

# THE FUTURE MARKER IN PALESTINIAN ARABIC: AN INTERNAL OR CONTACT-INDUCED CHANGE?\*

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## 1. Introduction

The current paper explores expressions of future time reference in Palestinian Arabic (PA). Different speakers of PA spoken in Gaza City express future time reference in morphologically distinct ways; further, these differences correlate with speakers' dialect background and age. The pilot study described here is designed to answer the following research questions: does the variation in the expression of future time reference represent a case of ongoing grammatical change in PA? If so, are changes the outcome of internal changes and universal linguistic tendencies or do they involve multiple complex and correlated processes that call for a multiple-causation approach to language change?

To establish the range within which PA dialects spoken in Gaza City vary in their morphological expression of future time reference, data was collected using interviews from speakers of two urban dialects: Gazan and Jaffan. For the study, fourteen female speakers representing three different age groups were interviewed: seven speakers with Gaza dialect background and seven with Jaffa dialect background. The recordings were transcribed, and the verb forms appearing were organized into paradigms according to their morphological form and function. A control group of four Jaffa dialect speakers who still live in Jaffa, Israel, were also interviewed using the same questions.

The results show that the morphology of the middle-aged and younger Jaffan and Gazan speakers living in Gaza exhibits verbal morphology properties with respect to the way they mark 'future' that are absent in the Jaffan dialect still spoken in Jaffa and are not characteristic of the speech of older Jaffan and Gazan speakers in Gaza. Data from Jaffan speakers still living in Jaffa show that future time reference is expressed outside the verbal paradigm by means of a particle *ra:h*, or the quasi-verb *bidd-* 'want'. However, middle-aged and younger Gazans and Jaffans living in Gaza primarily express 'future' within the verbal paradigm by means of a prefix *ha-* attached to the non-past stem.

To account for the variation in the expression of future time reference among PA speakers, I adopt the code-copying framework as developed by Johanson (1992, 1999, 2002, 2008), according to which internal factors are conceived as tendencies that may become the object of external factors of change. The main principle of code-copying is that linguistic elements including units and patterns are copied from one code to another. Copies of elements from a foreign model code are inserted into a basic code. The codes in contact can be languages or dialects. My analysis also draws on the principles of grammaticalization theory (Hopper and Traugott 2003; Bybee et al. 1994).

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The paper argues in favor of a contact-induced approach to language change which has been shown to be adequate when applied to other languages, particularly the Anglophone world, and has been adopted in different contexts. However, less research has examined the role of contact in language change in Arabic-speaking contexts. Moreover, a review of the literature shows that most, if not all, studies on dialect contact and change in Arabic-speaking settings have focused on the role of contact in phonological change, for example, Al Wer (1991, 2002) on dialect contact between PA and Jordanian Arabic in the City of Amman, Horesh (2014), which studies the shift in the phonemic inventory of PA spoken in Jaffa due to contact with Hebrew. To my knowledge, no research has examined the role of contact in morphological change in Spoken Arabic. Thus, the current study will shed needed light on the effects of dialect contact on morphological systems in general and in the Arabic-speaking world in general.

The structure of the paper is as follows: section 2 introduces background information about Arabic, the linguistic, social, and demographic situation in Gaza City, the setting of the field study, and an overview of the PA Arabic verb. Section 3 is dedicated to the topic of language change, dialect-contact, and the code-copying framework adopted in this paper. In section 4, I outline the study design. In section 5, I present my findings about the expression of future time reference in urban PA. In section 6, I examine the influence of dialect contact on the development of future marker in Gazan and Jaffan dialects spoken in Gaza City and propose an explanation for this development. In section 7, I conclude by discussing the results in light of the question of linguistic vs. external and extra-linguistic factors and predictors of contact-induced language change.

## **2. Background information**

This section provides background information about the Arabic language in general, spoken Palestinian Arabic, the Arabic verb, and the verb morphology of PA. I also describe the historical and current linguistic, social, and demographic situation in Gaza.

