the influence of gender on language variation is largely defined by the roles assigned to women and men in their social context. However, the male and female preachers in the current study have equal roles.

Word-internal mixing

Previous studies conducted by Holes (*Modern Arabic Structure*) and Mejdell among others have focused on the interaction between SA and dialectal linguistic elements and the constraints on mixing between lexical items and grammatical morphemes. Holes (*Modern Arabic Structure* 366) discusses the constraints within the verb phrase (VP). He explains that p-stem (i.e. imperfect) main verbs in both SA and Arabic dialects have the following morphological elements (he gives optional elements in parentheses):

(NEG) + (Mood/aspect) + prefix + stem + suffix + (Object) + (NEG)³
 In Holes' (*Modern Arabic Structure* 366) case, Cairene Arabic fills all these slots, as shown by the following example:

mā	+	b		+yi		+ḥibb	+	u	+	hā		+š
NEG		aspect		prefix.3.m		stem		pl.		object.3.f.s.		NEG
'they do not like her'												

The equivalent in SA is:

lā	+	yū		+ḥibb	+	ūna	+	hā
NEG		prefix.3.m		stem		m.p.		object.3.s.f
'They do not like her.'								

The second position, which is an important aspect in this list of elements in the VP, could be filled by future particles, i.e. *sa-* and *sanfa*, and by NA future particles.

In analysing the linguistic elements found in the VP that he calls *complex*, Holes (*Modern Arabic Structure*) questions where and how the selection of SA or a dialect restricts the selection of elements in the rest of the VP. He suggests a hierarchy of features where the selection of elements at certain points implies the selection of others. He provides four possibilities in the interaction between SA and Cairene Arabic, ranging from most formal to least formal. The most formal represents SA, as shown in the following examples adapted from Holes (*Modern Arabic Structure* 367):

- a. *sa-'aḡūlu*
- b. *sa-'aḡul*

³ There is a second NEG at the end of the VP in the case of the Cairene dialect, which is different from SA and NA in which NEG is a single element.

c. *ħa-'aqūl*d. *ħa-'ūl*

All the above examples have a future particle and mean 'I will say.' Example (a) represents the most formal form in which the selection of final *-u* as a mood ending (indicative) demands the selection of the SA future particle *sa-* and /q/ in the phonological realisation. In example (b), despite the absence of the mood ending *-u*, the use of the restrictive element *sa-* requires /q/ in the stem. In example (d), which represents the least formal form, the omission of the restrictive dialectal feature 'a requires the selection of the dialectal future marker *ħa-* and the realisation of the initial consonant of the stem as /'/ not /q/. However, if as in example (c) 'a is not deleted then both *sa-* or *ħa-* can occur with *ħa'aqūl* representing a less formal choice. In this sense, forms such as **ħa'aqūlu* and **sa-'ūl* are not possible. Therefore, there are restrictions on the type of elements co-occurring in the VP when SA particles selected as SA elements are obligatory elsewhere in the VP. In contrast, weak restrictions are found when dialectal particles are selected, as both dialect and SA elements are possible in all slots. In this respect, Holes (*Modern Arabic Structure*) introduced three groups regarding the type of elements occurring in the VP: SA marker + SA verb, dialectal marker + SA verb and dialectal marker + dialectal verb.

Linguistic interaction between SA dialectal elements results in forms which are neither SA nor plain dialectal. This phenomenon is referred to by Haeri and Holes (*Modern Arabic Structure*) as hybridisation which first began among educated people and has now become general (Holes, *Modern Arabic Structure*). It involves a combination of dialectal and SA elements (i.e. phonological, morphological and syntactic) at word and phrase level.

