

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

INTERDIALECTAL COMMUNICATION AND CODE
SWITCHING IN PAN-ARAB REALITY TELEVISION
THE CASE OF *ARAB IDOL*

by
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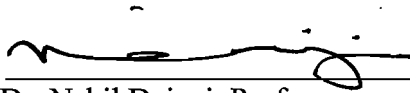
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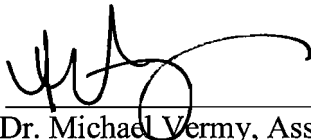
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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This analysis explored interdialectal communication on the program *Arab Idol*, which created an exemplary opportunity for this field of study by bringing together hosts, judges, contestants, and a viewing audience spanning the entire Arabic-speaking world. In the course of the literature review, two main gaps became apparent. First, few studies have examined spontaneous alterations between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic by individuals who are not trained specifically to use Standard Arabic. Second, there is an urgent need for interdialectal analyses in Arabic linguistics literature.

The theoretical framework for this analysis was Giles' Accommodation Theory, which states that speakers will converge or diverge their speech patterns to narrow or widen the social distance between the interlocutors. Two research questions guided this examination of interdialectal communication: first, what are the normal speech patterns of the judges and the hosts, and second, when do speakers either converge to or diverge from their interlocutors? To answer the former, I randomly selected longer stretches of speech from the portion of the episodes during which the hosts asked the judges questions. For the latter, I transcribed and analyzed the feedback segment for a selected group of finalists from both seasons. The transcribed data consisted of 123 comment sections, amounting to more than 9.5 hours of recordings.

This analysis resulted in five main findings: a strong tendency for speakers to maintain their native dialect during interdialectal communication; convergence toward their interlocutors through a variety of methods, including by switching dialects; certain dialects have connotations, such as Egyptian Arabic denoting comedy and Lebanese Arabic expressing pampering; Standard Arabic was not used to increase understanding in interdialectal communication, but instead was a tool for divergence; and *Arab Idol* celebrated the diversity and multiplicity of the Arabic-speaking world through embracing the various dialects in both speech and song.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ART	Arab Radio and Television
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAT	Communication Accommodation Theory
CBC	Capital Broadcast Center
CNN	Cable News Network
ESC	Egyptian Satellite Channel
Future TV	Future Television
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
H	High/Highly valued
L	Low/Lower valued
LBC	Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation
LBCI	Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International
MBC	Middle East Broadcasting Centre
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
MTV	Murr Television
MTV	Music Television
PBS	Public Broadcasting Service
RQ	Research Question
SAT	Speech Accommodation Theory
SDL	supra-dialectal Low

TRANSCRIPTION GUIDE

The following table lists the symbols used when transcribing the data for this analysis. Given that a wide range of dialects are present in the data, the allophonic variations observed in this study are separated with a slash.

Standard Arabic	Allophonic Transcription	Standard Arabic	Allophonic Transcription
ء	ʔ / y	ض	d / ḏ
ب	b	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ḏ / z / ḏ
ث	θ / t / s	ع	ʕ
ج	dʒ / g / j / y	غ	ġ
ح	ħ	ف	f
خ	x	ق	q / ʔ / g / j / G / ġ
د	d	ك	k / č
ذ	ḏ / d / z	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	š	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

Given the high variation of vowels across the dialects, the quality of the vowels has been condensed to the following: a, e, i, o, u, ə. A dash above the symbol indicates long vowels: ā, ē, ī, ō, ū. Only one diphthong was observed: a^y. Also, in the examples pauses are marked with a single forward slant (/) and long pauses with two forward slants (//), while hesitations are marked with a long dash (—).

All transliterated Arabic names and places do not follow the above transcription guide, but rather the generally accepted transliterated form. French and English words that have not been borrowed into Arabic are not transcribed, instead appearing in their standard written form to enhance understanding.

All examples presented in the analysis contain the transcription, running gloss, and gloss. The running gloss distinguishes all types of fixation for verbs, but does not mark gender or number for nouns and adjectives. Further, the prefix [b-] for verbs can have varying meanings depending on the dialect. Thus, for Egyptian and Syro-Lebanese dialects the [b-] is glossed as Hab. for habitual, while for Gulf Arabic the [b-] is glossed as Fut. for future. When either gender or plurality is significant in the example, the running gloss indicates as such through the symbols f. for feminine and pl. for plural.

Given the public nature of the data, all examples in Chapter V and Appendix I indicate the speaker either through the surrounding text or with the speaker's initials. The following table lists the letters used to indicate the hosts, judges, and contestants mentioned in these examples.

Initials	Speaker	Initials	Speaker
A	Ahlam	MM	Mohanad Al Marsoomy
AF	Ahmad Fahmi	MO	Mohammed Oulwan
AG	Ahmad Gamal	MT	Mohammed Taher
AH	Annabella Hilal	N	Nancy Ajram
AT	Abdallah Tulehi	PH	Parwas Hussein
FY	Farrah Yousef	R	Ragheb Alama
H	Hassan El Shafei	YA	Youssef Arafat
HK	Hassan Kharbech	ZK	Ziad Khoury

For Nancy Heckel and Rhyllis Rae Oedekoven,
two strong and inspirational women

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As talented as Lebanese artists are, the Egyptian population simply dominates the demand in the music industry of the Arabic-speaking world. This high Egyptian demand results in artists throughout the region supplying songs in the Egyptian dialect. One of, if not the, leading contemporary artists for the entire region is the Lebanese icon, Nancy Ajram, whose first two biggest hits were in Egyptian Arabic: *Akhasmak Ah* ‘Yes, I’ll stop speaking with you’ and *Ah w Noss* ‘Yes and a half.’¹ Even after establishing herself firmly within the regional musical scene, she continues to sing in the Egyptian dialect, such as the lead single from her most recent album *Nancy 8, Ma Tegi Hena* ‘Come here.’ During the first season of *Arab Idol*, Nancy Ajram appeared on the program as a guest star. A frontrunner in the competition, Egyptian Carmen Suleiman, asked the Lebanese icon why she sang so much in Egyptian Arabic. Nancy Ajram simply replied, clearly using Lebanese Arabic, that she enjoyed singing in the Egyptian Dialect and that the dialect suits her. A noteworthy exception to this trend is the Lebanese artist Melhem Barakat, who throughout his career has withstood the pressure to sing in the Egyptian dialect, performing only in his Lebanese dialect. He has collaborated with the renowned Rahbani brothers and Fairuz, and has gained considerable success in his native Lebanon, yet has been unable to attain the same fame as other regional artists (Albawaba 2001).

¹ Nancy Ajram won the World Music Award for the World’s Best-Selling Middle Eastern Artist twice, in 2008 and 2011. Additionally, during the 2014 World Music Awards, she received the award for Best-Selling Lebanese Artist.

This chapter introduces some of the common perceptions regarding interdialectal communication and pan-Arab identity that this thesis addresses. Due to the vast differences between the dialects, the myth has prevailed that since Standard Arabic is the one constant between all Arabic speakers, it becomes their means for interdialectal communication. Alternatively, the speakers simply resort to another language completely. The analysis presented here tackles that myth and contributes to Arabic sociolinguistics by examining interdialectal communication and code switching between varieties of Dialectal Arabic, both of which have been studied minimally.

A. Notions of Interdialectal Communication and pan-Arab Identity

The Arabic-speaking world is a diglossic community such that two varieties of the language co-exist in society: *fuṣḥā* ‘lit. eloquent; literary/standard’ and *ʕammiyya* ‘vernacular/colloquial/dialect.’² While the former generally is considered to be consistent throughout the entire region, the latter has clear distinctions between nations, cities, and even neighboring villages. As stated by Shouby “the gap between the literary language and any one of the colloquials is so great that an educated Egyptian who knows the literary language as well as the colloquial Egyptian finds it difficult to understand correctly the Iraqi colloquial; and so may the educated Syrian fail to understand the spoken Arabic of Morocco or Tunis” (1951, 286). While Arabic is the sole or joint official language in Algeria, Bahrain, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar,

² The terminology related to the varieties of Arabic has not been used consistently throughout the literature. In this document Standard Arabic refers to *fuṣḥā* and Dialectal Arabic refers to *ʕammiyya*. Classical Arabic is often considered the specialized language of the Quran, but some scholars have used it when referring to any implementation of Standard Arabic. The terminology of the varieties of Arabic and diglossia are further discussed in Chapter III.

Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, Katzner claimed that “when educated Arabs from different countries meet, they generally converse in classical Arabic” (1986, 159).³ Thus, both Shouby (1951) and Katzner (1986) underscored the sharp divisions between the dialects, which cause interdialectal communication to be difficult without the aid of Standard Arabic. Bateson (2003) highlighted Standard Arabic’s ability both to unite the Arabic-speaking population and to serve as a tool to enhance interdialectal communication. She stated that Standard Arabic

is the chief symbol of ethnic unity among the Arabs and is essential to any kind of Pan-Arabism. Any attempt to resolve the problems of diglossia by moving towards a more extensive use of the regional dialects runs into the impassioned opposition of those who see [Classical Arabic] as the essential basis for the common Arab nation; an Arab is defined as anyone who ‘speaks Arabic and thinks of himself as an Arab,’ and this is a definition which is only meaningful if it is taken, ideally, as referring to [Classical Arabic], since the regional dialects are not all mutually intelligible. Arabs who cannot use [Classical Arabic] to some degree may have to fall back on English or French (if they know these languages...) if they come from widely separated regions. Therefore, [Classical Arabic] still possess that vital element which was the basis for its adoption as the language of the Islamic *umma* (‘community’): it is a unifying factor, nowadays crossing the borders of different political systems, different economic environments widely varying cultures and physical types, and different religions (Bateson 2003, 79-80).⁴

Of note is that Bateson (2003) recognized the presence of European languages, such as English and French, which Arabic speakers may employ during interdialectal communication if their abilities with Standard Arabic are limited. Thus, these quotations all demonstrate the notion that Standard Arabic—or even another language—is the key for interdialectal communication due to the differences between the varieties of Dialectal Arabic, which may not be mutually intelligible. However, given that Standard

³ What Katzner referred to as Classical Arabic, I would consider Standard Arabic. The list of nations that have Arabic as the sole or joint official language is from Bassiouney (2009).

⁴ Again, what Bateson referred to as Classical Arabic, I would consider Standard Arabic.

Arabic is primarily a written and read language in addition to the fact that only a remarkably small segment of the population actively uses this variety regularly, Standard Arabic may not actually be such a critical tool for interdialectal communication, a point emphasized in both Chapters V and VI.

Further, in the above quotation Bateson (2003) also assumed the uniting power of Standard Arabic. She claimed that Standard Arabic is the foundation for the pan-Arab nation and that Standard Arabic is the language variety that contributes the Arabness to an Arabic speaker's identity.⁵ Holt (1996) distinguished the ways in which both Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic contribute to one's identity, yet in fundamentally different ways.

Because of *fuṣḤā*'s unique and long history, which includes the spread of Islam, the role of the *ʿulama*⁹ [scholars] and the circumstances of *al-nahḍa* [renaissance], there is still a very real pan-Arab identity which is, for the foreseeable future, politically unrealizable. The other form, *ʿammiyya*, although possessing a vitality and dynamism not echoed in *fuṣḤā*, leads to an identity which runs deep and is regionally based, and yet politically and historically marginalized (Holt 1996, 23).

Both Bateson (2003) and Holt (1996) adopted the notion that Standard Arabic is able to unite all Arabs despite the differences—political, economic, cultural, religious—between them. S'hiri (2002) also mentioned that the strength of *fuṣḤā* is cited as proof of the cultural unity present in the Arabic-speaking world, despite the fact that the variety is used by a small percentage of the population. The power of Standard Arabic to unite the Arabic-speaking community may be more wishful thinking by the cultural elite than a reality present on the Arab street.

⁵ While recognizing that not all Arabic speakers would identify with the ethnic label of Arab, this thesis generally considers how identity is reflected in language, thus regardless of the form of Arabic one speaks, the individual is part of the Arabic-speaking community. Certainly some individuals who speak Arabic do not identify as Arab, such as some Lebanese who identify with the Phoenicians, some Egyptians who identify with Ancient Egypt, or the Berbers of North Africa.

The connection between mass media and pan-Arab identity dates back to 1953 when Cairo Radio broadcasted a program entitled *ṣawt al-ʿarb* ‘The Voice of the Arabs.’ This broadcast spread Gamal Abdel Nasser’s message of pan-Arabism and was used as a tool to assert collective identity (Seib 2008). Just as Nasser attempted to spark the flare of pan-Arabism through his radio program, satellite television has helped to create a pan-Arab ‘imagined community’ (Kraidy 2002, 4).⁶ As Chapter II discusses, the 1990s witnessed the birth and growth of satellite television in the Arabic-speaking world, which allowed the government sponsored services and private corporations to stream channels not only throughout the region, but also to the Arabic-speaking diaspora across the globe. Despite the differences between the dialects, satellite television created the pan-Arab audience using both Standard and Dialectal Arabic on its various programs directed toward one of the largest language-based audiences in the world.

Boyd-Barrett (2000) discussed the development of satellite television broadcasting in relation to the dynamics of the local-global identity relations based on his ethnographic observations of the feasibility planning for a pan-Arab satellite venture based in Dubai during 1997-1998. Of particular interest were his observations regarding pan-Arabism as a marketing concept.

The ideology suggests that there already exists a regional identity for which the station is catering, and at the same time it acts as a force for the very construction of such an identity, although the distinction between the actual and the ideal becomes confused. Supporting the view that there is already a regional Arabic identity, advocates invoke commonalities of language, religion, history and aspects of culture. Sceptics, on the other hand, attach more weight to political divisions, different dialects of spoken Arabic, significant differences of wealth and history between different countries of the Arab world and significant

⁶ Another example of an ‘imagined community’ created through satellite channels, is that of Kurdistan. Satellite channels broadcasting programs in Kurdish were able to unite the disparate Kurdish communities of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey, and in the diaspora (Seib 2008).

differences of culture, touching on such matters as gender roles, and tolerance in matters of political and social communication. On the question of language, the proponents of Pan-Arabism argued in favor of a simplified 'media' version of Classical Arabic, which available market research did suggest would be acceptable to audiences in the target areas. There was some disagreement on this point within the team, however, some arguing that Classical Arabic, even a 'media' version of it, would seem unnatural to audiences which had grown accustomed to consuming a great deal of Arabic media material in Egyptian and Lebanese dialects (Boyd-Barrett 2000, 329).⁷

Of particular interest is how these satellite channels simultaneously appear to cater to as well as to construct the pan-Arab identity. There is a foundation for which these channels are well received throughout the Arabic-speaking world; however, they also help to solidify this notion of pan-Arabism, the message that Nasser was trying to spread decades earlier via the radio. Nonetheless, there are conflicting points of view regarding both the strength of a pan-Arab identity in addition to the language choice for satellite channels. The debate over language variety highlights the presence of Dialectal Arabic on satellite broadcasts, which not only helps to familiarize the pan-Arab audience with a range of dialects, but also raises these dialects from a national level to a regional one. The increased presence of Dialectal Arabic on satellite channels, then, could enhance interdialectal communication by elevating the level of familiarity the pan-Arab audience has with the various dialects.

Hammond (2007) examined popular culture in all of its various forms throughout the Arab world by discussing language, religion, cinema, music, television, press, and theater. He suggested "there is a greater tradition of Arab identity that exists alongside ancient, little traditions of local, non-Arab identities. But the last fifty years have witnessed a process whereby more and more of these smaller traditions are assuming the lofty title 'Arab'" (Hammond 2007, 3). Through mass media

⁷ Boyd-Barrett's reference to Classical Arabic is the variety I would consider Standard Arabic. Media Arabic, a specialized form of Standard Arabic, is mentioned in Chapter III.

communications, Arab identity has become a living reality and speakers from various dialects have gained a better understanding of the range of Dialectal Arabic. Certainly Egyptian Arabic has been widespread throughout the region since the 1960s due to the success of the Egyptian film industry, but now through satellite television Lebanese, Gulf, and even Maghreb Arabic have made in-roads throughout the region. Both Standard and Dialectal Arabic are interacting in politics and popular culture through modern communication methods, facilitating increased linguistic unity and mutual understanding.

Importantly, Hammond (2007) noted a potential change in perspective regarding the divisive abilities of Dialectal Arabic. Boyd-Barrett (2000), among others, mentioned how some have claimed that the differences between the varieties of Dialectal Arabic section off the region and only Standard Arabic has the power to unite all of the Arabic speakers. On the other hand, Hammond (2007) highlighted that the increased awareness of the dialects has helped to decrease the perceived threat that Dialectal Arabic poses to Arab unity. Hazem Alwani, director of an Arabic teaching institute in Damascus stated, “the satellite channels bring the local dialects closer, increase the ability for mutual understanding between different Arab countries, and increase the ability to understand local cultures” (Hammond 2007, 57). As Chapter VI demonstrates, the Arabic-speaking community is reaching a point where they celebrate the diversity and multiplicity of the Arab culture and Arabic dialects, as opposed to worrying about the divisive potential.

B. The Gap

As will be further highlighted in Chapter III, there is a severe lack of interdialectal communication studies in Arabic linguistics. Scholars tend to limit their focus to certain physical locales which then obliges them largely to neglect the interaction and communication between speakers of different dialectal groups. This trend continues with the code switching studies in the Arabic-speaking world. For example, linguists have examined the switching between urban Moroccan Arabic and French or the alternating of Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic in Cairo, while switching between Lebanese, Egyptian, and Gulf Arabic has not appeared in the literature. Both interdialectal communication and code switching between dialects are two fields of study ripe for exploration.

This study examines interdialectal communication through the pan-Arab reality television program, *Arab Idol*. Some may consider *Arab Idol* an entertainment program serving only to waste time and to distract the Arabic-speaking population from the critical political, economic, and social issues at hand. Nonetheless, this and similar programs are still worthy of exploration in an effort to gain a better understanding of current Arab popular culture. As Sabry succinctly stated,

Arab intellectuals' interpretations of culture are largely elitist. With few exceptions and without exaggeration, their 'take' on culture can be compared to those of the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, Matthew Arnold and other modernists who could not hide their abomination for the masses and their ordinary cultures. Arab intellectuals are, in general, more aristocratic than the aristocracy. Arab popular culture, for example, is still considered by many prominent and influential Arab intellectuals to be profane, unconscious, irrelevant and consequently unworthy of study. This view is symptomatic of the vast majority of Arab intellectuals, who constantly downgrade colloquial Arabic and for whom, to use Orwell's analogy, what goes on in the vile and gritty wind—the *souq* (marketplace), *makha* (café), the television pop music contest—is classified as profane. Therefore, all that is *shaabi* (of the people), be it music, television programs or just ordinary everyday experience, remains largely under-examined. The phrase the 'Arab street,' commonly used by Arab media and

Arab intellectuals, reflects this elitist stance and its distance from the majority of the population (2007, 159).

Thus, this analysis also meets a need identified by Sabry through its examination of a ‘television pop music contest.’ Admittedly, as will be seen in Chapter II, *Arab Idol* pays homage to a range of musical styles and does indeed celebrate the classical Arabic songs from the 20th century and the diversity of contemporary Arabic music. However, this insight is gained only through joining the pan-Arab audience watching the program and not simply writing the program off as ‘irrelevant’ and ‘unworthy of study.’

C. Overview of Chapters

The final portion of this chapter presents the organization for the thesis. Chapter II situates this study of *Arab Idol* into the phenomenon of reality television in the Arabic-speaking world. A brief history of reality television in the region is followed by a discussion of Marwan Kraïdy’s comprehensive analysis of how this genre became an idiom of contention for the pan-Arab audience. The chapter then concludes with a thorough description of the program *Arab Idol* to contextualize the subsequent linguistic analysis.

Chapter III presents a broad literature review for this analysis, covering the topics of diglossia, code switching, dialect levelling, and interdialectal communication. The vast bulk of the code switching literature in this review focuses on the Arabic-speaking world and the switches that occur either between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic or between Dialectal Arabic and a European language. Nonetheless, a portion of the code switching literature reviewed covers switching outside of an Arabic context in an effort to gain a broader understanding of this practice. The chapter also

discusses dialectal levelling within countries and highlights the few studies that have examined interdialectal communication.

The theoretical framework and methodology for this analysis is presented in Chapter IV. This study examines interdialectal communication through the lens of Giles' Accommodation Theory, which states that speakers adjust their speech patterns in an effort to modify the social distance between the interlocutors. The chapter then lists the two research questions guiding this examination: first, what are the normal speech patterns of the judges and the hosts, and second, when do speakers either converge to or diverge from their interlocutors? Then it describes the methodology enacted to select and transcribe the linguistic portions of *Arab Idol* as well as the data and participants used in this study.

Chapter V offers the analysis and discusses key observations from the study. In answering the first research question, I found that the judges and hosts exhibited a strong tendency to maintain their native dialects during interdialectal communication. In responding to the second research question, I observed a variety of techniques for convergence amongst the speakers on *Arab Idol* and only one instance of divergence. Further, I found several occasions in which speakers of one dialectal group experienced in-group moments, by simultaneously converging together and diverging from everyone else. The final portion of Chapter V discusses other linguistic phenomena observed, such as uses of Standard Arabic, subtitles, and local expressions.

Finally, Chapter VI discusses representations of identity within the program in addition to presenting the main findings from this analysis and opportunities for future research. The five main findings are: a strong tendency for speakers to maintain their native dialect during interdialectal communication; convergence toward their

interlocutors through a variety of methods, including by switching dialects; certain dialects have connotations, such as Egyptian Arabic denoting comedy and Lebanese Arabic expressing pampering; Standard Arabic was not used to increase understanding in interdialectal communication, but instead was a tool for divergence; and *Arab Idol* celebrated the diversity and multiplicity of the Arabic-speaking world through embracing the various dialects in both speech and song. Three courses for future research include further examination of interdialectal communication in the Arabic-speaking world, such as at leading regional universities or within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations; deeper exploration of how Gulf speakers modify their speech during interdialectal communication to determine if they have a stronger inclination to converge in comparison to speakers from other dialects; and further analysis of how speakers may use Dialectal Arabic to express either local or pan-Arab identity.

CHAPTER II

REALITY TELEVISION IN THE ARABIC-SPEAKING WORLD

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the reality television phenomenon that has left a huge impact on the Arabic-speaking world. This discussion begins with a history of reality television in the region, including the origins of Arab television channels adapting programs from the West, the importance of satellite television, and a brief description of several reality television programs, emphasizing both the depth and breadth of the genre. Then the chapter turns toward the work of Marwan Kraidy, whose extensive analysis of the reality television phenomenon demonstrates how this genre was used as an idiom of contention throughout the region. Finally, the chapter concludes with an in-depth description of the program used in this analysis, highlighting the characters, structure, and audience of *Arab Idol*.

A. History of Reality Television in the Arabic-Speaking World

Reality television “refers to various talent and game shows that are unscripted, feature primarily amateurs, and involve viewer participation through voting for contestants” (Kraidy 2010, 9). The origins of reality television as a genre are often traced back to the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) documentary in the early 1970’s entitled *An American Family*, which followed the lives of the Loud family over 13 episodes. Two decades later Fox aired *Cops*, showing raw footage of police action, while the Music Television (MTV) channel produced *The Real World*, depicting the lives of a selected group of individuals living and working together (Lynch 2005). Two European based international television production and distribution companies—the

Dutch Endemol and the English FremantleMedia—have created and distributed some of the most popular reality television programs and game shows. Endemol’s most recognized shows include *Big Brother*, *Deal or No Deal*, *Fear Factor*, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, and *Star Academy/Fame Academy*. FremantleMedia’s well-known programs consist of *Pop Idol*, *The X Factor*, *America’s Got Talent*, *The Apprentice*, *The Biggest Loser*, and *Candid Camera*. Endemol and FremantleMedia have sold the formats to these shows, which then have been adapted and produced in dozens of countries worldwide, including in the Arabic-speaking world.

Long before the Arab television channels purchased these formats, they had been creating adaptations of Western franchises. Khalil (2005) argued for a two-phase development in the rise of reality television in the Arabic-speaking world. The first phase was the foundation era, during which producers and marketers at Arab channels became accustomed to and convinced of the strategy of buying Western programs. This phase can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s when the high demand for programs and lack of recording technologies resulted in the live drama genre, where amateur and poorly-trained actors using mostly improvisation performed live in front of the camera. In the 1970s, Arab television stations began producing classical dramatic works of Arab and world literature while also looking toward Western shows for inspiration and plagiarism. By the 1980s, ‘copycat TV’ had become very common, whereby major successes of European and American shows were Arabized. The first reality television program was *Candid Camera*, which was produced in almost every Arabic-speaking country during the 1980s and 1990s, relying on viewers’ lack of television literacy. Other shows produced by the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) included *Wakkef Ta Kellak* ‘Stop So I Tell You,’ in which the presenter asked random

pedestrians to complete tasks to win the contents of a truck, and a New Year's Eve program, which presented a human interest story of helping a family's dream come true. Other copycatted programs aired by Lebanese channels include *Dulab al-Huzz* 'Wheel of Fortune' on Télé-Liban and the Arabic version of *Win, Lose, or Draw, Min Qaddak* 'Who's at Your Level,' on LBC.

In Egypt, the Arabic version of *Candid Camera, Al-Camera Al-Khafeya* 'The Hidden Camera' initially was broadcast in 1983, but gained in popularity when comedic actor Ibrahim Nasr took over as the presenter and protagonist in 1996. Evidence of the show's success include its movement from a weekly time slot to the post-Iftaar time slot during Ramadan as well as the spin-off feature length film released for Eid al-Fitr 2001. In Ramadan 2000, Ibrahim Nasr introduced the episode's setting and theme before being transformed into his character Zakiya Zakariya, a portly woman whose outfits changed depending on her socio-economic position in Egyptian society. Harris and Uthman (2005) highlighted how Zakiya Zakariya's escapades with unwitting guests pushed their patience and notions of social norms while challenging the expectations of class, locality, and gender. Ibrahim Nasr revealing the true identity of Zakiya Zakariya healed the rift created by her antics. The program exploited the deep class conflicts in Egyptian society, stereotyped participant's place of origin, and highlighted the feminine concerns of youth, beauty, and dignity. Zakiya even lampooned the uses of Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic when she assumed the role of a beggar in an upscale hotel, explaining that she was 'seeking alms' in Standard Arabic.

The turning point between the eras, according to Khalil (2005), occurred as the industry was watchful of the international markets and began to look favorably on the option of format-buying as a source of programming. In the 1990s, Arab stations started

to purchase the rights and production bible of a Western show and then locally produced it for regional consumption. By legally purchasing the format, the studio also received creative and technical consultants in addition to computer software and machinery. Initially, studios purchased variety and game show formats and then moved onto reality television programs. The Lebanese Murr Television (MTV) station bought internationally successful reality television programs as early as the fall of 1996; for five years MTV produced Arabic versions of the French *Family Feud* and the Dutch *Everybody's Equal*. Also, LBC produced the Arabic version of the French *Fort Boyard* and the Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC) produced the Arabic version of the British *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, which became extremely popular. Also, Zen TV, a Lebanese station consisting of a young team of recent graduates, experimented with Music Television (MTV) style shows, such as *Road Rules*.

Khalil (2005) distinguished the second phase, the development era, during which public awareness of reality television grew and the initial controversies appeared. Starting in 2003, reality television became an established programming genre in the Arabic-speaking world. As Kraidy (2010) noted, adapting a successful format has less risk than creating a new program, completely changing how producers and directors conducted their affairs. The main competition for reality programming was between LBC and MBC, each producing three shows a year and creating its own niche. LBC's programs usually had a 24-hour dedicated channel and a prime show, a 2-hour episode that included the best stories of the week, was the most-viewed, and was usually when a participant was voted out of or into the competition. MBC tended to have a daily or weekly episode recounting recent developments, allowing for editing. Future Television

(Future TV) had one main success, *Superstar*, and Arab Radio and Television (ART) only had one reality television program, *Al-Hawa Sawa* 'On Air Together.'

When a show is adapted to the Arabic-speaking world, Khalil (2005) argued that the process of 'Arabization' involves both the 'Lebanonization' and the 'Islamization.' Arabization is the process of repackaging Western formats in order to appeal to the Arabic-speaking audience. Lebanonization includes the predominantly Lebanese production crew as well as the aesthetic and editorial treatment of the format. Further, Lebanonization allows for the inclusion of the French and English terminology associated with the original program. The other necessary component for Arabization is the Islamization, such that producers follow various codes of conduct, including prayer rooms in villas and avoiding the topic of religion on shows. Given that Lebanonization is a key component of the Arabization, Lebanon has been the main breeding ground for reality television and programs produced outside of Lebanon still tend to have Lebanese managerial, creative, and technical crews.

The growth of satellite television in the Middle East is also a contributing factor to the rise of reality television programs. Sakr (2001) examined the growth of satellite broadcasting in the Middle East. The first Arab satellite broadcasting channel was the Egyptian Satellite Channel (ESC), which initially sent transmissions in December 1990 prior to the Gulf War. Within a few years, the region had several satellite broadcasters: MBC, ART, LBC-Satellite, Future TV, and Al-Jazeera. Sakr argued that satellite television had a high potential due to the high rates of illiteracy, desire for uncensored information, a need for home based entertainment, and the ability of satellite television to reunite communities scattered by war, exile, and labor migration. "Satellite television broadcasts in Middle Eastern languages have the

capacity to respond to these population movements, linking communities in different parts of the globe on the basis not of their nationality or location but of their linguistic and cultural affinities” (Sakr 2001, 8).

While MBC initially created its identity as the Cable News Network (CNN) of the Middle East and ART was intended for the majority of non-secularist, non-fundamentalist Muslims, the initial business plans for these stations were not profitable. Sakr (2005) analyzed the business empires of four Saudi nationals in the 1990s and found that all four ended up adopting Western programming as a choice and not due to an invasion of Western media companies. For example, Walid al-Ibrahim, one of the founders of MBC, and Salih Kamil, owner of Dallah al-Barakah Group and founder of ART, faced severe financial difficulties which forced them to restructure and adopt a more Western style of programming. This Western style of broadcasting included not only translated Western films and television shows, but also the adaptation of game shows and reality television programs.

Man Sa-Yarbah al-Malyoun, the Arabic version of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, was one of the first big hits in the region as a format adapted program and considered an “unprecedented commercial” success (Kraidy 2007, 49). MBC started broadcasting the show in November 2000 and it continued for ten seasons along with a spin-off. The host, Lebanese George Kordahi, stated

I wouldn't be exaggerating if I say that this program brings the whole Arab world together. It brings it together despite all the contradictions of the Arab world. Once in a seminar a woman said to me I had united the Arab world because everyone watches the program. Of course I was touched. A statistic a few months ago said that 80 percent of Arab viewers watch this program, which is a viewing figure that no program in the world has reached...My identity is Arab. I feel that I belong to all the Arabs. Without exaggeration, this is my feeling, that I belong to all the Arab nationalities (Hammond 2007, 224).

Thus, this program promoted cultural and pan-Arab unity despite the diversity of guests from the Arabic-speaking world. While the program structure, set design, and music were identical to the American version, the questions focused on Arab culture, poetry, politics, history, and scientific achievements. This program effectively combined reality television and ‘high’ Islamic and Arab culture, which minimized the controversy, except for some clerics denouncing high-stakes games.

The first Arabic version of *Pop Idol* was produced by Future TV and entitled *Superstar*, which was the first *Idol* franchise to feature contestants from different countries. Thousands of hopefuls auditioned and then millions watched and voted for their favorite contestants in the artistic competition. The show launched in January 2003 and continued for five seasons. While public humiliation certainly had a significant role in *American Idol*, *Superstar* emphasized apprenticeship and mentoring. Journalists and the general public perceived *Superstar* to be an authentic singing competition with contestants having real, amazing voices, while *Star Academy* was more about stage antics (Kraidy 2010). The pan-Arab audience was united in watching the show; however, viewers were divided along nationalist lines when voting. As one of the first and most successful reality television programs in the region, Khalil (2005) emphasized the importance of *Superstar*, which highlighted the commercial viability of the format, exemplified that an all-Arab show can be produced successfully, and included unprecedented interactivity between the audience and television. Further, *Superstar*’s success encouraged a competitive exploration for other reality television programs.

Then, LBC aired *The House* in February 2003 prior to the Miss Lebanon pageant. The program aired again in 2004, but was discontinued in 2005 due to security concerns. The finalists lived together in a luxurious villa for two months as the pan-

Arab audience voted to remove two candidates each week. Viewers could watch the ladies' lives at any moment on the 24-hour channel. The show was experimental and provided the necessary training to produce *Star Academy* the following year. Also, this show not only tested the advertising and marketing potential for similar programs, but also tested the rules and reactions to participants being filmed constantly.

Al-Hawa Sawa, was the first Arab-produced reality show, starting in December 2003. The program mixed *The Dating Game* and *The Bachelorette*, such that female contestants sharing a house were courted by suitors with the goal of a marriage proposal. ART, originally intended as a conservative approach to television, aired the show and maintained a strict dress and conduct code. *Al-Hawa Sawa* was another 24-hour reality program testing the conservative audience reception after being completely re-adapted to respect 'Arab values' (Khalil 2005). Also, the show demonstrated how participants without special talents could become television celebrities.

LBC started broadcasting *Star Academy*, based on the French show entitled *Fame Academy*, in December 2003 and the program is still running, the ninth season finale aired in January 2014 with plans for a tenth season. For the first season, from a pool of 3,000 pan-Arab applicants, LBC selected 16 finalists (8 male, 8 female), who agreed to be sequestered for 4 months in 'the Academy.' The finalists hailed from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, and lived together in Adma, Lebanon in a house with 60 cameras and a crew of 250 working on the show. Viewers had access to the dedicated 24-hour feed along with nightly 1-hour access shows and 2-hour Friday prime shows with live performances by the contestants. The students were coached to achieve personal and professional growth, receiving lessons in oral interpretation, dancing, singing, music, fashion, hair-styling, and make-up. Every

Monday the instructors at the Academy nominated two contestants to be voted upon by viewers, and on Friday the results were announced such that the student with the most votes remained and the one with the least had to leave the Academy. *Star Academy* quickly became the most popular show in the history of Arab satellite television, with the first season finale capturing the largest audience in pan-Arab television history up to that point (Kraidy 2007, 2010). The show reached the full potential for marketing and sales as the audience demonstrated strong loyalty to both the prime episodes and the 24-hour dedicated channel (Khalil 2005).

The most infamous attempt at reality television was the Arabic version of *Big Brother*, *Al-Ra'is*, produced by MBC. The program was a popularity competition between a group of men and women living together in a villa in Bahrain. MBC exerted an effort to re-adapt the show for cultural and religious sensitivities, but the show still caused a wave of uproar. MBC gained the rights for the program from Endemol and tried to customize it for conservative Arabian Gulf social norms through separate quarters for males and females as well as a prayer room. After a greeting of a kiss between Saudi Abdel Hakim and Tunisian Kawthar, MBC cancelled the program, declaring a loss of 6 million US dollars. *Al-Ra'is* was the first attempt to produce a 24-hour reality program outside of Lebanon and discouraged MBC from producing reality television programs that could not be edited before airing.

Al-Wadi 'The Farm' used celebrities as contestants and was based on the French version. Hosted by Lebanese Shia sensation Haifa Wehbi, 14 celebrities worked on a farm north of Beirut, milking cows and tending crops as well as performing a weekly singing and dancing variety show. Every week, two contestants were nominated by the instructors and one was voted off by viewers. *Al-Wadi* and *Dayf al-Beit* 'The

House Guest,' both of which were produced by LBC and started in 2005, marked a turning point in reality television using celebrities as the participants. *Dayf al-Beit* also started in 2005 and showed a celebrity spending the day taking care of a family, especially assisting with the children.

Within only a few years, the number and variety of reality television programs blossomed in the region. MBC produced the Arabic version of *Star Search*, entitled *Najem El-Noujom* 'The Star of the Stars,' which was a singing competition with few reality sequences. Starting in 2005, MBC produced *El Beyt Mish Beytak* 'This House is Not Yours' and *Min Jedid* 'Starting Over.' The former was the Arabic version of *Worlds Apart*, in which an Arab family was transplanted into a foreign community, such as Kenya, Ghana, or Mongolia, and the audience monitored the family's survival instincts, adaptation skills, frustrations, and friendships. Rania Barghout hosted *Min Jedid*, which combined the reality television and soap opera genres and depicted a group of women living together and trying to overcome problems by making a positive change in their lives with the help of life coaches, psychologists, dieticians, educators, and stylists. Future TV produced *Wedding Express*, in which couples were given a fixed amount of money for a wedding ceremony and a crew captured their negotiations with vendors, and a Ramadan program featuring Adel Karam, where he asked pedestrians to answer questions or perform stunts for cash. LBC's adaption of *The Weakest Link*, did not last long because the female host mimicked the original British host too closely and was considered too masculine by viewers. LBC's production of *Survivor* was filmed in Kenya, lasting one season; the lack of a live component and audience participation as well as a completely foreign location to viewers resulted in limited success. *The Mission* is an Al-Manar game show in which contestants competed to reach a virtual Jerusalem.

In *Extreme Home Makeover: Iraq*, participants had their war-damaged homes repaired. For some shows, producers altered the show to avoid the public humiliation factor. For the Arabic version of *The Biggest Loser*, a show about a weight-loss competition, the title took a positive twist, *Al-Rabeh Al-Akbar* ‘The Biggest Winner.’ Similarly, when MBC produced *Fear Factor*, the name became *Thadda El Khouf* ‘Defy Fear.’

As the reality television format gained prominence as a genre, there was an effort to affirm Arab tradition through a modern lens. Abu Dhabi TV produced two poetry competition shows for the Arabian Gulf: *Millionaire Poet* and *Amir al-Shu'ara* ‘Prince of Poets,’ both of which emphasized the tradition of oral poetry. *Al-Daw Al-Akhdhar* ‘Green Light,’ produced by Dubai Television, combined charity and reality television such that contestants worked together on a philanthropic project. This show did not have winners, but instead focused on socially responsible activities and offered an ‘ethical’ alternative to reality television (Khalil 2005). Wise (2005) discussed how the launch of an Islamic channel, *Al-Risella* [sic] ‘The Message,’ in 2006 would include a range of programming, including reality television: a *Superstar*-like competition for Islamic singers to perform songs of faith and family; *Tariq al-Risella* ‘The Path of the Message,’ a *Road Rules*-style trip following a group of young men taking the historic path of Islam’s spread from Medina; and a show modeled loosely on *The Apprentice*, in which the Kuwaiti preacher Tarik Suwaidan teaches a group of young people leadership skills and tests them through exercises while the audience votes for the best leader.

