

The Department of
Linguistics

Colloquium Talk Series




The College of
Arts&Sciences

Exploring the Linguistic Landscape of Middle East Pidgin Arabic: An Analysis of Unique Features

Dr. Maher Bahloul
& Dr. Imed Nsiri

 **Thursday, May 2**
Morrill Hall 106

 **4:30 p.m.**

 linguistics.cornell.edu

Light Reception with the speaker to follow.

Inta fi kalam, ana fi sir
you fi talk/speech, I fi go
*“Tell me how to get there, and I will
take you”*



OUTLINE

Research
Methodology

MPA Region

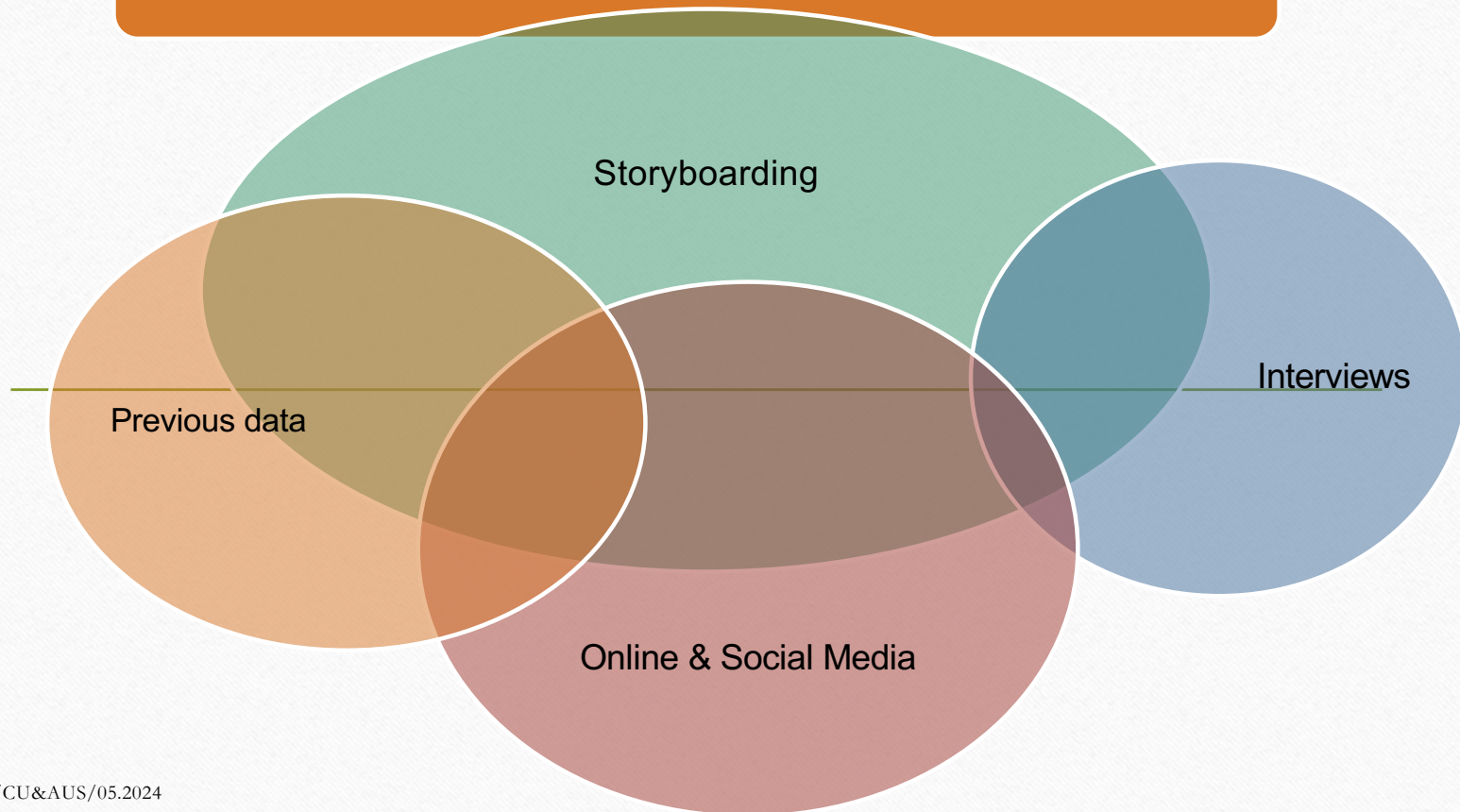
Historical
Overview

MPA Features



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Research Methodology & Data Collection



MAPS OF RELEVANT MIDDLE EAST PIDGIN ARABIC



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The geographical location of the Arabian Gulf is considered a transit hub for trade ships carrying goods between Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq & Lebanon



History



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FACTORS FAVORING THE BIRTH OF PIDGIN

Trade and Commerce / Dubai

Labor Migration

Colonial Influence / England

Multicultural Society

Modernization and Globalization



Connection to Oil Discovery

Oil was first discovered in Iran (1908) after which British Petroleum (BP) was created. Subsequent discoveries of oil in neighboring countries appeared in the 50s and 60s of