### **2.1 The Arabic language**

The term “Arabic”, a branch of the Semitic language family, refers to a set of linguistic systems, which despite manifesting substantial differences at different linguistic levels, exhibit sufficient mutual homogeneity to be classified as varieties or dialects of a single language. A distinction is made between Standard Arabic (SA), on the one hand, and spoken Arabic, on the other hand. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the standard formal variety of Arabic in use today in writing and formal speech across the Middle East and North African countries. Colloquial or spoken Arabic, on the other hand, consists of a number of local dialects which exhibit various linguistic features that make them distinguishable and even mutually unintelligible in extreme cases. These vernaculars are used for everyday speech and learned at home as first languages, while the formal language is learned later at school. Palestinian Arabic (PA), the dialect under

investigation here, is a dialect subgroup of Levantine Arabic. In colloquial PA, a distinction is made between urban, rural, and Bedouin spoken dialects. The Jaffan and Gazan dialects under study are to be considered as urban PA dialects.

## **2.2 Socio-historical, linguistic, and demographic situation in the Gaza City context**

To understand the current linguistic situation in Gaza and to establish what makes Gaza an ideal context for contact studies, this section provides a review of the historical political shifts and their reflections on the demographic composition and social structure of the Palestinian community. The context in Gaza City, the largest urban centre in the Gaza Strip, is very complex and can be described as a special socio-linguistic situation characterized by intensive contact between different dialects over a period of 68 years.

In 1947, Gaza, like other parts of Palestine, had a stable social structure and population. However, following the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 and the displacement of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland, and following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948-1949, the Gaza Strip began to witness great change, as a large part of the Palestinians displaced from their homes in what is now the State of Israel arrived in the Gaza Strip as refugees. The arrival of about 200,000 Palestinian refugees from outside the Gaza Strip has had dramatic demographic effects on the composition of the Gazan population. These changes included the establishment of refugee camps by UNRWA where Palestinian refugees settled, the arrival of new family groups, new social relations, and new dialects. Palestinian refugees displaced to the Gaza Strip brought with them their original dialects, both urban and rural, and came into direct contact with the Gazan dialect.

According to the latest figures from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2015, about 1.85 million Palestinians (a population density of 5068 people per km<sup>2</sup>) live in the Gaza Strip. About 67% of the population in the Gaza Strip are refugees who were displaced to the Gaza Strip in 1948, with the largest number of refugees coming from Jaffa and Ashkelon and surrounding villages. About 625,824 Palestinians comprising both Gazans and refugees live in Gaza City in an area of 56 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population density of 11,175.4 per km<sup>2</sup>. Today, Gazans and refugees live side by side in the same neighbourhoods and engage in face-to-face interaction in all aspects of life at work, schools, universities, hospitals, markets, etc. Also, at the social level, the two groups are not separated, and the social ties between them are increased by marriage.

## **2.3 Morphology of the Arabic verb**

This paper focuses on expression of future in the PA verb. The two main Tenses/Aspects

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wafainfo.ps/atemplate.aspx?id=2357> (Website of the National Palestinian Information Centre Wafa)

<http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?tabID=512&lang=ar&ItemID=1420&mid=3915&wversion=Staging> (Website of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)).

are traditionally known as “perfective/past” and “imperfective/present”. Finite verbs in PA show agreement inflection for three persons, two genders (in both the second and third persons) and number (singular and plural). Regarding formal expression of agreement, the “perfective/past” employs suffixes only, while the “imperfective/non-past” employs prefixes marking Person and suffixes marking Number and Gender. Following Holes (2004), I use the labels “suffix-stem” and “prefix-stem”, respectively.

### **3. Contact and language change**

Broadly speaking, contact linguistics is concerned with the long-term linguistic consequences that result when speakers of different languages or dialects come into contact (Trudgill 1986). For decades, most attempts to resolve the question of why languages change looked for internally-motivated explanation. Change is seen as an internal characteristic of language; therefore, explanations can ignore all other factors (see Farrar and Jones 2002: 1-8). However, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the role contact can play in language change has increasingly been recognized, beginning with Weinreich (1953) and later Trudgill (1986), after which the treatment of this subject was considered on a par with that of languages in contact (Hickey 2010: 5). The contact model I adopt here is the code-copying framework developed by Johanson (1992, 1999, 2002, 2008). This framework combines the possibility of both internally- and externally-motivated language change. It recognizes the role of internal factors, but at the same time stresses the role of extra-linguistic profiles of speakers in adopting and developing innovative forms as discussed in the next section.