Reality television has even taken a political twist (F.V.T. 2013). In *The Leader* contestants battled for an opportunity to run as an independent candidate. Al-Jadeed narrowed down 12,000 applicants to 15 contestants who debated Lebanon’s issues for ten weeks. LBC produced *State Academy*, in which participants proposed solutions to

problems facing Lebanese society and the viewers voted on which project to be financed. Maan TV produced *The President* where Palestinians vote for a young ambassador. Contestants confronted practical challenges and a panel of politicians, professors, and business people on a range of issues facing Palestine.

Despite the plethora of reality television options in the Arabic-speaking world, most of the internationally popular talent competitions have been adapted for the region. *The X-Factor* came to the region under the title of *Xseer Al-Najah* 'X The Road to Success' or 'Elixir of Success,' and has had a total of three seasons. LBC and Rotana produced the first two seasons in 2006-2007 and then the Egyptian channel Capital Broadcast Center (CBC) produced the third season in 2013. This program is similar to the British version whereby judges mentor contestants within a category (females, males, groups, over 25 years old) helping them with song selection and styling. Unfortunately, the show has faced stiff competition from other programs, such that the second season was discontinued due to the popularity of *Star Academy* and the third season competed with *Arab Idol* for viewers.

MBC has produced two popular talent competitions: *Arab's Got Talent* and *The Voice: Ahla Sawt*. The former was launched in January 2011 and has aired three seasons with the fourth starting later in 2014. The program began with auditions in which the contestants performed and if all the judges buzzed the red 'X,' then the performance immediately stopped. Ali Jaber, the dean of the journalism school at the American University in Dubai, and Najwa Karam, Lebanese iconic singer, have been a judge on all three seasons. Nasser Al Qasabi, Saudi actor and comedian, has been on the show since the second season while Ahmed Helmi, Egyptian actor, started with the third season. The judges represented a variety of careers, since the contestants demonstrated

their superb abilities in a wide range of talents, including singing, dancing, comedy, magic, rapping, and art. After the judges' auditions, the semi-finals and final were broadcast live. In each semi-final competition, a winner was chosen by viewers and the second and third place contestants were chosen by the judges. The final was determined solely by votes. The third season created a stir when the American Jennifer Grout, who sang classic Arabic songs by Fairuz and Umm Kulthum with superb precision, advanced to the finals and came in second place for the season (Jamjoom 2013).

The Voice: Ahla Sawt first launched in September 2012 and its second season concluded in March 2014. Four regional singers served as the judges and coaches on the show: Iraqi Kadim al-Sahir, Egyptian Sherine, Lebanese Assi El Helani, and Tunisian Saber Rebai. During the blind auditions, contestants sang for 90 seconds with the coaches turned away. Upon hearing a promising voice, a coach pressed a button, turning to face the contestant. If multiple judges turned around, the contestant chose the coach to serve as the mentor. Each coach formed a team and then paired two singers from the same team to compete during the battle rounds, in which the contestants performed the same song and the coaches determined who was eliminated. Then the show moved to the live performances and the viewing audience decided who had the best voice.

One last reality talent competition show is the Lebanese version of *Dancing with the Stars*, *Raqs el-Noujoum*, which is originally based on the British show *Strictly Come Dancing*.¹ Murr TV (MTV) has produced two seasons, launching the first one in December 2012. Lebanese celebrities were paired with professional dance partners and performed a different ballroom dance style each week, receiving both judges' scores and viewers' votes. In the second season, two of the celebrities on the show were former

¹ The Lebanese adaptation is the only version in the Arabic-speaking world.

contestants on *Superstar* and *Star Academy*. The Arabic-speaking world has a long history of adapting reality television programs in the region; however, these shows have not only been a form of entertainment, but also a medium for national and regional debates.

B. Reality Television as an Idiom of Contention

While several have proffered theories of reality television spreading democracy throughout the region, given that the contestants often win or lose by a few percentage points as opposed to the 99.9 percent victory of some political elections, and others have focused on the clash of Western culture with Islamic values, especially given the number of *fatwas* ‘legal opinions’ issued opposing reality television, Marwan Kraidy developed the most comprehensive analysis of reality television in the Arabic-speaking world.² Kraidy’s analysis is based on his fieldwork in the region, an extensive amount of print primary sources, hundreds of hours of watching Arab television, and 120 interviews with journalists, politicians, and television professionals. His focus was on three programs—*Al-Ra’is*, *Superstar*, and *Star Academy*—and how these shows became an idiom of contention within the region by providing people with “a new, alternative, camera-friendly and widely understood language of politics” (Kraidy 2007, 55). Due to the high visibility of popular culture, especially reality television, it becomes “a magnet for contentious politics because the upheaval over its implications for Arab societies stands for a larger, ongoing debate about Arab-Western relations and socio-cultural change” (Kraidy 2005, 4).

² Lynch (2005) and Khalil (2005) both discuss the debate surrounding reality television in the Arabic-speaking world regarding its ability to democratize the inhabitants as well as to attack Islam and Arab culture.

At first glance, the choice of Bahrain—over Lebanon or Egypt—as the location for *Al-Ra'is* seems questionable; however, Bahrain shares the cultural and social characteristics of Saudi Arabia—who is MBC's main market—while being more socially liberal, thus making Bahrain the obvious choice for MBC. During the initial planning of the program, a Saudi media committee with representatives from the ministries of interior, information, and religious affairs met to discuss the show. The committee was against the program, unless two conditions were met: if it was not filmed in Saudi Arabia—Bahrain was a suggested alternative—and there was a strict separation between men and women. The Saudi media mogul Walid al-Ibrahim requested that the villa feature gender-segregated bedrooms, prayer rooms, and bathrooms. The only shared space was the main living room. Further, during an interview, Kraidy found out that based on a casting decision all female contestants were divorcées, implying that none of them was a virgin. Thus, it appears that MBC made an effort to adapt the *Big Brother* format for the conservative values in the Arabian Gulf.

Kraidy (2005; 2010) demonstrated that the cancellation of *Al-Ra'is* was not simply due to Islamic criticism over *ikhtilat*, the unsupervised social mixing of unmarried men and women, which is *haram* 'prohibited' in Islam. During the pre-broadcast marketing for reality television programs, the channels "promoted the concept of 'reality' in reality TV aggressively, touting the spontaneity of the contestants, the liveliness of the primes, and, most importantly, the power of viewers to evict contestants weekly and ultimately to select the winner" (Kraidy 2010, 42). 'Abdel Mu'awida, the Salafi Vice-President of the Bahraini legislature, was concerned with this claim of representing reality, that its depiction of reality did not actually represent real life. During interviews with the press, 'Abdel Mu'awida claimed that "this program showed

an abnormal way of living, which is totally opposed to our thoughts, culture, everything... it is not reality TV at all, especially in our part of the world” (Kraidy 2010, 56). Other members of the parliament defended the program on economic grounds, arguing that the program would boost tourism and contribute to the economy. During interviews, Kraidy found out that MBC itself also contributed to the failure, given the lack of necessary preparations; there were few promotional clips to advertise, a shortage of proper training for the production crew, and no public relations strategy arranged. MBC ultimately cancelled the show, stating that it considers itself a channel for the Arab family and did not want to be accused of harming Arab traditions and values.

Kraidy (2010) emphasized that the debates and controversies surrounding *Al-Ra'is*, *Superstar*, and *Star Academy* demonstrated the battle between various political, clerical, and business actors as opposed to a simple antagonism between popular culture and Islamic doctrine. *Superstar's* format was acceptable to all but the most radical interpretations of Islam on social behavior due to limited interaction or physical contact between male and female contestants.³ While *Superstar's* format did not provoke the same level of moral outrage among Gulf Islamists, the reactions to the show tended to highlight political and national anxieties.

Nearing the end of its first season in August 2003, *Superstar* was more than just a talent competition and had become an international battle over national rivalries. Arab media reported that voting followed national bases. According to Future TV's figures, Diana Karazon won 84 percent of the votes in Jordan, Rouwaida Attieh 97

³ Nevertheless, there was some political commentary from Hamas and the Islamic Action Front, a Jordanian political group with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, condemning the show for its cultural globalization.

percent in Syria, and Melhem Zein 79 percent in Lebanon. When the Lebanese contestant, Melhem Zein, was eliminated and the Syrian contestant Rouwaida Attieh remained on the show, the Lebanese almost instantaneously reacted with brawls erupting at the concert hall and in front of Future TV studios. Accusations and rumors burst forth that Syrian political pressure was the motivating factor in the elimination of the Lebanese contestant over the Syrian one. Then the rivalry turned toward the tense relations between Jordan and Syria; as the season finale was between Jordanian Diana Karazon and Syrian Rouwaida Attieh. Syria's resentment about the Hashemite monarchy's compromising stance toward Israel has at times strained the two countries' relations. In Jordan, King Abdullah II reportedly instructed officers in the armed forces to vote for Diana Karazon, while in Syria telecommunications companies installed billboards promoting Rouwaida Attieh, claiming it was a national duty to vote for her. More than 30 million viewers watched the finale of the first season and with 52 percent of the 4.8 million votes, Diana Karazon became the first *Superstar* (Kraidy 2005).

Even before casting for the second season, *Superstar* was already a pan-Arab legend, resulting in 40,000 individuals auditioning and 83 advancing to Beirut. During the second season the competition came down to the Libyan Ayman El Aatar and the Palestinian Ammar Hassan. The Palestinian contestant was an early frontrunner due to his amazing talent, but as the competition continued speculations emerged that he was receiving votes because of Arab sympathy toward the Palestinians. As the Libyan contestant entered the finals, Muammar Gaddafi allegedly invested millions in advertising and telecommunications services. Ultimately, Ayman El Aatar won 54 percent of the 3.2 million votes cast in the final round.

In Kuwait, controversy over both *Superstar* and *Star Academy* appeared. In 2003 after the first season of *Superstar* the finalists participated in a tour of the region, including Kuwait. The Islamist bloc in the Kuwaiti legislature was against the tour for its negative impact on Islamic morals and values in addition to its encouragement of *ikhtilat*. Despite the opposition, the Minister of Information Muhammad Abul Hassan approved the concert. In 2004 during the first season of *Star Academy*, the competition came down to the Egyptian Mohammed Attia and the Kuwaiti Bashar Al Shatti. The charismatic Bashar Al Shatti became a national icon as the show gained popularity in Kuwait. Bashar Al Shatti solidified national unity amongst the Kuwaiti youth as he constantly reaffirmed his Kuwaiti identity and spoke in the Kuwaiti dialect. Despite the clerical *fatwas* and speeches condemning the show, Kuwaitis watched and voted with patriotic pride. As rumors of a *Star Academy* tour spread, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Islamic Endowments Affairs issued a *fatwa* against any concert that included forbidden practices, such as *ikhtilat*. Walid al-Tabtabai, a Member of Parliament and leader of the 18-member Sunni Islamist bloc in Kuwait's National Assembly, was highly critical of *Star Academy*. The concert was held, but in November 2004, the Islamist bloc officially questioned the Minister of Information, Mohammed Abul Hassan, who ended up losing his position for allowing the concert.

The assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri resulted in both *Star Academy* and *Superstar* becoming overtly political. The director of *Star Academy* made a rare on-screen appearance to inform the students of the assassination and to announce a 10-day hiatus from the program while Lebanon was mourning. The show resumed on Friday, February 25, 2005 with performances by leading Lebanese artists and contestants wearing black while singing patriotic songs with a giant Lebanese

flag in the background. During the second season, three contestants were nominated each week: the viewers' votes saved one, the non-nominated contestants saved a second, and the third was eliminated. For this episode, the Bahraini Ahmad Salaheddin received 34.92 percent of the vote, the Syrian Joy Bassous received 33.02 percent, and the Lebanese Samer Doumit received 32.06 percent. Thus, the public votes saved the Bahraini contestant and the non-nominated contestants in a vote of 6 to 1 saved the Lebanese over the Syrian, despite the Syrian having more of the popular vote. The elimination of the Syrian Joy Bassous from the second season mirrored the political atmosphere.

In the aftermath of the assassination and during the March demonstrations, Arab journalists began interpreting these events through the prism of reality television. "The liveness, avowed realism, managed unpredictability, production style, and technical lingo associated with reality television helped journalists make sense of the new dynamics of social and political communication manifest in the unfolding spectacle" (Kraidy 2010, 175). Further, demonstrators utilized participatory activities from *Star Academy*, such as nominating candidates and text messaging to build alliances. During the March 14th demonstrations against the Syrian presence in Lebanon, there were signs that used the language of *Star Academy*. One poster had a picture of the Lebanese President Emile Lahoud with the words 'nominee' and 'Call 1559;' 'nominee' referenced that a nominated contestant each week was eliminated and 'Call 1559' referred to how viewers voted via a four-digit number (Kraidy 2010, 180). The number 1559 referenced the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559, calling for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and the cessation of Syrian

meddling in Lebanese affairs. This sign effectively and succinctly combined a political message with reality television rituals of nomination, mobilization, and voting.

Superstar's third season's auditions started in November 2004, but the show was delayed for several months due to Rafiq Hariri's assassination and was periodically delayed with the assassination of Gebran Tueni and the passing of Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Prior to Rafiq Hariri's assassination, Syrians watched more Future TV than Syrian Television, but considering that the Hariri family owned Future TV and Rafiq Hariri's assassination was blamed largely on Syrians, the assassination resulted in a divorce between Future TV and its Syrian viewers. The third season ended in February 2006, almost exactly a year after the assassination.⁴ The final competition was between Saudi Ibrahim El Hakami and Syrian Shahd Barmada. Even with the divorce between Future TV and the Syrian public, the Syrian streets were buzzed over their contestant, despite concerns that she would not receive fair treatment on Hariri's television channel. In the end, the Saudi Ibrahim El Hakami won 53 percent of the vote.

Kraidy argued that *Star Academy* was "the most popular and most controversial program in the history of Arab satellite television" (2007, 44). *Star Academy* was a huge hit for individuals from all walks of life and prompted debates from clerics, politicians, intellectuals, artists, journalists, advertising executives, women's daytime talk shows, and men's public affairs programs. While *Al-Ra'is* could not get away with having men and women living together in the same house in Bahrain, *Star Academy* did so in Lebanon. *Star Academy*'s reception in Saudi Arabia was particularly tumultuous, while being extremely popular and emptying the streets of large Saudi cities during the Friday primes. *Star Academy* inspired mosque sermons and the highest Saudi body issued a

⁴ With auditions occurring in November 2004 and the season finale airing in February 2006, the third season of *Superstar* is the longest *Idol* production.

fatwa prohibiting the viewing of, discussing of, voting for, participating in, or funding of *Star Academy*. Nevertheless, the program was a huge hit in Saudi Arabia, especially during the second season when Saudi Hisham Abdulrahman won the competition.

In many ways the debate and controversy surrounding *Star Academy* was a means for Saudis to discuss the future of their nation given the context of a society devoid of public institutions to do so. The approval of the radical taped sermons by the Ministry of Information and the *fatwa* against the show underlined the clerics' and some of the royal family's opposition to the program, while media mogul and Saudi prince Al-Waleed bin Talal supported it. The strict prohibition against *ikhtilat* is a fundamental component of the Saudi social system and "the preservation of an unadulterated Saudi authenticity is a core concern of Wahhabiya's ultra-conservative worldview" (Kraidy 2009, 362). *Star Academy* presented a cultural hybrid of the foreign and native, which threatened the Wahhabiya foundation by offering a pluralistic option and compelling participants to evoke foreign social norms, such as voting for contestants. Since Wahhabiya should have the monopoly on representing social reality, reality television "poses a threat to Wahhabi prescribed and publicized rituals of religious and social reproduction" (Kraidy 2009, 361). Thus, *Star Academy* was controversial in Saudi Arabia by reflecting a pluralistic society and compelling participants to participate in alien social norms, while the debate surrounding the program mimicked a debate of the nation's future.

Therefore, reality television has stirred up a volatile mix of politics, religion, business, and sexuality as Arabs participate in heated debates over long-standing issues. These programs are local adaptations of international formats, making them hybrid texts mixing foreign and indigenous cultural sensitivities. There is also the clash between the

socially liberal Lebanese and the conservative Gulf societies; however this does not stop the former from directing and producing the programs and the latter's businessmen from investing in the production. Further, these shows attracted large audiences who participated in the show's rituals and voting, thus witnessing alternative social and political options.

One of the fundamental issues surrounding reality television is its claim to represent reality, a reality which several Arab viewers considered contentious. The controversies associated with these programs highlighted the depth and intensity of the desire for self-representation. The competitions on these programs simultaneously have promoted national unity within a state and fomented discord between them.

The talent competitions between contestants became an arena for waging political battles between international rivals, with the scope and implications completely beyond the contestants' control. Activists have employed the media-savvy tricks, such as mobilization tactics, campaign slogans, and voting rituals perfected through participation in reality television programs, due to their ability to hone messages for political action. It is noteworthy that these debates and controversies took unique forms in each Arab country, suggesting that modernity comes in multiple forms. As Kraidy succinctly stated, "the embedding of interactive procedure, the plebiscitary nature of reality shows, the affective bonds they forge with viewers, their transnational pan-Arab scope, and, most importantly, the self-made claim that reality TV represents reality, created a volatile combination that made it impossible for *Star Academy*, *Al-Ra'is*, and *Superstar* to avert politicization" (2010, 41). Future TV's *Superstar* only lasted for four seasons and after a few years was reborn under the name *Arab Idol* by MBC.

C. In Depth: *Arab Idol*

The original Arabic adaptation of the British *Pop Idol* was *Superstar*, discussed above, and the second Arabic adaptation of the show, and closely resembling the very successful *American Idol*, was *Arab Idol*. The first season premiered on December 9, 2011 with the results of the Egyptian Carmen Suleiman defeating Moroccan Dounia Batma shown on March 23, 2012. The second season premiered on March 8, 2013 and the announcement of the Palestinian Mohammed Assaf's victory over Egyptian Ahmad Gamal and Syrian Farrah Yousef occurred on June 22, 2013. The season finale for the second season was an unprecedented success for MBC, with an estimated 100 million viewers (Haddad 2013). The third season began in September 2014. The following portion of the chapter presents an in-depth view of this variety reality program to provide the reader with the necessary background information for the analysis.

1. *Cast of Characters*

The main and ever-present personalities on *Arab Idol* are the hosts and the judges. Kuwaiti *musalsalāt* 'television series' actor Abdallah Tulehi alongside Lebanese model and television personality Annabella Hilal served as the hosts in the first season. For the second season, Annabella Hilal remained a host, while the Egyptian actor Ahmad Fahmi became the new male host. In both seasons the male host provided the voice-over during pre-recorded segments, for example the video clip that introduces the episode using scenes from previous episodes. During the live episodes, the hosts serve several important functions, such as providing key information to the audience about the episode and how to vote, asking the judges and guest stars questions, announcing the contestants with the lowest percentage of the votes, transitioning the episode to the next

segment, and ensuring the judges' antics and audience's cheering do not hamper the flow of the show. Abdallah Tulehi, Annabella Hilal, and Ahmad Fahmi provide the show stability and continuity, while the judges create some very entertaining and hilarious moments for the viewing audience.

In the first season, Lebanese superstar Ragheb Alama, Emirati 'empress' Ahlam, and Egyptian record producer Hassan El Shafei rounded out the judging panel.⁵ The second season included the addition of Lebanese icon Nancy Ajram. In many ways, the initial judging panel mirrors the original judges on *American Idol*. Ragheb Alama, like Simon Cowell, anchors the judging panel and often provides information about the processes and procedures of the competition. However, unlike the infamously harsh remarks often uttered by Simon Cowell, Ragheb Alama is rarely severe and may even sugar-coat criticisms. In the first season, Ragheb Alama initiated his trademark phrase of 'bravo, bravo, bravo,' and only momentarily strayed from it at the beginning of the second season. Ahlam is the Paula Abdul with crazy antics; however, her musical expertise and tenacity to argue with Ragheb Alama distinguish her. Ahlam routinely provides harsh and technical comments to the contestants—even when all the other judges spoke highly—and explains nuances in the differences between musical styles across the region. At the same time, her outbursts of craziness and antics with her rival Ragheb Alama create memorable moments for the audience, for example when she demanded Kentucky Fried Chicken to be in her hotel room upon arrival or when she berated Ragheb Alama for thinking he is a teacher and above the rest of the panel. Hassan El Shafei is the Randy Jackson, the producer whose knowledge and expertise complements the rest of the panel. Hassan El Shafei, with strikingly good looks and fast

⁵ The honorific title of 'empress' was used by Abdallah Tulehi in the first season to address Ahlam (see example 38 in Chapter V). She is not part of the ruling family.

Egyptian Arabic speech, is another harsh judge, giving the most ‘no’s’ during auditions and often providing severe criticisms to contestants. The second season’s addition of Nancy Ajram completed the panel, offering more balance and distinction, with her sweet demeanor, usually positive feedback, and occasional insertion of her famous tagline *ah wa nuṣṣ* ‘yes and a half’. Her presence helped to balance the tension between Ragheb Alama and Ahlam—literally sitting in between the two. The personalities, comments, and antics of the judges made the show a must-see.

Of course a long list of individuals assisted with the production of the show, but only a few are often acknowledged by the judges and seen by the audience. Maestro Elie Alia conducts the musical ensemble that accompanies the contestants’ performances. These highly skilled musicians create a powerful impression for the audience through live music. Also, in the second season, the world renowned Lebanese classical pianist, Michel Fadel, often accompanies performances by the finalists. The contestants and their journey through the competition are what made the audience watch the show week after week as they cheered and voted for their favorite singer. Some of the contestants—personalities and memorable moments—are mentioned in the following section, describing how the show progressed from the casting call to announcing the winner.

2. From Auditions to Idol

The first four episodes of each season depict the audition process in several major cities across the region. In both seasons auditions occurred in Casablanca, Tunis, Cairo, Beirut, Amman, and Dubai. In Season One, additional auditions took place in Kuwait City and London, while the casting call scheduled for Damascus was cancelled

due to political unrest. For Season Two, additional auditions occurred in Luxor, Alexandria, and Erbil. The Doha casting call was canceled after an online campaign against the show gained momentum amongst Qataris, who found the program distasteful and were concerned it would tarnish Qatar's reputation as an intellectual and scientific community (Doha News Team 2012). Season One auditions occurred in September and October 2011, just two months before episodes were broadcast, while Season Two auditions occurred in October and November 2012, four months before the season was aired.⁶ The footage captured during the casting calls are compiled and edited to create the most entertaining and heartwarming episodes for the audience.

The audition episodes open with famous vantage points of the city and surrounding area and then turn to the male host amongst the hopefuls outside the audition location, usually an upscale hotel. Individuals start gathering in the early morning hours, several hours before the 7am auditions begin, with hopes of receiving a blue ticket with a number. Without the blue ticket, auditionees cannot enter the premises or fill out the forms to audition. Once the paperwork is completed each hopeful receives a bib with a five-digit audition number and the city's name. The male host greets the potential contestants before and after they leave the auditioning room. Once in the room, at least one of the judges greeted the auditionees and asked for a few words about themselves. After approximately a minute of a cappella singing, the judges may offer a comment before stating their yes or no. To receive the golden ticket to Beirut, the auditionee must receive an affirmation from a majority of the judges. In Season Two, there was often an image shown of the individual holding their golden ticket as the

⁶ Auditions for the third season occurred in March 2014, with the season starting the following September, six months later. For the third season, the Lebanese singer Wael Kfoury replaced Ragheb Alama on the judging panel.

picture on the MBC Visa to Beirut, which was then stamped saying *maqbul* ‘accepted.’ Individuals who did not receive a golden ticket would often stick their number to a corkboard.

The stories about those auditioning, the judges’ reactions, some crazy individuals, and the montages are what make these episodes entertaining. For a handful of contestants in each city, the episode included a brief video clip explaining a short personal story, but unfortunately these video clips did not always mean the auditionee received the golden ticket to Beirut. However, these clips did help the audience form the initial connections with potential contestants for whom they would later vote. These clips told the stories of the Moroccan female who is also talented in fashion and the Moroccan male who is a cook in Italy, the Palestinian wedding singer who traveled for two days to arrive in Cairo, the Tunisian taxi driver and the Lebanese hair-stylist both looking to change their stars, as well as the very young Egyptian girl who had to ask for her parent’s permission and the Saudi whose father is a composer. One of the most heartwarming stories was the Tunisian who explained to the judges that his mother is deaf and has never heard him sing, which made Nancy Ajram turn away to hide her tears. At other times, Hassan El Shafei and Ahlam could not help but laughing at some of the contestants who were talentless, such as the Libyan who looked like Muammar Gaddafi and sang ‘The Circle of Life’ from *The Lion King* and the Egyptian who brought a karaoke-like speaker and sang in English with awful pronunciation. The episodes also included an auto-tune of individuals who were sick and clearing their throats and a silent film depicting the judges’ frustrations as they listened to the not-so-talented. The judges’ antics during the auditions and horrible auditions are very

enjoyable, while the video clips depicting the potential contestants create bonds with the audience.

For Season One, after approximately 5,000 auditions, only 81 received the golden ticket and advanced to Beirut. For Season Two, these initial episodes showed Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, Libyans, Egyptians, Palestinians, Jordanians, Lebanese, Syrians, Iraqis, Saudis, Kuwaitis, Bahrainis, Emiratis, Omanis, and a Kurd audition for *Arab Idol*. After more than 15,000 auditions, only 95 individuals received the golden ticket to Beirut to continue with the auditioning process.

The following two episodes in the season are also pre-recorded and depict the next rounds of the audition process in Beirut, which concluded with the judges putting forth their list of the semi-finalists. In the second season, the audition process included three steps. In the first portion, the contestants, in groups of 10 or 11, stood on stage and each sang 60 seconds of a song of their choice. After everyone in the group sang, the judges eliminated a few and let some continue onto the next stage; in total 61 advanced to the next part.

In the second portion, the contestants divided themselves up into groups of five or six, where the contestants were all the same gender, but from different countries. The groups selected one song from a list of famous Arabic songs from classic movies and plays from the 20th century and then the groups had three days to prepare a performance. Songs for the females were 'Mali' by Warda Al-Jazairia from the movie *Sawt El Hob* (1973), 'El Ward Gamil' by Umm Kulthum from the movie *Fatmah* (1947), 'Rajain Ya Hawa' by Fairuz from the Rahbani Brothers' play *Loulou* (1974), 'Ya Wad Ya Teel' by Souad Hosny from the movie *Khali Balak Min Zouzou* (1972), and 'Imta Hataaraf/Layali El Ouns' by Asmahan from the movie *Gharam wa Intiqam*

(1944). Numbers for the males included ‘Ya Msafer Wahdak’ by Mohammed Abdel Wahab from the movie *Mamno’ El Hob* (1942), ‘Gana El Hawa’ by Abdel Halim Hafez from the movie *Abi Foq El Shagara* (1969), ‘Gharibeyn Ou Layl’ by Ghassan Saliba from the Rahbani Brothers’ play *Saif 840* (1987), and ‘Habeena’ by Farid al-Atrash from the movie *Nagham Fi Hayati* (1975).⁷ After each group performed, the judges provided some comments and then cut some individuals from the competition, with 46 remaining at the end of the round.

In the third portion, each contestant chose one song from a list of fifteen: five in Lebanese, five in Egyptian, and five in Gulf Arabic. As the contestants were seated in the audience, a judge randomly selected a name and the individual sang on stage in front of the group. After these rounds in the audition process, the judges had to select the twenty semi-finalists who would then proceed to the live portion of the program. In Season One, the judges selected 20 semi-finalists (10 male, 10 female) from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. However, in Season Two, the judges were unable to select a list of only 20 semi-finalists because the talent was much stronger; instead they chose 27 semi-finalists (15 male, 12 female) from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kurdish Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain. At the end of the sixth episode, the judges announced the news individually to all of the remaining individuals.

From the seventh to the season finale of the twenty-eighth episode, all are filmed and broadcasted live in front of a studio audience. Further, the judges no longer decide who is eliminated, but rather the votes from the entire viewing audience. In the next two episodes, the female semi-finalists sing one night and the male semi-finalists

⁷ The transliterations are written according to how they appeared on the *Arab Idol* second season page on Wikipedia.

sing the other night in hopes of winning the most votes from the viewing audience and advancing to the finals. In Season One, the audience had 24-hours to vote after these episodes; however, in Season Two, the audience had the full week to vote until the results were tabulated and announced.

In Season One, the eight finalists, as determined by the voting, were announced and then the judges selected an additional two wildcards. In Season Two, the eight finalists from the voting were announced on Friday night, and on Saturday the judges were supposed to select an additional four wildcards. Each judge called forward two of the remaining semi-finalists to sing and then selected one as their wildcard. Hassan El Shafei selected the Moroccan Yousra Saouf, who was not selected as a semi-finalist in the first season. Nancy Ajram chose the Lebanese Wael Said over the young Egyptian Mirna Hisham. Ahlam picked the Saudi Fares El Madani over the Iraqi Oussama Naji, stating there were already two Iraqi finalists and no Gulf finalists.⁸ Ragheb Alama called forward Moroccan Salma Rachid and Bahraini Hanane Reda, but after deciding that there were not enough female finalists, chose both of them. Thus, in Season One the 10 (5 male, 5 female) finalists hailed from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, while in Season Two the 13 (7 male, 6 female) finalists came from Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kurdish Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.

From the eleventh episode until the season finale, the remaining finalists sing a song on Friday night and on Saturday night the contestant with the lowest percentage of the voting is eliminated until the winner of *Arab Idol* is announced. On Friday nights,

⁸ Somewhat controversially Ahlam insisted that both Parwas Hussein and Mohanad Al Marsoomy were Iraqi, despite the fact that Parwas Hussein is a Kurd and from Kurdish Iraq (see Reuters 2013 and Shalaby 2013).

the hosts introduced the finalists to perform by stating their name and country, and then a pre-recorded video clip was shown. In these clips the finalists often talked about why they chose a song, a favorite artist, a friend visiting them, a favorite hobby, or what it is like just before walking on stage. Occasionally, either a fellow contestant introduced the contestant or all of the remaining contestants talked about the finalist who was about to sing. After the clip, the finalists performed the song with lighting, projections, and props to enhance the visual experience. These songs often were classic Arabic songs by the most famous regional stars in addition to hits from contemporary renowned artists. In Season One, approximately half the numbers each night included back-up dancers alongside the singer, while in Season Two, the performances did not have dancers, but instead occasionally used harnesses to lift the singer above the audience. After the performance, the contestants received feedback from each judge. In the first season, the host followed-up the comments with a question directed toward the finalist before transitioning the show to the next segment. In the second season, the hosts no longer asked a question, potentially in an effort to save time due to the presence of an additional judge and more finalists. Toward the end of the season as there were fewer remaining finalists, they sang multiple songs and receive feedback after at least one of the performances.

Saturday nights were elimination nights, but also included a guest star to keep the show entertaining. In Season One, these weekly stars would meet with the contestants prior in the week, provide feedback during a rehearsal, and then perform on Saturday nights. However, in Season Two, there was often a guest performer on both Friday and Saturday nights, but the guest did not provide guidance to the contestants. In the first season the guest stars included Saber Rebai, Sherine, Assi El Helani, Majid al-

Muhandis, Nawal Al Zoghbi, Elissa, Kadim al-Sahir, Nancy Ajram, Najwa Karam, and Latifa. The stars in the second season were Nawal El Kuwaitia, Amal Maher, Samira Said, Ramy Ayach, Hatem Al Iraqi, Nawal Al Zoghbi, Mohamed Mounir, Cheb Khaled, Majid al-Muhandis, Diana Haddad, Sherine, and Assi El Helani. Ragheb Alama, Nancy Ajram, and Ahlam each performed on a Saturday as well. These guest stars reflected the entire region and provided the audience with performances by the leading contemporary artists in the Arabic-speaking world.

In between the performances by the guest stars and on occasion by the finalists as well, the hosts slowly revealed who may be eliminated. A host would call forward a group of finalists, usually three or four, and with strong music, red lighting, and drama the hosts revealed who would be sent to the danger zone (*manṭiqat al-xaṭar*). After all of the finalists had been called to the stage, the hosts then brought forward the two or three contestants from the danger zone, and again with much drama announced who would be eliminated. In both seasons the judges had the opportunity to save one contestant from elimination. The judges individually commented about the finalist and state if they wanted to issue a save. If the majority of the judges wanted to save the finalist, then the save card was enacted and this stopped the elimination. This save card was never used in Season One, but was used in Season Two to save Fares El Madani after he had been hospitalized for several days during the competition. After the sole save card was issued, the judges still talked highly of each contestant once the elimination was announced. Additionally, a video clip was shown in which the eliminated finalist spoke about the experience of participating in the program. In the first season, only one finalist was eliminated each week until the winner was announced. However, in the second season, due to the higher number of finalists and the issuing of the save card, four times

there was a double elimination in which two contestants were removed from the competition.

The nine weeks in which the finalists perform and decrease in numbers include some of the most memorable moments of the entire show. In the first season during the feedback portions of the show, the Syrian Nadia Manfoukh does an impression of George Wassouf, tears up when talking about her late mother, and jokes that her personal problems are due to her diet—to which Ahlam claims that she is always on diet, but when she needs to perform she eats pasta and rice. Video clips show the contestants planting trees in Beit Mery, playing with the children at St. Jude's Children Hospital, and on the set of their own music video. After the Jordanian Youssef Arafat broke down on stage and was crying during his second performance of the night, rumors swelled in reports (Albawaba 2012b). When the competition was down to four contestants, MBC flew in a friend for each contestant and the following week flew in their mothers. In honor of mother's day, the contestants performed a special medley, which ended with Egyptian Carmen Suleiman and Moroccan Dounia Batma each presenting a rose to her mother, Youssef Arafat presenting it to Ahlam because his mother was unable to attend, and Abdallah Tulehi presenting one to his mother, who was in the audience, and one to his co-host Annabella Hilal. During the last week of the competition, Dounia Batma and Carmen Suleiman returned to their respective countries to meet with fans and the press; and when they returned to Beirut, each sang a patriotic number.

The second season was just as memorable—if not more so. In the beginning of the live episodes, Ragheb Alama stated that he thought a female would win the title, while Ahlam countered by claiming that a male would win. Abdelkarim Hamdan's

songs about his hometown Aleppo and country Syria brought the entire audience to tears and attracted the attention of not just regional media, but also Western media (AFP 2013; Haddad 2013). On the other hand, the bloopers of the Kurdish Parwas Hussein speaking Arabic in her video clips provided amusement. The studio audience was so supportive of the Lebanese Ziad Khoury that it seemed as if his entire village came every week to support his performances. Mohamed Mounir was so impressed with Ahmad Gamal's performance of his song, that he sent a video congratulating him and then came and met with all of the contestants a few weeks before his guest performance. When the Saudi contestant, Fares El Madani, had health problems and spent several days in the hospital, Ahlam was quite emotional after his performance. The finalists performed a special medley in honor of Warda al-Jazairia on the anniversary of her passing. Other exceptional performances included Fares El Madani singing with his brother, Ziad Khoury performing with his brother and father, and Parwas Hussein singing with her husband. Also, several contestants performed additional songs in English, such as Farrah Yousef singing Adele, Mohammed Assaf performing the Backstreet Boys' 'I want it that way,' and Ahmad Gamal's rendition of 'I believe I can fly,' in which he literally floated above the audience on a harness. Hassan El Shafei was impressed when contestants performed mash-ups of famous songs originally performed by famous male and female Arab artists. And Ahlam truly outdid herself with her Kentucky Fried Chicken and football moments. In the middle of providing feedback to Ziad Khoury, for several minutes she demanded that there be fried chicken in her hotel room when she returned, which brought the entire judging panel to tears from laughing. And after finding out that Mohammed Assaf likes football, she forced him to state if he was *madridī* 'with Madrid' or *barsalonī* 'with Barcelona' stating that he looks just like

Cristiano Ronaldo, but sings with the agility of Lionel Messi. After Ahlam stated that she was *barsaloniyya* ‘with Barcelona’ and Ragheb Alama said he was *madridī* ‘with Barcelona,’ in a hilarious moment Nancy Ajram, sitting between the two, said *ana baddi fīsh* ‘I want to live’! These performances, antics, and emotional moments all left impressions on the viewing audience.

In the ninth week of the finals, the competition was down to the remaining two or three finalists. On that Friday night the remaining finalists each sang three songs hoping to secure the most votes from the viewing audience. In the first season, guest star Najwa Karam, also performed in between the finalists’ songs. In the second season, instead of a guest star, the show brought back the 27 semi-finalists to perform. On that Saturday night there were several clips showing the progress of the finalists, the judges’ antics, and moments from the season. In addition to performances by a guest star and the potential Arab Idols, in Season One the ten finalists performed together and in Season Two both the finalists and the semi-finalists performed. Additionally, for the second season’s finale, MBC showed viewing groups from Cairo, Amman, and several cities in Palestine. Near the end of the episode, the hosts brought the finalists on stage and with much awe and drama announced the winner of *Arab Idol*. In addition to the title, the winners received a Chevrolet Malibu, a Pepsi sponsorship, and a record deal with Platinum Records. After much fanfare the Idol sang one last song to end the program.

3. Audience

With a cast of characters from a variety of countries and auditionees from almost every Arabic-speaking nation, *Arab Idol* is intended for a pan-Arab audience.

The hosts and judges frequently note that the audience spreads from the Arab Maghreb to the Arabian Gulf. One indication of the pan-Arab audience is the various cell providers with numbers for audience members to use in order to vote for their favorite contestant. These cell providers represent 17 Arabic-speaking countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Sudan)—excluding Libya—and the option of an international number for those outside the region. Further, for 11 of those countries, multiple cell phone providers are listed. The international number for voting is also important, since the show is broadcast across more than 40 countries worldwide (Khalaf 2012).