The economic boom resulted in the influx of immigrant workers from all over the world and for various service industries. Countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka contributed with millions of workers.





KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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The details below show the population of Saudis and non-Saudis in the country, including their gender (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2004–2012).

تقديرات السكان حسب الجنس و الجنسية (سعودي / غير سعودي) في المملكة للأعوام (٢٠٠٤م الى ٢٠١٢م) *
Estimates Of Population By Sex And Nationality (Saudi / Non Saudi) In The Kingdom For The Years (2004 To 2012)

الجملة TOTAL			غير سعوديين NON-SAUDI			سعوديون SAUDI			السنة YEAR
جملة TOTAL	اناث FEMALE	ذكور MALE	جملة TOTAL	اناث FEMALE	ذكور MALE	جملة TOTAL	اناث FEMALE	ذكور MALE	
25,787,025	11,316,644	14,470,381	7,671,475	2,292,343	5,379,132	18,115,550	9,024,301	9,091,249	2008
26,660,857	11,647,257	15,013,600	8,117,611	2,411,561	5,706,050	18,543,246	9,235,696	9,307,550	2009
27,563,432	11,985,417	15,578,015	8,589,817	2,536,980	6,052,837	18,973,615	9,448,437	9,525,178	2010
28,376,355	12,334,994	16,041,361	8,970,670	2,672,935	6,297,735	19,405,685	9,662,059	9,743,626	2011
29,195,895	12,652,059	16,543,836	9,357,447	2,776,008	6,581,439	19,838,448	9,876,051	9,962,397	2012

* تقديرات السكان منتصف العام مبنية على النتائج الأولية للتعداد العام للسكان والسكان لعام ٢٠١٠م



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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Expatriate Population in the UAE