#### **3.1 The code-copying framework and the dialect contact situation in Gaza City**

The code-copying framework as proposed by Johanson (1992, 1999, 2002, 2008) is a unified model that aims to deal with phenomena such as borrowing, transfer, adaptation, convergence, levelling, koinéization, shift, etc. under one umbrella (Johanson 2002: 285). Code-copying results from the interaction of linguistic codes whereby linguistic elements are copied from one code to another. The main working assumption I adopt from the framework is that language change and the historical development of copies are by definition code-internal, occurring in a specific code. Linguistic changes may be triggered by code-external factors which include contact or extra-linguistic psychological and social factors, in specific socio-political situations. By contrast, other changes occur without external or extra-linguistic motivation, that is, due to purely internal factors (Johanson 2002: 286). Within this framework, internal factors are thought of as inherent tendencies of systems where the structural properties of linguistic elements make them more or less likely to undergo change. In cases where linguistic tendencies seem to give rise to a change, extra-linguistic social or psychological factors are important for the outcomes of the change (Johanson 2002).

The linguistic elements copied in a contact situation can be units such as segments, morphemes, and words or their phonological, combinational, semantic, and frequential properties. Copying of entire units is called global copying, by which the whole form and

function of a unit is copied. Copying of properties is referred to as selective copying. The code-copying model accounts for both variational patterns and developmental stages of the structures involved (Johanson 2002: 288). Synchronically, the framework examines the complex variational patterns of “donor” and “recipient” languages and dialects and highlights the role of the processes of “adoption”, “imposition”, and “shift”. In the diachronic dimension, the model considers the developmental stages of the linguistic structures along the lines of habitualization and conventionalization that pertain to extra-linguistic developments that may result in complex language change over time (Johanson 1999). The code-copying framework is appealing for research on contact-induced language change because it considers both the synchronic and diachronic aspects of language change.

#### **4. Study design**

The procedure followed in this paper can be summarized as follows: recruiting participants, collecting, transcribing, and arranging data, and identifying patterns, arranging them as paradigms, identifying the meanings they encode, labelling them, and comparing them across speakers. Once the forms and their basic approximate meaning and place in the system of contrasts were determined, my next step was to refine the material at two levels: comparing data from speakers from different age groups but with the same dialect background, and then comparing speakers in a particular age group with their counterparts in the same age group from the other dialect background.

##### **4.1 Recruiting participants, interview, data collection**

To investigate the expression of future time reference in Jaffan and Gazan dialects and whether a change is taking place in them, I compared samples of the natural speech of these two dialects. I prepared an interview script of six questions to stimulate participants to use whatever grammatical structures encoding ‘future’ that might be available to them. For example, participants were asked questions about their expectations for life in the future and things they plan to do in the near or remote future. The participants’ answers were audio-recorded, and then transcribed and coded for analysis.

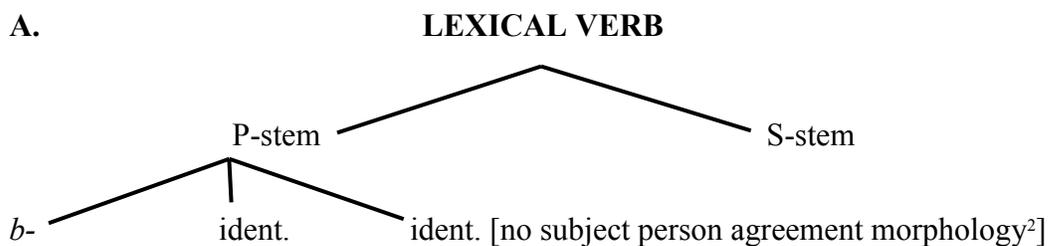
Participants were selected from the two dialect backgrounds under study, Gazan (G) and Jaffan (J) dialect, and from three different age groups: 18-39, 40-65, and > 66. Investigating the speech of speakers from different age groups makes use of the apparent-time theoretical construct of language change in which language change is based on the distribution of the linguistic variable across age groups in a speech community (cf. e.g., Labov 1994, 2001; Eckert 1998). If the results reflect variation within different age groups, this can be an indicator of either linguistic change in progress where variation over a broader range of ages is observed, or just an age-graded variation, by which there is a stable variation within a population based on age, and which does not necessarily indicate actual language change. In addition to the thirteen speakers who live in Gaza, the study also included four female speakers from different age groups who still live in Jaffa, a part of what is now Israel. These Jaffa Jaffan (JJ) participants serve as a control group

against which the speech of the speakers living in Gaza is compared. Interviewing people who still live in Jaffa and have not experienced intensive contact with the Gazan dialect or any other Palestinian dialect is important to address these two questions posed by Heine and Kuteva (2005: 22): “What evidence is there for transfer to have taken place? Could that change have taken place without involving language contact?”