Actual viewership statistics are few, but still demonstrate the enormous reception *Arab Idol*, especially the second season, received. Mohammed Assaf gained more than 60 million votes in the final round (M.R. 2013). The Palestinian phone provider Jawwal claimed that 8 million votes were cast by Palestinians for Mohammed Assaf, who also had support from the Bank of Palestine through matched voting and a billboard campaign (Sherwood and Balousha 2013). MBC estimated that 100 million viewers watched the finale for Season Two, which is the highest figure MBC has ever achieved. The previous record was held by the Turkish series *Nour*, which acquired 85 million viewers for the season finale at the end of August 2008 (Haddad 2013). Further, MBC estimated that 60 percent of Arab youth and 50 percent of Arab adults watched the finale (Hawkes 2013). Statistics based on Emirati viewership demonstrate that almost 411,000 residents watched the Season Two finale, or in other words 67 percent of Emirati viewers at the time were watching the finale. This level of viewership made *Arab Idol* Season Two the most popular program in the United Arab Emirates for the

year (Flanagan 2013). The unprecedented success of the second season indicates how the program was both a television and a cultural phenomenon in the region.

4. The Second Season: Bigger and Better

Thus far the descriptions of the characters, process, and audience has noted the differences between the first and second seasons of *Arab Idol*; however, there are several additional points regarding how the second season was a much bigger success than the first one. Mazen Hayek, the official spokesperson and general manager of public relations and business affairs for the MBC Group, stated that the second season was “a quantum leap” from the success of the first season and that “there are several reasons for the success... most notably, it forms a connection between Arab nationalities, without distinguishing between countries” (Haddad 2013; Hawkes 2013).

The production value of the second season was much higher and the aesthetic appeal for the audience increased significantly. While Chevrolet, Pepsi, and Platinum Records sponsored both seasons and Maybelline New York replaced Garnier as a sponsor for the second season, Season Two had the additional sponsorship of Kit Kat, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Samsung. The contestants were often seen drinking Pepsi, eating fried chicken and kit kats, and using Samsung devices. A higher number of sponsors translated into additional funds to raise the production value of the show, such as the audio equipment used by the judges, hosts, and contestants.

In the second season, the fans created a deeper connection with the contestants through a variety of means. Unlike the first season, in which the number to vote for contestants depended on the order in which they sang, in the second season the semi-finalists chose a number that stuck with them through the rest of the competition. This

consistency helped to form a bond, such that in the finals the studio audience often shouted the contestant's number while the host was announcing it. Kentucky Fried Chicken sponsored the Super Fan question each week of the finals, in which one question by a fan was selected and posed to a contestant. Also, the audience could see additional behind-the-scenes footage on the weekly *Arab Idol Extra*, which aired Thursday nights discussing the previous week's events. Finally, discussions on social media—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram—were much greater in the second season. During the finals there was a segment on the official accounts for all of the finalists so that their fan base could connect and follow with them. Mazen Hayek of the MBC Group also noted the “overwhelming number of comments about the participants every day” on social media as an indicator of the success of the show (Haddad 2013). After the season concluded, the finalists participated in the Arab Idol Tour, which even included North American cities to connect with their fan base there (Said 2013; Crouse 2013).

The second season also brought up sensitive regional issues while being a sensation with regional political leaders. The presence of Palestinian Mohammed Assaf and Kurdish Parwas Hussein politicized a social entertainment program, which tended to shy away from the political events in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. Thousands of political comments appeared on social media supporting the Palestinian hero and reacting to the Kurdish presence on an Arab talent competition. There was a surge of reactions after Ahlam commented that Parwas Hussein is from Iraq, not Kurdish Iraq, since the latter is an inseparable part of the former (Reuters 2013; Shalaby 2013). Political leaders offered their encouragement through their presence, phone calls, and posts on social media. Imad Ahmad, the Deputy Prime Minister for the Kurdistan

Regional Government of Iraq, sat in the live audience one week to offer support to Parwas Hussein. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called both Mohammed Assaf and Ragheb Alama personally to offer his encouragement. Ragheb Alama read a letter from a Palestinian in an Israeli prison who went on a hunger strike in order to watch Mohammed Assaf perform on *Arab Idol*. Ragheb Alama also announced a tweet in which then Lebanese President Michel Suleiman stated that Lebanon was proud of Ziad Khoury. International organizations associated with the United Nations also had a presence on the show. Iyad Abumoghli, regional director and representative of the United Nations Environment Program for West Asia attended to present Ragheb Alama an award for his work with the organization on climate change and appointed Ragheb Alama a goodwill ambassador for the program on behalf of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. And after being announced the winner, Mohammed Assaf became a cultural ambassador for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and for Palestine as well as receiving a diplomatic passport.

Finally, the second season had a much larger impact on both regional and Western media. The hosts and judges often welcomed regional journalists who attended the live performance and some newspapers provided weekly updates about the show (e.g. Topalian 2013). MBC even provided the top three finalists with training and guidance on how to interact with the press and media. A wide range of Western media covered Mohammed Assaf's win, telling the story of the singer who grew up in the Khan Younis refugee camp in Gaza, was reprimanded by Hamas for singing about Palestinian unity, struggled for two days to cross the border into Egypt and to arrive to the Cairo auditions late, and only received an audition number after a fellow Palestinian offered his own because he knew that Mohammed Assaf had a better chance of

winning. The *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC), *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, and others all told Mohammed Assaf's story while covering the massive celebrations in Palestine and the hero's welcome he received upon coming home (Booth 2013; Knell 2013; Sherwood and Balousha 2013).

This chapter has discussed the history and controversial nature of reality television in the Arabic-speaking world and has focused on the environment in which the data for this analysis occurred. *Arab Idol* has been a cultural phenomenon in the Arabic-speaking world through its unprecedented success. This program, as with other regional reality television shows, successfully adapted to Arab values by emphasizing the rapport and empathy between the judges and contestants as opposed to the public humiliation component of the Western counterparts. *Arab Idol's* strong appeal stems from a comprehensive representation of the region with hosts, judges, and contestants hailing from a variety of countries and a viewing audience spanning the entire Arabic-speaking world and diaspora by receiving the satellite broadcast. Not only does this audience watch the program, but also interacts through voting and commenting on social media in addition to developing strong connections with the contestants. *Arab Idol* stresses a clear Arab identity while also celebrating the multiplicity of this shared culture through diversity in local dialects, music, and nations of origin. The next chapter examines the various linguistic analyses on diglossia, code switching, interdialectal communication, and levelling in the literature review.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses a wide range of literature to provide a solid background for analyzing the linguistic variation in a talent-based reality television program. The chapter begins with a brief overview of diglossia and the range of continuum options that various scholars have put forth. Then, it thoroughly examines the code switching literature in the Arabic-speaking world and in a range of contexts. Next, it mentions a sampling of code switching studies based on other language varieties. The chapter then discusses levelling within countries and the few studies that have examined interdialectal communication. Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting the gap in the literature that this study aims to address.

A. Diglossia and the Continuum

A defining characteristic of the Arab-speaking world is the coexistence of a written standard language, which is generally portrayed as constant from Morocco to Iraq¹, and spoken varieties, which differ from country to country and even village to village. This linguistic phenomenon is diglossia, which Ferguson (1959) famously defined as:

a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (Ferguson 1959, 336).

¹ However, linguists recognize syntactic differences in written Arabic (e.g. Wilmsen 2010a).

In his discussion of diglossia, Ferguson labeled these varieties as the high or highly valued (H) and the low or lower valued (L). A central feature of Ferguson's initial description of diglossia is the functional separation between the two varieties. The H variety is used in a sermon at a church or a mosque, a personal letter, a political speech, a university lecture, a news broadcast, a newspaper editorial story, a caption on a picture, and poetry. While, the L variety is used in instructions to servants, waiters, and workmen; in conversations with family, friends, and colleagues; and for radio 'soap opera' programs, captions of political cartoons, and folk literature. The H variety has high symbolic value because its speakers consider it to be more beautiful and logical in addition to associations with religion. This variety has a long literary heritage, has been the object of grammatical study, and is learned through schooling; whereas, the L variety is learned as a mother tongue. When applying Ferguson's terminology to the Arabic language, *fuṣḤā* 'lit. eloquent; literary/standard' is the H variety and *ʕammiyya* 'vernacular/colloquial/dialect' is the L variety.

While Ferguson (1959) claimed a sharp differentiation between the H and L varieties, several scholars since have argued for multiple levels between *fuṣḤā* and *ʕammiyya*. Blanc (1960) proposed five levels for Arabic: standard classical, modified classical, semi-literary/elevated colloquial, koineised colloquial, and plain colloquial. Unlike the following scholars, Blanc stated that these levels were discrete.

Badawi (1973) also described five levels and related each level in terms of usage context and the speaker's education level. *fuṣḤā al-turaṯ* 'heritage classical' is the Classical Arabic of the Quran and the Arab literary heritage. *fuṣḤā al-ʕaṣr* 'contemporary classical' is the variety for the modern age, and what Western-trained linguists would consider Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). These first two varieties are

written and may be read from a text, while the following three varieties are not written and only spoken. *Ṣammiyyat al-muṯaqqafīn* ‘colloquial of the cultured’ is a colloquial influenced by MSA and used for serious discussions or formal situations when teaching at universities. *Ṣammiyyat al-mutanawwirīn* ‘colloquial of the basically educated’ is the normal language for people with only a basic level of education, or the variety used by educated individuals for non-serious discussions and by the media for non-intellectual topics. Finally, *Ṣammiyyat al-Ṣummiyīn* ‘colloquial of the illiterates’ is the colloquial with no influence from MSA. Badawi examined Egyptian media when determining these levels, but recognized that the borders between each level are blurred, fading into each other like a rainbow. Even though the levels are described in terms of education, the amount of education does not determine the level at which someone speaks, but rather the individual’s potential range and options. Both the individual’s abilities and the situation determine the appropriate variety.

Meiseles (1980) distinguished four varieties: Literary Arabic, Sub-standard Arabic, Educated Spoken Arabic, and Plain Vernacular. Additionally, Meiseles defined oral literary Arabic and informal written Arabic. The former is the oral language used in all formal occasions and in some semi-formal ones, while the latter is the written counterpart, but influenced by the vernacular. While Mitchell (1986) did not describe a continuum, he did differentiate four types of Arabic: Literary Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Educated Spoken Arabic, and Plain Vernacular. Both Meiseles (1980) and Mitchell (1986) stated that Educated Spoken Arabic is a tool for Arabic speakers from different dialectal groups—both within a country and within the region—to communicate.

Blanc (1960), Badawi (1973), Meiseles (1980), and Mitchell (1986) all developed slightly different distinctions between *fuṣḤā* and *ʕammiyya*. Thus, what Ferguson considered as two separate entities, may better be described as the ends of a continuum. Although linguists and scholars may differentiate between Classical Arabic (the language of the Quran), Media Arabic (a specialized subset of Modern Standard Arabic), and Educated Spoken Arabic, as Bassiouney (2009) highlighted, most native Arabic speakers consider the entire continuum as Arabic, albeit recognizing the differences in its two ends, Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic.

B. Code Switching in the Arabic-Speaking World

Code switching “is a practice of parties in discourse to signal changes in context by using alternate grammatical systems or subsystems, or *codes*” (Nilep 2006, 17 emphasis in original). In the Arabic-speaking world code switching applies both to switching between any variety of Arabic and another language (e.g. French or English) and to switching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic. Before examining the code switching literature regarding the social motivations for code switching in the Arabic-speaking region, I highlight the influential work of John J. Gumperz.

1. Gumperz and Conversational Code Switching

While working at the Institute of Sociology at Oslo University, Gumperz met Jan-Petter Blom, and the two conducted a verbal behavior study in Hamnesberget, a small settlement in northern Norway. The villagers of Hamnesberget used two varieties: Bokmål, the standard and literary code, and Ranamål, the local code, which has prestige and is a symbol of local identity. Blom and Gumperz (1972) described the two varieties

as distinct codes—even though there were only slight phonological, morphological, and lexical differences—largely because the native speakers believed in the separateness and maintained them as distinct forms. Due to the linguistic similarities, Blom and Gumperz (1972) concluded that social factors conditioned the separateness of the two codes. They defined social events as the participants, setting, and topic, and proposed that the social events restrict the selection of linguistic code. Further, they suggested two types of code switching: situational switching and metaphorical switching. Situational switching is a linguistic shift responding to a change in the social events, or in other words motivated by factors external to the participants. Metaphorical switching is the use of two varieties in a single social setting and as such is motivated by the individuals themselves and related to their perceptions of themselves vis-à-vis the social events. During metaphorical switching, the use of a code alludes to another social event which then provides connotations for the current social event. Blom and Gumperz emphasized the speaker's role in code switching. Gumperz later modified his terminology for switching.

Gumperz (1977) no longer distinguished between situational and metaphorical switching; instead he described conversational code switching and listed six of its conversational functions. He defined conversational code switching as “the juxtaposition of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems, within the same exchange” (Gumperz 1977, 1). Further, he described conversational code switching as flowing smoothly without hesitations or changes in rhythm. Gumperz differentiated the ‘we code’ and the ‘they code’ as important features in bilingual communities. The ‘we code’ is the minority language and associated with private, in-group activities, while the ‘they code’ is the majority language and

associated with public, out-group relations. Gumperz (1977) compared conversational code switching in three environments and found that six functions of code switching existed in all three communities. The three environments were an Austrian village on the Austrian-Yugoslavian border, Indian college students from urban Delhi, and Chicano college students and urban professionals in the United States. The 'we codes' are Slovenian, Hindi, and Spanish, respectively and the 'they codes' are German, English, and English, respectively. The six functions were quotations, addressee specification, interjections, repetition, message qualification, and personalization versus objectivization. Speakers switch codes for either direct quotations or reported speech. A switch can direct the message to one of the possible addressees or serve to mark an interjection or sentence filler. A repetition is when the message is reiterated in the other code, either literally or slightly modified, and may clarify the statement or emphasize the message. A switch may include a qualifying construction, such as sentence and verb complements or predicates following a copula. Finally, switches can provide objectivity or authority, create distance, or personalize the statement. Gumperz acknowledged that this list of conversational functions is not exhaustive and that switches may not always serve a function. He emphasized that speakers must know how to distinguish between meaningful and non-meaningful code alternations. Nonetheless, Gumperz's work on conversational code switching and listing the social functions has influenced a range of linguists, such as Bentahila (1983) and Zentella (1997).

Gumperz (1977) also noted that in diglossic situations, conversational code switching is largely situational since a distinct variety is used for particular settings, for a kind of activity, or with certain speakers. The norms regarding code selection should

be stable in a diglossic community because of the one-to-one relationship between language usage and social context.

Gumperz then expanded his work toward a general theory of discourse strategies, incorporating both monolingual and multilingual interactions. Gumperz (1982) highlighted the roles of contextualization cues and conversational inferences. A conversational cue is “any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signaling of contextual presuppositions” (Gumperz 1982, 131). The conversational inference “is the situated or context-bound process of interpretation, by means of which participants in an exchange assess others’ intentions, and on which they base their responses” (Gumperz 1982, 153). Since the conversational cues are implicit, interlocutors make conversational inferences based on their knowledge from past experiences and current perceptions. However, when interlocutors misinterpret the conversational inferences, there may be a misunderstanding—often a social faux pas—and the interlocutor is considered unfriendly, uncooperative, or rude. Gumperz (1982) argued that without communicative competence—both the grammatical and contextualization knowledge—misunderstandings are more likely to arise and impede conversational cooperation.

2. Code Switching Studies from the Maghreb

Gumperz’s work and listing of social functions influenced some of the following scholars examining code switching in Morocco and Tunisia. Bentahila (1983) examined the code switching of Moroccans between French and Moroccan Arabic in an informal setting.² The participants were not aware of the recording and were bilinguals between 17 and 40 years old. The conversation took place in a home with two to four

² Throughout this paper Bentahila referred to the two languages as French and Arabic; however from the examples it is clear that the latter code is Moroccan Arabic.

individuals and on a recurring basis, covering a range of topics. After examining the data, Bentahila divided the motivations for the switches into three categories: external factor, rhetorical device, and after hesitation. External factors are motivated not by the speaker, but rather have another impetus, usually the topic of the discussion. These switches allow the speaker to use vocabulary that is the most available or appropriate for a topic. When Bentahila listed the motivations under this category, he indicated if the switch was to Moroccan Arabic, to French, or for either language. He noted that speakers tend to switch to Moroccan Arabic to discuss a religious custom, to insult or swear, and to say a stereotyped phrase or filler. Speakers tend to switch to French for technical terms referring to medical, education, or administrative matters; for numbers, dates, or times; and to avoid a taboo word in Moroccan Arabic in an effort to minimize embarrassment. Some concepts are associated with a particular language or certain words have a particular connotation in one language, allowing a switch to go either to French or to Moroccan Arabic.

The rhetorical device category includes switching that is deliberately chosen and exploited for a particular effect. Most of these switches could be either to French or to Moroccan Arabic; however, only switches to Moroccan Arabic were used for a humorous or sarcastic comment. Speakers used switching as a rhetorical device to repeat in the other language for emphasis, to use the other code to show disagreement or astonishment, to interrupt, to gain the floor, to change the subject, to create a dramatic effect in a description, and to mark an aside. This category of switches was also used when quoting, whereby one language was used as an introduction and the other for the quotation; he noted that in his data usually Moroccan Arabic introduced a quotation in French. The final category, switching after hesitation, occurs when the speaker pauses

in the middle of the utterance and then continues in the other language. The speaker may continue in the second language or eventually return to the first language.

Bentahila's categories of external factor and rhetorical device are similar to Blom's and Gumperz's (1972) categories of situational switching and metaphorical switching.

Further, several of the examples Bentahila provided are similar to the social functions listed in Gumperz (1977), such as quotations and repetition.

Canna (2012) also examined language use in Morocco. While her study did not focus on code switching per se, her analysis of the appropriate contextual use of each code and its connotations complements this literature review. Canna explored the forms of address, specifically salutations and well-wishing formulas, and focused on three different contexts: eating places, receiving guests, and weddings. She conducted her fieldwork in Casablanca while living with an originally Fessi family and acting as a participant observer. She found a sharp distinction for the greetings in cheap restaurants and in fancy restaurants. In the former, all of the greetings and salutations were in Moroccan Arabic and only the father spoke to the waiter. In the latter, everything was conducted in French. She observed a strong tendency toward Moroccan Arabic when families received guests into their home and during weddings, in addition to some insertions of French or mixing. Her observations correspond to the connotations associated with each code. French is the symbol of modernity, sophistication, and wealth and is used for politeness amongst individuals with a French education, which usually implies a higher socioeconomic status. The use of French may also indicate distance, respect, and formality. Moroccan Arabic reflects traditional values, religion, and intimacy. When members of a higher social class speak in Moroccan Arabic to someone in a lower class it indicates solidarity and politeness.

Bentahila and Davies (2002) highlighted the symbolic use of French and Dialectal Arabic in raï music from Morocco and Algeria. The data included a corpus of 150 songs that used both codes and by singers who are considered by the North African public as being raï artists. Admittedly lyrics are not similar to spontaneous speech and the artists may not know their audience; however, writers tend to be very mindful of the meanings and symbols contained within in their lyrics. Bentahila and Davies found that the code switching in songs was very similar to the natural speech of Moroccans and Algerians. They also observed a tendency to switch into French for several reasons, including terms associated with Western culture, abstract words related to emotions, and descriptions of male-female relations. Many of the songs were mostly in Dialectal Arabic; however, the refrains—and often titles—were in French. Thus, while only a small amount of information is delivered in French, the quantity appears to be larger because of the repetition of the chorus. Bentahila and Davies argued that the use of French and Dialectal Arabic have different roles. French expands the scope of the audience by appealing to outsiders, the West, and the international community, while Dialectal Arabic appeals to the home community and used for elaboration. Further, the code switching provides a unique Maghrebi feel.

Baoueb (2009) studied the variety of languages used by Tunisian business speakers, focusing on social constraints for switching. She used two different companies for the study, one small and one large, and had several participants from each, six and ten respectively, in addition to any willing customers. For the study, she collected data in three ways: researcher observations, interviews and questionnaires, and recordings of business conversations. She divided the data into two groups, code switching between Tunisian Arabic and French, and code switching between Tunisian Arabic, Modern

Standard Arabic, and English. This division appears to be due to the inclusion of Arabic speakers from Libya, the Gulf, and other parts of the Middle East. She divided the motivations for the switching into three categories: situational, stylistic, and linguistic. Situational switches are contextual and based on the setting, topic of conversation, and social positions of the speakers. Tunisian Arabic and French code switching is unmarked within members of the group; however considered informal. She also stressed that due to the technical nature of some words, the speaker would use French and not Tunisian Arabic. The switching into Modern Standard Arabic or English is not a natural form of communication for Tunisian speakers and indicates an interaction with individuals from a different socio-cultural group. Switching to English for technical terms, such as dates, numbers, and sums of money, may increase understanding. Further, switching to English or another dialect of Arabic may allow the speaker to appear multifaceted and to reduce group boundaries in an effort to forge a closer relationship.

Stylistic switches are similar to Bentahila's (1983) category of rhetorical device and used to express discord or surprise, to gain the floor, to make side comments, to reiterate, and to attract attention. Baoueb also stated that these switches are usually uttered in the speaker's native language. In formal settings in which French should be the language used, Tunisian Arabic is used to paraphrase, to make side comments, and to reiterate. However, in informal settings, French is used to interject, to quote, and to emphasize. When the switching is between Tunisian Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and English, using French would be an exclusion strategy and the switching to English or Standard Arabic would be used to avoid misunderstanding or to emphasize. Finally, linguistic switches are language induced and would include lexical switches and

discourse markers. Due to the lack of technical terms in Tunisian Arabic, most of the linguistic switches to French are for words of a technical and scientific nature or words dealing with dates, numbers, and times. On the other hand, most of the linguistic switches to Tunisian Arabic are for idiomatic expressions associated with culture or religion. The linguistic switches to English are for unknown words or dates, numbers, times, and sums of money. Generally, Baoueb's first two categories are very similar to Bentahila's (1983) categories of external factors and rhetorical devices; however, by adding the third category, it becomes much more difficult to draw the line between situational and linguistic switches. Baoueb admitted in the discussion that the lines between the categories are not always clear when labeling a switch.

All of these studies have common themes in the use of Dialectal Arabic and French in the Maghreb. Dialectal Arabic is the language of tradition, religion, solidarity, and intimacy, while French is the language of Westernization, modernity, abstractness, and distance. While the contrast between Maghreb Arabic/French and Dialectal Arabic/Standard Arabic is not the exact same, as I shall highlight below, there are strong similarities regarding the associations of both French and Standard Arabic with abstractness and distance. Further, switching between Maghreb Arabic and French is a natural phenomenon and is considered to be an unmarked choice in informal situations. However, switching between Dialectal Arabic and Standard Arabic may be limited due to the education level of the speaker and the situation.

3. Code Switching Studies from Egypt

A fair amount of code switching literature uses data from Egypt in a range of contexts, including mosques, academia, talk shows, and a theater community.

Bassiouney (2006; 2013) examined the code switching by religious preachers in mosque sermons to determine how they exploit the diglossic situation to convey the message more effectively. The data consisted of ten hours of Friday sermons recorded between 1997 and 1999. Bassiouney analyzed three speeches, two by the same speaker who did switch and a third speech with another speaker who did not switch. She stated that Standard Arabic is associated with authority, formality, detachment, and abstractness, while Egyptian Arabic is connected with family, friends, intimacy, informality, and concreteness. Thus, a speaker can exploit these associations when giving a public lecture. In her analysis of the first speaker, she noted a pattern of introducing the mosque sermon with a quotation from the Quran in Classical Arabic, then explaining the verse through a story in Egyptian Arabic, and concluding with a summarizing remark in Standard Arabic. Even though the speaker changed the variety he spoke throughout the sermon, he never changed his role as a preacher. The other speaker maintained Standard Arabic through the entire sermon and even used the phonology of Standard Arabic, such as *jim* and not *gim*. Bassiouney (2013) stressed that because of the strong association of Egyptian Arabic with domestic life and real people in addition to the connection between Standard Arabic and abstractions, the switching can trigger associations in a speech to create a more powerful effect for the audience.

Bassiouney (2006) incorporated her discussion of code switching in mosque sermons and political speeches (below) as well as university lectures in her analysis of different types of monologues. The university lecture included in her data was delivered by a professor at Alexandria University about the Roman conquest of Egypt.

Bassiouney found that the professor generally used Egyptian Arabic with insertions of Standard Arabic in her speech. The professor did not use language to assign roles to the

interlocutors or to organize the structure of the lecture. Thus, for both mosque sermons and university lectures—which are both didactic in nature—the speakers can change code without changing their roles as either sheikhs or professors. Overall Bassiouney (2006) proposed a cause and effect chain to explain how speakers choose the variety. The speaker first chooses the communicative aim, then either opts for involvement from the audience or a lack of it, next selects the ideation, and finally chooses the code to use. Bassiouney concluded that while the setting, audience, and subject matter play a role in language choice, the speaker is the most essential factor in determining code choice in monologues.

Mejdell (2006) examined the situation of the academic panel presentation at a public seminar to determine the variety speakers use to communicate. The first panel consisted of four speakers discussing problems of higher education in Egypt and took place at the American University of Cairo. The second panel was held at the *Tagammuʿ* party premises in Cairo to discuss a newly published short story collection and included two panel presenters and an ex-auditorio contribution by an audience member. While the panel presenters may have prepared for the engagement, they all spoke extemporaneously, using elements of both Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic. Mejdell analyzed five linguistic features: complementizers, demonstratives, negative particles, relative phrases, and pronoun suffixation. Mejdell found an uneven distribution of the Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic features across the speakers; thus, the style for the speakers in the similar setting of a panel presentation is not the same. She observed that some speakers oriented more toward a Standard Arabic style, others toward an Egyptian Arabic style, while others mixed evenly throughout. Mejdell noted an apparent hierarchy of the various features both on inter- and intra-speaker

levels; demonstratives and negative particles tended to be in Standard Arabic and pronoun suffixation usually was in Egyptian Arabic, with relative phrases and complementizers in the middle. Mejdell concluded that the speakers of academic panels tend to use a middle or educated language (*luġa wuṣṭa* or *luġa al-muṯaqqafīn*), which is appropriate for non-casual speech and allows for a range of styles. This mixed variety is easier for both the speaker and the listener, while also signaling the formality of the situation as well as the Egyptian identity of the speaker simultaneously. The following study also found two different styles used by well-known writers during interviews.

Eid (2007) studied Standard and Egyptian Arabic variation during interviews broadcasted on an Egyptian channel. She analyzed two separate interviews, one with Yehya Haqqi and the other with Anis Mansour, both of whom are famous writers and were involved in the literary and cultural scenes of their time. She classified the speech in the interview as Standard Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, or a hybrid. Eid distinguished between code switching and hybrid language use, whereby the former is done for a certain effect and in the latter the boundaries between the two codes are blurred or fuzzy. In the Haqqi interview, several people spoke about different facets of Haqqi's life and the questions were never heard. Haqqi maintained the boundaries between public/professional and private/personal, such that Haqqi used a primarily Standard Arabic style to discuss professional matters, while allowing his family to talk about personal matters using both Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic. The Mansour interview showed both the interviewer and the interviewee outdoors near a swimming pool. Mansour used both languages and did not maintain the boundary between Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic, which allowed him to merge both his

professional and personal identities into one entity. Thus, speakers can use multiple styles and varying degrees of hybridity to portray a certain identity.

Bassiouney (2009; 2010) also examined the variation between Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic on talk shows, focusing on the code choice and code switching by women in relation to identity and assertiveness. Her analysis demonstrated that educated women with access to Standard Arabic can and do use that variety as a discourse function to project a certain identity. The data consisted of fifteen hours of recordings from five different shows, some of which were exclusively men or women and some were mixed company. She found that women used Standard Arabic to portray a certain identity, such as social reformist, director of a non-governmental organization, or judge. Specifically, the judge's use of Standard Arabic indexed her position as a judge and the authority she has in the courtroom. Both men and women manipulated Standard Arabic to symbolize their identity, authority, and expertise. Further, she noted that women were as assertive as men through their use of both overlap and interruptions.

Finally, Wilmsen (1996) analyzed a theatrical community in Egypt and collected data through participant observations with the aim of observing switches between Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic. He distinguished between code switching and code-mixing. A speaker may use the Egyptian dialect and then switch into Standard Arabic to highlight or emphasize the utterance. Switching to Standard Arabic was employed to present the speaker's main point, to pose a central question, to quote elements of a discussion from television or newspapers, or to offer the speaker's either endorsement or scorn for a statement when accompanied by a change in pitch. Code-mixing, similar to Eid's (2007) notion of hybridity, is where the mixing is not as neat as switching and tends to violate the proposed rules for code switching (e.g. Eid

1988). Wilmsen found that the majority of the code switching tended to be single word switches and he observed more code-mixing than code switching.

With few exceptions, the speakers analyzed in the above literature tend to be very educated individuals, such as sheikhs, academics, or writers. The linguistic variation by these speakers and in these contexts is very specialized and may not extend to the natural speech by the average person. Political leaders and politicians are another group of individuals who tend to be highly educated and are capable of manipulating the associations of Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic to be persuasive and lively in their speeches.

4. Code Switching in Political Speeches and Beyond

Several studies have focused on how politicians employ language use and variation as a discourse function. Bassiouney (2009) included a brief comparison of two speeches by Arab presidents, highlighting the role of both Standard Arabic and mixing with colloquial. Usually the interviewers use either a mixture of Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic or just Standard Arabic for interviews with heads of state, since the interviewer normally prepares the questions ahead of time. In an interview with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad after the Hizballah-Israel 2006 war, the Egyptian interviewer used a mixture of Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic while al-Assad spoke in only Standard Arabic. Through al-Assad's use of Standard Arabic he is appealing to its connotations, especially authority and legitimacy, and to its symbol of Arab unity while discussing Iran's role in the 2006 war. Contrastingly, the Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abd Allah Salih used a mixture of Standard Arabic and Yemeni Arabic during his interview. Whereas the Syrian president used Standard Arabic to emphasize legitimacy, the

Yemeni president spoke in an expected manner and did not claim authority with his language choice. This section discusses some of the literature on political speeches and concludes with a comprehensive study both in terms of contexts examined and geographical scope.

Holes (1993) examined six extracts from the speeches of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, focusing on the communicative content of the speeches and then relating that to language variation. He noted that while political speeches tend to be scripted, Nasser's speeches were closer to live theatrical performances which incorporated many conversational tactics, such as parenthetical asides, digression into personal memories, swearing, and joking. Holes used recorded versions of the six speeches and compared the actual delivery to the official texts. Nasser delivered these speeches between 1956 and 1965 on a range of topics. Holes analyzed speeches with similar topics and found that even if the speeches have the same strategic objective, Nasser may use different tactics and the language choice was a linguistic consequence of the chosen tactic. Holes (1993) argued that Standard Arabic is used for abstractions and ideals, claims authoritativeness, lacks personalization, and is delivered in a slower pace. On the other hand, Egyptian Arabic is used for commentary and explanation, conveys the concrete and physical, and personalizes the issues. Holes also claimed that Egyptian Arabic can be used as a textual framework by organizing "for the audience in 'real time' the 'timeless'" Standard Arabic text (Holes 1993, 33). The language choice is dependent on three factors: the status the speaker gives to his statement, the discourse function of his statement, and the role the speaker plays vis-à-vis the interlocutors. This basic juxtaposition between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic has been observed in other speeches both in Egypt and in other Arabic-speaking countries.

Mazraani (1997) analyzed the language variation in the speeches of three Arab heads of state to observe how they use language variation as a rhetorical strategy. She used audio and video recordings of speeches by the Egyptian Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Iraqi Saddam Hussein, and the Libyan Muammar Gaddafi. After transcribing the speeches, she analyzed them at the phonological, morpho-phonological, syntactical, and lexical levels. She categorized sections of the speech as either Standard Arabic, Dialectal Arabic, or mixed, and found that some switches had a rhetorical function, while others did not. Overall she found that all three speakers used Standard Arabic and their Dialectal Arabic in similar ways. Standard Arabic tends to be didactic and connotes prestige, authority, power, and respect. Speakers use Standard Arabic when constructing an abstract argument, recalling historical events, depersonalizing the discourse, and distancing themselves from the audience. Dialectal Arabic tends to be exegetical, expressive, and emotional. Speakers use Dialectal Arabic to reiterate concepts stated in Standard Arabic, to describe anecdotes of personal experiences or conversations with other leaders, to personalize the discourse, and to create solidarity with the audience. She also noted some differences in the styles of the three presidents. Nasser was the most natural in both varieties and made clear switches between each, while Hussein and Gaddafi tended to mix the two varieties together more.

Bassiouney (2006) included an analysis of four speeches by Egyptian politicians, two by President Hosni Mubarak and two by different Egyptian members of parliament. In the 1999 Labor Day speech, in which the president discussed the achievements of the year and the problems to be tackled, Mubarak used pure Standard Arabic to convey factual information in the role of the president and then switched to Egyptian Arabic to explain the facts in the role of the good old friend. In another speech

with an audience of students and professors, Mubarak started the speech in Egyptian Arabic to appear personal and informal, taking the role as a father or caring older man. When he was asked a question about the peace process, he switched to Standard Arabic to appear objective and abstract, assuming the role of a political commentator. In the second part of the response he switched to a mixture of both varieties, providing concrete examples and assuming the role of a popular Egyptian and Arab leader. Bassiouney also analyzed two speeches by members of parliament delivered on the same day. One member gave a speech criticizing the Health Ministry over importing contaminated foreign food and used the expected language choice of mixing, representing the role of a parliament member. The second gave a speech in pure Standard Arabic about the sanctions against Iraq. This time the member was not speaking as an individual, but rather as an abstract voice, assuming the role of an Egyptian or Arab. Overall, Bassiouney found that in political speeches—unlike in mosque sermons and university lectures—there is a direct relation between code choice and role. Further, Bassiouney noted that Standard Arabic is used to portray importance and seriousness, while Egyptian Arabic is used for narration and concrete examples.

Finally, Albirini (2011) also examined the switching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic, but used a range of settings enabling comparisons between the different contexts. He used 11 religious speeches, 14 political debates, and 10 football commentaries, totaling to 27 hours of audio and video recordings. He divided the switching into two broad groups: switching from Dialectal Arabic to Standard Arabic and the reverse. He labeled eight types of switches for the former and nine types of switches for the latter. Overall, he found that all of these types of switches were found in all three contexts.

Albirini claimed that switching to Standard Arabic was connected with showing prestige, importance, eloquence, seriousness, and linguistic complexity. A speaker may switch to Standard Arabic to introduce a formulaic expression, which has a positive connotation in Arab culture due to the connection to piety and God-consciousness. This type of switch can also highlight the importance of the utterance or contextualize it as significant. Switching to Standard Arabic can emphasize the utterance by reiterating the same words or idea, and can also signal a shift in tone from comic to serious. Speakers tend to introduce direct quotations in Standard Arabic because it provides authority and credibility to the quotation. Because of Standard Arabic's association with eloquence and high style, a switch will be used to produce rhyming utterances or to recite lines of poetry. Speakers may switch to Standard Arabic when assuming the role of an expert or an analyst due to the connection with education, knowledge, and sophistication. Finally, switching to Standard Arabic can indicate a pan-Arab or Muslim identity. Thus, Albirini concluded that switches to Standard Arabic utilize the variety's roles and functions to demonstrate importance, high prestige, identity, seriousness, and sophistication.

Albirini also claimed that switching to Dialectal Arabic was associated with informal, low prestige, and everyday topics. Switches to Dialectal Arabic can be fillers to interrupt the flow of Standard Arabic or can be parenthetical phrases to introduce a point or add to the message. While Standard Arabic can be used to highlight importance, a shift to Dialectal Arabic can deemphasize a particular utterance or reduce its significance. And while Standard Arabic is used for direct quotations to show authority, Dialectal Arabic is used for indirect quotations and often has a critical, sarcastic, or unaffectionate tone. Albirini stated that since Dialectal Arabic is the easier

code, it is used for explaining or simplifying a previous idea. Further, due to the complexity of numbers in Standard Arabic, numbers, time, and dates are often referred to in Dialectal Arabic. Similarly, since Dialectal Arabic is the code for everyday life, one switches into this variety to exemplify a point through a real-life or hypothetical example. Also, it is the language for daily-life sayings, which can dramatize a point or add emotional appeal. A speaker can shift to Dialectal Arabic to signify a change in tone from serious to comic, and criticism may be more acceptable when connected with jokes and sarcasm. Dialectal Arabic is also used to discuss taboo or derogatory issues in an effort to save face. Finally, switching to Dialectal Arabic can be used to scold, insult, or personally attack someone and may be employed to mitigate the force of face-threatening acts. Thus, according to Albirini, switches to Dialectal Arabic demonstrate unimportance, low prestige, accessibility, and non-seriousness.

From his analysis, Albirini concluded that the division between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic is not based on the context of the speech event, but rather demonstrates the functional division between the two varieties. Further, he suggested a reformulation of the construct of diglossia so that it is functional and not contextual. Albirini repeatedly stressed that only Standard Arabic was used as an index of pan-Arab or Muslim identity. The entire paradigm of his analysis was built upon the associations of Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic. Whereas the other scholars above differentiated these connections to abstract v. concrete—which lacks value connotations—Albirini created two groups of associations that appear to be laden with value judgments.

This section has examined thoroughly the range of code switching studies analyzing this phenomenon in the Arabic-speaking world. While code switching in the

Maghreb between Dialectal Arabic and French may be a common occurrence for the average person, in the rest of the Arabic-speaking world, switching between Dialectal Arabic and Standard Arabic may be an indication of additional education or training as well as reflecting a certain situation. Before continuing on to the literature on levelling in the Arabic-speaking world, the following section discusses some of the code switching literature occurring outside of the region.