9.540 – 8.447

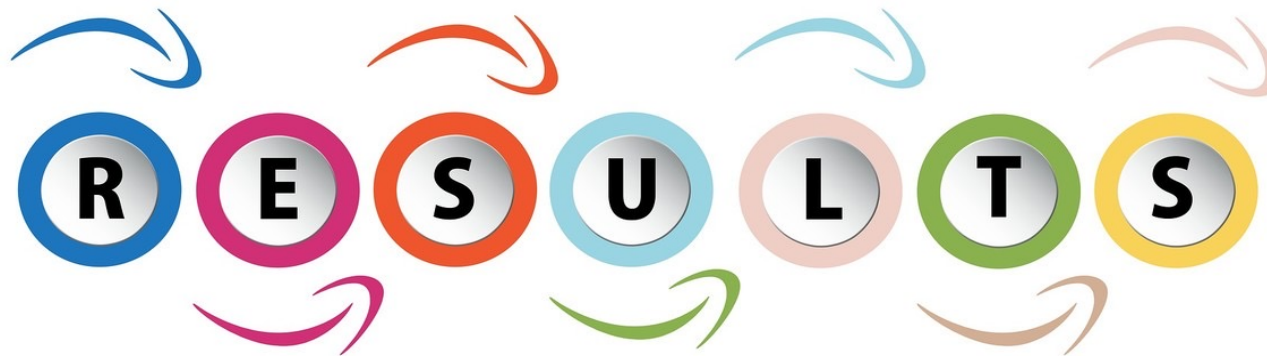


1.093 million

MB & IN /CU&AUS/05.2024

EXPAT POPULATION IN THE UAE

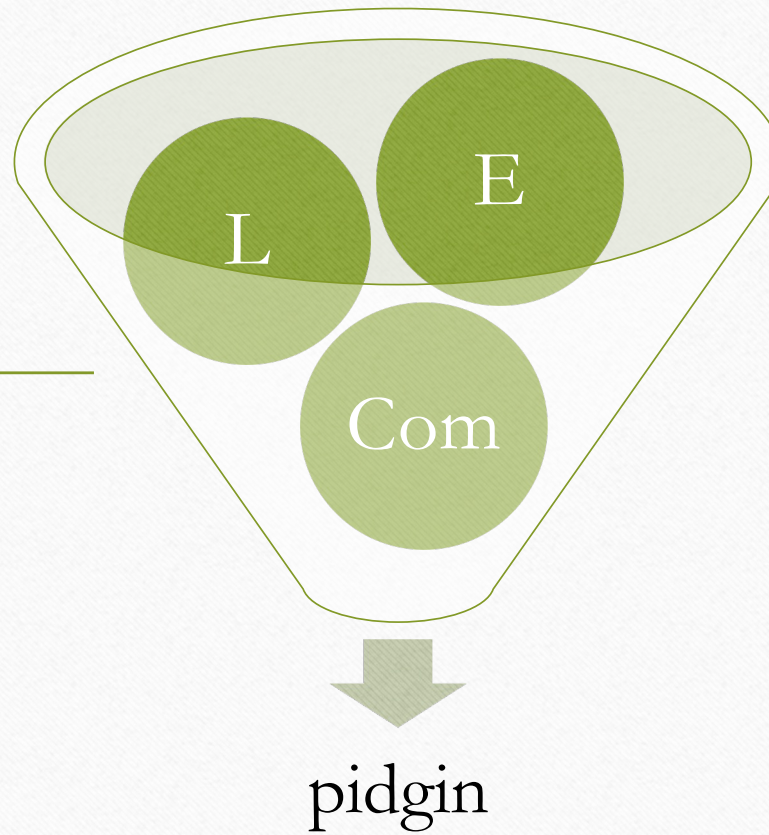




L - Locals

E - Expatriates

Com - Communication



Lexifier/Superstrate: Gulf Arabic

Substrates: India/Hindi, Pakistan/Urdu, Sri Lanka/Sinhala and Bangladesh/Bengali, Kerala/Malayalam
Indonesia/Javanese and the Philippines/Tagalog

Pidgin Language Names

Gulf Pidgin (Smart, 1990; Wiswall, 2002)

Gulf Pidgin Arabic (Naess, 2008; Bakir, 2010)

Urdu Pidgin Arabic & Gulf Pidgin Arabic (Al Moaily, 2008)

Gulf Asian Pidgin (Al-Azraqi, 2010)/ Pidgin Madam (Bizri, 2014)

Saudi Pidgin Arabic (Alshammari, 2010, Albakrawi, 2013; Al-Zubeiry, 2015)

Gulf Pidgin Arabic includes KPA, OPA, UAEPA, SPA, BPA, QPA
Kuwait, Oman, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar

Abdulrahman,
Pakistan

BA Social Studies

1 year Master's in English

Salesman & Manager

Sample interview & Short Film





Copy of Complete Collected Transcriptions 2022.pdf

560 pages of data transcriptions

Linguistics Features

Simplified Consonantal Inventory

Reduced/Absence of inflections

Multifunctionality (*fi*)

Superstrates and Substrates competition

Feature selection: conversion & diversion

Language transfer (hada – Bonais 2022)

outline

**MPA Consonants &
Vowels**

**MPA Phonological
Processes**

**NP Inflectional
Morphology**

**VP Inflectional
Morphology**

CONSONANTS



Table 2. Gulf Arabic Consonants
(adopted from Naess 2008:28).