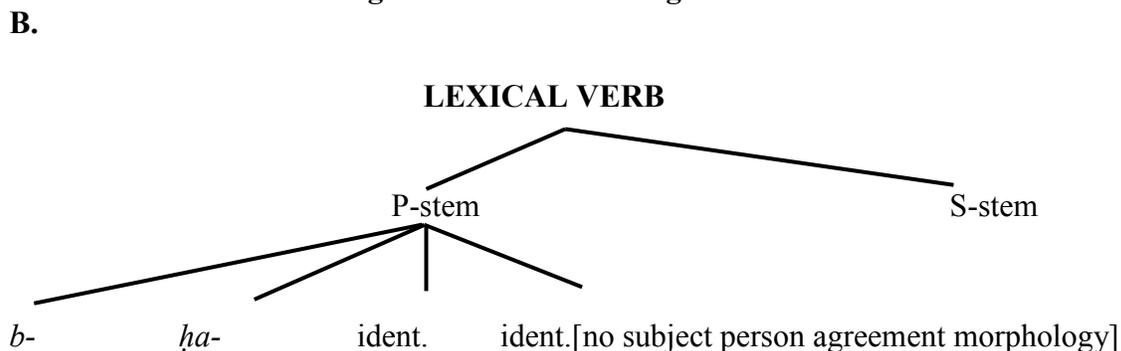
## 5. Findings: Future time reference within and outside the verbal paradigm in PA

This section of the paper presents findings from the field study of the expressions of future time reference in PA. It will identify how the future is expressed in the finite verb system. It will also show where the verb paradigm can be augmented by complex constructions allowing more distinctions. The data indicate a major two-way temporal contrast in the PA verb form between the ‘non-past’ associated with the prefix-stem and ‘past’ associated with the stem-stem.

Based on the simple finite verb forms appearing in the data, there appear to be two verb paradigms operating in PA, as shown in figures 1 and 2.



**Figure 1: Verbal Paradigm A in PA**



**Figure 2: Verbal Paradigm B in PA**

Paradigm B is distinct from Paradigm A in that it has one more contrast within the forms building on the prefix-stem: a form prefixing *ha-*. Within paradigm structure A, the data show that the non-past tense as marked on the prefix-stem refers to situations which hold at the moment of speech (1) or will hold subsequent to it (2).

<sup>2</sup> For agreement morphology of the PA verb, see section 2.3.





|                           | non-past stem | <i>bidd-</i> | particle <i>ra:h</i> | prefix <i>ħa-</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Jaffa Dialect</b>      | 15            | 19           | 31                   | -                 |
| <b>Gaza Jaffa Dialect</b> |               |              |                      |                   |
| > 66                      | 10            | 14           | 7                    | -                 |
| 40-65                     | 1             | 2            | -                    | 34                |
| 18-35                     | 5             | 2            | 10                   | 31                |
| <b>Gaza Dialect</b>       |               |              |                      |                   |
| > 66                      | 9             | 10           | -                    | -                 |
| 40-65                     | 2             | 13           | 6                    | 19                |
| 18-35                     | 1             | 4            | 6                    | 25                |

**Table 1: Forms available for future time reference in urban PA**

Based on Table 1, the variation among PA speakers in the means available to them for the expression of future time reference can be described as follows:

1. For Jaffa Jaffan (JJ) speakers, there are no examples of morphological marking of future time reference as distinct from ‘non-past’. Extramorphological forms of expression are available, i.e. the particle *ra:h* and the quasi-verb *bidd-* ‘want’ + p-stem.
2. For Gaza Jaffan (GJ) speakers, Group 3 (> 66.) is identical to the JJ speakers in expressing future time reference. All GJ speakers in age groups 1 and 2 exclusively use the prefix *ħa-* with few examples of the non-past (*b-* + p-stem), *bidd-*, and *ra:h* + p-stem.
3. For Gazan (G) speakers, the oldest only use the ‘non-past’ (inflected p-stem) when referring to future situations within the verb paradigm, and the quasi-verb *bidd-* outside of it. Otherwise, G speakers use the prefix *ħa-* to mark future reference within the paradigm, and the quasi-verb *bidd-* outside of it.