C. Additional Code Switching Literature

This section discusses a small portion of the code switching literature focused on the social motivations for alternating languages. These linguists have examined code switching in a range of bilingual communities and with a variety of languages: Spanish, English, Basque, French, Catalan, Castilian, and Hindi. A well-known scholar of Spanish-English code switching is Zentella and her observations of the Puerto Rican community in New York City. Zentella (1997) included the initial analysis of 5 young girls during the period of 1979-1980 and the subsequent data when they were 19-25 years old. The initial study consisted of 103 hours of tape recording spanning over 18 months in which the 5 girls switched between English and Spanish 1,685 times. Zentella divided the factors for code switching into three broad categories: on the spot, in the head, and out of the mouth. The first two categories are similar to Blom's and Gumperz's (1972) distinction between situational and metaphorical switching respectively. The third category is the grammar of mixing and covers the lexical limitations and syntactical constraints when using both codes.

The on-the-spot factors are the observables, such as the physical setting as well as the linguistic and social identities of the participants. Regarding the interlocutors,

Zentella observed three main trends. First, children would often address an individual in the interlocutor's preferred language: Spanish for parents and older Latino women, and English for siblings and men of all ages, especially if they have status or business connections. Second, children usually followed the leader and would switch languages to imitate their interlocutor's switch. Third, in situations where the language preferences were not shared between the interlocutors, they would follow the rule "I speak what I speak best and you speak what you speak best," since most people at least understood both languages (Zentella 1997, 89). Zentella also found that there was less switching during routine activities such as playing outdoors or shopping at the stores.

The in-the-head factors are the shared knowledge of how to manage conversations, to achieve intentions in verbal interactions, and to show respect for the social values of the community. She found 21 conversational strategies and assigned 803 of the switches into one of these categories. Zentella categorized only 48 percent of the switches and was unable to label the rest, highlighting that all switches may not be socially motivated. She grouped these conversational strategies into four main categories: realignment, appeal/control, clarification and/or emphasis, and crutch-like code mixes.³ Several of her categories of switching were noted by other scholars as well, such as quoting (Gumperz 1977; Bentahila 1983), role shift (Holes 1993; Bassiouney 2006), translations (Gumperz 1977; Bentahila 1983), appositions (Gumperz 1977), and taboos (Bentahila 1983). Overall, Zentella found that the girls used varying

³ There are eight realignment switches (topic shifts, direct and indirect quotations, declarative/question shifts, future referent checks, checking, role shifts, rhetorical question and answer, and narrative frame break), three appeal/control switches (aggravating requests, mitigating requests, and attention attraction), four clarification and/or emphasis switches (translations, appositions, accounting for requests, and double subject), and six crutch-like code mixes (crutching, filling in, recycling, triggers, parallelism, and taboos).

amounts of each type of switch and observed that these styles of switching were associated with age and language proficiency.

Muñoz Barredo (2000) also listed the social motivations for code switching between Spanish and Basque. She analyzed almost nine hours of recorded informal speech of bilinguals in Basque Spain narrating personal events and conversing together. Muñoz Barredo found that switching to Spanish indicated authority and seriousness, smoothed over negative comments, portrayed humor or irony, and reported hypothetical or real dialogue. A switch in language may be related to the topic or connote implications; for example, Spanish is the language of work and education, thus topics related to them were often discussed in Spanish. Overall, code switching animated the speech through role changing and dialogue, reinforced or rejected statements, and organized the discussion. Infrequently switches were linguistically motivated due to forgetting a word; these switches were often marked by pauses or hesitations. Again, many of the motivations she observed were also mentioned in other studies.

Alfaraz (2009) investigated the use of Spanish and English in the formal speech event of a religious ceremony. She analyzed six sixty-minute bilingual services of a Catholic mass in Miami, Florida. The mass consisted of ritual talk and non-ritual talk. Ritual talk is used for prayers, readings, and chants; follows a script; tends to have careful articulation; and the switches are less frequent and inter-sentential. Non-ritual talk is used for the homily, greeting, and concluding remarks; is not scripted; tends to have a faster tempo; and switches are more common, both inter- and intra-sentential. Overall, the mass was 59.9 percent in English and 40.1 percent in Spanish on average, which may indicate that English is the unmarked language since it is usually used in institutional contexts. However, when distinguishing between ritual and non-ritual

language use, Spanish is the preferred language for ritual talk while English is the preferred language for non-ritual talk. Alfaraz observed that the Liturgy of the Eucharist is almost exclusively in Spanish, which is the most important part of the service and accommodates the Spanish monolinguals in the congregation. Thus, in the mass Spanish serves two roles: it is the language of the formal and ritualized aspects of the mass, while also being intimate and deepening the religious experience. On the other hand, the homily is often delivered in code switching so that the priest can gain in-group member status from the bilingual majority, which may help the congregation receive the religious message better. The language variation in the bilingual service supports the framework of the mass and reflects the varying linguistic abilities of the congregation. When comparing Alfaraz's (2009) and Bassiouney's (2013) findings it is interesting to note that in the bilingual Catholic mass, Spanish is both the ritualized, formal language, while also being the language of intimacy. Whereas, Bassiouney (2013) observed that Standard Arabic is the formal variety, while Egyptian Arabic is the intimate variety.

Numerous other studies have examined the social motivations and discourse functions of Spanish-English code switching in the United States. Bailey (2000) emphasized the interactional component of code switching. By analyzing the video recordings of Dominican American high school students through a conversational perspective, he found that many switches were used as conversational management tools serving discourse contextualization functions. Thompson (2011) analyzed home video-recordings for code switching and style shifting. He found that most of the switches appeared to be conscious in nature and that the code switches paralleled the style shifts. Further, speakers used the switches to establish identity or reflect ideology toward language learning and language use. The wife switched to English to establish

solidarity with her ethnically non-Hispanic bilingual husband, while the husband used both languages to convey his claim to the bilingual Hispanic culture. Toribio (2002) evaluated the linguistic abilities and attitudes toward code switching amongst bilinguals in California. She used an extensive sociolinguistic survey and several tasks to measure bilingual and code switching competencies. Toribio found that the quantity and quality of code switching varied considerably with the speakers' competence and attitudes toward code alternation. Thus, while some speakers use code switching to signal their social identity or affiliation with two different linguistic and cultural worlds, other speakers do not code switch and may even renounce it as a linguistic form.

The following two studies highlight how code switching allows speakers to overcome linguistic barriers. Woolard (1988) examined the code switching behavior of a comedian and identified orderliness and meaning in his language alternation, addressing the linguistic and social concerns of his community. In Barcelona, the Catalans are all bilinguals, speaking both Catalan and Castilian Spanish, while the Castilians tend to be monolingual in the state language, Castilian. In public, code switching between the two languages is rarely done, which made the promiscuous mixing of the two varieties very salient in the comedy routine of Eugenio. Through her analysis, she found that only 20 percent of the speech was Catalan. She observed phonological shibboleths of Catalan accent, characteristic Catalan prosodic patterns, and the repeated use of a few formulaic phrases, such as terms of address. Eugenio used set patterns of mixing in often repeated phrases at the beginning of his jokes, contrasted 'he says' in the dialogue of the jokes, and repeated utterances in Catalan to build the anticipation. These simple, systematic code switching strategies established the dual linguistic claim and worked to level the boundaries between the two linguistic groups as

opposed to maintaining them. With one exception—which was a fable with the message of peaceful language coexistence—the punch line for every joke was in Castilian. His use of language did not obscure information for any member of the audience, and the salient positions of Catalan sent his social message of overcoming language barriers.

Relatedly, Heller (1988) argued that code switching can be used for strategic ambiguity in an effort to avoid or mitigate conflict. Using both languages allowed individuals to make multiple claims as opposed to declaring a choice. Heller used examples from two contexts; the first is the language shift from English to French in a large company in Montreal and the second is a French-language minority elementary school in Toronto. English had been the language to conduct business affairs, but when the language policy switched to French, many senior employees either retired or were passed over for promotion by younger Francophones. Heller observed that the Anglophones would use French during in-group interactions to claim access to situations where the criterion for entrance is French, without having to be French. Further, at the management level, the younger, newly promoted Francophones would code switch during the meetings so that they could adhere to the rules of using French while also including the older Anglophones, who were passed over for promotion, in the conversation. At the school, the code switching with French demonstrated the students' right to attend the school, while also not claiming the French identity, since many students were not French. Thus, in both the company and the school, code switching between French and English allowed individuals to avoid conflict and make multiple claims.

In a similar vein as this study, the following analysis used television shows to examine language variation. Prasad (2010) studied language use and code switching in

three Indian television serials by analyzing the dialogue and surveying viewers about the acting, costumes, language, and dialogue. Prasad found that certain characters speak only English or only Hindi or another local language, while others code switch. Prasad claimed that the code switching in serials is a deliberate tool to bring depth to the characters, allowing them to be portrayed more effectively. Code switching was used to portray anger and hatred as well as to convey closeness or distance. Characters often switched into English when plotting schemes or to show that the character has a Western education or has traveled to America. Characters would use a low variety to reveal a rural background.

This section has highlighted the range and possibilities of code switching literature in several different communities. Now, this chapter returns to the Arabic-speaking world, discussing levelling and interdialectal communication.

D. Levelling and Interdialectal Communication in the Arabic-Speaking World

Levelling is the removing of stigmatized or prominent features and replacing them with less stigmatized ones. Levelling can occur at the level of an individual city or country, or potentially across a wider geographic area. First, this section explores some of the literature concerning levelling in cities or countries, and then examines the relatively few studies that focused on interdialectal communication, the linguistic interaction between speakers from different dialectal groups in the Arabic-speaking world. Finally, the section mentions the notion of a regional dialect.

1. Levelling Within a Country

This part begins with a study that compared the levelling literature of three cities to analyze the forces that lead to levelling. The section then continues with various levelling studies spanning several countries: Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, and Tunisia. Holes (1995) examined the dialect levelling process within three capitals. He used literature on the dialects of Manama, Amman, and Baghdad, and found that urbanization and increased literacy formed the foundation for dialect levelling. Further, Holes stated that the outcome was based on the strength of the potential dialects in terms of their associated political power and population size. In Manama, the two competing dialects were the ‘Arab spoken by the Sunni Bedouins who migrated to the island and the Baharna spoken by the Shi’a original inhabitants of the area. The Manama dialect was heavily influenced by the ‘Arab dialect because of the connection of this population with the monarchy and political power. The Amman dialect was formed by more of a dialectal compromise between the urban dialect—which also had Palestinian connotations—and the Bedouin dialect—which had a Jordanian connection. And the Muslim Baghdadi dialect underwent a change by adding Standard Arabic features and became the standard Baghdadi dialect because of the dominant size and the political power of the Muslim population. The Christian and Jewish Baghdadi populations each had their own dialect, but due to their minority statuses, these speakers often switched to Muslim Baghdadi in public. While these levelled dialects are prestigious in public, the competing dialects are still used in private spaces and have markers of communal identity.

Hachimi (2007) examined how Fessi women of Andalusian descent create a linguistic and social identity in Casablanca. Casablanca’s importance grew due to the

French and through the 20th century experienced massive growth and urbanization, including the migration of Fessi families to Casablanca. Currently there are three main ethno-linguistic groups within the Muslim population in Casablanca; the *ʕrubī* ‘rurals’ are the largest population group, the Soussis are the Berbers from the Sous region, and the Fessis-Casablancans are individuals either born in Fes or are second or third generation Fessis migrants to Casablanca. The Fessi dialect is an urban dialect and perceived as posh and bourgeois; young girls are encouraged to maintain their Fessi dialect, while men tend to adopt more of a koine speech. The Casablancon dialect is a relatively new koine with several rural features and considered by Fessis as rural, non-prestigious, and masculine.

Hachimi conducted in-depth ethnographic interviews with 15 Fessi women varying in age and education levels. She focused on two phonological items and one morpho-syntactic item in her analysis. She found that the older women who had migrated earlier from Fes have adopted Casablancon features more than Fessis born in Casablanca. The older women who level their speech distinguish between ‘us Fessis of Casablanca’ and ‘them Fessis of Fez.’ On the other hand, the Fessis born in Casablanca maintain the Fessi variants and distinguish between ‘us Fessis’ and ‘them non-Fessis.’ Hachimi distinguished three categories of individuals: pure Fessis (*f^wassa-d-fes*), Fessi-Casablancans (*f^wassa-d-kasa*), and Casablancans (*biḍawa*). She argued that the Fessi-Casablancon identity exists in both the individuals who level their speech toward the Casablancon koine and the individuals who maintain the Fessi features. Women level in an effort to speak normally (*ʕadi*), to become one of the people (*ʕaʕbi*), and to be tougher (*Ḥarša*) than the Fessis from Fes. The Fessis who maintain have a stronger

Fessi identity and try to sound feminine and civilized, but not as naïve, pompous, or outdated as the pure Fessis.

Al Batal (2002) analyzed the language used by the reporters from the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) in the field.⁴ For this study he used 40 news broadcasts from LBCI recorded between January and June 1999 in addition to an interview with the head of the news division. He observed that the headlines and local Lebanese news at the station were delivered in Standard Arabic; however, when the reporter is on-location, there was a switch to a unique mix of Standard Arabic and Lebanese Arabic. He noted that this mix is only for Lebanese news, and never for regional or international coverage. Al Batal claimed that this mixture is unique because it occurs in a formal sphere that previously was the domain of Standard Arabic, and that it is an interesting combination of the lexical and syntactic bases of Standard Arabic combined with phonological and morphological items of Lebanese Arabic. He stated that the language appears to be the result of writing the broadcast in Standard Arabic and then putting it through a Lebanese Arabic filter. Al Batal further argued that this new mixing is an attempt by LBCI to create a new Lebanese identity. Given the historical tension within Lebanon over its identity as an Arab country or a non-Arab country, the creation of a Lebanese version of Standard Arabic is an expression of a unique Lebanese identity ‘with an Arab facet’ [*sic*] (*ḍāt wajh ṣarabī*) (Al Batal 2002, 95). Thus, the Lebanese Arabic elements provide the unique Lebanese flavor, while the Standard Arabic elements maintain the formality and distinguish it from other registers.

Al-Wer has focused on the outcome of contact between the Jordanian and Palestinian dialects through the Amman Project. Amman was resurrected as a city and

⁴ Most individuals do not differentiate between LBC and LBCI, often using the former when referring to the latter. Al Batal (2002) does make this distinction.

became the capital of the Emirate of Transjordan in 1923, which resulted in the migration of elite families from Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem, Haifa, and Nablus. Subsequent waves of migration were due to the wars of 1948 and 1967, which brought rural Palestinians to Amman, as well as the city's rise in prominence politically and economically, which brought Jordanians to the capital. Al-Wer (2007) analyzed the process of dialectal change and the formation of the Ammani dialect by using recorded material across generation groups. She observed that first generation speakers—those who moved to Amman as adults—primarily speak their native dialects and may exhibit rudimentary levelling by removing the most local and marked features. The second generation speakers, meaning the first native-born generation, demonstrate extreme inter- and intra- speaker variation using a mixture of both dialects. Al-Wer described their speech patterns as chaotic; however, this chaos is turned into order by the third generation (the second native-born generation), who show an evolution of norms and stability of usage.

In this analysis, Al-Wer focused on the consonants, vowels, and 2nd person plural pronominal suffix as used by the third generation speakers. Two features of the Ammani dialect are of particular note. First, the *qaf* has two phonetic variants [ʔ] and [g], which vary depending on the context. Females, irrespective of background, use the [ʔ], which has come to symbolize femininity and modernity. Palestinian males also exhibit the [ʔ] and both Palestinian and Jordanian males will employ the [ʔ] when interacting with females. Jordanian males utilize [g] amongst themselves and both male groups will use the [g] when interacting together. The [g] is associated with high ranking officials as well as macho characteristics. Thus, the phonetic variation of the *qaf*

in the Ammani dialect reflects a social and stylistic reallocation.⁵ Second, /-kum/ as the 2nd person plural pronominal suffix is unique to the Ammani dialect, varying both from the new koineized northern and southern dialects in Jordan /-ku/ and from the Palestinian, Beirut, and Damascene dialects /-kun/. While the second-generation speakers exhibited large amounts of variation, the third-generation speakers are demonstrating orderliness.

Watson (2007) examined the extent to which the language in a Sana'a radio serial reflects the levelling of greater Sana'a. The radio series is called *musfid wa-musfidih* 'Musid and Musida' and has been broadcast twice daily since 1988. Each episode is only three to five minutes long and contains the dialogue between a husband and a wife discussing a social issue. The episodes begin with the theme song, continue with the discussion, and end with the argument summarized in Standard Arabic. Watson conducted a morphological and lexical analysis of three episodes and used PRAAT, a speech analysis program, to compare the pause phenomena from five episodes with native Old Sana'a speakers. Watson found that all of the morphemes and most lexical expressions are from the Sana'a dialect, though also attested in surrounding dialects. Some of the lexical items were a mixture of Standard Arabic or pan-Yemen Arabic. Based on the PRAAT analysis, she found that glottalization occurs in the radio series, but not to the same extent as the native Sana'a speakers. Thus, despite the morphological and lexical similarities between the shows and the Sana'a dialect, the pause phenomena distinguish the variety from the Old Sana'a dialect.

While the final study for this section does not deal with levelling per se, it does examine accommodation within a city in the Arabic-speaking world. Lawson-Sako and

⁵ See Al-Wer and Herin (2011) for a deeper discussion of the variation of the *qaf* in the dialect of Amman.

Sachdev (1996) examined actual language use in Tunisia, specifically in the streets of Sousse. They explored how the ethnic background (Arab Tunisian, white European, black African) and the gender of a speaker in addition to the language (Tunisian Arabic, French) of a plea affected the cooperative behavior of Arab Tunisians. They created a four-turn dialogue in which the researchers asked 909 random, individual Tunisian pedestrians two separate questions and then recorded the language of the subjects' two responses. They categorized the responses as converging (matching the language of the researcher), diverging (using a different language), or code switching. Lawson-Sako and Sachdev found that Tunisian and European males speaking Tunisian Arabic had the highest amount of identification with no divergence observed. European males received the most convergence, while Tunisian males usually received code switching. The authors posit that the latter is probably due to the fact that code switching allows for two indexes simultaneously: higher-status with French and solidarity with Tunisian Arabic. When approached by an African male, the subjects diverged strongly from his request. They also found that subjects converged for females speaking French, more so than when the males used French. The following section explores the few studies that examined interdialectal communication between speakers from different countries.

2. Interdialectal Communication

An early study examining interdialectal communication was Blanc (1960), which analyzed a conversation between two natives of Baghdad, one of Jerusalem, and one of Aleppo. While all of the participants were native Arabic speakers from different dialectal groups, the conversation took place at a language school in Monterey, California for twenty minutes discussing the Arabic language. The objective of the

study was to observe how speakers communicate with each other across dialectal differences. After the analysis of the recorded conversation Blanc proposed two effects: classicizing and levelling. Classicizing, also referred to as standardization, is the elimination of local features for standard ones and may occur more often in formal speech or for a topic requiring a formal style. Levelling is the process of unselecting local or rural features for ones that are more well-known and easier to understand. Despite the limitations of a small sample size and probably artificial, non-casual speech, Blanc's study was an important first step in examining interdialectal communication.

Abu-Melhim (1991) conducted a study to determine if speakers from different dialect groups rely primarily on Standard Arabic or Classical Arabic when conversing informally, as other linguists have claimed and was mentioned in Chapter I.⁶ He used five thirty-minute recorded conversations of a Jordanian couple and an Egyptian couple. The participants knew about the recorder and picked the topics under discussion. Overall, Abu-Melhim found that the speakers used multiple strategies to accommodate—not just Classical or Standard Arabic—but usually the speakers used their own dialect when conversing. When speakers did switch, they would either switch to Egyptian Arabic, English, or Standard Arabic, and never to Jordanian Arabic. Abu-Melhim stated that because of the popularity of Egyptian radio and other media programs, Jordanians had more familiarity with the dialect. Further, since Egyptian Arabic is so widespread, it tends to have the most prestige amongst other dialects. When the Jordanians either adopted the Egyptian Arabic phonology in their pronunciation or even incorporated lexical terms, they were converging toward the Egyptians. The switching to English tended to be for specific terms or words with a certain connotation.

⁶ The former he defined as “the written language of contemporary literature and journalism,” while the latter he described as “the traditional language of the Qur’an” (Abu-Melhim 1991, 231).

And the switching to Standard Arabic was used to quote a written letter. The Egyptians never switched to Jordanian Arabic because there was no need for them to converge to the Jordanian couple. Thus, the speakers adopted a wide range of strategies to accommodate; however, for most of the discussion the speakers spoke in their native dialect, maintaining their normal speech patterns.

S'hiri (2002) explored the linguistic accommodation between Tunisian Arabic speakers and Arabic speakers from the Middle East. She divided the Arabic-speaking world into two groups: the Maghreb and the Mashreq, defining the former as Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia and the latter as Egypt and everything else to the east. S'hiri claimed that due to the media, films, and television programs from Egypt and the Levant, the Maghreb has more familiarity with Mashreq dialects than visa-versa. Further, Egyptian and Levant dialects embody Mashreq dialects for Tunisians. S'hiri examined the linguistic behavior as well as language perceptions and attitudes of Tunisian journalists and broadcasters living in London and working with Arabic-speaking Middle Eastern colleagues. She emphasized that London would be considered neutral territory, no one having home-field advantage, and that all speakers had a solid knowledge of Standard Arabic. The informants were five Tunisians; S'hiri conducted individual interviews with each and gave a recorder to three of them, who then recorded interactions with their colleagues without S'hiri's presence.

S'hiri argued that Tunisian Arabic speakers unilaterally converge their language toward the Mashreqi speakers. She found that the convergence strategies demonstrated by the Tunisians were not reciprocated by the Mashreqi interlocutors, or at least not in the same way. S'hiri observed phonological, morphological, and lexical modifications from the conversations and noted that only one informant made syntactic

changes and used matching paratactic forms to portray specific pragmatic effects. Similar to the findings of Abu-Melhim (1991), S'hiri found that Tunisian speakers used a variety of strategies to accommodate to their interlocutors, including incorporating elements of Mashreqi Arabic, Standard Arabic, and English into their speech. Specifically, S'hiri observed three main strategies: switching into English instead of switching into French, which is typical in Tunisian Arabic; eliminating loan and assimilated words of French or Italian origin and substituting them with Tunisian Arabic, Mashreqi Arabic, Standard Arabic, or English; and suppressing a range of Tunisian Arabic expressions and features, including the lack of distinction between 2nd person masculine and feminine suffixes, incomprehensible words, expressions which have offensive meanings in other dialects, and question words. There were no Mashreqis who switched into Tunisian Arabic, although their switching into Standard Arabic or English could be considered as accommodation or as adherence to the register of the conversation. A striking feature of these findings is that while these journalists have the capabilities of switching into Standard Arabic when communicating across dialectal lines, they still use their own dialect or code switch into another dialect or language during interdialectal communication.

S'hiri claimed that the linguistic behavior in this study is conditioned both by the informants' assessments of their interlocutors' identity and the identity that the informants wish to project. Based upon the interviews, S'hiri observed three reasons for accommodating: efficient communication in the workplace, cultural openness, and evoking listener's social approval. The pressure from work for effective communication, the minority feelings of the Tunisians, and their greater exposure to Mashreqi Arabic all motivate Tunisians to accommodate to their interlocutors.

Additionally, cultural openness, friendliness, and *savior faire* result in Tunisians valuing mastering languages and communicating with others in their own language. Further, by always accommodating to Mashreqis and the Mashreqis never learning any Tunisian Arabic, Tunisians could always revert to pure Tunisian Arabic to exclude them. Finally, Tunisians accommodate in order to evoke the listener's social approval, which is based on Tunisians' perceptions of Mashreqi stereotypes that Tunisian Arabic is not pure or correct. S'hiri argued that Tunisians may have internalized the Mashreqi value system and that through accommodating to Mashreqi Arabic the Tunisians are promoting their Arab identity and minimizing their Tunisian identity. While Tunisians accommodate to Mashreqi Arabic in the workplace to avoid ridicule, their families point out that they sound like the songs and soap operas. The viewpoint that Maghrebi Arabic is incomprehensible to others may influence both the Maghrebi contestants when speaking on a social televised program as well as the use of subtitles in Standard Arabic in the pre-recorded video clips.

3. Regional Dialects

In Ibrahim's (1986) seminal work in which he called upon scholars to differentiate between standard and prestige dialects, he also devoted a significant portion of that piece to the notion of an inter-regional dialect, or the supra-dialectal Low (SDL). From his point of view, the SDL would be based on the speech of urban centers, such as Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem. Dialects of the capital are the prestigious language for the country due to an understanding of the stigmatized features within the country. The concepts of prestigious and stigmatized could then be expanded across national borders. He believed that the SDL would grow because of shared prestigious

features, mutual intelligibility, and social changes within the region, such as urbanization and an expanding middle class.

Nearly 30 years later a distinct SDL has not been recognized; however, there is also the potential for regional standards. Versteegh (1997) listed the five typical classifications for the dialects as: Arabian Peninsula, Mesopotamian, Syro-Lebanese, Egyptian, and Maghreb. Thus, there is the potential to observe a regional dialect representing one of the groups listed by Versteegh, with the dominant dialectal features displaying the relative political, economic, and social power within the region. Holes (2005) posited that a Gulf regional dialect standard may be emerging.

Holes (2005) examined the language used in television and radio *musalsalāt* (serials) in Bahrain in an effort to analyze how the state government indirectly manages the process of identity formation through language. As mentioned above, in Bahrain the ‘Arab dialect is spoken by the Bahraini Sunnis and has prestige due to its connections to the monarchy. The ‘Arab dialect is also similar to other Gulf dialects, such as the ones spoken in Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. The Baharnah dialect is spoken by the Twelver Shi’ah of Bahrain and even though it does not have the overt prestige of the ‘Arab dialect, it still has covert prestige within the community. The Baharnah dialect is similar to the dialect of the Shi’ah from the eastern province of Saudi Arabia as well as some dialects in northern Oman, parts of the United Arab Emirates, and southern Yemen.

Holes found that Bahraini television and radio *musalsalāt* tend to only use the ‘Arab dialect and often only depict ‘Arab neighborhoods. Even the characters that should be Baharnah (i.e. vegetable sellers or boat builders) speak the ‘Arab dialect. The only exception he found was in slap-stick comedy when Baharnah actors would

sometimes use very stereotypically Baharnah language. Holes posited two possible explanations for the lack of Baharnah in the *musalsalāt*. The first is that the use of Baharnah by ‘Arab scriptwriters may be interpreted as mockery. The second is that the ‘Arab dialect has assumed the status of a ‘regional dialect standard’ due to its similarity with dialects from Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, because all of these dialects have common ancestors from the Najd. Further, the ‘Arab dialect becoming a regional dialect standard is the by-product of the pan-Gulf social, economic, and political networks of the last 20 years. Holes (2005) argued that the process which created the prestigious dialects in the capitals is repeating itself in the Gulf. However, as opposed to having only one center—given the similarities between several regional centers—the same general dialect-type has assumed the position of the prestige dialect. Within social televised programs there is the potential for both glimpses of a SDL and the usage of regional dialects within the Arabic-speaking world.

E. Filling the Gap

The above has explored a wide range of literature spanning multiple phenomena of diglossia, code switching, levelling, and interdialectal communication. Despite the breadth of analyses, two complementary aspects deserve further investigation and are the goals of the current analysis. First, few studies have examined the spontaneous alterations between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic by individuals who are not specially trained to use Standard Arabic, such as sheikhs, academics, politicians, and newscasters. While the hosts of reality television programs may have had additional training—like that of newscasters—to use Standard Arabic, the judges and contestants probably do not have this specialized expertise. Second, there is

an urgent need for interdialectal analyses in the Arabic linguistics literature.⁷ *Arab Idol* provides a unique situation in which the members of the show and the audience who receives the satellite broadcast into their homes all span the entire Arabic-speaking world. The language use and variation on *Arab Idol* is ripe for examination and addresses two critical needs within the literature.

⁷ Bassiouney (2009) referenced the need for analyses of interdialectal communication. Ferguson (1990) mentioned analyzing change in progress as Arabic dialects may either create a new supradialectal norm or diverse regional standards.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This chapter connects the literature review and analysis by presenting the theoretical framework, research questions, and methodology for this examination of interdialectal communication. The chapter begins by discussing Giles' Accommodation Theory and how this model is an appropriate theoretical framework for the analysis. The two main research questions guiding this analysis are presented followed by a description of the methodology used. The chapter concludes with a description of the data and participants.

A. Theoretical Framework

A significant portion of the code switching literature focuses on the grammar of code switching by proffering constraints and principles. Eid (1988) stated the Contradictory Effect Constraint and the Directionality Constraint based on her analysis of switching between Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic. Myers-Scotton's Negotiation Principle, Unmarked-Choice Maxim, Marked-Choice Maxim, and Exploratory-Choice Maxim have been applied to a wide variety of code switching situations, including those involving Arabic (Myers-Scotton and Ury 1977; Myers-Scotton, Jake, and Okasha 1996). Based on Spanish-English code switching, Poplack (1980) developed the Free Morpheme Constraint and the Equivalence Constraint. However, this analysis is directed at the other portion of code switching literature, which concentrates on the social functions of code switching. As such, I selected Giles' Accommodation Theory as the analytical framework for this study.

Giles (1973) first published the Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) based on a study of interpersonal accent convergence during an interview. However, as the theory became more interdisciplinary by incorporating sociological, socio-psychological, and socio-linguistic processes and since accommodation can occur through more than just speech, Giles et al. (1987) redeveloped the theory as the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). Giles and Coupland (1991) argued that CAT is a very flexible theory and capable of handling social consequences of interaction, ideological and macro-societal factors, intergroup variables and processes, discursive practices in naturalistic settings, and language shifts. CAT suggests that convergence reflects an individual's or a group's desire for social approval and integration, and that the speaker's attractiveness, perceived supportiveness, and intelligibility increase from the recipient's perspective when convergence occurs (Giles and Coupland 1991).

Convergence is "a strategy whereby individuals adapt to each other's communicative behaviors in terms of a wide range of linguistic/prosodic/non-vocal features including speech rate, pausal phenomena and utterance length, phonological variants, smiling, gaze and so on" (Giles and Coupland 1991, 63). Further, speakers may be more likely to converge toward a person of power or when there is a high probability of future interactions. Convergence may have several rewards, such as increased feelings of warmth and "gains in listener's approval and perceived cooperativeness," while also having potential costs, such as "possible loss of personal and social identity, and expended effort, especially if accommodation is wide-spread, not reciprocated, and long-term" (Giles and Coupland 1991, 75). Adjusting one's speech may help attain certain goals, such as "evoking listeners' social approval,

attaining communication efficiency between interactants, and maintaining positive social identities (Giles et al. 1987, 14-15).

However, accommodation used to mock an individual as well as over-accommodation do not have the same rewards as convergence. Over-accommodation is when convergence strategies are overplayed, such as excessive concern for vocal clarity and amplitude, message simplification, repetition, and offering excuses and apologies which are unwarranted. Despite the often well intended actions, over-accommodation usually characterizes demeaning or patronizing talk (Giles and Coupland, 1991).

Divergence is a strategy whereby “speakers accentuate speech and non-verbal differences between themselves and others” through various tactics, such as indexical and symbolic dissociation by using in-group stereotyped pronunciation, explicit propositional non-alignment by expressing disagreement, and physical distancing by terminating or avoiding interactions (Giles and Coupland 1991, 65). Divergence may indicate a personal disdain for another’s dress, mannerisms, habits, language style, or message. On the other hand, divergence can serve as a tactic of intergroup distinctiveness for individuals searching for a positive social identity. “By diverging and emphasizing one’s own social (and sometimes idiosyncratic) communicative style, members of an ingroup may accentuate differences between themselves and outgroup members along a salient and valued dimension of their group identity” (Giles and Coupland 1991, 80).

Also, it is important to note the difference between divergence and maintenance. When individuals diverge from their interlocutors, they are emphasizing the differences between the communication styles. However, when individuals exhibit maintenance, they are using their normal speech patterns while not increasing or

decreasing the differences between the communication styles. Finally, Giles and Coupland (1991) noted that both convergence and divergence could be either upward or downward in terms of style and formality.

As a theoretical framework, CAT “can usefully be construed as the full range of interpersonal addressee-oriented strategies in discourse whereby speakers ‘attune’ their talk to some characteristics of the hearer” (Coupland and Giles 1988, 178). SAT and subsequently CAT have been utilized in a wide variety of domains, including compliance-gaining, courtroom interactions, diplomacy, radio news reporting, intergroup communication, second language acquisition, language maintenance and shift, dialect change, and miscommunication. S’hiri (2002) used Giles’ Accommodation Theory in her analysis of communication between Mashreqi and Maghrebi speakers at Arab media companies based in London (see Chapter III). Both S’hiri (2002) and this study focus on interdialectal communication, which is a perfect opportunity to employ Giles’ Accommodation Theory. I use this theory to determine if as speakers from different dialectal groups interact, do the speakers converge in an effort to aid understanding or do the speakers maintain or diverge their communication styles, which may signal widened social distance or in-group identity. The following portion lists the research questions for this study and connects them to the gaps present in the literature.

B. Research Questions

In Chapter III, two main gaps in the literature became apparent. First, few studies have examined the spontaneous alterations between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic by individuals who are not specially trained to use Standard Arabic. Second, there is an urgent need for interdialectal analyses in the Arabic linguistic

literature. *Arab Idol* provides a unique opportunity to contribute to both of these gaps. The majority of the language is produced spontaneously during shows in front of a live audience. Further, the hosts, judges, contestants, and guest artists of the show along with the audience who receives the satellite broadcast into their homes all span the entire Arabic-speaking world.

Two research questions (RQs) have guided this analysis of interdialectal communication as occurring on *Arab Idol*. In order to observe changes in the participants' speech styles, the first RQ is to determine the normal speech of individuals on the show.

RQ 1: What are the normal speech patterns of the judges and hosts?

It is important to note that this RQ is limited only to the judges and hosts because these individuals are the main speakers during each episode and are present actively throughout the entire season. RQ 1 has merit for two reasons. First, by understanding the normal speech patterns, any differences, including convergences and divergences, are more apparent. Second, considering the widespread assumptions regarding the usage of *fuṣḥā* to assist with interdialectal communication, it is important to observe the amount of *fuṣḥā* actually used.

The second RQ is to determine instances of convergence and divergence during the spoken utterances on *Arab Idol*.

RQ 2: When do speakers either converge to or diverge from their interlocutors?

The focus of this part of the analysis is instances when the speaker either switches dialects and/or uses a dialect that is not the speaker's mother tongue. The former occurs when a speaker initially uses one dialect and then switches to a different dialect, while

the latter happens when a speaker starts speaking in a non-native dialect. To the extent possible, potential motivations for converging or diverging are explored. The subsequent portion of this chapter describes the methodology used to answer these RQs.

C. Methodology

The structure of *Arab Idol* results in the speech of each participant occurring at specific moments. The male host introduces each episode and performs the voice-over for the pre-recorded video clips. Both hosts ask other participants questions and transition the episode to the next section. The judges provide comments to the contestants, answer questions posed by the hosts, and talk with the guest stars. The contestants speak in the pre-recorded video clips that introduce their performances and respond to the judges and hosts during the comment portion. The guest stars respond to the questions from the hosts and communicate with the judges. Given the structure of the show and the large amount of data, different parts of the episode were selected to answer each RQ.

To answer the first RQ, I randomly selected one longer section of spontaneous speech by each host and judge from each season. During most live episodes, the hosts usually introduce the episode on stage and pose a question to each judge. Sometimes the hosts also pose questions to the judges in the middle of the episode or when the guest star is present. In an effort to exclude any potential effect from the presence of the guest star, only question segments without a guest star on stage are included. Specifically, the judges' responses to the questions and the following transitions by the hosts to the next

segment of the episode were isolated for observation.¹ These sections of speech are useful to determine the general speech patterns of the participants given the lack of influence by the presence of a guest star or contestant, and the participants are directing their utterances toward the general viewing audience.

For both seasons, I reviewed the live episodes and identified a total of 26 question rounds based on the above criteria. I assigned each unique speech segment by each participant in each question round a number. Then, I used a number sequence generator from random.org to select randomly one speech section by each host and judge from each season. The chosen selections were then transcribed and analyzed to observe the general speech characteristics and the overall language use.

For the second RQ, I chose to concentrate on the portion of the show after contestants performed when they received comments from the judges. By focusing on the Top 10/Top 13 finalists for each season, this section only contains spontaneously produced speech in front of a live audience. Further, during this portion of the show the audience contributes by voting each week for their favorite contestant. This section demonstrates the importance of effectively communicating to a wider audience to receive the largest percentage of the vote. Concentrating on these sections also allowed me to compare the judges' speech patterns across contestants as well as over time with the same contestant.

¹ The questions posed by the hosts were not considered for the RQ given that hosts may accommodate to the judges. However, when the hosts transition the show they are speaking directly to the audience using their normal "announcer" speech patterns.

Table 4.1 Season One Top 10 and Season Two Top 13 Finalists, by Ranking

Ranking	Season 1 Contestant	Ranking	Season 2 Contestant
1	<i>Carmen Suleiman</i>	1	<i>Mohammed Assaf</i>
2	<i>Dounia Batma</i>	2, 3	<i>Ahmad Gamal</i>
3	<i>Youssef Arafat</i>		<i>Farrah Yousef</i>
4	<i>Nadia Manfoukh</i>	4	<i>Ziad Houry</i>
5	<i>Mohammed Taher</i>	5, 6	<i>Salma Rachid</i>
6	Hassan Kharbech		Parwas Hussein
7	Ghofran Fatouhi	7	Abdel Karim Hamdan
8	Mohammed Oulwan	8	Mohanad Al Marsoomy
9	Shirine Ljmi	9, 10	Yousra Saouf
10	Yahya Yacoub		Fares El Madani
		11, 12	Sabrine El Nagily
			Hanane Reda
		13	Wael Said

Table 4.1 lists the finalists for each season based on their ranking. As mentioned in Chapter II, the number of finalists for each season differed because the judges considered the contestants in the second season to be stronger with respect to talent. Due to the higher number of finalists, two contestants were eliminated in a single week four times during the season. Even with the limitation of focusing on the comments portion of the show, there was still an unwieldy amount of data. I decided to further constrain which contestants I concentrated on with two guiding principles. First, I included the Top 5 contestants from each season with the rationale that their speech patterns may have been more effective for interdialectal communication, thus gaining them additional votes compared with other contestants. The names of these contestants are italicized in Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. Second, I included additional contestants in order to represent the five main dialectal groups as defined by Versteegh (1997): Maghreb, Egyptian, Mesopotamia, Syro-Lebanese, and Arabian Peninsula. For two

individuals, Hassan Kharbech and Hanane Reda, I included them as the third participant for that dialectal group in order to include participants of both genders. Finally, Season Two was unique in that it included a non-Arab contestant, Parwas Hussein from Kurdish Iraq. Since Parwas Hussein's native language is not Arabic, I chose to include her in the study as communication with her may accentuate any convergence or divergence tendencies. In Table 4.2 and 4.3 the contestants selected based on the second guiding principle are listed in small caps.