In her study on the mixed styles in spoken Arabic between SA and Egyptian Arabic, Mejdell also examined word-internal mixing. In trying to understand the reasons behind the restrictions found in internal word mixing, Mejdell relates the restrictions to the *dominant language hypothesis* proposed by Petersen. Based on her study of dominance in a Danish–English bilingual child, Petersen (486) explains the notion of the dominant language hypothesis as follows:

The dominant language hypothesis states that in word-internal code-switching, grammatical morphemes of the DOMINANT language may co-occur with lexical morphemes of either the dominant or the nondominant language. However, grammatical morphemes of the NONDOMINANT language may co-occur only with lexical morphemes of the nondominant language.

This hypothesis, as suggested by Mejdell (63), could best describe the situation observed in "Arabic code interaction," where the Arabic dialects must be considered the dominant variety as these are usually the first language or variety acquired naturally. As Grosjean indicates, the dominant language is the one that a person is more exposed to and needs to use more.

Similarly, Schmidt proposed constraints on mixing between stems and suffixes, where the stem (the lexical item) could not be colloquialised except after the suffix (the grammatical item) had been colloquialised. This constraint falls under the *dominant language hypothesis*. The hypothesis assumes that when switching to a non-native target language or variety, the native variety could strongly affect the phonology and morphosyntax of the non-native variety (Weinreich, as cited in Mejdell). Moreover, in a similar way, with regard to the different psycholinguistic processes involved in the interaction between a standard variety and the dialect, Coetsem (27–36) states that when the standard language and the dialect are genetically closely related, the dialect speaker might apply “correspondence rules” between the varieties to convert to the standard. However, in the process of acquisition, the speaker will be:

imposing parts of elements of his dialect, the *s*/ [source language] upon the standard, the *r*/ [receiving language]. Such parts include primarily the most stable domains or subdomains of the dialect, for example, the phonology, specifically articulatory habits. [...] Also, the morphology is a very stable domain, and is not transferred in its entirety to the *r*/ or target language. [...] more stable elements of the vocabulary, such as functors, especially prepositions, which indicate grammatical relations, are also often maintained and imposed upon the standard language.

Gibson reflects the same principle in his interpretation of Auer’s co-occurrence restrictions between standard and dialect features at the word level. He formulated the following constraint: “an intermediate variety will have dialectal bound morphemes alongside standard lexical forms. Standard morphology alongside non-standard lexical forms is what we do not expect to find in such cases” (Gibson 69).

Methodology

The Recordings

The data in this study consists of twelve published audio recordings of religious sermons obtained from websites such as *al-wahāṭ aṣ-ṣawṭīyah* and Islamweb.net. The quality of the recordings is generally good and the data consist of entirely natural, unelicited speech (Bowern). The preachers were not being recorded for language analysis purposes. They usually record their religious speeches and upload them onto YouTube and various Islamic websites to be made easily accessible to the audience, who can listen to them at their convenience. Moreover, the recordings were made in formal settings. Thus, it was felt that only in these circumstances could the recordings be considered to illustrate spontaneous, unselfconscious speech. The method adopted differed in this respect from that used by some other researchers, such as Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez and Redlinger in their collection of samples of Spanish–English code-switching. In

their investigations, the speakers were aware that they were being recorded, and had even been told that the investigator was interested in hearing some examples of code-switching. This approach is undesirable and may encourage artificiality because, as Bovern (112) comments, it might lead people to feel that “it should be the formal standard language that is recorded and described rather than the colloquial speech.”

The duration of the preachers’ speeches ranges from one hour to an hour and a half. They vary in the topic, setting or circumstances under which they were delivered and in the audiences to which they addressed. The total duration of the whole data corpus of recordings is nearly 13 hours and 48 minutes. This is deemed to be sufficient for the purpose of the study because it yields a large amount of data for analysis; many tokens of the variables analysed in this study were identified.

The sample

Since the rise of Islam, both males and females have participated in preaching the religion (Az-Zayyan). However, Friday and Eid sermons at masjids are given exclusively by male sheikhs or scholars. The Prophets’ wives and his daughter Fatimah all participated in preaching by addressing only females and explaining feminine issues to them in the light of Islam; females are generally not expected to address males for social and Islamic reasons (Az-Zayyan). Currently, both female and male preachers must obtain a licence to preach from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in Saudi Arabia; but women are authorised to preach only to females.