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Pharyngealized	Dental	Alveolar Pharyngealized	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Stops	b				ṭ ṭ̣ ḍ ḍ̣ ṭʕ				k g q			ʔ
Fricatives		f	θ ð	ðʕ	s z sʕ			ʃ	x ɣ		ħ ʕ h	
Affricates							tʃ dʒ					
Nasals	m						n					
Taps							r					
Approximants							l	j	w			

Table 1. GPA Consonants
(adopted from Naess 2008:43).

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Alveo- palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	p b		t̪ d̪			k g	ʔ
Fricatives		f	s z		ʃ		h
Affricates				tʃ dʒ			
Nasals		m			n		
Taps					r		
Approximants			ʋ		l	j	w

8 Vowel Phonemes of Gulf Arabic (Næss, 2008)

		Front	Central	Back
High	Short	i [i] ِ		u[u] ُ
	Long	ī [i:] ِي		ū [u:] ُو
Mid		iyy [e:] ِيِ		uww [o:] ُوو
Low	Short		a [a] َ	
	Long		ā [a:] َا	

The vowel system remains the same apart from the rendering of vowel lengthening as non-phonemic resulting in a 5 vowel system instead of 8

Some Pidgin Phonological Processes

- The Arabic labiodental fricative /f/ (ف) is often realized as the unvoiced labial stop /p/ (پ).
- The interdentalals /θ/ (ث) and /ð/ (ذ) are replaced with dentals /t/ and /d/
- The alveopalatal /ʃ/ (ش) is quite often replaced with /s/ (س).

- The velar fricatives /ğ/ (غ) and /ħ/ (خ) are replaced by their velar stops /g/ (ق) and /k/ (ك), respectively or by /k/ (ك) for both.
- The pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/ (ع) is debuccalized to /ʔ/ (أ) or, more often, dropped (whether in initial, medial, or final positions – see 2023 debuccalization paper-
- The voiceless pharyngeal fricative /ħ/ (ح) is debuccalized to the glottal fricative /h/ (ه) as in *ḥārr* (حار) for har (هر) ‘hot’
- Geminate consonants frequently undergo the process of degemination (*ḥārr* for har ‘hot’)

**“ Nouns are inflected
to show singular and plural. ”**

Reduced/Absence of Inflections

Free Object
and/or
Possessive
Pronouns

Bound ➤ Free Morphemes

POSSESSIVE

- **In Gulf Arabic:**
ktab-i (كتابي)
book-1S
'My book'.
- **In MPA:**
ktab ana (كتاب انا)
book.Ø I
'my book'

OBJECT

- **In Gulf Arabic:**
hu gal-i (هو قالي)
he tell.pst-1S
'he told me'.
- **In MPA:**
hu ygul ana (هو يقول انا)
he tell.Ø I
'he told me'

Reduced/Absence of Inflections

No Verbal
Agreement
(AGR &
TAM)

+/- AGR & +/- TAM

AGR (Person, Number, Gender)

- In Gulf Arabic:
Layla kal-at it-tuffaḥah (ليلى كالت التفاحة)
Layla ate-3SF the-apple
'Layla ate the apple'
- In MPA:
Layla ya-kul tufaha (ليلى ياكل تفاحة)
Layla 3MS/Ø -eat apple
'Layla ate the apple'

TAM (Tense, Aspect, Mood)