Table 4.2 Finalists Distributed by Dialectal Groups

Maghreb		Syro-Lebanese	
<i>Dounia Batma</i>	<i>Salma Rachid</i>	<i>Youssef Arafat</i>	<i>Mohammed Assaf</i>
HASSAN KHARBECH	Yousra Saouf	<i>Nadia Manfoukh</i>	<i>Farrah Yousef</i>
Ghofran Fatouhi			<i>Ziad Houry</i>
Shirine Ljmi			Abdel Karim Hamdan
			Wael Said
Egypt		Arabian Peninsula	
<i>Carmen Suleiman</i>	<i>Ahmad Gamal</i>	<i>Mohammed Taher</i>	FARES EL MADANI
Yahya Yacoub	Sabrine El Nagily		HANANE REDA
Mesopotamia		Other	
MOHAMMED OULWAN	MOHANAD AL MARSOOMY		PARWAS HUSSEIN

With those two guiding principles, I chose 7 contestants from the first season and 9 contestants from the second season, or in other words a total of 16 contestants out of a possible 23. With respect to gender, the selected contestants consisted of 9 males and 7 females out of a total of 12 and 11, respectively. As contestants were gradually eliminated from the program, the number of times a contestant received comments varied. Further, on some episodes, contestants sang multiple times, but did not

necessarily receive feedback from the judges each time. The total number of times each contestant received comments from the judges is provided in Table 4.3.

For Season One, these feedback sections ranged from approximately one minute to nine minutes, with an average of four minutes. In Season Two, the show included an additional judge, Nancy Ajram, and the hosts no longer asked the contestants questions at the end of each feedback portion. However, these portions were still longer, ranging from over two minutes to ten minutes with an average of more than five minutes. In total, these 123 feedback sections consisted of 582 minutes, which provided sufficient data for becoming familiar with the speech patterns of the four judges. The sections were transcribed and verified with native and/or fluent speakers of the appropriate dialect to increase the reliability of the analysis.

Table 4.3 Contestants Chosen for Analysis and Number of Sections Analyzed

Season 1 Contestants	Number of Comment Sections	Seasons 2 Contestants	Number of Comment Sections
<i>Carmen Suleiman</i>	12	<i>Mohammed Assaf</i>	11
<i>Dounia Batma</i>	12	<i>Ahmad Gamal</i>	11
<i>Youssef Arafat</i>	9	<i>Farrah Yousef</i>	11
<i>Nadia Manfoukh</i>	8	<i>Ziad Khoury</i>	9
<i>Mohammed Taher</i>	7	<i>Salma Rachid</i>	7
HASSAN KHARBECH	5	PARWAS HUSSEIN	7
MOHAMMED OULWAN	3	MOHANAD AL MARSOOMY	5
		FARES EL MADANI	4
		HANANE REDA	2
Total	56	Total	67

Finally, during the initial viewing of the entire show, I observed moments in which the participants discussed language or identity issues. These instances, such as discussions about singing in different dialects or highlighting a part of someone's

identity, are also included in the analysis and discussion of this study. Further, I note the presence or lack of subtitles during the audition process and in pre-recorded video clips. The next portion of the chapter describes the data used in this study.

D. Data Description

In this section of the chapter, I include how I acquired the data, the setting in which these interactions happened, and a description of the main participants in this study, with particular attention to any feature which may influence their language use and/or abilities.

1. Data

The data for this analysis came from the first and second seasons of *Arab Idol*, which were purchased from DVD shops in Beirut, Lebanon. Unfortunately, the first season's discs only contained 10 of the 28 total episodes; however, the 10 episodes included the relevant and necessary sections for this analysis. The second season's discs consisted of all 28 episodes, but some were not complete. Through the website shahid.net I watched the missing portions from the second season.² Thus, the data included in this analysis consist of 38 episodes, totaling to almost 65 hours of footage.

2. Setting

Both seasons began by showing the auditions across the region as the judges selected those who would advance to the next round. For both seasons, auditions took place in Cairo, Casablanca, Tunis, Dubai, Beirut, and Amman. For Season One,

² The section for the first season of *Arab Idol* on shahid.net could not be accessed.

auditions also occurred in Kuwait City and London, and for Season Two auditions also were held in Luxor, Alexandria, and Erbil. The contestants who received the golden ticket to Beirut then participated in further rounds of elimination until the judges selected the semi-finalists, the Top 20 for the first season and the Top 27 for the second season. Up to this point in the season, the footage for the first six episodes was all pre-recorded and edited to form the episode. Episodes 7-28 all occurred in front of a live audience in the MBC studios in Lebanon. These live episodes included brief pre-recorded video clips, in which the contestants introduced their performances or were shown rehearsing or living together. Although the speech of the participants could be considered a performance given the presence of a stage and the context of the show, the speech chosen and analyzed for this study is spontaneously produced and is not a delivery from a prepared script.

3. Participants

The primary speakers during the seasons are the hosts, judges, contestants, and guest performers. As described above, I chose to analyze the feedback portion of the episode, selecting contestants to include as many major dialectal groups as possible. Table 4.4 lists the main participants included in this study with any available information regarding their ages, origins, and educational background.

Table 4.4 Description of Participants

Name	Position	Country	Age³	Other Information
Annabella Hilal	Host	Lebanon	25	Born into an Orthodox Christian family in Achrafieh, Beirut; fluent in English and French, and earned a Master's in Law; finalist in Miss Lebanon 2005 and competed in Miss Universe 2006; presenter of fashion program on LBCI
Abdallah Tulehi	Host	Kuwait	29	Actor in Arabic <i>musalsalāt</i>
Ahmad Fahmi	Host	Egypt	32	Began career singing; actor in Arabic movies and <i>musalsalāt</i>
Ragheb Alama	Judge	Lebanon	49	Born into a middle-class Shiite family in Ghoubeyri in southern Beirut; graduated from the Lebanese Musical Institute with honors; singer
Ahlam	Judge	United Arab Emirates	42	Born to an Emirati father and a Bahraini mother in Abu Dhabi; spent childhood and school years in Bahrain; studied Islamic Law at Dubai University, but did not finish because of dream of singing; married a Qatari racecar driver
Hassan El Shafei	Judge	Egypt	29	Composer and producer; initially gained fame while working in the United States
Nancy Ajram	Judge	Lebanon	29	Born into a Maronite Christian family in Achrafieh, Beirut; singer
Carmen Suleiman	Contestant	Egypt	17	From Zagazig in Al Sharqia Governorate and born into an upper-class family
Dounia Batma	Contestant	Morocco	20	Born and raised in Casablanca; father was a famous singer; studied tourism
Youssef Arafat	Contestant	Jordan		
Nadia Manfoukh	Contestant	Syria	23	Studied music theory
Mohammed Taher	Contestant	Saudi Arabia	23	From the city of Al-Ahsa in the Eastern Province

³ Age listed is based on the participant's age at the time of the first appearance on the program in that position.

Hassan Kharbech	Contestant	Tunisia	23	Earned his university degree
Mohammed Oulwan	Contestant	Iraq	20	
Mohammed Assaf	Contestant	Palestine	23	Born in Libya to Palestinian parents, moved to Gaza when 4 years old; journalism student at Gaza City's Palestine University; father was a customs officer for the Palestinian Authority and mother is a mathematics teacher at a United Nations school
Ahmad Gamal	Contestant	Egypt	24	Born in Tanta in Gharbia Governorate; earned a degree in chemistry and is a trained pharmacist
Farrah Yousef	Contestant	Syria	23	From Tartus; received a scholarship to study medicine in Italy, where she learned to sing in Italian, English, and French
Ziad Khoury	Contestant	Lebanon	24	From the Chouf; father is a music teacher
Salma Rachid	Contestant	Morocco	18	Born and raised in Casablanca; began university studies in economics
Parwas Hussein	Contestant	Kurdish Iraq	24	From Erbil; student at the Institute of Fine Arts
Mohanad Al Marsoomy	Contestant	Iraq	26	Music teacher; studied at the Institute of Fine Arts
Fares El Madani	Contestant	Saudi Arabia	21	From Jeddah; father is a composer
Hanane Reda	Contestant	Bahrain	21	Music student

Sources: Crouse 2013; MBC 2011a; MBC 2011b; MBC 2011c; MBC 2011d; MBC 2012a; MBC 2012b; MBC 2012c; MBC 2012d; MBC 2012e; MBC 2012f; MBC 2013a; MBC 2013b; MBC 2013c; MBC 2013d; MBC 2014a; MBC 2014b; MBC 2014c; MBC 2014d; MBC 2014e; MBC 2014f; MBC 201g; MBC 2014h; MBC 2014i; MBC 2014j; MBC 2014k.

This chapter has laid out the theoretical framework, research questions, and methodology used in this study. Now, it is time to turn to the analysis.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses the findings from the study. In answering the first research question regarding the normal speech patterns of the hosts and judges, I found that they tended to maintain their normal dialect when communicating on the program. The first section highlights the normal dialectal features of the Gulf, Lebanese, and Egyptian hosts and judges. In answering the second research question regarding instances of convergence and divergence, I found that the participants used a wide variety of methods to converge and rarely diverged. This range of convergence methods included options that required little effort on the part of the speaker, such as checking for understanding and assigning nicknames, in addition to methods that demanded more effort on the speaker, such as switching dialects or languages. Further, convergences that do not narrow the distance between the interlocutors occurred, such as mocking and over-accommodation. I also observed several in-group moments between Gulf, Egyptian, and Kurdish interlocutors as they converged amongst themselves, simultaneously diverging from the wider audience. There was only one instance of divergence in which the speaker exhibited not only distinctive Gulf Arabic features, but also a clearly Standard Arabic phrase. The final portion of this chapter discusses other linguistic phenomena observed, such as uses of Standard Arabic, subtitles, and local expressions.

A. Maintenance

Most of the time the hosts and judges on *Arab Idol* maintained their dialects when speaking spontaneously on the show. The randomly selected segments of natural

speech for the hosts and judges for each season are provided in Appendix I. While these segments are relatively short sections of continuous speech (average of 20 seconds for the hosts and 40-60 seconds for the judges), the same normal dialectal patterns were observed in the majority of feedback portions. Given that these feedback portions totaled more than 9.5 hours of recordings, and usually the judges spoke for lengthy sections, I developed a strong sense of their normal speech patterns, thus being able to distinguish their even state and to recognize when they departed from these normal forms.

The Gulf speakers, Abdallah Tulehi and Ahlam, used interdental [θ] and [ð], the emphatic [ḏ], the affricative [dʒ], and the *qaf* as both [q] and [g].¹ Morphologically, they employed the demonstratives /haða/ and /haði/, the interrogative /wiš/, the word *al-Ḥīn* ‘now’ and the word *kaʿf* ‘how.’ Additionally, they utilized the 2nd person plural pronominal suffix /-kum/ and the 2nd person plural verbal suffix /-ūn/. Syntactically, they used the relative particle /lli/ and the construction *a-bġī a-gūl* ‘I want to say’.

The Lebanese speakers, Annabella Hilal, Ragheb Alama, and Nancy Ajram, often used the dentals [t], [s] and [z] as opposed to the interdental while also utilizing the [ʔ] allophone of the *qaf*. They also employed both the [a] and [e] to mark the feminine gender in some nouns and adjectives, depending on the preceding consonant. Morphologically, they utilized /Ḥa/, /raḤ/, and /laḤ/ to mark the future tense and /ʕam/ to signal a progressive action. They employed the 2nd person plural pronominal suffix /-kun/ and the 3rd person plural verbal suffix /-ō/ and as well as the demonstratives /haʿda/, /haʿde/, and /ha/. Additionally, they used the pronouns of *huwwa* and *niḤna*

¹ Mustafawi (2006) noted that the [g] has been substituted unconditionally for the [q] in some varieties of Arabic for approximately twelve centuries. Thus, the appearance of the [g] in Arabian Peninsula dialects is an old feature.

‘he’ and ‘we,’ respectively, and the word *halla* ‘now.’ And syntactically, they utilized the relative particles of /li/ and /yilli/ in addition to employing the phrase *badd-ī ’ūl* for ‘I want to say’ and the doubled object construction *ana b-a-Ḥibb-ā la-aḤlām* for ‘I love Ahlam,’ which is further discussed below in (4).

The Egyptian speakers, Ahmad Fahmi and Hassan El Shafei, used characteristically Egyptian Arabic features, including the [g] instead of the [j], the *qaf* as both [ʔ] and [q], and epenthetic vowels (bolded), such as in *bassi bi-šakl* ‘but in a way’. Morphologically, they used the demonstratives /da/ and /di/ such as in the utterance *ʕal-masraḤ-da* ‘on this stage’ as well as the pronouns *huwwa* and *iḤna* ‘he’ and ‘we,’ respectively. Further, they used the future tense marker /Ḥa/, and the word *zayy* ‘how/like.’ And syntactically, they employed the relative particle /li/ and the discontinuous negation construct of /ma ... š/. For comparisons, Hassan El Shafei would often say in the feedback portions *ʕayz a-’ūl-lak* ‘I want to tell you.’

Thus, all of the hosts and judges tended to maintain their normal dialectal features during interdialectal communication. Additionally, I observed that when the judges became excited, for example when they were very impressed with a contestant’s performance or became enthusiastic, the judges’ speech tended to become slightly more dialectal. Part of Giles’ definition of divergence is the emphasizing of in-group features in an effort to create distance; however, in these instances the judges were exhibiting a stronger maintenance and were not trying to create distance between themselves and the contestant. This excited speech is reminiscent of Labov’s (1972) ‘danger of death question,’ in which he wanted speakers to become emotionally charged so that they revert to their most normal, unmonitored speech state. Thus, their excitement resulted in the judges reverting to their normal, unmonitored speech.

Examples of this excited speech are prevalent throughout the data, especially toward the end of the first season when all of the judges were very impressed with Moroccan Dounia Batma and Egyptian Carmen Suleiman. In the excerpt of (1), Ahlam provides feedback to the Syrian Nadia Manfoukh. Ahlam is extremely pleased with Nadia Manfoukh’s performance and instead of converging toward the Syrian contestant (which is discussed below), Ahlam’s enthusiasm about the performance takes over and she uses markedly Gulf Arabic features in her speech:

(1)	a-gdar	a-ḡṡad	a-ḡūl-l-ič	ṡōt-ič	Ḥilū	ṡalaṡ-t-ič
	I-can	I-sit	I-say-to-you	voice-your	nice	rising-it-you
	rāyiṡa	wa-maṡallah		ṡale-č	ṡala	hāḏa
	amazing	and-whatever.God.wills		on-you	on	this
	ḏaṡif	wa-jamāl	al-yōm	zayy	al-gamar	
	slim	and-beauty	the-day	like	the-moon	

‘I am able to say to you that your voice is lovely, your high notes are amazing. Good heavens! Your slenderness and your beauty today shimmer like the moon.’ (Season 1, Episode 19)

In this example Ahlam is using all of her standard Gulf Arabic phonology and has even used the *kashkasha*, by using the 2nd person feminine singular possessive pronominal suffix /-ič/. Ahlam rarely employs the /-ič/ in the program; usually only using it when she is extremely excited with a female contestant. Also, while the word *ḏaṡif* means ‘weak’ in Standard Arabic, in the Gulf and other dialectal areas it means ‘slender/skinny,’ which is clearly the meaning she intends as she compliments the contestant on her beautiful voice and appearance on stage.²

² During the course of the season, Nadia Manfoukh was dieting in an effort to improve her appearance on stage. However, both Hassan El Shafei and Ahlam commented that the most important part of her performance is her voice and she should not diet if that will hinder her performance.

Throughout all of the normal speech segments and during the majority of the feedback sections, the hosts and judges exhibited maintenance by employing their normal speech patterns. Further, when the judges became excited with a contestant's performance, they reverted further into their local dialects, demonstrating Labov's idea of natural, unhindered speech during the 'danger of death' question.

B. Convergence

This portion of the chapter covers the range of convergence strategies used by the hosts, judges, and contestants during *Arab Idol*. These strategies range from minimal effort on the part of the speaker, such as checking for understanding and assigning nicknames, all the way to switching dialects and changing languages. Additionally, this section includes convergence strategies that do not necessarily create a close feeling with the interlocutor, such as mocking and over-accommodation.

1. Checking for Understanding

At a basic and simple level, checking that the interlocutor comprehends the utterances of the speaker is a minimal method of closing the distance between the two individuals. Somewhat surprisingly given the breadth of Arabic dialects present on the program, only twice did an individual check for understanding with an interlocutor. The only individual who performed this action was Ragheb Alama, once when the Kurdish contestant received comments and the second time he interrupted another judge's turn to ensure that the contestant understood the feedback.

The first instance of Ragheb Alama checking for understanding involved the Kurdish contestant, Parwas Hussein. When Parwas Hussein auditioned, she brought a

translator to help her understand the judges and communicate with them more effectively. When Parwas Hussein stood on stage without her translator during the first live episode, Ragheb Alama asked if she understood him, to which she nodded. In the second instance, Hassan El Shafei is providing feedback to Iraqi Mohanad Al Marsoomy in rapid Egyptian Arabic. Ragheb Alama interrupted Hassan El Shafei and asked him to slow down so that the contestant could understand better. Hassan El Shafei did not think he was speaking too fast and asked the studio audience if they understood, to which they responded with loud cheers. In both of these examples, Ragheb Alama is concerned about the contestant's comprehension of the feedback from the judges.

2. Assigning Nicknames

When an individual assigns another person a nickname, the act is intended to create a bond between the two people, and usually when this event occurs on *Arab Idol* it signals that the judge is impressed particularly with the contestant. When a judge gives a contestant a nickname, especially when the judge repeats the nickname over several weeks of the program, this act forms a stronger connection between the two individuals and brings them closer together. In total, the judges assigned only 13 nicknames: 3 in the first season and 10 in the second season. The sizeable increase in nicknames assigned to the contestants in the second season may be attributed to the fact that the judges repeatedly emphasized that the vocal quality and talent level were much higher and far superior in the second season.

Also, Hassan El Shafei assigned more than half of all the nicknames (seven), and for several of the nicknames he used them during multiple weeks. Considering that Hassan El Shafei does not stray from using Egyptian Arabic with the contestants,

assigning contestants nicknames may be his personal strategy of creating bonds with the contestants. Two of Hassan El Shafei's most used nicknames include *maṣallima* 'teacher' to Syrian Nadia Manfoukh and *zizū* to Lebanese Ziad Khoury. All of the other judges only assigned two nicknames each and with one exception repeated the nicknames at least two times. One other popular nickname is that of *ṣārūx* 'rocket,' which Ragheb Alama gave to Palestinian Mohammed Assaf; he used the nickname during four weeks of the program.

3. *Little Effort Convergence*

In the course of the analysis, I found that Ahlam and Ragheb Alama occasionally made small convergences, which did not necessitate a large amount of effort. Except when Ahlam was excited and would revert to her normal Gulf dialect, Ahlam consistently converged with her *qafs* to the dialect of the contestants. Thus, Ahlam tended to use an [ʔ] with the Lebanese, Egyptian, Palestinian, Syrian, and Jordanian contestants, while she would use the [g] with the Moroccan, Tunisian, Saudi, Iraqi, and Bahraini contestants. Statistically, Ahlam converged with the former 68.75 percent of the time and with the latter 100 percent.³ Not only would Ahlam converge with the contestants, but when telling stories, referring to the panel, or saluting other artists, Ahlam also converged with the dialects of the individuals to whom she referred. Thus, when mentioning the Lebanese singers Najwa Karam and Fairuz as well as the Egyptian singers Mohammed Abdel Wahab, Umm Kulthum, and Abdel Halim Hafez, Ahlam consistently used the [ʔ] allophone of the *qaf*. Further, considering that all of the

³ These calculations only include speech in which Ahlam was not enthusiastic, thus using her normal Gulf dialect.

other members on the judging panel employ the [ʔ] allophone for the *qaf*, when Ahlam referred to the judging panel she used the [ʔ] allophone as well.

Additionally, Ahlam not only used these two allophones for the *qaf* as well as the *fuṣḤā* [q], but Ahlam also used three other allophones, albeit with much lower frequency. Examples (2a-e) provide five different extracts to highlight Ahlam’s range of *qafs*, including the Standard Arabic [q] in (2a), the Gulf Arabic [g] in (2e), and the Egyptian and Syro-Lebanese Arabic [ʔ] in (2a) and (2d). Another *qaf* that Ahlam used is the voiced uvular plosive [G], which is common in the Qatari dialect.⁴ Thus, in (2c) when Ahlam refers to a Qatari composer and artist, she uses the [G] allophone.⁵ Another variation of the *qaf* is the [j], which Ahlam used in an Emirati local expression (2e). This variation is similar to the manner in which the emirate of Sharjah is often pronounced and written. The final allophone of the *qaf* is the [ǧ], such as in (2b). All six allophones of the *qaf* that Ahlam uses are provided in (2a-e); the allophones are bolded.

- (2) a. ... a-škur-kum min kill **G**alb-ī / intū wa-ustāḏ
 I-thank-you from all heart-my/ you and-maestro
- ilī Ṣaliya a-Ḥayyī-kum wa-l-fir**q**a l-musiʔiyyə
 name I-salute-you and-the-ensemble the-musical

‘... I thank you all from my whole heart, you all and Professor Elie Alia, I salute you all and the musical ensemble.’ (Season 1, Episode 15)

- b. ... fī **ǧ**immat al-romansiyya wa-**ǧ**immat il-Ḥubb...
 ...in peak the-romance and-peak the-love...

‘...in the peak of romance and the peak of love...’ (Season 1, Episode 15)

⁴ Al-Amadidhi (1985) analyzed the Qatari dialect specifically and observed 13 allophonic variations of the *qaf* (85-86). The [g] variant was used almost 60 percent of the time. Also, he observed the [G] variant a significant amount of times.

⁵ In addition to using this *qaf* in reference to a Qatari artist, Ahlam tended to use this *qaf* when saying romantic words such as *Galb* ‘heart’ and *Gamar* ‘moon,’ as in (2a). The use of this allophone of the *qaf* for these romantic terms is not surprising given that her husband is Qatari.

- c. ...al-mulaḥḥin wa-l-fannān al-Gaṭarī...
 ...the-composer and-the-artist the-Qatari...
- ‘... the Qatari composer and artist...’ (Season 1, Episode 25)
- d. ...ana waʔaf-t-l-ik wa-saʔaf-t-l-ik...
 ...I stood-I-for-you and-clapped-I-for-you...
- ‘... I stood for you and clapped for you...’ (Season 1, Episode 25)
- e. ...fi imarāt ni-gūl ʕale-yya rafja...
 ...in Emirates we-say on-me accompaniment...
- ‘...In the Emirates, we say “I swear”...’ (Season 2, Episode 13)

In addition to being highly flexible when selecting *qaf* allophones, Ahlam had other convergences that involved a low amount of effort. Frequently she would change the interdental [θ] to the dental [t] when speaking with non-Gulf speakers. For example, during one feedback section she repeatedly used the word *taniyya* ‘second’ when speaking with the Syrian Farrah Yousef (Season 2, Episode 27). Also, Ahlam had a number of set expressions that she would use to converge with individuals, such as employing the [ʔ] allophone of the *qaf* in the expression in (2d), using the Lebanese Arabic expression *ʕan jadd* ‘seriously/really’ with Ragheb Alama and Nancy Ajram, and utilizing the Egyptian Arabic expression *ya rāqil* ‘oh man’ with Hassan El Shafei and Ahmad Fahmi. All of these expressions were set phrases that Ahlam easily pulled from her repertoire to converge with individuals from different dialectal groups.

Ragheb Alama also had a tool to help him converge with the Egyptian contestants, although he did not use it as frequently as Ahlam used her various methods that required little effort. Occasionally when speaking with an Egyptian contestant he used the [g] as opposed to his normal [j]. One of these instances is provided in (3) in which Ragheb Alama was speaking to the Egyptian Ahmad Gamal.

- (3) inšaʿalla Ḥa-ta-kūn mawgūd
God.willing will-you-be present

‘Hopefully you will be present.’ (Season 2, Episode 21)

These judges used various convergence techniques that involved a small amount of effort. Ahlam not only varied the pronunciation of her *qaf* with all interlocutors, but also used several set expressions. Ragheb Alama sometimes pronounced the Egyptian Arabic [g] when talking to Egyptian contestants. All of these techniques can be easily performed by the speakers, yet still have the effect of converging with the interlocutors.

4. Switching Dialects Amongst the Hosts and Judges

In this analysis I distinguished the convergences amongst the judges from the convergences between the judges and the contestants. The judges developed a strong sense of camaraderie, both when enduring the auditions process together and in their shared experiences on the panel providing feedback. Additionally, they have a very different relationship amongst themselves than they do with the contestants, with the latter being more of mentorship. This section of the chapter describes the judges switching into Lebanese, Egyptian, and Gulf Arabic with the hosts and other judges.

a. Switching to Lebanese Arabic

Ahlam regularly switched into the Lebanese dialect in an effort to converge to Ragheb Alama, Nancy Ajram, and Annabella Hilal. For example, Ahlam was speaking in the Gulf dialect to Tunisian Hassan Kharbech when Ragheb Alama interrupted her. Ahlam then switched into Lebanese Arabic for a few lines to tell him to calm down and

that she has something to say before switching back to Gulf Arabic with the contestant (Season 1, Episode 19). During the mother's day tribute episode, Ragheb Alama saluted Ahlam for being a mother and she thanked him very politely in Lebanese Arabic (Season 1, Episode 25). Also, when Ahlam was telling Ragheb Alama that she would be leaving Lebanon after the season finale to return to the United Arab Emirates, her language choice reflected her traveling, starting in the Lebanese dialect and ending in the Gulf dialect (Season 1, Episode 27). Ahlam repeatedly used *'ūl-ī* 'say' to Nancy Ajram (e.g. (13) below) and once employed Lebanese Arabic when complimenting Annabella Hilal (Season 2, Episode 13). Thus, Ahlam frequently switched into Lebanese Arabic when talking with the Lebanese judges and hosts.

Not only did she make these switches, but sometimes she used local Lebanese dialectal features. In (4) Ahlam used a construction with a doubled object: a pronominal object suffix and an object noun that both have the same referent. Koutsoudas observed this phenomenon in the Lebanese dialect, such as in his example *ʕali šāf-ha la-l-bint* 'Ali saw (her) the girl' (1967, 512).⁶ Both Ragheb Alama and Nancy Ajram used this construction regularly. Ragheb Alama's use of this feature is provided in (A8)'s line 9 of Appendix I. Leading up to Ahlam's utterance of (4), Ragheb Alama mentioned how Ahlam was wearing a large, decorative crocodile bangle, which had several close-ups earlier in the episode as Ahlam spoke. He called attention to this piece of jewelry and then the two proceeded to joke about it. He referred to it using the Arabic word for crocodile (*timsāḥ*) and then Ahlam rebutted, saying in heavily accented English it was a

⁶ Feghali (1928) commented that this feature was more common in older Lebanese dialects. Levin (1987) analyzed this construction's appearance in Galilee dialects as well. He noted that this construction is also present in dialects in Iraq, Aleppo, and Damascus; however this feature is not completely widespread as it is rare in Jerusalem dialects.

‘crocodile.’ The two laughed and then Ahlam said the following line, joking that she wore it so that it could eat him. In (4), the doubled object construction is italicized.

- (4) ana kan badd-ī a-lbis-u axir Ḥalqa bass libas-t-u
 I was want-I I-wear-it last episode but wore-I-it
- il-yōm ʔul-t barki barki a-xallī a-xallī *ya-kl-u* *la-rāḡib*
 the-day said-I maybe maybe I-let I-let *he-eat-him* *to-name*

‘I wanted to wear it the last episode but I wore it today. I said maybe, maybe I will let *it eat Ragheb.*’ (Season 1, Episode 23)

The doubled object construction is a non-obligatory syntactic feature in Syro-Lebanese dialects. Thus, Ahlam’s use of this construction demonstrates detailed knowledge of the syntax of Syro-Lebanese dialects.

Another local Lebanese dialectal feature is the collapsing of the 2nd person singular masculine and feminine pronouns. Behnstedt’s (1997) map of this dialectal feature indicates its presence in northern Lebanon (506-7, map 253). Further, according to one of my Lebanese informants, this feature is also present in southern Lebanon as well as in Beirut. Prior to the utterance in (5), Nancy Ajram was speaking to the contestant and Ragheb Alama accidentally interrupted her before she had finished her remarks. As the two of them are talking about how she had not finished, Ahlam bursts out with *ya rabb* ‘oh lord.’ Nancy Ajram asked her if she wanted Ragheb Alama to start and amidst laughter Ahlam replied no. Ragheb Alama then countered and claimed that she did want him to proceed. As Ahlam stops laughing, she said to him the following line, with the last part clearly in a strong Lebanese dialect (bolded) in which she exhibited this feature.

(5)	la	ana	b-a-ʔūl	ya	rabb	mā	ti-ntiqil
	no	I	Hab.-I-say	oh	lord	no	you-move.on
	ka-l-ʕāda		lēš	intə	hēk		
	like-the-normal		why	you	thus		

‘No, I said oh lord don’t move on. **As normal why are you like that?**’ (Season 2, Episode 13)

Ahlam was the only judge to switch into Lebanese Arabic to converge with the Lebanese host and judges. Of note is that Ahlam not only switched into Lebanese Arabic, but she also exhibited very local Lebanese features when converging.

b. Switching to Egyptian Arabic

Hassan El Shafei maintained his Egyptian Arabic with all other judges; however, they still converged to him. Ahlam, Ragheb Alama, and Nancy Ajram all switched into Egyptian Arabic to converge to Hassan El Shafei. However, Ahlam switched more frequently than the other two and was very skilled in her switches. The next example includes four short utterances demonstrating Ahlam’s skill in Egyptian Arabic. In (6a-b) she correctly placed the stress (bolded) in the word, which in (6b) was on the epenthetic vowel. Admittedly she did not change her [j] to a [g] in (6b), but this discrepancy is probably because the Egyptian Arabic [g] is the same sound as her normal Gulf Arabic *qaf*. In (6c) she used a very common Egyptian Arabic phrase to indicate possession in an effort to claim Moroccan Dounia Batma’s laughter as her own, much to the dismay of Hassan El Shafei. And in (6d), Ahlam again used the epenthetic vowel (bolded) and demonstrated her ability to respond quickly to him in Egyptian Arabic.

- (6) a. A: b-a-ʔul-la-ha
 Hab.-I-say-to-her
- ‘I say to her.’ (Season 1, Episode 21)
- b. A: yaʕnī baʕd kalām-ak Ḥa-ʔūl ēh /
 mean after words-your will-say what/
- xajal-tī-nī
 embarrassed-you-me
- ‘I mean, after your words, what will I say, you made me embarrassed.’
 (Season 2, Episode 23)
- c. A: di-btāʕt-ī
 this-follows-me
- ‘This is mine.’ (Season 1, Episode 25)
- d. H: ēh bi-t-buʕṣ-ī-l-i lēh
 what Hab.-you-look-you-to-me why
- A: b-a-Ḥibb a-buʕṣi-l-ak
 Hab.-I-like I-look-at-you
- H: ‘What, why are you looking at me?’
 A: ‘I like to look at you.’ (Season 2, Episode 19)

Ahlam also used Egyptian Arabic in longer utterances on several occasions, such as in (7). Ahlam finished telling Egyptian Carmen Suleiman that her first performance of the night was not as good as in previous weeks. Najwa Karam was a guest at the judging panel and tried to soften the criticism by claiming that Ahlam is a caring judge, to which Ragheb Alama completely disagreed. At this point Ahlam paused and Hassan El Shafei interjected telling her to talk and not to be scared. Then she responded to him in Egyptian Arabic, using the discontinuous negation and again an epenthetic vowel (bolded). Then Ragheb Alama joined the conversation, using Egyptian Arabic.

- (7) H: ʔūl-ī mā ta-xf-ī-š
 say-you no you-scared-you-no
- A: ana miš xayfa bassi ta-xf-ī-š ašli
 I not scared but you-scared-you-no because
- ana— ana lli huwwa ʔāl wala mā
 I— I that he said not whatever
- ʔāl-š ana Ḥa-ʔūl lli Ṣāyzāh
 said-no I will-say that want
- R: māho mant ta-ʔūl lli inta Ṣāyz-u
 emphatic you you-say that you want-it

H: ‘Say it, don’t be scared.’

A: ‘I am not scared, just don’t be scared because I—I, that is whatever he said, I will say what I want to.’

R: ‘There it is, you already say what you want to.’ (Season 1, Episode 27)

Ragheb Alama used Egyptian Arabic with Hassan El Shafei other times as well and even with host Ahmad Fahmi. In (8), Ragheb Alama had been talking about all of the other judges’ feedback to Bahraini Hanane Reda. When he referred to Hassan El Shafei’s comments, he quoted him by switching into Egyptian Arabic (bolded) while also employing a Lebanese Arabic local expression in the same utterance.⁷ Ragheb Alama first quoted him in Egyptian Arabic and then increased the compliment in Egyptian Arabic as well, for both parallelism and emphasis.

- (8) Ḥasan ʔāl inn-ik inti ḡanna^y-ti **kuwayyis**
 name said that-you you sang-you **well**
- giddan** wa-ana a-bṣum-l-uh bi-l-ṣašira Ṣala illi ʔāl-u
 very and-I I-stamp-to-it by-the-ten on that said-it

⁷ The local expression *a-bṣum-l-uh bi-l-ṣašira* refers to the practice of validating documents with a thumbprint (*bašma*). The phrase literally means making a fingerprint with all ten fingers; thus by extension the local expression means to agree whole-heartedly or to swear.

inn-ik	ġanna ^y -ti	kuwayyis	giddan	giddan
that-you	sang-you	well	very	very

‘Hassan said that you sang **very well**, and I swear that you sang **very, very well**.’ (Season 2, Episode 13)

In another instance, Ragheb Alama switched from Lebanese to Egyptian Arabic to converge to Ahmad Fahmi. At the end of the positive feedback for Moroccan Salma Rachid’s performance, the host explained that she had been very sick. Ragheb Alama chimed in and said that if that is the case, we want her to be sick all the time, implying that she sang wonderfully despite the ailment. His switch into Egyptian Arabic, bolded in (9), was received positively by the Egyptian judge and host, both laughing heartily.

(9)	iza	hēk	iza	hēk	ʕayzīn-ha	dayiman	taʕbāna
	if	thus	if	thus	want-her	always	sick

‘If so, if so, **we all want her to be sick always**.’ (Season 2, Episode 21)

At one point Hassan El Shafei’s Egyptian Arabic may have confused Ragheb Alama. As shown in (10), Hassan El Shafei was explaining that he does not normally talk a lot, but tonight he wanted to do so. However, he used a verb that may have confused Ragheb Alama, so in Egyptian Arabic he asked Hassan El Shafei what he wanted to do. Even after he repeated, Ragheb Alama may not have understood, and so Nancy Ajram interjected using the same verb and conjugating the command according to Egyptian Arabic grammar. Thus, Nancy Ajram understood what Hassan El Shafei wanted to do and instructed him to do so in Egyptian Arabic.

- (10) H: ...ṣammatan kilam-ī ʔuṣayyar wa-a-Ḥibbi-š
 ...usually word-my short and-I-like-no
- a-rġi bass ana n-nahār-da bʔa ṣawz
 I-talk.a.lot but I the-day-this is want
- a-rġi Ḥabbatēn [N laughs]
 I-talk.a.lot two.things [N laughs]
- R: ṣayz ēh
 want what
- H: ṣawz a-rġi
 want I-talk.a.lot
- N: irġi
 talk.a.lot

H: ‘... normally my comments are short and I do not like to talk a lot, but tonight I want to chatter on a bit.’

R: ‘Want to what?’

H: ‘I want to chatter on.’

N: ‘Chatter on [then].’ (Season 2, Episode 13)

As this section has demonstrated, all three judges converged with Hassan El Shafei by employing Egyptian Arabic, but to different degrees. Ahlam was the most skilled with her Egyptian Arabic as seen through both her frequency of use as well as her utterances with proper stress and epenthetic vowels. Ragheb Alama also used Egyptian Arabic on multiple occasions; however, his skill with the language was much more limited. And while Nancy Ajram rarely employed Egyptian Arabic to converge with Hassan El Shafei, she may have a better comprehension of the dialect than her fellow Lebanese judge due to her continued singing in Egyptian Arabic.

c. Switching to Gulf Arabic: A Heart Breaker

In the data there was only one example in which a judge other than Ahlam switched into Gulf Arabic, but to understand this moment of hilarity and drama it is

necessary to explain the greater context of this example. The week after the judges saved Saudi Fares El Madani, Ahlam took a moment to explain to him the importance of singing within range. First, she explained how Egyptian Umm Kulthum and Mohammed Abdel Wahab are both amazing singers, yet the former can sing up and down the musical scales while the latter sings within a set range. Then, she stated that Lebanese Ziad Khoury can sing a wide range of notes, but Saudi Fares El Madani is better within a certain range. She then utters the following line stating that Ziad Khoury’s voice is so powerful that it splits the ground, while Fares El Madani’s voice breaks hearts. This line is provided in (11) and highlights how Ahlam converged to both singers with her pronunciation of the verb.