Today’s advancement of technology and the increased access of male and female preachers to homes, summer schools, masjids, and TV programmes⁴ has made it easier for preachers or Islamic scholars to spread their religious and social messages. The audience can choose either to go to masjids to attend a religious/social speech given by a well-known sheikh or they can watch or listen to speeches through their computers and smartphones at home, at work, or during their car journeys. Moreover, preachers now have individual websites. This means that they can address all levels of society, whether educated or uneducated, young or old, male or female, and rich or poor. This situation has helped to create more non-traditional Islamic ways of spreading their message.

The aim of the speaker and the effect they aim to make on their audience play an important role in their code choice (Bassiouney, *Functions of Code-switching*). Thus, in religious sermons, whether they are given in masjids or public places, preachers are aiming to persuade their audience of the truth of their sermon message, even if they have to switch between the different Arabic varieties.

⁴ Only male preachers are currently allowed to have TV programmes in Saudi Arabia.

Selecting the sample for my study was not an easy task. The first decision to be taken involved the sample size. The number of participants that a particular study should have to render it fruitful, effective, and representative depends on the nature of the study. Creating a situation where results are representative of the whole region concerned would require an exhaustive survey of that region “and that kind of survey is seldom – and in dialectology, perhaps never – done” (Chambers and Trudgill 91). The current study combines quantitative and qualitative methodology because of the need to investigate the nature of the data and the concept of word-internal mixing in the preachers’ speeches in detail and this demands more time and effort. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, six preachers were selected consisting of three males and three females.

The second decision concerned the selection of the preachers. I based my choice on the male and female preachers’ popularity. Moreover, the subjects had to fulfil two criteria: (1) They must have been born in Najd; and (2) they must have lived in Najd or are currently living in Najd. I also accessed several websites, such as Wikipedia, to check the popularity of preachers in the Najd region in particular. The preachers chosen are all highly educated, and five of them are PhD holders and university staff members at Saudi universities. They are referred to by their initial letters in the analysis.

Results and discussion

In this section, first a quantitative analysis will be presented for the use of /q/ and /g/ by males followed by the female speakers’ use of these variants. This will be followed by a discussion of examples of word-internal mixing.

Male speakers’ use of /q/ and /g/

Table 4. Male Speakers’ Use of SA /q/ and NA /g/

q/g	Male speakers						Total
	AM1	AM2	MA1	MA2	SJ1	SJ2	
SA /q/	494	397	635	565	403	285	2779
NA /g/	110	89	63	108	418	595	1383
Total	604	486	698	673	821	880	4162
SA%	81.8%	81.7%	91%	84%	49.1%	32.4%	66.8%
NA%	18.2%	18.3%	9%	16%	50.9%	67.6%	33.2%
Total %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