- In Gulf Arabic:
ana ji:t gabil (أن جيت قبل)
I come.Pst before
'I came before'
- In MPA:
ana yiji gabil (أن يجي قبل)
I come.Ø before
'I came before'

Reduced/Absence of Inflections

**No
Adjectival
Agreement**

No Gender Agreement

- **In Gulf Arabic:**

kalima jidi:d-a (كلمة جديدة)

word.F new-F

'a new word'

- **In MPA:**

kalima jidid (كلمة جديد)

word.F new.∅

'a new word'

Reduced/Absence of Inflections

No
Determiners

No Inflection for Definiteness

In Gulf
Arabic:

- *haða I-walad*
- this **Def**-boy
- *'this boy'*

In MPA:

- *hada walad*
- this **∅**.boy
- *'this boy'*

Journal of Semitic Studies LXVIII/1 Spring 2023

doi: 10.1093/jss/fgac022

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DEBUCCALIZATION IN GULF PIDGIN ARABIC: OT PARALLELISM OR HARMONIC SERIALISM

MUFLEH ALQAHTANI and MOHAMMAD ALMOAILY¹

- 1. (1) To what extent is debuccalization seen as a phonological process that targets pharyngeal fricatives in GPA?**
- 2. (2) How should we best account for debuccalization in GPA using Optimality Theory?**

WORD ORDER

SVO is the preferred word order,
but SOV is often used

MPA WORD ORDER

SOV

- *inte šara šuf yigdar*
- *you street look can*
- *“you can see [them] on the street”*
- *انت شارع شوف يقدر*

SVO & SOV

- *hateti may [...], baden sabun hateti*
- *put water [...] then soap put*
- *“You can put water, then soap”*
- *هتيت ماي، بعدين صابون هتيت*

PRONOUNS

I/YOU & HE/SHE

The pronouns most widely used are *ana* (“أنا”), *inte* (“إنت”) and phonetic variants, with no functional differentiation of gender.

Huwa (هو) and *hiya* (هي) are both occasionally used for the third person,

HADA

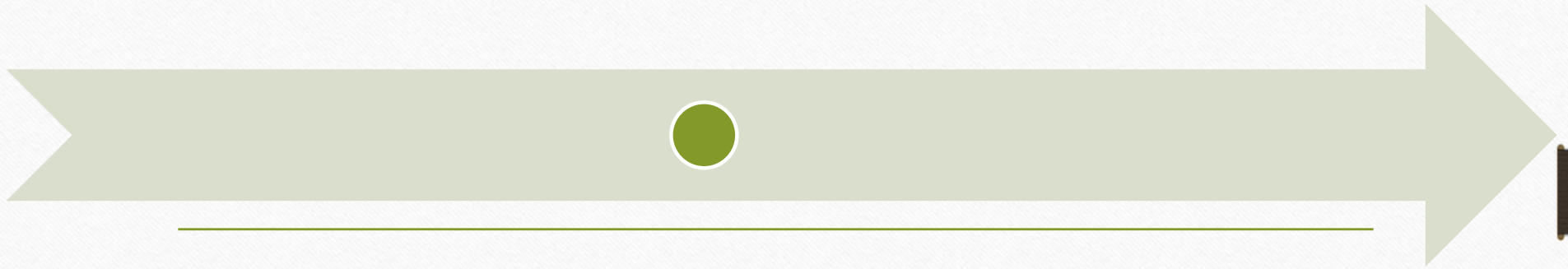
Moreover, *ha:ða* is a reflex of demonstrative in Gulf Arabic that is usually used when referring to a third person pronoun.

Plural personal pronouns are not extensively used, the noun *nafar* (“people”) being typically employed to refer to non-specific “they”.

In most other cases, juxtaposition of two singular pronouns is used to express plural pronouns, particularly the first person (e.g. *ana (I) huwa (he)* = “we (two)”; literally “I he”).