- (11) ...ziyad ṣōt-u lamma bi-y-ġannī b-i-Ḥiṣṣ
 ...name voice-his when Hab.-he-sings Hab.-I-feel
- innu **bi-y-šīʔ** al-arḏ [crowd cheers] wa-inta
 that **Hab.-he-splits** the-earth [crowd cheers] and-you
- ya faris lamma bi-t-ġannī ṣōt-ak **yi-šigg**
 oh name when Hab.-you-sing voice-your **he-splits**
- il-galb
 the-heart

‘...Ziad, his voice when he sings I feel that **it splits** the earth [crowd cheers] and you, oh Faris, when you sing, your voice **breaks** the heart.’ (Season 2, Episode 17)

Later in the same episode, Hassan El Shafei concluded his positive feedback to Palestinian Mohammed Assaf with a variation of Ahlam’s phrase. Hassan El Shafei told him that *ṣōt-ak bi-y-šūʔʔ aṣ-ṣaxr* ‘your voice splits stone.’ Upon hearing this utterance, both Ahlam and Nancy Ajram comment that there are now three objects being split and start listing them amongst a great deal of laughter. Nancy Ajram at first listed all three

in a very Lebanese manner (12), using the [ʔ] for the *qaf* and inserting a small vowel in the nouns to avoid two consonants in a row.

- (12) ...bi-y-šīʔʔ il-ariḍ... wa-bi-y-šīʔʔ il-ʔalib...
 ...Hab.-he-splits the-earth... and-Hab.-he-splits the-heart...
 wa-bi-y-šīʔʔ aṣ-ṣaxir...
 and-Hab.-he-splits the-stone...
 ‘... splits the earth... and breaks the heart... and splits the stone...’ (Season 2, Episode 17)

However, her list using Lebanese Arabic did not satisfy Ahlam, who in a mix of Lebanese (bolded) and Gulf Arabic commands tells her to say them in Gulf Arabic in (13).

- (13) ... ʔul-ī-hum ʔul-ī-hum ʔul-ī-hum... nansī
 ... **say-you-them** **say-you-them** **say-you-them...** **name**
 ʔul-ī... xallī nansī ti-ʔul-hā... bi-l-xalījī / gūl-ī
say-you... **let** **name** **you-say-it...** in-the-Gulf / say-you
 šigg il-galb... ʔul-ī
 split the-heart... **say-you**
 ‘...**say them, say them, say them...** Nancy say... **Let Nancy say it...** in Gulf Arabic, say break the heart... **say.**’ (Season 2, Episode 17)

Initially, Nancy Ajram had a hard time amongst the laughter and even hesitated with the first phrase. But after much anticipation and with a great deal of drama and passion Nancy Ajram finally uttered the three phrases in Gulf Arabic, much to the amusement of Ahlam and the Gulf viewers. In (14), Nancy Ajram used the [g] as her *qaf* and removed the inserted vowels that she used above in (12); however, she maintained the [d], thus not fully pronouncing the Gulf Arabic equivalent [d̥].

- (14) yi-š— yi-šigg il-galb [A laughs] wa-yi-šigg
 he— he-splits the-heart [A laughs] and-he-splits
- iṣ-ṣaxr wa-yi-šigg il-arḍ
 the-stone and-he-splits the-earth
- ‘Bre—breaks the heart [A laughs] and splits the stone and splits the earth.’
 (Season 2, Episode 17)

Encouraged by Ahlam, Nancy Ajram switched into Gulf Arabic when uttering the phrase in (14). The fact that there is only one switch into Gulf Arabic amongst the judges highlights that they are unfamiliar with the dialect and have a much greater familiarity with Egyptian Arabic.

5. *Switching Dialects with the Contestants*

This section discusses how the judges converged with the contestants by switching their dialects. The switches occur in three of the five dialect groups: Syro-Lebanese, Egyptian, and Mesopotamia Arabic. Additionally, the section examines the notion of converging in an effort to save-face when giving a critique.

a. Switching into Syro-Lebanese Arabic

As mentioned above, Ahlam consistently converged her *qafs* toward the Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian, and Palestinian contestants by using the [ʔ] allophone. Additionally, she frequently used both words and syntactic structures from the Syro-Lebanese dialects with these contestants. For example, she used the construction /fī/ with a personal pronominal suffix to mean ‘can do’ as well as place the modifier *iktīr* ‘a lot’ before the verb or noun it was modifying as opposed to after (Season 1, Episodes 19 and 21). Occasionally Ahlam combined the two dialectal groups in word formations,

such as *ʔāʔilt-hā* ‘I am saying it,’ which combined the Syro-Lebanese Arabic [ʔ] allophone of the *qaf* with the Gulf Arabic *hamza* in the active particle and 3rd person feminine pronominal suffix (Season 1, Episode 17).

Ahlam employed Lebanese Arabic utterances with Lebanese Ziad Khoury in the second season, such as in (15a-b) with the Lebanese Arabic bolded. In (15a) Ahlam utilized the same doubled object construction that was discussed regarding (4). After Ahlam used this clear Lebanese Arabic expression, she switched into Gulf Arabic with a phrase that means ‘a lot.’ In (15b) Ahlam finished her comments to Ziad Khoury by referencing his country, although she referred to Lebanon in the feminine while the Lebanese refer to their country in the masculine. This example also demonstrates how the judges frequently referred to the contestants’ countries, which is a topic further discussed in Chapter VI.

(15) a. **ana** **b-a-ḥibb-u** **la-ziyad** la-marra [crowd cheers]
I **Hab.-I-like-him** **to-name** for-time [crowd cheers]

‘**I like Ziad** a lot.’ [crowd cheers] (Season 2, Episode 11)

b. ... **badd-ī** ʔul-l-ak **ti-slam** **libnān** **yalli**
 ... **want-I** **say-to-you** **she-peace** **Lebanon** **which**

jāb-it **ṣōt-ak** aḥsan-t
brought-she **voice-your** well.done-you

‘... **I want to say to you peace to Lebanon that brought your voice**, well done.’ (Season 2, Episode 17)

Thus, Ahlam switched into Syro-Lebanese dialects repeatedly, demonstrating her skill in using the various Arabic dialects.

The most interesting switch into Lebanese Arabic was when Hassan El Shafei converged with Ziad Khoury, because Egyptians are known to favor their own dialect

and to switch rarely. However, upon further understanding Ziad Khoury's relationship with all three Egyptians in the second season—Ahmad Gamal, Ahmad Fahmi, Hassan El Shafei—the reasons for Hassan El Shafei's switch become more apparent. The contestants tend to develop one strong personal friendship during the finals; for Ziad Khoury, his close friend was Ahmad Gamal. This friendship was most evident in the introduction videos when contestants introduced each other; Ziad Khoury and Ahmad Gamal spoke highly of each other in these videos (Season 2, Episode 13). A few weeks later, the friendship between host Ahmad Fahmi and Ziad Khoury was demonstrated by their coordinated handshake before they simultaneously announced the number to vote for Ziad Khoury, which caused exclamations by Hassan El Shafei (Season 2, Episode 17). The practice and preparation for the move increased as it became more complicated and even involved a spin (Season 2, Episodes 21 and 25). Finally, Hassan El Shafei awarded Ziad Khoury the nickname *zizū*, which signals the close relationship and fondness that the judge has for the contestant; and he used the nickname frequently. Thus, Ziad Khoury not only had a favorable status from the perspective of the Egyptian judge, but also the Egyptian contestant and host.

In the eighth week of the finals after Ziad Khoury's first performance of the evening, Hassan El Shafei remarked how the contestant appeared to be more relaxed. In (16), the topic of Ziad Khoury's suit came up, and using a distinct Lebanese Arabic phrase Hassan El Shafei commented that the suit compliments him well.⁸

⁸ In Lebanese Arabic the word 'suit' is feminine; however in this example Hassan El Shafei is referring to the act of 'suing up' by using the masculine singular conjugation.

- (16) ZK: bass hiyye al-badle jāyī šway *slim* liannu
but she the-suit come a.bit *slim* because
- ya ra^y-t-ne...
oh saw-it-me...
- H: bi-yi-lba²-l-ak bi-yi-lba²-l-ak
Hab.-he-suit-for-you Hab.-he-suit-for-you
- ZK: ‘Just the suit is a bit *slim* because I wished...’
H: ‘It suits you, it suits you.’ (Season 2, Episode 25)

Hassan El Shafei used a Lebanese Arabic phrase, yet the notion of guys joking about clothes is much more Egyptian. Then, after his second performance of the night, Hassan El Shafei’s comments were short and concentrated on the fact that the contestant had changed suits. Now the judge not only commented about the clothing, but is almost ribbing him about the suit. The ribbing is completely normal for Egyptian men, but would be considered rude amongst Lebanese men, given how the latter take a great deal of pride in their fashion. Thus, Hassan El Shafei’s use of Lebanese Arabic is indicative of his friendship with Ziad Khoury. Further, Ziad Khoury has a close relationship with all of the Egyptians on the second season, so much so that Hassan El Shafei even joked around with the contestant as if he were Egyptian. Hassan El Shafei’s one utterance in Lebanese Arabic underscores the close relationship between the two individuals, which caused him to deviate from the norm of always speaking in Egyptian Arabic.

b. Switching into Egyptian Arabic

The non-Egyptian judges all switched into Egyptian Arabic in an effort to converge with the Egyptian contestants. In the first season, both Ahlam and Ragheb Alama switched into Egyptian Arabic a few times to converge with Carmen Suleiman. In the second season, Ahlam, Ragheb Alama, and Nancy Ajram all switched into

Egyptian Arabic to converge with Ahmad Gamal, yet at a higher frequency than in the first season. This discrepancy between the two seasons is most likely due to the fact that it is more socially acceptable to be jovial with males, but to maintain distance with females when in public. In the first season, Ahlam often used the standing and clapping phrase with the [ʔ] allophone with Carmen Suleiman, (2d above). Additionally, Ahlam switched into Egyptian Arabic a few times, such as in (17), in which the Egyptian Arabic segment is bolded. Of particular note in this example, is that Ahlam began by using Gulf Arabic mentioning the improbable condition of the renowned Mohammed Abdu sitting in her chair. Thus, she used Gulf Arabic when referring to the Gulf artist and then switched to Egyptian Arabic to give the actual compliment.

- (17) innu law al-ustāḏ moḤamed Ṣabdu mawjūd
 that if the-honorific name present
- hinna gāṣid ṣal-kursi lli ana gāṣida ṣalē-h
 here sitting on-chair that I sitting on-it
- [A taps table twice] **kān** ʔam **wa-ēh** [A and H stand and clap]
 [A taps table twice] **was** **stand** **and-what** [A and H stand and clap]

‘If master Mohammed Abdu was present here and sitting on the chair that I am sitting on [A taps table twice] **he would stand and do what?**’ [A and H stand and clap] (Season 2, Episode 27)

Also during the first season, Ragheb Alama switched into Egyptian Arabic twice, one of them is provided in (18) with the Egyptian Arabic bolded. In her performance, Carmen Suleiman was standing on a red carpet and the stage had the appearance of paparazzi surrounding her while she performed. Thus in his comments, Ragheb Alama gave most of his feedback in Lebanese Arabic, but at the end switched into Egyptian Arabic to tell her that he hoped that she becomes a world star. Of particular note is that Ragheb Alama used the Egyptian Arabic phrase *lāyʔa ṣale-ki* ‘it

suits you,’ compared to the corresponding Lebanese Arabic phrase that Hassan El Shafei used in (16).

(18)	badd-ī want-I	ʔil-l-ik say-to-you	ir- <i>red carpet</i> the- <i>red carpet</i>	kān-it was-it	lāyʔa suits	ʕale-ki on-you
	ʔāwi [chuckles] a.lot [chuckles]	yaʕnī mean	inti you	inti you	wa— and—	yaʕnī mean
	akīd— of.course—	inšaʔallā God.willing	Ḥa-t-kūn-i will-you-be-you		nagma star	
	bi-ʕālim in-world	il— [crowd cheers] the— [crowd cheers]				

‘I want to say to you that the *red carpet* **suits you very well** [chuckles] **I mean you, you and—I mean of course—hopefully you will be a star in the world of—**’ [crowd cheers] (Season 1, Episode 23)

As mentioned above, the amount of Egyptian Arabic used by the three non-Egyptian judges is greater in the second season than the first. Further, as noted in the previous section regarding the switching between the judges, Ahlam seems to have the most control when switching into Egyptian Arabic. This tendency is again repeated in the data regarding the interactions between the judges and the contestants. Ahlam tends to use markedly Egyptian Arabic phrases with relative ease, while Ragheb Alama tends to stumble and Nancy Ajram’s longer phrases tend to involve a great deal of passion. (19a-c) provide only some of the switches that Ahlam made when speaking with Ahmad Gamal; the clearly Egyptian Arabic is bolded in (19a) and the utterances in (19b-c) are almost complete switches into Egyptian Arabic, thus almost completely bolded.

- (19) a. aywa mā bāyn ʕale-k innu muš aḤmad jamāl
 yes emphatic seems on-you that not name
- bitāʕ il-usbūʕ lli fāt bi-y-ġannī
 following the-week that passed Hab.-he-sing
- di-l-waʔti— yaʕnī Ḥatta wa-inta ʕayyān
 this-the-time— mean even and-you sick
- šōt-ak rāyiʕ aḤsan-t
 voice-your amazing well.done-you

‘Yes, **it seems like** that was not the Ahmad Gamal **from last week** singing **now**—I mean even when you are **sick**, your voice is amazing, well done.’
 (Season 2, Episode 11)

- b. ana b-a-ʔūl huwwa da aḤmad jamāl illi ana
 I Hab.-I-say he this name that I
- b-a-Ḥibb a-smaʕ-u / huwwa da-šōt wa-huwwa
 Hab.-I-like I-listen-it / he this-voice and-he
- da-l-ġuna ʕarif sori li-l-kilma-di bass inta
 this-the-song know sorry for-the-word-this but you
- miel siyāra spor [N laughs] ...
 like car sports [N laughs] ...

‘I say that you are the Ahmad Gamal that I love to listen to. It is that voice and that song I know, I am sorry for the word, but you are like a sports car.’ [N laughs] ... (Season 2, Episode 23)

- c. ana b-a-ʔūl ... wallāhi aḤmad a-ʔul-l-ak ʕala
 I Hab.-I-say... for.sure name I-say-to-you about
- Ḥāga ana nas-īt a-tnaffas wa-ana
 thing I forgot-I I-breathe and-I
- b-a-smaʕ-ak
 Hab.-I-listen-you

‘I say ... honestly Ahmad I say to you that I forgot to breathe while I listened to you.’ (Season 2, Episode 27)

The utterance of (19a) follows a discussion about how Ahmad Gamal has been ill recently and therefore he did not reach his full potential during his performance.

Ahlam made the comment of (19a), using some clear Egyptian Arabic phrases, to agree that the Ahmad Gamal performing at the time was not the same Ahmad Gamal from the previous week. For instance, *ṣayyān* ‘sick’ is only used in Egyptian Arabic once it becomes clear that a person is actually sick; usually *taṣbān* ‘tired’ is the euphemism used (Wilmsen 2010b; c.f. (9)). The speech in (19b) is only the first portion of a long monologue in which Ahlam maintained her use of Egyptian Arabic while elaborating on the metaphor of Ahmad Gamal as a sports car. This long stretch of Egyptian Arabic is only momentarily interrupted by Gulf Arabic when Ahlam kept the interdental [e] in *miel* ‘like.’ The utterance in (19c) is noteworthy since Ahlam is very emotional and excited after Ahmad Gamal’s performance, but she is able to maintain composure and switch into Egyptian Arabic for one line and then quickly switched back into excited Gulf Arabic. In both (19b) and (19c), Ahlam started in Egyptian Arabic for her feedback to Ahmad Gamal, but then at some point switched back into Gulf Arabic. Also as noted above, Ahlam tends to maintain the [j] and not switch into the Egyptian Arabic [g], such as in Ahmad Gamal’s last name in (19a-b). However, Ahlam did make the switch in (19c) with *Hāga* ‘thing,’ probably because it is part of a phrase that Hassan El Shafei says frequently on every episode: *ṣayz a-ʔul-l-ak ṣala Hāga* ‘I want to tell you something.’

While Ahlam tends to have extended stretches of Egyptian Arabic, Ragheb Alama tends to stumble over his Egyptian Arabic or make simpler switches. In (20a-b) Ragheb Alama made short insertions in Egyptian Arabic during the comments portion of the show. When uttering (20a), Ragheb Alama kept looking between Ahmad Gamal and Hassan El Shafei as he tried to gain their approval. In Egyptian Arabic *ṣayz* and *ṣawz* are both acceptable variations to say ‘I want.’ In this example Ragheb Alama starts

using one option and then switched to another option, potentially not realizing that both forms are correct. In (20b) amidst the judges' conversation, he suddenly inserted this rather simple statement in Egyptian Arabic. In both of these utterances Ragheb Alama made simpler switches into Egyptian Arabic as compared to Ahlam's switches.

- (20) a. ana miš ʕaw— miš ʕayz / ʕayz a-rawwaḥ farḥ-it
 I not wa— not want/ want I-send.home joy
- Ḥasan aš-šafaḥi innu yi-tkallim wa-huwwa Ḥa-yi-tkallim
 name that he-talk and-he will-he-talk

‘I don’t wa—I don’t want, I don’t want to spoil Hassan El Shafei’s joy that he talks and he will talk.’ (Season 2, Episode 13)

- b. aḤsan min kida ... aḤsan min-da miš Ḥa-ya-Ḥṣal
 better than that... betther than-this not will-he-happen

‘Better than that ... better than this will not happen.’ (Season 2, Episode 25)

Nancy Ajram switched into Egyptian Arabic a fair amount, but to varying degrees. She had a few one-word switches, such as *Ḥagatēn* ‘two things’ and *buṣṣ* ‘look’ (Season 2, Episodes 13 and 19). She also quoted Egyptian Arabic songs, such as lyrics from a number by Mohammed Abdel Wahab and her song dedicated to Egyptians, *Ana Maṣrī* ‘I am Egyptian’ (Season 2, Episodes 13 and 15). Nancy Ajram only had one longer stretch of Egyptian Arabic with Ahmad Gamal, but as with her switch into Gulf Arabic in (12), Nancy Ajram used a lot of passion and hand gestures when speaking in Egyptian Arabic to the contestant. The Lebanese judge delivered the line in (21) very slowly and deliberately and apparently with a large amount of effort. Not only did she laugh, but so did the contestant and Hassan El Shafei, who commented that she had crossed over and should go back to Egypt. This first part of the phrase is listed in (21a); however, as usual, Nancy Ajram had not finished her comments and

Ragheb Alama tried to interrupt her. She finally finished her utterance (21b) and after more laughter from the judges switched back into Lebanese Arabic to finish her comments to the contestant. Nancy Ajram’s delivery in different Arabic dialects tends to be deliberate; however, the drama and passion only adds to the pleasure for the Gulf and Egyptian audiences.

- (21) a. ēh da ēh da / ēh il-gamāl da
 what this what this/ what the-beauty this

 [N laughs] ēh ir-ri’a di / il-ṣasal-da
 [N laughs] what the-softness this/ the-honey-this

‘What is this! What is this! What beauty is this! [N laughs] What softness is this! [What] honey is this!’ [N and AG laugh] (Season 2, Episode 25)

- b. mā fī-š aḥlā min kida [N and R laugh]
 not there.is-not nicer than that [N and R laugh]

‘There is nothing nicer than that.’ (Season 2, Episode 25)

None of the judges used or attempted to use Maghreb dialects with any of the Maghreb contestants. However, a few potential attempts at converging with the Maghreb contestants occurred. Given that Hassan El Shafei tends to follow the Egyptian Arabic rules for when to use the [q] or the [ʔ] in addition to Nancy Ajram’s strong inclination for always using the [ʔ], deviations from these practices are noteworthy. For example, when Hassan El Shafei was providing feedback to the Tunisian Hassan Kharbech, he used the [q] in *aqall* ‘minimum’ and *maqbul* ‘acceptable’ whereas in Egyptian Arabic the [ʔ] is usually used (Season 1, Episode 17). Also, when delivering comments to the Moroccan Salma Rachid, Nancy Ajram used the [q] in an almost equal proportion to the [ʔ], which was highly uncharacteristic for her (Season 2, Episode 13). While Ahlam’s variation of the *qaf* makes it easier for her to converge with the

contestants, the use of the [q] by Hassan El Shafei and Nancy Ajram in these examples demonstrates an attempt for minimal convergence that still required effort.

Even Ahlam, with such skill in a wide variety of Arabic dialects, never completely converged with any of the Maghreb contestants. Of note, was an instance in which Ahlam was complimenting Salma Rachid on her beautiful, Moroccan inspired gown and instead of using Gulf or Moroccan Arabic, Ahlam spoke in Egyptian Arabic. Ahlam was trying not only to offer the contestant a compliment, but also adjusted her speech to further narrow the distance between the two individuals. However, since Ahlam is not as well versed in Moroccan Arabic, the farthest West she could go dialectally was Egyptian Arabic. This compliment in Egyptian Arabic is provided in (22).

- (22) ...al-quftan al-maġrabī Ḥa-y-ākul min-nik Ḥitta
 ...the-dress the-Moroccan will-he-eat from-you piece
 ‘... the Moroccan dress will eat a piece of you.’ (Season 2, Episode 23)

As demonstrated through these examples, there was a higher frequency of converging with the Egyptian contestant in the second season compared with the first, which may be due to the fact that the contestant was male. Further, Ahlam’s tendency to use skillful switches into Egyptian Arabic continued, while the other judges opted for simpler switches. Finally, while there were no switches into Maghreb Arabic, it is noteworthy that Ahlam switched into Egyptian Arabic when talking with the Moroccan contestant about her Moroccan gown.

c. Switching into Mesopotamia Arabic

Both Ahlam and Ragheb Alama used typical Iraqi greetings with the Iraqi contestants. Even though this convergence is short, these greetings are still effective in bringing the judge and contestant closer together. In (23), Ahlam started her turn with the Iraqi Arabic greeting, which made Mohammed Oulwan smile and chuckle before responding.

- (23) A: š-lon-ak
 what-color-your
- MO: [slight laugh] Ḥamdallah ya-slam-ič
 [slight laugh] thanks.be.to.God he-peace-you
- A: ‘How are you?’
MO: [slight laugh] ‘Thanks be to God, may God grant you peace.’ (Season 2, Episode 13)

In the second example (24), Ragheb Alama began his feedback with a different Iraqi greeting, which was then reciprocated by the contestant, Mohanad Al Marsoomy.

- (24) R: aḤsan-t ya mohannad / ya mohannad /
 well.done-you oh name/ oh name/
- yi-sḤad masā-k
 he-happy evening-your
- MM: yi-sḤad masā-k
 he-happy evening-your
- R: ‘Well done Mohanad. Mohanad, good evening.’
MM: ‘Good evening.’ (Season 2, Episode 19)

Thus, although these greetings are very simple, by employing them both Ahlam and Ragheb Alama narrowed the distance between them and the Iraqi contestants.

d. Converging when Criticizing

A noteworthy trend within the data was a tendency for Ahlam to converge to contestants when she delivered criticism. For example, just before offering an Iraqi greeting in (23), Ragheb Alama had just finished some tough comments and following the greeting Ahlam also was critical of his performance. Ahlam also converged with the Syrian Nadia Manfoukh and the Egyptian Carmen Suleiman when delivering negative remarks on several occasions (e.g. Season 1, Episodes 13, 21, and 27). Also, once during comments to Egyptian Ahmad Gamal, she began the utterance mixing in Egyptian Arabic phrases, then switched into her normal Gulf Arabic speech for the bulk of her remarks, but again ended the speech using more Egyptian Arabic phrases. Thus, she began and ended her comment by converging to help ease the blow of her criticisms in Gulf Arabic (Season 2, Episode 21). Ahlam did not always converge when delivering critiques, especially when she was trying to distance herself from the contestant.

6. Contestants Switching Dialects with the Judges

The contestants also tended to maintain their dialect when speaking to the hosts and judges during the feedback portions. I only observed two examples in which a contestant used a non-native dialect, and in both instances this utterance occurred during a more comical moment or initiated one. Interestingly, in both examples, the contestants in these exchanges were North African: Tunisian Hassan Kharbech and Moroccan Salma Rachid, employing Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic utterances respectively.

In the first example, Hassan El Shafei began his comments regarding Hassan Kharbech's performance by addressing him with the typical nickname for a person named Hassan, [abū ʕalī] 'Ali's father.' Before Hassan El Shafei continued, the

contestant made a remark in Egyptian Arabic, using a line often uttered by this judge. The imitation was spot-on as Hassan El Shafei responded in a slight chuckle before continuing on with his comments.

- (25) H: abū ʕalī
 attributive name
- HK: buṣṣ ya Ḥasan / Ḥa-ʔūl-l-ak ʕala Ḥāga
 look oh name/ will-say-to-you about thing
- H: bizzabṭi kida [HK laughs] bizzabṭi kida...
 exactly that [HK laughs] exactly that...

H: ‘Abu Ali.’

HK: ‘Look oh Hassan, I am going to tell you something.’

H: ‘Exactly that, [HK laughs] exactly that...’ (Season 1, Episode 13)

In the second example, Ragheb Alama was giving his feedback to Salma Rachid about her performance, basically by telling a funny story. He described his conversation with Nancy Ajram during the Moroccan’s performance, in which he told Nancy Ajram a positive quality about the contestant, such as the smoothness of her singing and the advanced technique. He said that her response was always [ʔal-it-l-e maʕ-ak Ḥaʔʔ] ‘she told me, “you are right.”’ Then, Ragheb Alama told Nancy Ajram that Nancy Ajram was very lovely, and she became quiet. So, Ragheb Alama asked her why she grew silent. During a short lull in the joke-telling and as Ragheb Alama was laughing, Salma Rachid piped in with:

- (26) ʔāl-it-l-ak maʕ-ak Ḥaʔʔ
 said-she-to-you with-you right

‘She told you, “you are right.”’ (Season 2, Episode 19)

Salma Rachid used Lebanese Arabic to participate in the joke, thus converging with Ragheb Alama. He ended the story by saying that Nancy Ajram said she was quiet because his last remark was completely correct.

In both (25) and (26), the contestants did not utilize their native Tunisian or Moroccan Arabic, but instead converged to the judge who was speaking by using Egyptian or Lebanese Arabic. In the first example, Hassan Kharbech imitated Hassan El Shafei's Egyptian Arabic phrase, which narrowed the distance between the judge and the contestant. Hassan El Shafei clearly thought that Hassan Kharbech's imitation was done well and both laughed together, highlighting the effectiveness of this convergence. In the second example, Salma Rachid attempted to join Ragheb Alama as he told his joke and in doing so she spoke in Lebanese Arabic. Although Ragheb Alama did not specifically recognize Salma Rachid's convergence, and instead continued telling the hilarious story with the punch line, the contestant still made the effort to identify with the Lebanese judge. As mentioned in the previous two sections, switching dialects between individuals is a clear and skillful strategy of convergence.

7. Using Connotations Associated with a Dialect

In Chapter III, the literature review highlighted that when switching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic or between Dialectal Arabic and an European language, the switching may contrast the associations and values attributed to each variety. Egyptians are considered to be funny—or at least in their comedic movies—and the Lebanese appear to live a pampered lifestyle with their malls, elegant fashion styles, and spa treatments. In addition to each dialect containing strong connotations, pan-Arab media is saturated with both of these dialects. This strong presence in Arabic-speaking

media provides the entire region a strong familiarity with both of these dialects. This section describes how Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic have particular connotations when contrasted against all other dialects.

a. Egyptian Arabic: Comedic

The Egyptian Hollywood produces a large number of films that gain recognition throughout the region; many of these films tend to be in the comedy genre, resulting in many non-Egyptians associating the dialect with comedic situations. In the first example, Ahlam opened with the following line to the Jordanian Youssef Arafat. Instead of using her normal Gulf speech with some small phonological convergences (as mentioned above), Ahlam completed her first line by switching into Egyptian Arabic (bolded) to lighten the mood. Ahlam was joking around so that Youssef Arafat would not worry about her remarks. At the end of her utterance, both Ahlam and Youssef Arafat laughed, indicating that Ahlam successfully lightened the mood.

- (27) yūsif / ana ʕand-ī l-ak naṣīḥa / mā **ta-ʕmil-š** **Ḥāga**
 name / I have-I for-you advice/ **no** **you-do-no** **thing**
- inta** **ʕadda^y-t** [A and YA laugh]
 you **passed-you** [A and YA laugh]

‘Youssef, I have advice for you, **do not do anything, you passed.**’ [A and YA laugh] (Season 1, Episode 17)

In the second season, Ahmad Fahmi paused for several seconds before starting the transition to the next portion of the program because he was unsure if Ahlam was finished talking. The other judges noticed his hesitation and immediately started laughing, since Ahlam is notorious for being long-winded. In responding to him, Ahlam mixed a Gulf Arabic word with several Egyptian Arabic ones. Her use of Egyptian

Arabic—even though it is with an Egyptian—still helped to lighten the mood as she joked around with him. In (28) clearly Egyptian Arabic words are bolded and clearly Gulf Arabic words are italicized; all other words are shared between the two dialects.

- (28) A: lamma ni-xtisir **t-ʔūl-u** ixtasar-tū
 when we-short **you-say-it** short-you.pl
- wa-lamma **na-kallim** **ktīr** *ta-gūl-ūn*
 and-when **we-talk** **a.lot** *you-say-you.pl*
- wadwad-tū** **na-ʕmil** **ēh**
 chattered-you.pl **we-do** **what**
- AF: **la** **xāliṣ** [A and AF laugh]
 no **complete** [A and AF laugh]
- A: **šuf-ū** **l-kum** **Ḥall**
 see-you.pl **for-you.pl** **solution**

A: ‘When I keep it short, **you all say** that I was too short. And when **I talk a lot, you all say that I chattered on. What should I do?**’
 AF: ‘**No, not at all.**’ [A and AF laugh]
 A: ‘**Find yourselves a solution.**’ (Season 2, Episode 21)

As seen in (28), Ahlam used 1st and 2nd person plural pronominal suffixes when referring to just herself. Thus, when her remarks are short, the hosts tell Ahlam that she spoke too little, but when her remarks are longer, the hosts tell Ahlam that she spoke too much. Referring to herself in the plural distances herself slightly as the use of Egyptian Arabic highlights how Ahlam is giving Ahmad Fahmi a hard time and joking around with him.

b. Lebanese Arabic: Pampering

The Lebanese have developed a strong national identity, which includes the carefree lifestyle of shopping, clubbing, and always doing so in the most fashionable

way. Not only do the Lebanese broadcast this lifestyle to the rest of the Arabic-speaking world through their satellite programs, but also the country has been a prime recreational destination for regional travelers, especially from the Gulf. During the second season, in the last two weeks of the competition, Syrian Farrah Yousef is the only remaining female contestant. *Arab Idol* pampered the sole female contestant with a spa treatment, fancy gowns, and glittering jewelry. In the final week, her introduction video for her first number showed how well MBC pampered her. Also, during the feedback portion after her second song, Ahlam told Farrah Yousef to say that they pampered her and Farrah Yousef did so by stating that she was pampered a great deal (Season 2, Episode 27). While this exchange did not involve switches to Lebanese Arabic, it does reinforce the connection of pampering with the Lebanese, since *Arab Idol* is filmed in Lebanon.

Earlier in the second season, Saudi Fares El Madani had some health complications and stayed for several days in the hospital. After he performed his song that week, all of the judges were offering typical get-well Dialectal Arabic expressions. Both Hassan El Shafei and Ahlam used the Lebanese dialect to offer their well wishes to the contestant. Hassan El Shafei started with general pan-Arabic expressions and then offered the additional option of a recognized Lebanese Arabic phrase and even joked that he was pampering the contestant in doing so. Egyptian speakers tend not to switch into other dialects, thus underscoring Hassan El Shafei's use of Lebanese Arabic (e.g. Abu-Melhim (1991)).

The last to offer comments was Ahlam, since she was emotionally distraught over her fellow Gulf speaker's condition. She started by expressing how much her heart was aching over Fares El Madani in Lebanese Arabic, and after a pause with her eyes

tearing up, she continued with another pan-Arabic phrase. Ahlam's use of Lebanese Arabic with a fellow Gulf speaker was extremely uncharacteristic, thus signaling how she was using the Lebanese dialect in an effort to pamper him so that he would become healthy again. The following example includes both Hassan El Shafei's and Ahlam's remarks, such that the Lebanese Arabic phrases and words are bolded, while the pan-Arabic phrases are un-bolded.

- (29) a. H: salamt-ak alf salāma aw **salāmat**
 peace-you thousand peace or **health**
- ʔalb-ak** a-dallaʕ-ak...
 heart-your I-pamper-you...
- ‘Feel better, many well wishes, or **rest your heart**. I am pampering you...’ (Season 2, Episode 15)
- b. A: **ana** **b-a-ʔul-l-ak** **inn-ak** **wijjaʕ-t**
 I **Hab.-I-say-to-you** **that-you** **hurt-you**
- ʔalb-ī**// alf salāma ʕalē-k
 heart-my// thousand peace on-you
- ‘**I say to you that you broke my heart**. Many well wishes for you.’ (Season 2, Episode 15)

This portion of the chapter has given several examples in which speakers switched dialects to express a sentiment associated with that particular dialect. In the case of the Egyptian dialect, given the association of the dialect with comedic movies, individuals employed Egyptian Arabic when trying to joke around or lighten the mood. For the Lebanese dialect, given the connection with a pampered lifestyle, individuals switched into Lebanese Arabic when portraying this sentiment. Connotations associated amongst the dialects, such as Egyptian Arabic for joking and Lebanese Arabic for pampering, are not well documented.

8. *Switching Languages*

This section discusses when individuals switch languages in an effort to converge with their interlocutor. The languages involved in these switches include Arabic, Kurdish, English, and French.

a. Arabic

Parwas Hussein often spoke in Arabic on the program, thus converging with all of the judges, hosts, and audience members. In (28a-b) Parwas Hussein used Arabic with the judges during the feedback portion. As will be discussed below, Parwas Hussein used Arabic, but with some grammatical errors; however, the judges still should have understood what she meant, even if her Arabic sounded slightly peculiar.

(30) a.	ʕašān	al-yōm	a-ġannī	warda al-jazayirī	lāzim	kill
	because	the-day	I-sing	name	must	all
	muštarikīn	yaʕnī	yi-lbus	abyaḍ	wa-ašwad /	la
	participants	mean	he-wear	white	and-black/	no
	bass	ana	muš	zaʕlān		
	but	I	not	upset		

‘Because today I sang Warda Al-Jazairia, all of the contestants had to wear black and white. No, but I am not upset.’ (Season 2, Episode 17)

b.	wa-šukran	kull	al-ʕālim—	daʕm-ū	tašwīt
	and-thank.you	all	the-world—	support-they	vote
	wa-tašjīʕ	la-ili	ana	wa-bi-sabab-kun	ana
	and-encouragement	for-me	I	and-by-reason-you	I
	a-wṣal	lī-hun			
	I-reach	to-here			

‘And thank you everyone—supported, voted, and encouraged me, and because of you all I reached here.’ (Season 2, Episode 21)

In (30a-b) Parwas Hussein's Arabic was not well formed and contained grammatical errors. In (30a) the past tense might have sounded better instead of the present tense for the verb 'to sing' and she mispronounced [al-jaza'iriyya] both by not articulating the *hamza* and not making the word feminine. In the same utterance, she also should have said [kill al-muštariķīn] to correctly say 'all of the contestants;' should have conjugated the verb 'to wear' in the plural; and did not include the feminine suffix for the adjective 'upset.' In (30b), the phrase would have been well formed if she had included the relative pronoun after the word 'the world;' used verbs as opposed to the *mašdar* 'verbal noun' form to keep a parallel structure; and conjugated the final verb in the past tense. Nonetheless, Parwas Hussein's use of Arabic still reflects her attempt at converging with the judges and the viewing audience.

b. Kurdish

Parwas Hussein's use of Arabic on an Arab talent competition involving singing Arabic songs is to be expected; however, two of the judges speaking in Kurdish is not. Ragheb Alama and Nancy Ajram twice used Kurdish when speaking with Parwas Hussein, exerting a large amount of effort on their part. Parwas Hussein appreciated this effort as her reactions tended to include huge smiles and blown kisses. Nancy Ajram's and Ragheb Alama's Kurdish phrases spanned two episodes, with each judge switching languages during both episodes.

In the first of these two episodes, Ahlam was very pleased with Parwas Hussein's performance that evening and spoke first with a great deal of enthusiasm. Nancy Ajram was also excited and spoke next. Near the end of her comments, she suddenly switched from Lebanese Arabic to Kurdish, giving Parwas Hussein a

compliment. Upon hearing this Kurdish utterance, Parwas Hussein was filled with delight, blew a kiss to Nancy Ajram, and then paid her the same compliment in return.

This first exchange involving Kurdish (bolded) is provided in (31).

- (31) N: wa-ana badd-ī ʔil-l-ik al-yōm /
 and-I want-I say-to-you the-day /
- dang-e ta zor zor zor zor jwana**
 voice-of you very very very very beautiful
- PH: [blows kiss to N] **supas** šukran **dang-i to**
 [blows kiss to N] **thank.you** thank.you **voice-of you**
- zor zor zor dɣwana**
 very very very beautiful

N: ‘And I want to say to you today, **your voice is very very very very beautiful.**’
PH: [blows kiss to N] ‘**Thank you, thank you, your voice is very very very beautiful.**’ (Season 2, Episode 15)

Parwas Hussein is from Erbil and speaks the Sorani dialect of Kurdish, as opposed to the Baadini dialect, which is spoken by the ruling family of Erbil. However, given the differences between how Parwas Hussein and Nancy Ajram said ‘your voice,’ it appears that Nancy Ajram learned this Kurdish phrase from someone who speaks the Baadini dialect of Kurdish.⁹ Also, in Kurdish the sounds for [j] and [dʒ] are considered two separate phonemes, thus Nancy Ajram mispronounced the word ‘beautiful,’ while Parwas Hussein said it correctly. Nonetheless Nancy Ajram’s effort at speaking Kurdish impressed Parwas Hussein, receiving it positively.

Shortly after this occurred, Ragheb Alama started his turn, explaining that he had learned a few words of Kurdish to speak to Parwas Hussein. Ragheb Alama

⁹ This insight is provided by one of my Kurdish informants.

hesitated slightly and then made a mistake, which Parwas Hussein corrected. Then he continued his utterance, upon understanding what he had said she repeated it in Kurdish and then translated it into Arabic. Then Ragheb Alama finished with a long phrase in Kurdish, complimenting Parwas Hussein, which caused both of them to laugh. Ragheb Alama's attempt not only affected Parwas Hussein, but also impressed Hassan El Shafei and Ahmad Fahmi. The former commented that Ragheb Alama had taken a whole course in the language and the latter asked if he understood what he said. This exchange between Ragheb Alama and Parwas Hussein is provided in (32), again with the Kurdish bolded.