Based on comparison of the data, two possible scenarios of development are suggested:

1. Gazan usage served as model for Jaffans who came into contact with G speakers and copied the Gazan prefix *ħa-* into their basic code. The copy of *ħa-* is inserted into the simple verb paradigm where they had previously been no specific distinction of future time reference possible.
2. Jaffan dialect served as a model code for the Gazan dialect. *ra:h* is a lexical motion verb that had not yet developed into a grammaticalized future marker in the dialect of Gaza by the time of contact. In the Jaffan dialect, *ra:h* was in the midst of a grammaticalization process by which it had become a particle marking ‘future’. Through a process of selective grammatical copying (see Section 3.1) G speakers adopted the grammatical function of *ra:h* as a future marker on the

model of the Jaffan dialect and inserted it into their own basic code, followed by change in the syntactic behaviour of the verb.

The second possibility is the one I adopt here and base my analysis on. This decision is based on the absence of *ra:h* or *ħa-* from the means available to the older G speakers, GW3 and GU3, for the expression of future time reference. This finding suggests that it is the Gazan dialect that took Jaffan usage as a model at the time of initial contact and copied *ra:h* into their basic code. The development of future marker in PA spoken in Gaza may be accounted for if we assume that the development occurred in the following stages.

### **Stage I: Grammaticalization of the lexical verb *ra:h* into a grammatical particle**

The source of the development of future markers *ra:h* and *ħa-* in urban PA spoken in Gaza today can be traced back to a grammaticalization process that took place in the Jaffan dialect. Hopper and Traugott (2003: xv) defines grammaticalization as “the change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions”. Parallel to universal pathways of development, the lexical motion verb *ra:h* ‘go’ developed into a future marker in the Jaffan dialect. Bybee et al. (1991, 1994) find that movement verbs are more frequent lexical sources for ‘future’ than lexical verbs or material of any other type. The source meaning for movement features is that ‘the agent is on a path moving toward a goal’. Thus, this path of development for the verb *ra:h* ‘go’ into a future marker in PA is as follows:

(8) Movement towards a goal > intention > future

The movement towards a goal and the intentional meaning lead to the development of ‘go’ into future meaning. That is, since the intention to do something is often realized in a period subsequent to the moment of speech, the future meaning is inferred in these structures. According to Bybee (2003), habituation which results from repetition is instrumental in the development of grammatical elements. The semantic force of the expression that is repeated frequently is weakened as it loses specific features of its meaning and is used in more contexts which makes it more subject to grammaticalization (Bybee 2003: 605). The future marker in PA presumably developed from constructions as in (9) where the verb *ra:h* is followed by another verb.

(9) *ra:h-at*                      ġaħa:n    ti-ħmil                      ġumrah                      (JL3)  
 go.PAST-3SG.FEM    to              3SG.FEM-do.NON-PAST    pilgrimage  
 ‘She went to (Mecca) to do pilgrimage.’

The mechanisms of inference, extension and habituation can account for the rise of future meaning for the verb *ra:h* in PA. First, the hearer infers that the speaker’s intention is to be realized in the future. The more frequently the verb *ra:h* is used, the future

meaning inferred is enhanced in the speaker's mind and a connection, based on this context-induced reinterpretation, is established between these constructions and the future (Hopper and Traugott 2003). As this connection is established, the verb *ra:h* is extended to new contexts, as in (10) that is of the future, where no intention is evident.

- (10) yoam    ʔil-dʒumʕah    ʕina    ra:h    y-ku:n    ʕawaʕif    (JF2)  
 Day    the-Friday    at-1PL    FUT.    3SG.MASC.be.NON-PAST    storm.PL  
 'Next Friday, there will be storms [according to the weather forecast].'

As the use of *ra:h* is extended to include a future meaning, it has undergone decategorialization, (Heine and Kuteva 2005). Its status has changed from a content word to a function word i.e. from a member in an open lexical class of verbs to a functional marker that is a member of a closed-word class and no longer inflects for agreement.