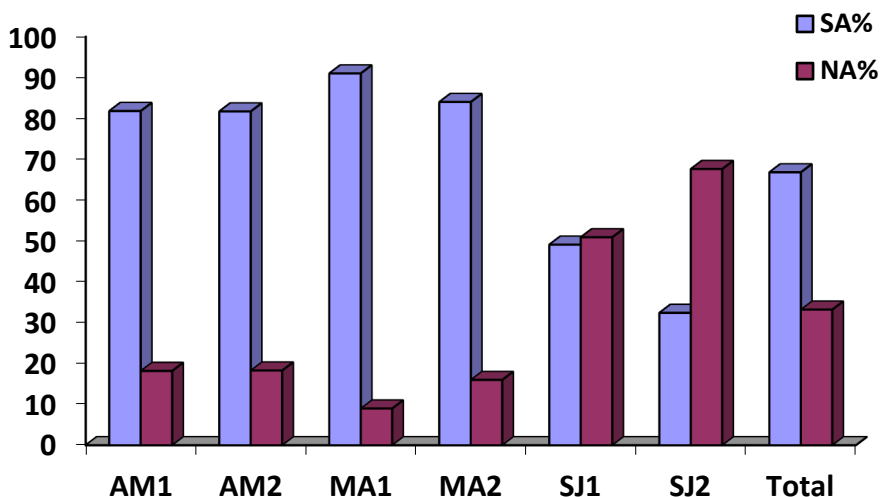


Fig. 1. Male Speakers' Use of SA /q/ and NA /g/

Analysis of the data according to the frequency of occurrence of SA /q/ and NA /g/ shows that the first two preachers use NA /g/ less frequently than SA /q/ in both of their two given speeches. On the other hand, the third preacher SJ tends to use NA /g/ more frequently than SA /q/. However, despite the differences found between the three speakers, the overall percentages show that SA /q/ is used more frequently than /g/, representing 66.8% of the total.

Females' Use of /q/ and /g/

Table 5. Female Speakers' Use of SA /q/ and NA /g/

q/g	RM1	RM2	NE1	NE2	RB1	RB2	Total
SA /q/	679	665	818	507	826	662	3959
NA /g/	1	6	77	135	116	162	497
Total	680	671	895	642	744	824	4456
SA%	99.9%	99.1%	91.4%	79%	84.4%	80.3%	88.8%
NA%	0.1%	0.9%	8.6%	21%	15.6%	19.7%	11.2%
Total %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The female speakers show considerable use of both SA and NA variants. However, all of the female preachers have a strong tendency to use the SA phoneme /q/ more frequently than the NA /g/, though individual differences can be seen in the percentage use of SA and NA variants. The first speaker, RM, uses SA /q/ more frequently than the other two females, as can be seen from Table 5. In her first speech, SA /q/ accounts for 99.9% and NA /g/ accounts

for 0.1% of the total. Similarly, in her second speech, SA /q/ accounts for 99.1% and NA accounts for 0.9% of the total.

For the second speaker, NE, SA /q/ is used at a higher percentage in her first speech than her second speech. Moreover, for the third speaker, RB, SA /q/ accounts for 84.4% of the total in her first speech and 80.3% in her second speech. Nevertheless, despite the percentage differences between her first and second speeches, SA is used more frequently than NA.

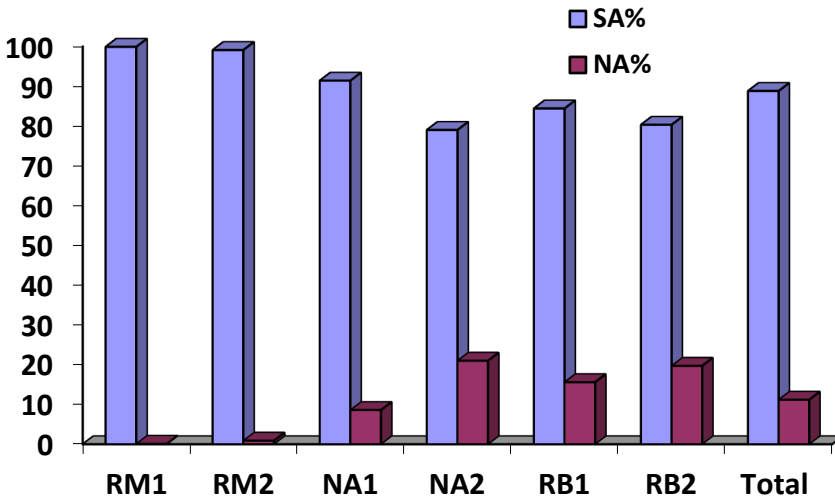


Fig. 2. Female Speakers' Use of SA /q/ and NA /g/

To summarise, as can be seen in Table 5 and illustrated in Figure 2, despite the differences in the female speakers' choice of SA /q/ over NA /g/, SA accounts for 88.8% of the total number of /q/ variants whereas the NA variant accounts for 11.2% of this total.