- (32) R: b-a-ʔil-l-ik **baxer—** **baxer** **bū**
 Hab.-I-say-to-you **welcome** **welcome** [sic]
- PH: [PH laughs] **baxer bay**
 [PH laughs] **welcome**
- R: **baxer bay** **bo** arab a^ydol
 welcome **to** Arab Idol
- PH: ahh **baxer bay** **bo** yaʕnī
 ahh **welcome** **to** mean
- R: **baxer bay** **bo** arab a^ydol
 welcome **to** Arab Idol
- PH: marḤaba bi-l-arab a^ydol
 welcome to-the-Arab Idol
- R: **tou** **waku** **kalatu** **wa** **la** **rey** **hawler**
 you **like** **citadel** **and** **on** **the.road** **Erbil**
- barz** **damēne** [R and PH laugh]
 high **always** [R and PH laugh]

R: I say to you **welcome, welcome.** [sic]

PH: [PH laughs] **Welcome.**

R: **Welcome to Arab Idol.**

PH: ahh **welcome to**, you mean,

R: **Welcome to Arab Idol.**

PH: Welcome to Arab Idol.

R: **You are like the citadel and will always be high in Erbil!** [R and PH laugh] (Season 2, Episode 15)

Ragheb Alama clearly was exerting a great deal of effort to converge with Parwas Hussein by switching languages. Other than his initial mistake, he successfully switched into Kurdish.¹⁰ After Ragheb Alama's use of Kurdish, he continued his feedback in Lebanese Arabic. Finally, it was Hassan El Shafei's turn to talk, but before he did, Nancy Ajram kindly requested that he also speak in Kurdish. Hassan El Shafei laughed and said next time. This episode contained the most Kurdish uttered by the judges and clearly had a meaningful impact on Parwas Hussein, especially given her genuinely surprised reaction to them speaking in Kurdish.

A few weeks later, Ragheb Alama and Nancy Ajram used Kurdish once again. During this live performance, Imad Ahmad, the Deputy Prime Minister for the Kurdistan Regional Government, was in attendance. During the feedback portion, Ragheb Alama chose to congratulate Erbil for being selected as the Arab tourist capital for 2014. At the end of this announcement, Ragheb Alama switched to Kurdish to repeat his salutations.¹¹ Imad Ahmad recognized this switch and nodded toward Ragheb Alama in affirmation. Then at the beginning of Nancy Ajram's turn, she repeated her Kurdish phrase from the previous episode. This use of Kurdish again pleased Parwas Hussein who then repeated the compliment to Nancy Ajram. Then Ragheb Alama asked Parwas Hussein what they said, and she translated the utterance into Lebanese Arabic.

Simultaneously, Nancy Ajram and Hassan El Shafei joked that since Nancy Ajram

¹⁰ The Kurdish word for 'welcome' *baxer bay* is often written with a final 't,' as is the word for 'always' *damēne*. However, according to one of my Kurdish informants, the 't' is often not pronounced with these words. Thus, Ragheb Alama not pronouncing the written 't' is not necessarily a mistake.

¹¹ Ragheb Alama mispronounced the Kurdish word for congratulations, which is actually [peroz bet].

remembered the Kurdish phrase she would teach him Kurdish. These utterances involving Kurdish (bolded) are provided in (31 a-b).

- (33) a. R: ...**peroz bey** [audience claps]
 ...**congratulations** [audience claps]
 ‘... **congratulations.**’ [audience claps] (Season 2, Episode 21)
- b. N: badd-ī ʔil-a al-yōm— **zor** **zor** **zor** **zor**
 want-I say-it the-day— **very** **very** **very** **very**
- jwana**
 beautiful
- R: oohhh
 oohhh
- PH: **to** **zor** **zor** **ḏwana**
 you **very** **very** **beautiful**
- N: ‘I want to say it today—**very very very very beautiful!**’
 R: ‘Oohhh!’
 PH: ‘**You are very very beautiful!**’ (Season 2, Episode 21)

The switch from Lebanese Arabic to Kurdish for Nancy Ajram and Ragheb Alama is highly significant since they are exerting a large amount of effort to converge to Parwas Hussein. There is a high probability that their exposure to the Kurdish language was minimal or non-existent before the second season of *Arab Idol*. Thus, they had to expend great effort to learn and practice the Kurdish phrases before uttering them on a highly popular television program. Parwas Hussein and Imad Ahmad recognized their convergences and appreciated the effort.

c. International Languages: English and French

In addition to switching into various dialects of Arabic as well as Kurdish to converge, the judges also switched into international languages, such as English and

French. In the following example, Syrian Farrah Yousef was receiving feedback from the judges after her performance, in which Michel Fadel accompanied her on the piano. Lebanese Michel Fadel is a renowned classical music pianist who has spent some time in the United States. During Hassan El Shafei's turn, he thanked Michel Fadel using several phrases in English. After speaking directly to Michel Fadel in English, Hassan El Shafei then continued talking in Egyptian Arabic to the viewing audience, explaining that Michel Fadel's involvement is an honor for *Arab Idol* and that he is an amazing performer. In (34) the English phrases are italicized.

(34) H: ... awwalan *the one and only* mišel fādī [audience claps]
 ...first *the one and only* name [audience claps]

FY: akīd
 of.course

H: *a great musician* ana *I'm a big fan...*
 a great musician I *I'm a big fan...*

H: '...first *the one and only* Michel Fadel,' [audience claps]

FY: 'Of course.'

H: 'A *great musician* I, *I'm a big fan...*' (Season 2, Episode 19)

Hassan El Shafei could have thanked Michel Fadel in Egyptian Arabic; however, the judge considered him to be an international performer, thus requiring an international language such as English. The use of English signals the level to which Hassan El Shafei considers Michel Fadel famous; he is not just a regional star, but an international star.

Similarly, probably the most famous guest star to perform on the program was Algerian raï singer Cheb Khaled, who is also the only guest star with whom the judges and host spoke in French and English. After his performance, Annabella Hilal greeted him in French and then both Ragheb Alama and Nancy Ajram mixed in phrases of

French with the Lebanese Arabic, which is not surprising considering that Algerian Arabic tends to mix in French and Cheb Khaled sings in both varieties. When it was Ahlam’s turn, she only spoke to him in Gulf Arabic, which may indicate that Gulf Arabic is her strongest language, that she is trying to emphasize his origins as coming from the Arabic-speaking world, or that she is embarrassed by her pronunciation of English and French.¹² Then, as Hassan El Shafei spoke he used several long phrases in English along with his Egyptian Arabic, indicating that Cheb Khaled is not merely a regional star, but an international star. An excerpt of Hassan El Shafei’s comments is provided in (35) with the English italicized.

- (35) ... inna inna dāxil *fusion music on a mainstream level*
 ...that you enter *fusion music on a mainstream level*
- wa-ana n-nahār-da *you’re an international superstar* miš *regional*
 and-I the-day-this *you’re an international superstar* not *regional*
- thank you so much*
thank you so much
- ‘...that you brought *fusion music on a mainstream level* and I today, *you’re an international superstar* not *regional*. *Thank you so much.*’ (Season 2, Episode 21)

Hassan El Shafei’s motivation for using English is clear from this utterance. He identified Cheb Khaled as an international star and chose to use English when speaking to him, since English is an international language. Both Michel Fadel and Cheb Khaled could have understood the Egyptian Arabic, but Hassan El Shafei decided to signal their international status by using English. Similarly, Annabella Hilal, Ragheb Alama, and Nancy Ajram all used French with Cheb Khaled. These four all chose the international

¹² Albawaba (2012a) highlighted that viewers teased Ahlam for her poor pronunciation of English words, especially her pronunciation of ‘Twitter.’

language that they are the most comfortable using; for Hassan El Shafei it is English and for the other three it is French. Thus, in these two scenarios, the use of English or French signals the international status of the interlocutor.

9. *Mocking*

As mentioned in Chapter IV, convergence may not always narrow the social distance, but can be used in a negative way to mock another person. Given the hostility and tense relationship between Ahlam and Ragheb Alama, the former occasionally used Lebanese Arabic in a mocking way. She frequently told Ragheb Alama to give her a ‘moment’ [daʔiʔa] and to ‘calm down’ [rūʔ], which may have been said with more hostility than other convergences. In the following examples, Ahlam employed Lebanese Arabic in an effort to mock Ragheb Alama. Further, in both of these examples Ahlam is giving Ragheb Alama a hard time for immediately giving positive remarks to contestants and not actually commenting on their performances.

The first example occurred during one of the longest feedback portions, in which the three judges debated musical concepts at length. The judges kept talking, and host Annabella Hilal was forced to interrupt them and simply ask if Moroccan Dounia Batma sang well or not. To this question, Ragheb Alama replied that of course she sang well, which irritated Ahlam who does not normally sugar-coat her criticisms. At this point, Ahlam chimed into the discussion and declared that she cannot simply say that a contestant sang well unless she heard the contestant sing well, which was a direct jab at Ragheb Alama. Not only was her message intended as an affront to Ragheb Alama, but she also switched from phrases in Gulf Arabic to phrases in Lebanese Arabic. In (36),

the clearly Gulf Arabic portion of the utterance is italicized and the clearly Lebanese Arabic portion is bolded.

(36)	<i>maʕ</i>	<i>iḥtarām-ī</i>	<i>li-ustāḏ</i>	<i>raġib</i>	<i>ana</i>	<i>a-bġī</i>	
	<i>with</i>	<i>respect-my</i>	<i>to-honorific</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>I-want</i>	
	<i>a-qūl-l-ič</i>	<i>šay</i>	<i>duniya</i>	<i>ana</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>an-nās</i>	<i>lli</i>
	<i>I-say-to-you</i>	<i>thing</i>	<i>name</i>	I	<i>from</i>	<i>the-people</i>	<i>that</i>
	<i>fiʕalan</i>	<i>b-i-ḥibb</i>	<i>šōt-ik</i>	bass	ana	mā	
	<i>actually</i>	<i>Hab.-I-like</i>	<i>voice-your</i>	but	I	no	
	fi-nī	a-smaʕ	šī	wa-b-a-ʔūl	inn	iktīr	ġanna^v-ti
	can-I	I-listen	thing	and-Hab.-I-say	that	a.lot	sang-you
	Ḥilū	ana	ana	mā	fi-nī	a-ʔūl	hēk...
	nice	I	I	no	can-I	I-say	thus...

‘With my respect to Mister Ragheb, I want to tell you something. Dounia, I am among the people that actually love your voice, but I cannot listen to something and say that you sang very lovely, I, I cannot say that...’
(Season 1, Episode 23)

Of particular note is that Ahlam used two words of the same meaning in both her Gulf Arabic section and Lebanese Arabic section with clear differences. When speaking in the Gulf dialect she used the word [šay] ‘thing,’ but when speaking in the Lebanese dialect used the corresponding equivalent [šī]. Similarly, she used [a-qūl] ‘I say’ during the Gulf Arabic portion and its corresponding equivalent [a-ʔūl] in the Lebanese Arabic section. These words highlight the differences between the Gulf and Lebanese Arabic sections of (36).

In the second example, Moroccan Salma Rachid sang one of Ahlam’s songs, and during Hassan El Shafei’s comments he talked about the importance of knowing the history of the song, telling a heartwarming story about Ahlam. After Hassan El Shafei’s remarks, it was Ahlam’s turn, but she was at a loss after his kind words. Ragheb Alama

suggested that she start by saying that Salma Rachid is beautiful, but Ahlam did not take kindly to his suggestion. Again Ahlam made fun of Ragheb Alama for immediately giving contestants compliments. When Ahlam uttered this phrase she was making fun of Ragheb Alama as she repeated his compliment, but said it with disgust and mockery. It is unclear why Ragheb Alama used the Egyptian Arabic phonology for the word [gamīla] ‘beautiful;’ however, this fact does not detract from Ahlam’s usage of Lebanese Arabic with Ragheb Alama as well as repeating the Egyptian Arabic phrase in a mocking manner. In (37) Egyptian Arabic words are bolded while Lebanese Arabic words are not.

- (37) R: hallaʔ ʔil-ti-l-ik **gamīla** **wa-gamīla** hallaʔ
 now say-you-to-you **beautiful** **and-beautiful** now
- šū badd-ī a-Ḥkī maʕ-ki
 what want-I I-speak with-you
- A: inta ʕala ʔūl **gamīla** **gamīla**
 you on length **beautiful** **beautiful**
- gamīla** **gamīla/** midri wi šū
 beautiful **beautiful/** wonder and what

R: ‘Now say to her **beautiful and beautiful**, now what do I want to talk with you about?’

A: ‘You are always **beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful**, and whatever.’ (Season 2, Episode 23)

Thus, in these examples, Ahlam used Lebanese Arabic to mock Ragheb Alama as opposed to converge with him. In both of these instances Ahlam was making fun of Ragheb Alama’s tendency to offer compliments immediately to the contestants as opposed to being critical. In (36) Ahlam began the utterance in Gulf Arabic and even used the phrase *maʕ iḤtarām-ī* ‘with my respect,’ which is similar to the English expression ‘with all due respect’ and normally implies just the opposite. Then Ahlam

ended the utterance with Lebanese Arabic to belittle how easily Ragheb Alama gave out compliments. In (37), Ahlam not only used Lebanese Arabic to poke fun at him, but also repeated the Egyptian Arabic word for beautiful with disdain. By using Lebanese Arabic in this manner, Ahlam was mocking Ragheb Alama.

10. Over-Accommodation

Similarly to mocking, over-accommodation does not elicit a positive reaction like other types of convergence. Instead, over-accommodation often appears to be condescending and demeaning. The only contestant who received over-accommodation, was Parwas Hussein since Arabic was not her first language. There are several examples of Ragheb Alama over-accommodating to her: he asked if she understood a Lebanese Arabic word and then cited it in Standard Arabic (Season 2, Episode 19); he dwelled on her difficulty with Arabic and asked her to translate a simple Lebanese Arabic expression (Season 2, Episode 21); and he questioned if she understood the meaning of the songs' words, to which she replied that she did (Season 2, Episode 23). Ragheb Alama exhibited the most over-accommodation, but there were two other instances observed in the data. At the end of a feedback section Annabella Hilal asked if Parwas Hussein understood the judges' comments and then just simply stated that she sang well, which appeared as if Annabella Hilal was treating her like a young child (Season 2, Episode 19). Also, Hassan El Shafei stressed how Parwas Hussein put great effort into the words, somewhat implying that she needed to focus on the words more and still was not successful singing in Arabic (Season 2, Episode 21). In all of these examples the speakers made remarks—probably unintentionally—that could have been considered demeaning and condescending by Parwas Hussein.

C. In-Group Moments

The in-group moments are when convergence meets divergence; individuals from a dialectal group converge by employing particularly dialectal features, while at the same time diverging from the other out-group individuals sitting in the studio and watching at home. At a basic level, these in-group moments could simply be the use of local greetings or nicknames; and as the in-group moments become more intense, the speech becomes more dialectal, using inside cultural jokes and even incomprehensible phrases for out-group members. Additionally, in-group moments could include switching into a different language because it is the in-group language. This section discusses these in-group moments that occurred amongst the Gulf, Egyptian, and Kurdish members of *Arab Idol*.

1. *Gulfi Moments*

In the first season there were several mini Gulfi moments between Ahlam and Kuwaiti host Abdallah Tulehi, especially when the hosts asked the judges questions. Often before asking the questions, the two exchanged greetings using typical Gulf Arabic expressions. For instance, in (38) Ahlam responded with the phrase *ya marḤaba s-sāʕa*, a Gulf Arabic greeting for ‘welcome.’ These small Gulfi moments happened on several occasions during this part of the program.

- (38) AT: aḤlām / il-imburaṭūra kaʕf Ḥal-ič
 name / the-empress how state-your
- A: ya marḤaba s-sāʕa [AT and A laugh]
 oh welcome the-hour [AT and A laugh]

AT: ‘Ahlam, the Empress, how are you?’

A: ‘Welcome.’ [AT and A laugh] (Season 1, Episode 13)

In both seasons Ahlam used a word [dʒadurī] of uncertain meaning.¹³ In the second season, when Ahlam used this word with the Iraqi contestant, Nancy Ajram did not understand and questioned her. Ahlam simply repeated the word and then in an especially Egyptian manner, Hassan El Shafei offered his opinion on the word's meaning. He explained that the utterance meant that Ahlam's turn had arrived, whereupon Nancy Ajram gasped as she finally understood its meaning. Ahlam never rebutted Hassan El Shafei's explanation and all three judges laughed after this exchange. In (39) the Lebanese Arabic is italicized and the Egyptian Arabic is bolded.

- (39) A: [laughs] dʒadurī [laughs]
 [laughs] dʒadurī [laughs]
- N: [leans to A] šū ha^yda
 [leans to A] what this
- A: dʒadurī
 dʒadurī
- N: dʒadurī šū yaʕnī
 dʒadurī what mean
- H: **yaʕnī** **dōr-ha** **wa-geh**
mean **turn-her** **and-come**
- N: [N laughing] ahhh aja dōr-i [A, N, H all laugh]
 [N laughing] ahhh came turn-my [A, N, H all laugh]
- A: [laughs] 'dʒadurī.' [laughs]
 N: 'What is this?'
 A: 'dʒadurī.'
 N: 'What does dʒadurī mean?'
 H: '**It means her turn has come.**'
 N: [N laughing] 'Ahhh my turn has come.' [A, N, H all laugh] (Season 2, Episode 19)

¹³ A question was posed to the Arabic Linguistics listserv on June 30, 2014 with three possible options for the meaning; however there was still not a definite answer in the responses.

This option for the possible meaning of [dʒadurī] is probable given that in both instances in which Ahlam used the word, it was at the beginning of her turn. However, after the first time she used it (below 40) she emitted a peculiar laugh, which is something that Ahlam tends to when she is acting a bit abnormal, and announcing that her turn has arrived is not abnormal. Another option is that Ahlam said the French phrase *j'adore* 'I love' in a heavily accented manner. This option has credence given that at other times Ahlam also used other French words, such as *tonalité* 'tonality,' *silence* 'silence,' *reportage* 'reportage,' *élection* 'election,' and *monsieur* 'mister.' A third option was a possible connection to Persian, given that Emirati Arabic includes numerous borrowings from Persian. The word *čatūrī* in Persian means 'how,' as in the colloquial Persian phrase *hāle šoma čatūr ē* 'how is your condition.' This phrase could be interpreted by Arabic speakers to mean 'your condition is good?.' However, it is not clear that this word has been borrowed into Emirati Arabic. Regardless of the meaning of [dʒadurī], (40) demonstrates a more intense Gulf moment.

Ahlam started her turn uttering this word and laughing in a peculiar way. After a short pause, Saudi Mohammed Taher uttered to her a line that included several clear Gulf Arabic expressions. The contestant addressed her in a typical Arab fashion by referring to her as the mother of her oldest son. He also used the Gulf Arabic interrogative *šīnu* 'what' and the 2nd person feminine singular verbal suffix /-īn/. Further, Mohammed Taher used an infix /-ann/ between the imperfect verb and the pronominal suffix. Holes (2011) noted that this feature appears in Omani, Yemeni, and Emirati dialects as well as the Baharnah dialect in Bahrain. Further, Holes argued that it is at least as old as or predates the codification of Arabic in the end of the 8th century

CE.¹⁴ The contestant's Gulf Arabic utterance resulted in laughter from both the contestant and Ahlam, signaling the effectiveness of the in-group moment. Thus, regardless of the meaning of Ahlam's word, the contestant used local Gulf Arabic characteristics with her to underscore their shared Gulf identity.

As Ahlam had a hard time responding through her laughter, Hassan El Shafei in an especially Egyptian manner pretended to spread incense over her head to ward off evil spirits. However, Ragheb Alama could not sit quietly and let this in-group moment pass. He wanted to know what happened, interrupting Ahlam's laughter to state that they were all not content because they did not understand what happened. When Ragheb Alama asked what was said, he even used a Gulf Arabic interrogative, which was highly uncharacteristic and potentially his attempt to join the Gulfi moment and to understand the joke. The contestant tried to placate Ragheb Alama and then Abdallah Tulehi offered to be of service for all of the judges by acting as a Gulf Arabic translator. As Ahlam's laughter quieted she resumed her comments to Mohammed Taher, which were slightly more dialectal than normal; for example she used the Gulf Arabic modifier *wāyid* 'a lot' with the allophone [y] instead of [dʒ] or [j]. This interaction is provided in (40) with the Gulf Arabic bolded and the Lebanese Arabic italicized.

¹⁴ Eades (2009) mentioned the suffix /-ann/ occurring between active participles and a pronominal object suffix (89). Holes (2011) noted that for dialects with this feature, the infixing gives the active participle a verbal force. This infixing between a verb and a pronominal object suffix is potentially less common, but still cited, e.g. Owens (2013, 220) and Clive Holes, email message, June 14, 2014. Also, I am grateful for Dana Abdulrahim, Assistant Professor at the University of Bahrain, for pointing out the song entitled *aHibb-ann-hā* 'I love her' by Iraqi singer Ali Johar https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDx3_BpqRuQ.

- (40) A: dʒadurī [peculiar laugh]
 dʒadurī [peculiar laugh]
- MT: **umm fāhid inti šīnu ma ta-gūl-īn**
 mother name you what whatever you-say-you
- ana rādi fi wa-a-Hibb-ann-ič** [A, MT laugh]
 I content in and-I-like-ann-you [A, MT laugh]
- A: **ana— ana Ḥass-it** [laughs]
 I— I felt-I [laughs]
- R: *laḤza laḤza yaʕnī niḤna miš rādīn*
 moment moment mean we not content
- bi-šnu bi-t-ʔil-l-ak*
 in-what Hab.-you-say-to-you
- MT: **bi-l-ʕaks akīd akīd**
 in-the-opposite of.course of.course
- AT: **killu-ku ʕala rās-ī asātiða bass**
 all-you on head-my honorific.pl but
- ti-drun ʕalē-h**
 you-know on-it
- A: ‘dʒadurī.’ [peculiar laugh]
 MT: ‘**Mother of Fahid, whatever you say I will be content and I like you.**’
 [A, MT laugh]
 A: ‘**I—I felt**’ [laughs]
 R: ‘*Wait a second, we are not content in what she says to you.*’
 MT: ‘**The opposite, of course, of course.**’
 AT: ‘**I am at the service of all of you so you know it.**’ (Season 1, Episode 21)

These instances between the Gulf host, judge, and contestants are clear in-group moments in which these individuals emphasized their Gulf identity through their dialect. At a basic level these moments include typical Gulf Arabic greetings between Ahlam and Abdallah Tulehi, while at a more intense level these moments include longer utterances of more localized Gulf Arabic. When Nancy Ajram and Ragheb Alama questioned the utterances in (39-40) they signaled not only their desire to understand,

but also to join the clique. Further, Abdallah Tulehi's offer to act as a Gulf Arabic translator underscored that an in-group Gulf moment had occurred.

2. *Masri Moments*

In the second season, the combined presence of an Egyptian host, judge, and contestant that were all male resulted in several instances of small Masri moments. These moments ranged from Hassan El Shafei bestowing nicknames onto Ahmad Gamal as well as using Egyptian Arabic greetings. Also, Hassan El Shafei and Ahmad Fahmi have several brief exchanges that result with only the two of them laughing. The most intense Masri moment was when Ahmad Fahmi gave the Egyptian contestant a hard time about not liking Lebanese food, since many Egyptians state that they do not like to eat outside of the home.

Several small and simple Masri moments occurred between the three Egyptians. Hassan El Shafei stated *aḤmad sulṭān* 'Ahmad rules' (Ahmad is a sultan), which Ahmad Gamal appreciated. The judge also used typical Egyptian Arabic greetings, such as the quintessential Egyptian Arabic greeting in (41), which the judge used to begin his comments.

- (41) H: izzayy-ak
 how-you
- AG: tamam Ḥamduʾlla [N laughs]
 fine thanks.be.to.God [N laughs]
- H: 'How are you?'
- AG: 'Fine, thanks be to God.' [N laughs] (Season 2, Episode 21)

In other episodes Hassan El Shafei greeted the contestant with a nickname derived from Ahmad (Season 2, Episodes 23 and 25).¹⁵ Additionally, during one of these instances and as shown in (42), Hassan El Shafei used what Mughazy (2003) referred to as an ‘overt complementizer,’ in which the 3rd person masculine singular pronoun is used as an affirmative. Thus, Hassan El Shafei was employing a local dialect feature to connect with the Egyptian contestant.

- (42) huw abū Ḥmēza...
 complementizer attributive name...
 ‘The fact is, Abu Hmeza...’ (Season 2, Episode 23)

Further, both Hassan El Shafei and Ahmad Fahmi often remarked how they were both proud of the Egyptian contestant as a fellow Egyptian (Season 2, Episodes 15 and 17).

Hassan El Shafei and Ahmad Fahmi also shared small moments between themselves. These moments tended to involve a short exchange that may easily slip pass non-Egyptian Arabic speakers (Season 2, Episode 19). After one such exchange, Ahlam questioned Hassan El Shafei regarding what had just happened. Hassan El Shafei simply repeated the line and then told her to not worry about it (Season 2, Episode 27). Thus, Hassan El Shafei easily excluded Ahlam from the Egyptian moment between the judge and host.

The most intense, hilarious, and heartwarming Masri moment involved host Ahmad Fahmi confronting contestant Ahmad Gamal about his food choices (Season 2, Episode 17). After Ahmad Gamal finished receiving the judges’ feedback and Ahmad Fahmi announced the number to vote for the contestant, the host kept him on stage for

¹⁵ The common nickname for someone named Ahmad is actually *abū Ḥmayd*.

just a moment. Ahmad Fahmi brought up Ahmad Gamal's statement from the previous week in which he stated that he did not like Lebanese food. Ahmad Gamal tried to back down from what he had said by claiming that he meant that he was just not accustomed to Lebanese food. However, Ahmad Fahmi insisted and continued repeating that Ahmad Gamal had claimed that he did not like the food. Egyptians are known for not liking to eat outside the home, but by being in the competition Ahmad Gamal was obliged to eat outside of his home. Ahmad Gamal almost reached the point of distress after all of Ahmad Fahmi's hounding, but suddenly a great surprise emerged as the contestant's mother walked onto the stage. The implication was that the Hagga would be able to cook for her son so that he may eat well even when in Lebanon. For several long moments the reunited son and mother embraced. Then, Ahmad Fahmi joked with the mother to see if she thought that Ahmad Gamal had lost weight. Then Ahmad Gamal thanked MBC for this wonderful surprise and stated that he had started to miss his family, of course in markedly Egyptian Arabic speech. During an episode the following week, a video clip showed a cooking lesson by the Hagga and her son with all of the remaining female contestants (Season 2, Episode 19).

The second season of *Arab Idol* produced several Masri moments, which were probably due to the fact that the number of Egyptians on the program reached a critical point. Further, it helped that all three Egyptians were males, thus allowing them to joke more in public. These moments underscored not only Egyptian linguistic in-group knowledge, but also cultural knowledge.

3. *Kurdish Moment*

In what turned out to be Parwas Hussein's last week in the competition, a Kurdish delegation was in the studio audience to support their fellow Kurd. After the judges remarked on her performance and the host announced the number to vote for her, Parwas Hussein politely requested to say a few words to the delegation, in Kurdish. The host allowed her to state her comments and Parwas Hussein began addressing the delegation in Kurdish, thus creating a moment amongst them, especially since most in the Arabic-speaking audience would not understand her at all. In her utterance she thanked the delegation of Kurdish artists and expressed that their presence is not only an honor, but also an encouragement.

In this utterance, she used two Arabic borrowings *šarife* 'honor' and *yaʕnī* 'mean' in addition to a one-word switch into Arabic *kabīra* 'big' (bolded in 43). What is particularly noteworthy about the switch is that she also used the Kurdish corresponding equivalent *gawra* 'big' in the same utterance. The switch into Arabic may be attributed to Parwas Hussein's living in Lebanon amongst Arabic speakers for almost two months. Parwas Hussein primarily used features of the Erbil dialect, although she also used one of the Sulaymaniyah dialect. For instance, *amin* and *min* have the same meaning of 'me,' but the former is from the Erbil dialect while the latter is from the Sulaymaniyah dialect. Similarly, *dabim* 'I become' is the Erbil variant, while in Sulaymaniyah the initial [d] would be absent. Another Erbil dialectal feature is the pronunciation of the [k] as softer, indicated as [k'] in (43).¹⁶ Parwas Hussein used all of these features of the

¹⁶ Again this insight is provided by my Kurdish informants, who said that the Erbil dialect tends to have extra sounds that the Sulaymaniyah dialect does not possess. Despite these differences, the dialects of these cities are both part of the Sorani dialectal group of Kurdish.

Erbil dialect, and despite using *min* ‘me,’ it is still clear that she is from Erbil and not Sulaymaniyah.

(43)	zor a.lot	bexer-hatini welcome-I.am		šandi delegation		hunarmandan-i artists-of	
	kurdistan kurdistan	dakama-wa I.do-again	bo for	min me		šarife-k’-i honor-an-of	
	kabīra— big—	yaʕnī mean	ba with	ewa you.all	amin me	zyatir more	gawra big
	dabim I.become	zyatir more	tašjiʕ encouraged		dabim I.become	zor a.lot	
	supas thank.you						

‘I’m warmly welcoming the delegation of artists from Kurdistan again. I am **more** honored to have you here and I am more encouraged. Thank you very much.’ (Season 2, Episode 23)

Thus, Parwas Hussein took the opportunity to thank the Kurdish delegation in the studio audience and spoke to them in Kurdish, which created an in-group moment by distinguishing their linguistic differences between this Kurdish group and the wider Arabic-speaking audience, both sitting in the studio and viewing at home.

D. Divergence

Divergence is a method to create distance between interlocutors. Only one example of this kind of divergence occurred in the totality of the feedback portions analyzed. This example happened in the second season during the eighth and penultimate week of the program. After her first performance of the night, Syrian Farrah Yousef received feedback from three judges. Ahlam paused before giving her

comments. She started with the first portion of a common Arabic phrase in which the speaker tells the listener to accept a piece of advice, which is often a stern criticism. In Egyptian Arabic, this phrase is *ʕand-ī kilmat-ēn Ḥuṭṭ-ī-hum zayy Ḥalaʕ fī widān-ik* ‘I have two words, put them like an earring in your ears.’ Hassan El Shafei recognized this local expression. He was startled when Ahlam started with it and let out an exclamation since he knew something adverse would happen. Then Ahlam said a few words, completed the phrase, and even reiterated it before giving Farrah Yousef a warning against being too prideful, which Ahlam considered to be the death of an artist. As shown in (44), Ahlam not only used extremely Gulf Arabic speech, but she also employed Standard Arabic (bolded) when giving the actual warning.

- (44) A: ʕand-ī kilmat-ēn // b-a-tmanna-l-ič mā
 have-I word-two// Fut.-I-hope-to-you no
- ti-zʕal-i min-ni
 you-upset-you from-me
- H: lēh bass
 why but
- A: ...a-bōji a-gūl-a-l-ič // wa-Ḥuṭṭ-īn
 ...I-want I-say-it-to-you // and-put-you.f.pl
- miəl Ḥalaḡ lamma t-lbas-īn Ḥalaḡ fī dan-ič
 like earring when you-wear-you earring in ear-your
- Ḥuṭṭ-īn miəl Ḥalaḡ // **faraḤ yūsif** **īyyā-ki**
 put-you.f.pl like earring// **name** **warning-you**
- wa-l-ḡurūr** **fa** **huwa** **magbarat** **al-fannān**
 and-the-pride **so** **he** **grave** **the-artist**

A: ‘I have two words, I hope that you will not be upset with me.’

H: ‘But why?’

A: ‘...I want to say to you, and put them like an earring, when you put an earring in your ear. Put them like an earring. **Farrah Yousef beware of pridefulness, for it is the artist’s grave.**’ (Season 2, Episode 25)

After these words, Ahlam continued her comments, indicating that Farrah Yousef is an accomplished artist. But then, Ahlam repeated her warning again, this time doubling the construction *iyyā-ki wa-l-ġurūr* ‘beware of pridefulness.’ Ahlam then concluded her remarks with *aHsan-ti* ‘well done.’

In (44), Ahlam was not excited or enthusiastic with Farrah Yousef, but rather she was trying to distance herself from the contestant while giving her a stern critique. Ahlam employed a variety of methods to create a strong divergence from the contestant. First, she used her typical Gulf Arabic phonology of [g] for *qafs* and interdental [θ] as well as the *kashkasha* for the 2nd person feminine singular pronominal suffix /-ič/, which she used several times in this utterance. As mentioned above, Ahlam tended to only use the /-ič/ when she was very excited with a contestant and reverted to her extra Gulf Arabic speech patterns. Second, she utilized the Gulf Arabic feminine plural command *Ḥuṭṭ-īn* ‘put’ (Qafisheh 1975, 74). As opposed to using the feminine singular command, Ahlam employed the plural command to create additional distance. Third, Ahlam utilized a Standard Arabic construction when stating her warning against pridefulness. The construction of the warning (*iyyā-ki wa-l-ġurūr*) employs a well-known classicism discussed by the 8th century CE grammarian Sībawayhi in his phrase *iyyā-ka wa-l-asada* ‘beware of the lion’ (Kitāb I: 330). Additionally, when she repeated the warning, she doubled this phrase. Often in Standard Arabic the phrase is repeated for emphasis; this repetition usually takes the form of *iyyā-ki ʔumma iyyā-ki wa-l-ġurūr* ‘beware then beware of pridefulness.’ Thus, Ahlam used both Gulf Arabic dialectal features and Standard Arabic constructions to diverge from Farrah Yousef.

The importance of this example cannot be understated. Divergence was a rare observation in this data set, which comprised mostly of maintenance and varying convergence strategies. Further, and most importantly, the judge used Standard Arabic to diverge from the contestant. This use of Standard Arabic for divergence counters the common notion that Standard Arabic can serve as a tool to unite all Arabs. Instead, Ahlam used Standard Arabic for her final blow when widening the distance between her and Farrah Yousef.

E. Additional Linguistic Observations

When conducting the analysis of *Arab Idol*, I also observed several other noteworthy linguistic points, including the use of Standard Arabic, subtitles, local expressions, and international languages.

1. (Other) Uses of *fuṣḤā*

Only two of the judges, Ragheb Alama and Ahlam, used *fuṣḤā* during the program. One of these moments was discussed above, when Ahlam used a Standard Arabic phrase to diverge from the contestant. Of the other uses of *fuṣḤā*, Ragheb Alama employed this variety the most in an effort to emphasize a point, to define a word, and to read. He only used *fuṣḤā* once in the first season, but employed *fuṣḤā* 15 times in the second season. Also of note is that Ragheb Alama occasionally did not form his utterances in Standard Arabic well. Ahlam also used *fuṣḤā* once in the first season when she was quoting cultural information and then used the variety four times in the second season to emphasize a point. Thus, in addition to using Standard Arabic to

diverge, *fuṣḤā* appeared infrequently and was employed in the conventionally recognized uses of *fuṣḤā*: emphasizing, citing, reading, and quoting.

Almost every time Ragheb Alama used *fuṣḤā* on the program he switched in an effort to emphasize his point. Four of these instances are listed in (45a-d). Preceding the utterance of (45a), Ahlam was telling the contestant that Ragheb Alama did not like the contestant's new look. Then Ragheb Alama interrupted her, first in Lebanese Arabic and then switching into Standard Arabic to tell her not to put words in his mouth. In (45a) he correctly used *fuṣḤā* in a negative command, the pronunciation of 'thing,' and negation with the particle [lam]. A few times Ragheb Alama repeated his main point in both Standard Arabic and Lebanese Arabic for emphasis; in (45b) Ragheb Alama negated with [lam] and then repeated the meaning in Lebanese Arabic. Ragheb Alama's pronunciation was markedly in alignment with Standard Arabic in (45c), with his articulation of the [q] in *qul-t* 'said' and *sābiqan* 'previously;' the pronunciation of the [ʔ] in *ǧināʔ* 'singing;' and the employment of case endings in *jamāl-un* 'beauty.' In (45d) Ragheb Alama used the absolute negation with [lā] to stress that there were no comments regarding the contestant's performance in addition to the Standard Arabic demonstrative *haḏihi*.

(45) a.	la	la	la	miš	mazbūt	lā	tu-qawwal-ī-nī
	no	no	no	not	correct	no	you-attribute-you-me
	šayʔ-an			lam		a-qul-u	
	thing-accusative			did.not		I-say-it	

'No, no, no not correct. **Do not attribute to me something that I did not say.**'
(Season 1, Episode 13)

- b. ...**lam** **tu-xfiq** wa-lā bi-ayya lōn
 ...**did.not** **you-be.unsuccessful** and-no in-any style
- mā waʔaʕ-t bi-l— ayya lōn ǧanna^y-t-u
 no fall-you in-the— any style sang-you-it

‘... **You were not unsuccessful** in any dialect, you did not fail in any dialect that you sang in.’ (Season 2, Episode 11)

- c. lli inta ʔil-t-ā ʔada^y-t-ā bi-šakil rāyiʕ
 that you said-you-it passed-you-it in-way amazing
- k-al-ʕādī **wa** **kun-t** **kama** **qul-t** **la-ka** **sābiqan**
 as-the-normal **and** **was-you** **as** **said-I** **to-you** **before**
- jamāl-un** **li-l-ǧināʔ** **aḥsan-t**
beautiful-nominative **for-the-song** **well.done-you**

‘That you passed in an amazing way, as usual, **and you were as I told you before beautiful in the song. Well done.**’ (Season 2, Episode 17)

- d. ʔaddima hiyye sahle miš ʕaʕbe / sahle ayy
 as.much she easy not hard / easy any
- Ḥadā bi-yi-farkiš ʔuddām-a wa-inta
 person Hab.-he-mess.up in.front-it and-you
- ʕurab ʕōt-ak **lā** **taʕliq** **bi-haḏihi**
 ornamentation voice-your **no** **comment** **in-this**
- al-uǧniyya**
the-song

‘As much as it is easy, not hard, easy any person can mess it up. And as for the ornamentation of your voice **there is no comment in this song.**’ (Season 2, Episode 13)

Also of note is that Ragheb Alama occasionally committed solecisms when he used *fuṣḤā* to stress his point. For example, he fully declined a diptote when he uttered [jarāʔimun] the plural of ‘crime’ (*jarīma*), which is classified as *mamnūʕ min aṣ-ṣarf* ‘indeclinable.’ In (45a-b) he correctly negated with the particle [lam]; however, in (46a-b) he did not correctly negate with the particle [lan] or [lam]. In (46a) he uttered *lan ya-*

kūnu ‘he will not be’; however, the correct pronunciation of this construction would have been *lan ya-kūna*, correction bolded. And in (46b) he said *lam ta-xz-u* ‘you did not take it,’ which included the dental [z] as opposed to the interdental [ð] phonologically. Further, his conjugation of the verb was not correct and should have been *lam ta-ʔxuð-hu*, again correction bolded. The solecisms in these examples underscore the difficulty that speakers may have when trying to spontaneously switch into *fusḤā*.