Fi in Gulf Arabic

Fi



fi as a copula: NP1 + *fi*
+ NP2/AdjP

fi as a preposition
meaning 'in': *fi* + NP
(locative)

fi as existential
marker: *fi* +
NP/Clause

Fi as an auxiliary verb:
fi + verb/verbal noun

fi occurring after
negator *ma* 'not' to
express negation= *ma*
+ *fi*

Preposition

Mama w walad yudxal hada *fi* markit

Mom and boy enter this *in* market

'A mom and her son went *inside* the market'

ماما و ولد يدخل هذا *في* ماركت

Auxiliary

Fi + Verb/Verbal
Nooun

badin huwa *fi* (y)sir mahal tani

then he *fi* go/ing shop second

'Then he went to another store'

بعدين هو *في* سير محل تاني

Auxiliary

Fi + Verb/Verbal
Noun

Hada madrasa *fi* talim

This school *fi* studying

'I studied in school'

هاد مدرسة *في* تعليم

Existential Marker

Fi hada tani sura

Fi this second picture

'In this second picture...'

في هذا ثاني صورة .

Existential Marker

Fi šuwaya bas ma *fi* katir

Fi little but Neg*Fi* many

'There are a few, but not many'

في شويه، بس ما في
كثير

fi as a copula: NP1 + *fi* +
NP2/AdjP

Mama w bača *fi* zalan

Mother and son *fi* upset

'The mother and her son got upset'

ماما و باتشا *في* زعلان

fi as a copula: NP1
+ fi + NP2/AdjP

ana *fi* gawi

I *fi* strong

'I *am* strong'

انا *في* قوي

fi as a copula: NP1
+ fi + NP2/AdjP

huwa *fi* bača

he *fi* child

'he *is* a child'

هو *في* باتشا

fi occurs after the Gulf Arabic negation particle
ma 'not' to express negation

Win ysir? hada *ma-fi* maloom

Where go? this *NEG* know/n

'No one knows where he went'.

• وين يسير؟ هاد *مافي* معلوم

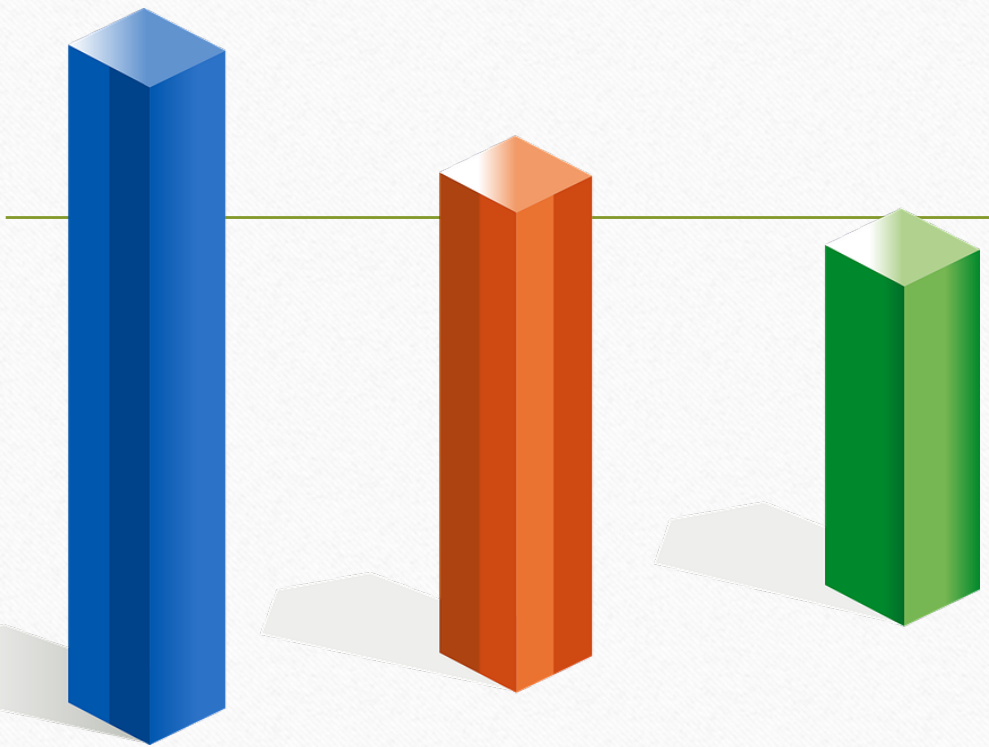
fi occurs sentence finally

nafar doktor yeji sawi tartib *fi*

نفر دكتور يجي سوي ترتيب في

people doctor come make preparation AUX

'The doctor came and fixed everything'