The Difference between Male and Female Speakers in Their Use of /q/ and /g/

Table 6. A Comparison between Males and Females in Their Use of /q/ and /g/

	SA	NA
Male	66.5	33.2
Female	88.8	11.2

A brief examination of Table 6 quickly ascertains that although both the male and female speakers use SA /q/ more frequently than they do NA /g/, SA /q/ tends to occur more often in speeches given by female speakers. SA /q/ accounts for

88.8% of the total number of /q/ variants in the female data compared to 66.5% in the male data.

Intraspeaker and interspeaker differences

Before concluding the discussion, I will turn to discuss the intraspeaker and interspeaker differences found among the male and female speakers in their use of SA and NA variants, including a focus on whether there are gender differences in the individual usage.

As summarised in the tables above, there is an uneven distribution of variants across speakers. This agrees with Mejdell's finding that speakers do not respond to "a similar setting with similar styles" (376). All speakers use both SA and NA linguistic variants, except for the female RM who shows almost no use of the NA variant, as can be seen in Table 5. All of the male and female speakers except for RM switch between SA and NA, producing a mixed variety.

It is also worth mentioning that, as reflected in the tables above, there is a kind of "interspeaker consistency" in most of the speakers' usage levels of SA and NA linguistic variants. RM is the only speaker with the highest usage level of SA variants in all styles, with negligible use of NA variants. Her discourse style could be characterised as "SA-oriented" as she avoids the wide use of NA variants. On the other hand, SJ, a male speaker, shows the lowest usage of SA /q/ and the highest usage of NA variants.

Word-internal mixing

Few examples of word-internal mixing were found in the study. One example is demonstrated by AM, a male speaker, in his first speech and one example by NE, a female speaker, in her first speech. These are listed as follows:

Examples of mixing

1. yi-qābil-ū-na-h (AM1)
IPF.3SG.M-meet-M.PL-IND-him
'(They) meet him.'
2. it-ḥaqiq (NA1)
IPF.2SG.M-fulfil
'(You) fulfil.'

Equivalentents in SA

yuqābilūnahu

tuḥaqqiqu

NA

yigablūmah

iḥagig

In both examples (1) and (2), the prefix is in NA while the SA /q/ is used in the stem of the verb. No examples were found where /g/ is used with an SA prefix. This agrees with the findings of Mejdell. In this study, the dominant language is NA.

Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the use of SA /q/ and its NA reflexes by male and female preachers in religious discourse. Ferguson ("Diglossia" [*Word*]) argues that

religious discourse is a formal context of speech that demands the use of SA. However, in the present study on religious discourse, which is supposed to be delivered in highly formal language, male and female preachers switch between different language levels when delivering speeches in order to achieve their rhetorical and other indirect purposes.

This study makes an original contribution by analysing the use of SA /q/ and NA /g/ by male and female preachers and by demonstrating that the female preachers use SA /q/ more frequently than their male counterparts do. However, intraspeaker differences could also be observed and, generally speaking, both male and female preachers use SA /q/ more frequently than the NA variant /g/.

Contrary to previous studies conducted on /q/ variants which show the preference of women to use urban and prestigious forms of Arabic whereas men prefer the standard or rural forms, this study reveals that female preachers use SA more frequently than NA. The NA variety could be perceived as a prestigious variety because “Najdi” communities are a majority group in the country and because NA is the variety spoken by the royal family (Alaiyed; Alqahtani). However, similar to studies conducted in Western societies showing that females tend to use standard language more frequently than males, the females in this study use SA more frequently than the males.

There were a few cases of internal word mixing where SA /q/ occurs with an NA prefix or suffix, but not vice versa. It can be argued that SA variants restrict switching whereas NA variants occur with both NA and SA lexis.

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