### Stage II: Copying and conventionalization of *ra:h* into the Gazan dialect

I claimed earlier in this section that Gazan speakers copied the property of *ra:h* as a future marker into their basic code on the model of the Jaffan dialect. Elements copied from one code to another may start as momentary and sporadic ephemeral instances of copying, the result of singular individual dynamic acts (Johanson 1999: 47, 2008). However, with more acceptance from other members in the speech community, copies may become used habitually, with various degrees of recurrence in the individual. Copies may also become more or less conventionalized. Conventionalization is the integration with respect to acceptance in the speech community (Johanson 2002: 299). Table 1 above shows different degrees of acceptance of the innovative forms *ra:h* and *ħa-*. While they are more conventionalized and used habitually by middle-aged and younger speakers, they are not used by older Gaza Jaffan and Gazan speakers.

### Stage III: Further grammaticalization of the particle *ra:h* into the prefix *ħa-*

In a later more advanced stage of grammaticalization, the future particle *ra:h* has further become a prefix *ħa-* that attaches to the p-stem of the lexical verb as in (11).

- (11) ʔana    ħ-a-ɖalni    fi-l-baladiyeh    zayma    ana    (GJR1)  
 I    FUT-1SG-stay.NON-PAST    in-the-municipality    as    I  
 'I will stay with my work in the municipality as I am (I do not have other plans).'

As it developed into a prefix *ħa-*, *ra:h* has undergone loss of phonetic substance and decategorialization. While the lexical verb *ra:h* still retains its full form, the particle *ra:h* was reduced to the prefix *ħa-*. According to Bybee (2003), such changes are hastened by the increasing frequency of use of grammaticizing constructions as they generalize to a wider range of contexts. Also, in being reduced to an affix, the future particle has further lost its morphosyntactic properties. As noted in Section 5, this has major consequences for the structure of the simple verb paradigm.

## 6.2 Discussion

The further grammaticalization of the future marker in PA from the particle *ra:h* into a prefix *ha-* supports the idea that once a linguistic element is copied, it automatically undergoes internal development (Johanson 2002). However, the crucial question to ask is whether this development of the future marker in PA spoken in Gaza City could have taken place without contact? This possibility cannot be ruled out as this development of a future marker from a motion verb is a path attested in many languages (see Section 6.1). However, the following two observations from the data need to be considered. First, if we assume that the particle *ra:h* and its reduced form *ha-* in the urban PA spoken in Gaza City are the outcome of a purely internal development, how can we account for the variation among Gaza Jaffan and Gazan speakers in different age groups with respect to these two forms? Gaza Jaffan and Gazan speakers show different degrees of acceptance of *ra:h* and *ha-*, which interacts with speaker age and dialect background. Second, if the development of the future marker in PA spoken in Gaza from a lexical verb is a purely internal development process, why has not the Jaffa dialect spoken in Israel undergone a similar process? The fact that it has not may be a piece of evidence to support the claim that grammatical change is more likely to occur and that the extent of grammaticalization tends to be greater in a situation of extensive contact over time (Heine 2012). The next section of the paper will examine how variation among PA speakers in the expression of future time reference interacts with external factors.

## 6.3 Extra-linguistic factors: dominance and socio-linguistic speaker profiles

Although the development of new markers to express future in PA spoken in Gaza can be a purely linguistic development, the data from speakers with different age groups suggests that the developments depend to a great extent on speaker sociolinguistic characteristics. This section highlights the role of extra-linguistic factors such as dominance relations and speaker age in the adoption of the linguistic innovations.

### 6.3.1 Social asymmetry and dominance relations

Johanson (1999: 54) points out that dominance relations and the degree of social asymmetry play a role in the outcome of contact-induced change. He defines dominance relations in terms of social, economic and political relations and strength where the language of the immigrant community is usually the dominated code. Johanson (1999: 54, 2002) states that code-copying processes typically occur in a dominated speech community that is connected to a dominant speech community by strong external bonds. Johanson suggests that the asymmetric dominance relations between the two codes cause “one-directional dynamics” where the dominated variety adopts new linguistic habits from the dominant variety (1999: 54). In most cases, the dominated variety is a diaspora variety.

Johanson’s proposal seems to work well in language contact situations where an asymmetric relationship between a dominant and a dominated language can easily be

detected or in a dialect contact situation where one of the dialects in contact serves as a lingua franca. However, in the Gaza context, which includes several mutually intelligible dialects with none of these dialects acting as a lingua franca, it is not easy to assume asymmetric dominance relations that result in unidirectional dynamics between the basic code and the model code. In situations like this, dominance relations need to be defined carefully as it is not necessarily the case that adoption or imposition processes only take place in one direction towards the model or dominant code by the speakers of the dominated code.