$$\sigma^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \quad S_x^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2$$

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{n} \sum x_i \quad \sigma = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \quad \chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

$$S_x = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n-1} \sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \quad P(x=k) = \binom{n}{k} p^k (1-p)^{n-k}$$

$$\hat{y} = a + bx \quad \mu = np \quad z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma} \quad \sigma = \sqrt{np(1-p)} \quad \mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum x_i$$

Statistics

$$b = r \frac{s_y}{s_x} \quad a = \bar{y} - b\bar{x} \quad \hat{p} = \frac{x_1 + x_2}{n_1 + n_2} \quad \bar{x} = \frac{x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + \dots + x_n}{n}$$

$$\binom{n}{k} = \frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!} \quad H_0: p = p_0 \quad SE = \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} \quad z = \frac{\hat{p} - p_0}{\sqrt{p_0(1-p_0)}}$$

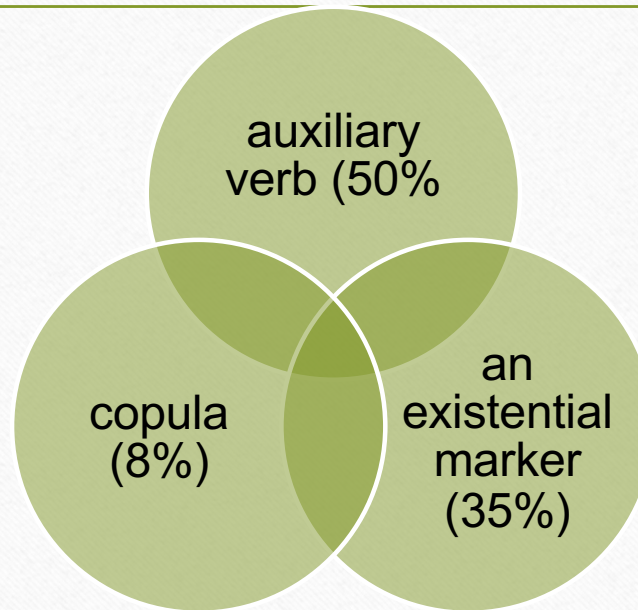
$$ME = z \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}} \quad n \rightarrow \infty \quad SE = \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}_1(1-\hat{p}_1)}{n_1} + \frac{\hat{p}_2(1-\hat{p}_2)}{n_2}}$$

$$P(A/B) = P(A) + P(B) - P(A, B) \quad S = \frac{1}{n-2} \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{y})^2$$

$$P = 1 - P(A) \quad CI = (\hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2) \pm z^*(SE)$$

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AUX
EXT
Copula



c o n c l u s i o n

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MB & IN /CU&AUS/05.2024

63

Overall, MPA exhibits a range of unique dialectal features that reflect the complex linguistic dynamics and contact phenomena in the Middle East region. These features contribute to the distinctiveness of MPA as a contact language and highlight its role in mediating communication among speakers with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

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Thank you

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YOUR
QUESTIONS

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The College of
Arts&Sciences

Exploring the Linguistic Landscape of Middle East Pidgin Arabic: An Analysis of Unique Features

Dr. Maher Bahloul
& Dr. Imed Nsiri

 **Thursday, May 2**
Morrill Hall 106

 **4:30 p.m.**

 linguistics.cornell.edu

Light Reception with the speaker to follow.