As Jaffan PA is a diaspora dialect, it would be plausible to think of Gazan PA as the dominant dialect and of Jaffan as the dominated dialect, and thus to expect the change to be unidirectional i.e. copying from Gazan into Jaffan and other refugee dialects. However, the data collected in this pilot study suggests that copying is performed by speakers of the dominant Gazan dialect. Prestige is also an important factor that needs to be considered here. The Jaffa dialect has always been perceived as the most prestigious Palestinian dialect. It is put in the same category of the Levantine dialects of Jerusalem, Beirut, and Damascus that are labelled as “prestigious urban dialects” (Naim 2006, Rosenhouse 2007, Al Wer 2002). Although the socio-political status of Jaffans changed after their arrival in Gaza as refugees, the dialect has maintained its prestige. This view of Jaffa as prestigious dialect made it acceptable for speakers of the dominant Gazan dialect to copy elements from the dominant Jaffan dialect, for example, copying of *ra:h*.

### 6.3.2 Speaker age and regional identity

The variational patterns of PA speakers with respect to the morphological variables outlined in Section 6.1 interact with speaker age and regional identity. Older GJ speakers, for example, who identify themselves with the original community in Jaffa, show more linguistic conservatism than younger speakers. As indicated in Section 6.1, the three older GJ speakers in the study express future time reference with a pattern identical to that of Jaffa Jaffans. The data shows that the conventionalization of the two codes *ra:h* and *ħa-* has a wider scope among younger and middle-aged G and GJ speakers; however, the innovative forms are not accepted by older speakers. Older G and GJ speakers are conservative regarding the new innovations and their speech does not incorporate any of the innovative forms, while middle-aged and younger speakers adopt, spread, and further develop the innovative forms. This finding fits with what Labov (1994, 2001) notes that younger speakers use more innovative forms than older speakers. Eckert (1998: 152) also notes that community studies of variation frequently show that increasing age correlates with increasing conservatism in speech.

Johanson (1999: 55) notes that first generations of diaspora communities speak codes that are very similar to the regional varieties they spoke in the original communities left behind. Early diaspora varieties are characterized as heterogeneous, whereas later varieties often show less variation. The Gaza context seems to fit within this categorization. The early language situation is heterogeneous and characterized by differences between older Gazan and older GJ speakers, whereas the later language

situation can be described as being more levelled as evident in the speech of younger speakers of both dialects who exhibit the same use patterns of the future.

To conclude, based on the above discussion of the distribution of the future markers *ħa-* and *ra:ħ*, I interpret the general age-related pattern in PA spoken in Gaza as representing a generational change in progress. I take young and old people to be representing the contemporary and historical states of the PA spoken in Gaza City, respectively. Moreover, Jaffan and Gazan dialects were different from each other at the early time of contact, which is still reflected in the older speakers' speech. However, later codes are more levelled and homogeneous as shown by data from middle-aged and younger speakers. The age-stratified patterns of Gazan and Gaza Jaffan speakers in Gaza might be suggestive of contact-induced language change.

## 7. Conclusion

This study was designed to meet the following goals: to examine the variation among speakers of PA living in Gaza in the way they express future time reference and whether the variation represents a case of language change in progress, and, if so, to determine the factors involved in these developments. To accomplish these goals, I collected and compared data from 18 PA speakers from different age groups and dialects. I provided a linguistic description of the two verb paradigms operating in PA and examined complex structures that complement the possibilities of the simple verb paradigm to express future time reference in PA. The data show that the PA verbal system is evolving from a past-non-past two-way system to a three-way Tense system of past, present, and future.

The developments that move the Jaffan and Gazan dialects towards one another in their marking of future time reference seem to admit a significant role for both internal or linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. With these developments, the verbal systems of Gazan and Jaffan dialects have come to resemble one another more than previously. Though the developments represent familiar paths of development, they cannot be studied in isolation from certain socio- and psycholinguistic aspects of the speakers involved and the contact setting in which the code interaction occurs. Extra-linguistic factors such as length and intensity of contact, prestige, speaker age and identity strongly influence the adoption of linguistic innovations in individuals, groups, and generations in Gaza City. Further investigation of data to be collected from a larger sample of PA speakers is needed to determine if the available expressions for future time reference interact with different degrees of remoteness in the future.

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