(46) a.	liannu because	fī there.is	kādīm as-sāḤir name	wāḤid one	lan will.not
	ya-kūnu he-be	iəṇēn two	badd-i want-I	yy-āk object.marker-you	inta you
	tī-bḤaə you-search	ʕala about	makān-ak place-your		

‘Because there is one Kadim Al Sahir and **there will not be two**. I want you to **find** your own place.’ (Season 2, Episode 15)

b.	Ḥaʔʔatan truly	inta you	hadiya gift	la-l-ʕālim to-the-world	al-ʕarabī / the-Arab /	siwāʔan whether
	siwāʔan whether	xada-t took-you	laqab title	arab Arab	aʔdol / aw Idol / or	lā no
	samaḤ allah allowed God	lam did.not	ta-xz-u you-take-it	fa-inta then-you	arab Arab	aʔdol Idol

‘Truly, you are a gift to the Arab world. **Whether or not you win the title of Arab Idol, or God forbid you do not take it, you are still Arab Idol.**’ (Season 2, Episode 17)

Only twice did Ragheb Alama use *fusḤā* when he was not emphasizing his point. In one of these instances he used *fusḤā* to cite a word. Prior to uttering the line in (47), he had been talking to Parwas Hussein in Lebanese Arabic and used the word *na-tanāʔaš* ‘we discuss.’ In a moment of over-accommodation, he stopped and asked if the

contestant knew what the word meant. In doing so, he switched from saying the word in Lebanese Arabic to citing it in Standard Arabic (bolded).¹⁷

(47) ta-ʕrif-ī šū yaʕnī **na-tanaqqaš**
you-know-you what means **we-discuss**

‘Do you know what “**na-tanaqqaš**” means?’ (Season 2, Episode 19)

Ragheb Alama also used Standard Arabic when he read a letter that he had received to Palestinian Mohammed Assaf. The letter was from a Palestinian prisoner in an Israeli prison who went on a hunger strike in an effort to be allowed to watch Mohammed Assaf perform on *Arab Idol*. When the judge talked about the letter he used Lebanese Arabic, but when he read from it, he used Standard Arabic and even inserted the case-endings. Thus, Ragheb Alama used the greatest amount of Standard Arabic on the show, usually to emphasize his main point with the contestants. He also utilized Standard Arabic to cite and to read, all of which correspond to the conventionally accepted functions of Standard Arabic in the code switching literature (see Chapter III).

Ahlam is the only other speaker to use Standard Arabic on the program. One instance of her use of *fuṣḤā* has already been discussed in (44) when she utilized Standard Arabic to diverge from a contestant. Her other uses of Standard Arabic are fewer in comparison with Ragheb Alama. Another instance of Ahlam using *fuṣḤā*, is when she quoted the cultural phrase about teaching a man to fish as opposed to simply giving him a fish, which is provided in (48).

¹⁷ This word in Standard Arabic is Form V, while in Lebanese Arabic it is Form VI.

- (48) ...lā ta-ṣṭī-nī samak-an innama Ṣallam-nī
 ... no you-give-me fish-accusative rather teach-me
- ka^yfa aṣṭād-ha
 how hunt-it

‘... Do not give me a fish, but rather teach me how to fish.’ (Season 1, Episode 15)

Similarly to Ragheb Alama, Ahlam also utilized Standard Arabic to emphasize a point. When speaking to a contestant and emphasizing that the singer Thekra is the queen of emotion and that the contestant failed to bring this emotion to the stage, Ahlam used Standard Arabic, negating with the particle [lam]. Ahlam seemed to hesitate before making the switch by repeating the negation particle; however, she still correctly formed the phrase in *fuṣḤā*: *lam—lam yujad* ‘was not present’ (Season 2, Episode 11). Ahlam also employed Standard Arabic when she told Parwas Hussein that her stage presence should be taught in school. Ahlam first uttered this phrase to the contestant before the finals and repeated it several times during the finals, so much so that Parwas Hussein usually mouthed the words along with Ahlam. (49a-c) list three different ways in which Ahlam said this phrase to the contestant.

- (49) a. **wa-mā zil-t** a-gūl inna ṣōt-ik **la-ya-jīb**
and-no stop-I I-say that voice-your **emphatic-he-necessary**
- an** **yu-darras** **mā** **zil-t...** [PH laughs]
that **he-is.taught** **no** **stop-I...** [PH laughs]

‘**And I still** say **that it is necessary to teach** your voice, **I still...**’ [PH laughs]
 (Season 1, Episode 11)

- b. fi kill Ḥalqa lāzim a-qul-l-ik inti **lāzim** **an**
 in every episode must I-say-to-you you **must** **to**
- an** **lāzim** **iḤsās-ik** **yu-darras** **lāzim** **yu-darras**
that **must** **emotion-your** **he-is.taught** **must** **he-is.taught**

‘During every episode I have to say to you, **it is necessary, it is necessary that your emotion be taught, it should be taught.**’ (Season 2, Episode 15)

- c. liannu al-yōm **iḤsās-ik** **ya-jib** **an** **yu-darras**
 because the-day **emotion-your** **he-necessary** **that** **he-is.taught**

‘Because today **it is necessary that your emotion be taught.**’ (Season 2, Episode 21)

In all three examples the emphasis was the same, that her stage presence should be taught; however, Ahlam’s word choice changed as well as her ease in using *fuṣḤā*. The basic and original phrase is best demonstrated in (49c) which includes the Standard Arabic complementizer [an] ‘that’ as well as the passive voice *yu-darras* ‘is taught.’ (49a) contains this same phrase with the added stress through the emphatic [la] as well as the markedly *fuṣḤā* construction *mā zil-t* ‘I did not stop.’ Finally, in (49b) Ahlam appeared to be hesitating and having a hard time switching into *fuṣḤā*, which may be indicative of her high level of excitement regarding Parwas Hussein’s performance. Thus, Ahlam employed *fuṣḤā* to quote cultural material and to emphasize her point, albeit with less frequency than Ragheb Alama. Further, it is noteworthy that Standard Arabic was never used to assert a pan-Arab identity or to aid in interdialectal communication. The examples in this section demonstrated that Ragheb Alama and Ahlam employed Standard Arabic in the conventionally expected manners, as described in Chapter III.

2. *Use of Subtitles*

Standard Arabic subtitles in the media assist the viewer to understand the dialogue, whether it is uttered in a different language, such as English, French, or Kurdish, or in an Arabic dialect that is difficult for most speakers to understand, especially the dialects of the Maghreb. Since the majority of *Arab Idol* is broadcast live from MBC studios, the use of subtitles is constrained to pre-recorded sections, such as the initial auditioning episodes and the edited videos shown during the live episodes. This section describes the observations regarding the use of subtitles on *Arab Idol*.

During the auditions, subtitles only appeared for the auditions that happened in Maghreb countries. The subtitles often occurred during the special segment about an auditionee, in which the Maghreb speakers spoke about themselves. Subtitles only appeared in these videos approximately half of the time. When showing the actual auditions in front of the judges, subtitles only appeared once, because the contestant spoke a large amount of French and English. However, when an auditionee in an Egypt audition used a great deal of English, there were no subtitles. This contrast in the use of subtitles between the Maghreb and the Egyptian auditions underscores the Sharqi mentality that people should be able to understand what happens in their part of the region or that the Maghreb dialects are incomprehensible.

Another noteworthy comparison is between the two pre-recorded videos in which Moroccan Dounia Batma's mother spoke. In the first video, Dounia Batma was describing her favorite person, her mother. It appeared that the mother was recorded from her home as she talked about Dounia Batma's singing and performances. For this video, the mother's utterances were subtitled. However, a few weeks later, the contestants' mothers arrived in Lebanon and there was another pre-recorded video clip

with Dounia Batma's mother speaking. In this video, the mother's speech was not subtitled. This contrast between the two videos is interesting and there are numerous possible explanations for this difference. For example, the mother could have tried to converge more toward the Sharqi Arabic when outside of the Maghreb. Also, by being in Lebanon, the producers and directors could have had more editorial control and influence when the mother was recorded. Or, as mentioned above, there may be less of a need or desire to subtitle the speech that is produced in major Sharqi capitals. All of these possibilities would also explain why the contestants were not subtitled when they were in Lebanon, even if they were subtitled during a special segment during the auditions, such as for Moroccan Salma Rachid.

Finally, the only time in which subtitles occurred with Parwas Hussein was during her exit video. In that video, Parwas Hussein spoke in her native Kurdish while subtitles allowed the general Arabic-speaking audience to understand her reflections on her experience on *Arab Idol*.

3. Use of Local Expressions

All of the judges utilized local dialectal expressions when providing comments to the contestants. Usually the judges explained the meaning of the local expressions while maintaining their normal dialect, but they did not always offer an explanation. I distinguished 14 local expressions, 8 in the first season and 6 in the second season.¹⁸ Ahlam used the most local expressions (six), which included non-Gulf Arabic expressions. In the second season, Ahlam repeated a local Egyptian Arabic expression that Hassan El Shafei used in the first season, *yamma* 'oh mama' (Season 1, Episode 11;

¹⁸ These local expressions are found in a local dialectal group and do not appear across dialectal groups.

Season 2, Episode 23). In the second season, Ahlam also used a local Lebanese Arabic expression that is relatively uncommon, according to one of my Lebanese informants, *fašax-ti-nī* ‘you overpassed me’ (Season 2, Episode 15). Also of note is that Ahlam misused a local Gulf Arabic expression. She tried to use the local expression *zadd-t at-ḥīn balla* ‘to make matters worse,’ in a positive way, such as to mean ‘continually getting better;’ however the local expression only works with a negative meaning (Season 1, Episode 23).

All the other judges only used a handful of local expressions: Hassan El Shafei (four), Ragheb Alama (three), and Nancy Ajram (one). A noteworthy instance was Ragheb Alama’s usage of the local Lebanese Arabic expression *kīf baramā-t-u bi-y-iji wāʾif* ‘however you throw him, he will land on his feet’ (Season 1, Episode 21). He used the example at the beginning of his turn and even asked Moroccan Dounia Batma if this local expression occurred in her dialect. She shook her head once, and then again after he asked if she knew its meaning. At this point Ragheb Alama explained the local expression using his normal Lebanese Arabic. Thus, all the judges utilized these local dialectal expressions and even in explaining them refrained from using Standard Arabic to aid the interdialectal communication.

4. Use of Other Languages

In addition to using English and French to converge with international stars, mentioned above, the judges tended to use single word insertions of English or French in their normal speech. Often these switches were technical terms either related to music or the production of *Arab Idol*. The English words used by the judges, especially Hassan El Shafei, related to performing (stage, performance, audience, live, full band, solo),

auditioning (auditions, casting), parts of the song (note, hook, chorus, verse), musical terms (tune, tuning, intonation, dynamics, harmony, scale, auto-tune, achromatic, charisma, technique, character, artist), and industry jargon (studio, music industry, show business, hits, remake, jazz, rock). The judges used these English words with a relatively high frequency, such that 77 percent of the feedback sections included at least one word of English, while only 14 percent included at least one word of French. The Lebanese—Nancy Ajram, Ragheb Alama, and Annabella Hilal—primarily used the French words, which also tended to be technical in nature. The French words included technical musical terms (*majeur* ‘major,’ *mineur* ‘minor’), performance words (*nuance* ‘nuance,’ *presence* ‘presence,’ *concert* ‘concert’), and other assorted words (*conservateur* ‘conservative,’ *description* ‘description,’ *décor* décor, *dispensé* ‘exempted’).

Hassan El Shafei had spent time in the United States prior to the start of the first season, which probably expanded his fluency in English, especially regarding musical terms. He used the most English compared with the other judges, such as in (50), with the English italicized. Hassan El Shafei doubled the pronoun, first in Egyptian Arabic and then in English, which is a common feature in code switching between Arabic and English, as noted by (Myers-Scotton, Jake, and Okasha 1996).

(50) ... ana šāyf fī-ki inn inti *you're a star*
 ... I see in-you that you *you're a star*

‘... The way I see it, *you're a star*.’ (Season 1, Episode 27)

Therefore, the judges inserted English and French vocabulary into their utterances, with a significant amount more English than French. Hassan El Shafei used the most English switches and exhibited the widest variety in his terminology. The

Lebanese accounted for the majority of French words used, although Ahlam also uttered a few, as mentioned previously.

This chapter has presented the findings concerning interdialectal communication as observed on the program *Arab Idol*. I found that the hosts and judges tended to maintain their normal dialect when communicating. Further, I found that the participants used a wide variety of methods to converge, such as assigning nicknames, using various dialects, and switching languages. I also observed several in-group moments between Gulf, Egyptian, and Kurdish interlocutors as they converged amongst themselves, simultaneously diverging from the wider audience. There was only one instance of divergence in which the speaker exhibited not only distinctive Gulf Arabic features, but also a clearly Standard Arabic phrase.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Arab Idol provided an exemplary opportunity to examine interdialectal communication given the combination of hosts, judges, contestants, and a viewing audience comprising the entirety of the Arabic-speaking world. This chapter discusses representations of identity within the program in addition to presenting the five main findings from this analysis and offering three courses for future research.

A. Language and Identity

The first section of this chapter discusses several observations regarding language and identity on the program. The speakers in *Arab Idol* consistently used local Arabic dialects and dialectal features to express an Arab identity. This multiplicity of the Arab identity also was present through *Arab Idol*'s celebration of the diversity of musical culture throughout the region. Nevertheless, the contestants' national identity was continually emphasized throughout the program by the hosts and judges. Finally, this section concludes with an examination of Parwas Hussein's Kurdish identity in the Arab talent competition.

1. Arab Identity through Dialects

Participants of the program used local dialects to assert not only local identity, but also an Arab identity. This observation contradicts notions held by some Arabists and linguists. During the rise of Arabism in the latter part of the 20th century, Arabists grasped and held firmly to the notion of Standard Arabic uniting all Arabs since it is present throughout the entire Arabic-speaking world, while the dialects vary widely and

are not mutually comprehensible. Further, as mentioned in Chapter III, Albirini (2011) underscored that only Standard Arabic was used to express pan-Arab identity in his analysis of the functions of code switching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic. Regardless, this program stressed both local and Arab identities using only Dialectal Arabic.

As opposed to proffering a one-dimensional view of Arab identity, *Arab Idol* truly celebrated the diversity and complexity present in the Arabic-speaking world. The contestants hailed from all parts of the region and all were competing to become the Arab Idol. The judges and the guest stars represented the leading contemporary artists, hailing from Morocco to Iraq. The contestants and these artists performed songs from all five major dialect groupings and even sang in different dialects from their own. Throughout the entirety of the program, the hosts, judges, and contestants spoke in Dialectal Arabic with only a handful of exceptions, in which Ragheb Alama and Ahlam occasionally spoke in Standard Arabic. Further, the viewing audience spanned from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf and the broadcasts even reached the diaspora communities outside of the region. Thus, the only uniting factor is that they all speak Arabic—regardless of dialect—not that they all communicate using *fuṣḥā*.

The judges and contestants switched dialects in an effort to converge and to strengthen the bonds between them. Some switches and examples from above deserve further mention as the speakers used Dialectal Arabic to express an Arab identity. For example, when Ahlam switched into Lebanese Arabic using the local features of the doubled object construction (4, 15) or the collapsing of the 2nd person masculine and feminine pronouns (5), she did not simply switch into basic Lebanese Arabic, but rather she utilized localized dialectal features. Thus, by using these local features Ahlam

underscored the Arab identity shared between her and the Lebanese interlocutors. Also, in the Gulfi moment described in (40), Mohammed Taher used a rare dialectal feature, the infixed /ann/, to emphasize simultaneously a local eastern Arabian Peninsula identity and an Arab identity, especially while addressing Ahlam as *Umm* Fahid. The speakers on *Arab Idol* never used *fusḤā* to highlight an Arab identity, but rather maintained their dialects or switched into other dialects to emphasize local and Arab identities.

2. *Dialects in Songs*

Musical culture is a key component of the program and *Arab Idol* clearly celebrated the diversity in the musical cultures throughout the Arabic-speaking world. Amidst their comments, the judges often remarked that music is part of the local culture and that the local *ṣurab* ‘ornamentation’ and *maqamāt* ‘compositional modes’ are different throughout the region. Also, when contestants performed a song outside of their native dialect, the judges often commented upon their singing in the dialect well or poorly. And when contestants could sing well in several different dialects the judges highlighted this ability. Regardless of a song’s dialect, the entirety of these Arabic songs were considered part of the broad pan-Arab culture and shared amongst all of the contestants and the viewing audience.

Arab Idol appreciated the variety present in the music of the Arabic-speaking world. During the second season’s auditioning process in Beirut, in the third round the contestants had to choose one of fifteen songs to sing: five in Egyptian, five in Lebanese, and five in Gulf Arabic, highlighting a portion of the selection within Arabic music and mirroring the nationalities of the judging panel (Season 2, Episode 6). After

Ahlam selected Fares El Madani to be her wildcard, she stated that it was necessary for a Gulf voice to be represented in the finals, thereby allowing the spread of finalists to be a comprehensive representation of the region (Season 2, Episode 10). During the feedback portions, the judges frequently remarked on the differences in musical culture. Ahlam explained the variations in the beat between Iraqi and Sharqi music (Season 2, Episode 13). The Emirati judge specifically requested that Salma Rachid sing a Moroccan song because she loves hearing the exceptional voices coming from the Maghreb (Season 2, Episode 11). Hassan El Shafei noted that the *maqamāt* ‘compositional modes’ are different across the region (Season 1, Episode 11) and Ragheb Alama highlighted that the *ṣurab* ‘ornamentation’ varies (Season 1, Episodes 23 and 25).¹ Bruno et al. (2012) noted that the ornamentation gives the music its special regional character and holds the emotional impact of the song which is then transmitted to the audience. Despite the unique *ṣurab* particular to each region, these songs are still inherently Arab. The fact that in the Arabic language *ṣurab* shares the same three-letter root as Arab is indicative of how this embellishment contributes to the Arab identity of the music.

Ahlam encouraged the contestants to sing in their dialects at the beginning of the finals in the second season, but also appreciated when contestants performed well in other dialects (Season 2, Episode 11). The judges usually highlighted a contestant’s singing outside of their native dialect. Whenever non-Gulf contestants sang a Gulf song, they always sought approval from Ahlam. When the Jordanian Youssef Arafat

¹ Bruno et al. (2012) defined ornamentation as when the singer bends notes or embellishes them through trills, glissandos, or short secondary notes. They also explained *maqam* as the set of rules for composing melody in Arabic classical music and that each *maqam* has a particular scale which the composer draws from when creating a piece and the singer calls upon when improvising and inserting the ornamentation. The name of each *maqam* is due to a certain characteristic, either the place of origin or an attribute of the music.

performed Gulf songs exceptionally well, Ahlam claimed that it sounded as if he had graduated from the Kuwait school (Season 1, Episodes 11 and 15). And when Carmen Suleiman performed a Gulf song Ahlam told her that she did not sound Egyptian (Season 1, Episode 13). Especially in the first season, the contestants—Hassan Kharbech, Nadia Manfoukh—wanted verification from Ahlam that they sang in the Gulf dialect well (Season 1, Episodes 15 and 17). And in the second season, Ahlam requested that Palestinian Mohammed Assaf sing a Gulf song; the following week after an excellent performance Ahlam thanked herself for telling him to sing in the dialect (Season 2, Episodes 19 and 21). When Dounia Batma sang a Gulf song, Ragheb Alama noted that her combination of the Moroccan voice with a Gulf song was lovely (Season 1, Episode 19). And when Farrah Yousef sang a Gulf song, both Nancy Ajram and Ragheb Alama highlighted her song choice and the latter even claimed that the Syrian sang better in the Gulf song than in her previous Aleppan song (Season 2, Episode 27). However, not all of the contestants performed well in the Gulf dialect and Ahlam highlighted a Moroccan semi-finalist's failure in singing in that dialect (Season 2, Episode 7).

The vocal coaches and judges also commented when non-Lebanese contestants sang Lebanese numbers. During the second round of the auditions process in Beirut, a group of non-Lebanese men had to perform a Lebanese song. During the rehearsal, a vocal coach asked if there were any Lebanese in the group, implying that a Lebanese contestant could assist the group to sound Lebanese. Nonetheless, their performance went well and Nancy Ajram commented that it sounded as if they were all Lebanese when they sang (Season 2, Episode 6). Similarly, when Ahmad Gamal performed a Lebanese song, Ragheb Alama was impressed with the Egyptian's performance in a

different dialect (Season 2, Episode 17). However, when Hassan Kharbech performed a song by the Syrian George Wassouf, all of the judges noted that the Tunisian needed to work on his pronunciation (*muxārij al-Ḥurūf*).

Sometimes the judges noted that a certain style of music suited a contestant. Ragheb Alama highlighted that Lebanese Ziad Khoury performed extremely well when singing in the *jabalī* ‘mountain’ style (Season 2, Episode 25). After one performance, Nancy Ajram commented that she could feel Mt. Lebanon in his voice (Season 2, Episode 17). Nonetheless, Ziad Khoury still sang well in other dialects, such as when he performed an Iraqi song (Season 2, Episode 15). Ragheb Alama told Mohammed Taher that the Gulf dialect suited him most and that if the Saudi contestant chose a song in a different dialect he must work harder (Season 1, Episode 15).

The judges acknowledged when contestants sang in other dialects well and commended them when they excelled at several dialects. Especially toward the end of the second season, the judges underscored contestants’ performing in several different dialects well. Hassan El Shafei highlighted this ability in Palestinian Mohammed Assaf and Nancy Ajram noted it in both Moroccan Salma Rachid and Syrian Farrah Yousef (Season 2, Episodes 19, 23, and 27). The underlying idea is that a true Arab artist appeals to the entire Arabic-speaking world by singing in a range of dialects. Saudi Mohammed Taher eloquently stated this notion to Ragheb Alama when remonstrating with him for the judge telling the contestant to sing only in the Gulf dialect. Mohammed Taher told the judge that in the end he is Arab and a true artist should be able to sing in any dialect (Season 1, Episode 15). Similarly, Iraqi Mohanad Al Marsoomy answered a SuperFan question, stating that he always wants to perform Iraqi songs, but that an artist should be able to sing in different dialects, thus he would also perform Lebanese and

Egyptian songs. The ability to sing well in several different dialects is a way in which artists are able to express their Arab identity and to expand their appeal to the entire Arabic-speaking world.

3. References to Countries

The diversity of the Arab identity was also celebrated in the judges' recognizing the various countries for both sending participants and for their musical and cultural heritage. Often judges sent salutations to countries after a contestant sang extremely well (i.e. 'I salute Morocco'), and sometimes the remarks were more elaborate, such as when Ahlam mentioned that drinking from the Tigris River must produce strong Iraqi voices (Season 2, Episode 17). Occasionally when contestants performed a song not in their native dialect they would salute that country, such as when Jordanian Youssef Arafat saluted Kuwait and Lebanese Ziad Khoury hailed Iraq (Season 1, Episode 11; Season 2, Episode 15). Additionally, contestants referenced events in their country, such as when Carmen Suleiman stated that her heart was crying for Egypt and Youssef Arafat wished King Abdullah II a happy birthday (Season 1, Episode 13). And for Kuwait's national holiday, the Kuwaiti host wore a large pin and mentioned the holiday at the beginning of the episode and later the Saudi Mohammed Taher mentioned that he wore a white gutra to offer solidarity with his fellow Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country.

As mentioned in Chapter II, these regional talent competitions often showcase international rivalries and voting tends to correlate strongly with contestants' national bases. Hence, Ragheb Alama and Ahlam referenced how the audience should vote based on talent and not on nationality. Both at the beginning of the live episodes and

toward the middle of the season, Ragheb Alama stressed that the audience should vote for their favorite candidate whom they want to become Arab Idol and not on the basis of nationality (Season 2, Episode 10 and 20). When he first made this remark, Ahlam said that this moment was the first time that she agreed with him 100 percent and reiterated the directive not to vote on nationality or country because ‘we are all the Arab world and one heart’ (Season 2, Episode 10). Nonetheless, as both Carmen Suleiman and Mohammed Assaf were announced the winners, their national flags were draped on their shoulders, because they are still representing their countries.

Another way of referencing national origins was through the contestants’ outfits. In an introduction video in the first season, all of the finalists wore their national dress, explained it to the audience, and then sang part of a patriotic song (Season 1, Episode 11). However, this video was probably the first and last time most of the contestants wore their national dress on the program. There were only two groups of finalists that wore outfits reflecting their countries: Saudis and Moroccans. The Saudi contestants often wore the thobe and gutra when performing a Gulf song, although not always. Dounia Batma and Salma Rachid each wore a Moroccan inspired outfit. Although wearing a certain ensemble signaled a contestant’s national identity, contestants rarely used this option and chose stylish gowns or sleek suits instead. This section concludes the discussion about the celebration of multiplicity of the Arab identity; the next section describes Kurdish identity on the program.

4. Kurdish Identity on an Arab Talent Competition

Parwas Hussein’s presence on *Arab Idol* created an interesting dynamic; how could a Kurd compete on an Arab talent competition that involved not only singing in

Arabic, but also conversing in Arabic to the judges and the general audience? Kurdish viewers tended to display a range of views; from supporting their fellow Kurd notwithstanding the Arab-ness of the show given that a *Kurdish Idol* does not exist, to attacking her for her participation on an Arab program since a Kurd could never win the title of Arab Idol. This section discusses references to Parwas Hussein's place of origin, native language, and singing abilities as well as how she may have chosen to express her identity on the program.

When Parwas Hussein first appeared on *Arab Idol*, she was auditioning in Erbil with her name, age, and Iraq as her country appearing on the screen. However, once the live episodes began, the hosts introduced her performances by saying: *parwas Husa'n min kurdistan al-Şirā'* 'Parwas Hussein from Kurdish Iraq.' Thus, at some level, there was recognition that she was different from the other contestants from Iraq. However, this distinction did not please Ahlam, who in a dramatic and controversial moment declared that Parwas Hussein was from Iraq, since the Kurdish part is inseparable (Season 2, Episode 10). After this occurred, Kurdish viewers rallied together in defense of Kurdish Iraq resulting in Ahlam issuing a public apology for her comments via Facebook. Shalaby (2013) mentioned that Ahlam's comment may reflect the policies of the GCC, since the organization does not have direct relations with Kurdish populations. This mentality also would explain Ahlam's reference to the well-known Kurdish singer Chopy as Chopy the Iraqi (Season 2, Episode 15). Only during Parwas Hussein's last week in the competition did Ahlam recognize her as being from Kurdish Iraq (Season 2, Episode 23).

The judges made other comments which indicated both their ignorance regarding the Kurds as well as their confusion about her participation. Ragheb Alama

repeatedly mentioned that Parwas Hussein mixes Arabic and Kurdish in her singing and how this wonderful mixture would please both the Arabs and the Kurds. However, at first when he talked about this mixing he described Arabic as a language and Kurdish as a dialect (Season 2, Episodes 13 and 15). Only later did he refer to both as languages (Season 2, Episode 17). Thus, Ragheb Alama initially demoted Kurdish to being only a dialect and then subsequently equated both Arabic and Kurdish as languages.

As mentioned above, the judges tended to remark on how well contestants performed songs outside of their native Arabic dialect. Thus, it was not surprising that the judges commented about Parwas Hussein performing in a non-native language. For example, after Parwas Hussein sang a Gulf song particularly well, Ahlam burst forth with the comment that she sang the song as if she were an Arab (Season 2, Episode 11). This comment mirrors the same formula that Ahlam used when she told any non-Gulf contestant how well they sang a Gulf song. Similarly, Nancy Ajram was so impressed with her performance that she told Parwas Hussein that she is not from Kurdistan but Arabistan (Season 2, Episode 13). Clearly both Ahlam and Nancy Ajram were complimenting Parwas Hussein's ability to perform Arabic songs; however, the comments could easily be misconstrued and considered slightly insensitive. The Kurds are an ethnic group in the region, currently struggling to affirm a unique identity from the other ethnic groups and to create their own nation. These remarks—Parwas Hussein sings like an Arab or she is from Arabistan—undercuts and belittles her Kurdish identity. Additionally, these comments underscore how the judges had a difficult time comprehending a Kurdish singer performing in Arabic so well.

The identity that Parwas Hussein portrayed on the show—through the director's lens—is also crucial. Throughout her participation on the program Parwas

Hussein emphasized her Kurdish, non-Arab identity. She brought a translator to auditions to assist her communication with the judges, signaling a discrepancy between how well she sings in Arabic and her spoken language skills. While she sang many songs completely in Arabic, she also combined Kurdish with several of her performances, again highlighting her Kurdish identity. When Ahlam made her comment about her being from Iraq, the camera showed Parwas Hussein politely mouthing Kurdish Iraq back to the judge. In all of the introduction videos Parwas Hussein spoke in Arabic, but the videos were edited to highlight her mistakes and Arabic bloopers, thus emphasizing her non-Arab identity. The editing by the production crew underscored the perspective and story that the crew wanted to portray. Parwas Hussein's use of Arabic on the show is one way in which she appealed to the viewing audience for their votes—even if her Arabic was not always well-formed. However, with her elimination from the competition, she could showcase fully her Kurdish identity. Thus, during her exit video she spoke in Kurdish with Arabic subtitles. And, after Mohammed Assaf was announced the winner, all 27 finalists rushed onto the stage and Parwas Hussein was proudly holding a Kurdish flag, representing her people.

The production team emphasized her non-Arab identity through both referring to her place of origin as Kurdish Iraq and including her bloopers in the introduction videos. For many judges, Parwas Hussein's participation on the show was a learning experience. Ahlam eventually referred to her place of origin as Kurdish Iraq and Ragheb Alama finally elevated Kurdish to its proper status as a language. Still, the judges at times struggled to grasp how a Kurd could sing so well in Arabic, resulting in comments that were not completely sensitive or respectful. Finally, throughout the competition Parwas Hussein always highlighted her Kurdish identity, politely and with a smile.

However, she only truly played the identity card once she was out of the competition, by speaking in Kurdish in the exit video and holding a Kurdish flag in the finale.

B. Main Findings

This analysis of interdialectal communication on the program *Arab Idol* has yielded the following five main findings:

1. During interdialectal communication, speakers exhibit a strong tendency to maintain their native dialect.
2. Speakers will converge with their interlocutors in an effort to narrow the distance and to increase solidarity. These convergences take a variety of forms, including switching into the dialect of the interlocutor.
3. Speakers will switch into certain dialects to call upon the connotation of the dialect, such as to be funny through Egyptian Arabic and to be pampering with Lebanese Arabic.
4. Standard Arabic was employed when diverging from the interlocutor in addition to a handful of other instances that correspond with the generally accepted categories in the literature.
5. Arab identity on *Arab Idol* was expressed through the multiplicity of the dialects and not through the ‘unifying’ Standard Arabic.

In line with the findings of Abu-Melhim (1991), speakers on *Arab Idol* tended to maintain their native dialect when communicating with interlocutors from varying dialectal groups. The hosts, judges, and contestants utilized the form of Arabic which is the most natural to them when speaking spontaneously, Dialectal Arabic. The availability of satellite television and the prevalence of these regional shows have

increased the exposure to and intelligibility of the various dialects for both the participants of the program and the viewing audience. During the few occasions in which any misunderstanding occurred, speakers explained the meaning of their utterances using Dialectal Arabic. Further, when the judges employed local dialectal expressions, they clarified the meaning through Dialectal Arabic. Thus, speakers on *Arab Idol* maintained their dialect during interdialectal communication and never utilized Standard Arabic to aid understanding or comprehension.

Speakers on *Arab Idol* employed a variety of methods to converge with their interlocutors, including switching dialects. These convergences both underscored the camaraderie between the judges and the bonds created between the judges and the contestants. Switching dialects requires both familiarity and skill on the part of the speaker and results in a narrowed social distance between the interlocutors. The Emirati judge, Ahlam, exhibited the highest frequency of both simple and complex switches demonstrating her vast familiarity with the various dialects. The Lebanese judges, Ragheb Alama and Nancy Ajram, both switched dialects to a lesser degree and the latter tended to have moments of increased hilarity with her extended switches into either Gulf or Egyptian Arabic. Even the Egyptian judge, Hassan El Shafei, switched into Lebanese Arabic during one utterance with a contestant due to a close connection between the two, despite the strong tendency for Egyptians to maintain their own dialect during interdialectal communication, as noted by Abu-Melhim (1991). The switching between dialects, as opposed to switching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic, or Dialectal Arabic and a European language, is rarely mentioned in the code switching literature.

In some instances, speakers switched into a different dialect not to converge to the individual, but rather to signal a characteristic associated with that particular dialect. Just as the literature has documented switching into Standard Arabic or Dialectal Arabic due to the values attributed to each, this analysis found switching into Egyptian Arabic for humor and into Lebanese Arabic to pamper. Egyptian Arabic is associated with comedy due to the quantity and prevalence of the Egyptian comedic films throughout the entire region, while the Lebanese are seen to live a pampered lifestyle with their fashion and shopping malls. These connotations represent the perceived characteristics of these dialects amongst all others, as opposed to the simple dichotomy between Standard and Dialectal Arabic.

Standard Arabic hardly ever occurred on *Arab Idol*, which is expected given the context of a talent competition. However, Ahlam's use of Standard Arabic when diverging is especially noteworthy. In this clear example of divergence, Ahlam employed both local Gulf Arabic features and an extremely Standard Arabic phrase to distance herself from the contestant when offering a warning. Thus, as opposed to Standard Arabic's ability to unite all speakers, Ahlam used this variety to distance herself from a fellow Arab. The other handful of instances in which Ragheb Alama or Ahlam employed Standard Arabic aligned with the established categories within the literature: to emphasize, to cite, to quote, and to read. Importantly, the speakers on *Arab Idol* never employed Standard Arabic to explain themselves or to assist with interdialectal communication.

As opposed to the widespread belief that only Standard Arabic has the linguistic power to unite the Arabic-speaking world, this analysis has demonstrated that the interlocutors on *Arab Idol* utilized Dialectal Arabic to express Arab identity.

Additionally, *Arab Idol* celebrated the diversity present throughout the region, especially local expressions of musical culture. When Ahlam utilized the local Lebanese Arabic features of the doubled object or the collapsing of the 2nd person pronoun, she expressed solidarity with the Lebanese judge and contestant as fellow Arabs. The musical performances by the contestants and the guest stars exemplified the diverse musical culture, which is shared amongst the entire Arabic-speaking world as part of a common cultural repertoire and appeals to the entire viewing audience from Morocco to Iraq. Further, the judges praised contestants who performed songs in different dialects well and the contestants remarked that a true Arab artist should be able to perform in a variety of dialects, not simply their native one. Arab identity is not simply a monolithic phenomenon expressed only through *fuṣḤā*, but rather through the multiplicity of the dialects present in the speech of the interlocutors and the songs of the artists.

These five findings greatly contribute to the literature on interdialectal communication, code switching, and expressions of identity. However, there are still ample opportunities to explore the largely unobserved field of research dealing with interdialectal communication in the Arabic-speaking world.

C. Future Research

Given the limited amount of literature on interdialectal communication in the Arabic-speaking world, this area of study still deserves a great deal of attention. Nonetheless, this analysis aligns with the findings of S'hiri (2002) and Abu-Melhim (1991), helping to debunk the myth that Standard Arabic is essential for interdialectal communication. In the course of conducting this analysis, I have identified three specific opportunities for future research.

First, interdialectal communication in the Arabic-speaking world should be studied in a natural environment to enhance the validity of this study and its findings in a performance context. The leading universities in the Arabic-speaking world are one example of a natural environment that brings together students from across the region for the purpose of higher education. For example, the American University of Beirut attracts students from the entirety of the Arabic-speaking world with individuals hailing from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Bahrain. Of course while these students may represent the entire region, they are not necessarily representative of the entire Arabic-speaking population given their higher level of education. Nonetheless, these universities create an environment ripe for examination.

Another potential context exists in the GCC countries, which attract Arabic speakers from the entire region for either economic opportunities or leisure. Due to the ownership and employment laws in most GCC countries, the owners and a certain percentage of employees must be local nationals, while the rest of the employees tend to be foreign nationals, from South Asia, Europe, North America, and, of course, the rest of the Arabic-speaking world. As much of the region suffers from conflict, instability, and high unemployment, many Arabic speakers flock to the GCC countries for employment. Simultaneously, GCC residents can easily travel between the countries due to multinational agreements and frequently visit their neighboring nations. Already this phenomenon of contact has appeared in Gulf *musalsalāt*. For example, the program *maṭlūb rijāl* ‘Men Wanted’ follows the lives of women working in a beauty salon in Dubai, in which the main characters hail from Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria as well as including many Gulf characters. Examining interdialectal communication in the

context of the Gulf should provide natural speech and incorporate socio-economic diversity.

Second, Gulf speakers' communication habits with other Arabic speakers deserve specific attention. On *Arab Idol*, Emirati Ahlam was by far the speaker with the greatest ability both to manipulate and to utilize the various Arabic dialects at her disposal. By comparison, the Saudi judge, Nasser Al Qasabi, on *Arab's Got Talent*, is also the judge who switches most often between dialects. Gulf speakers as a whole may exhibit a higher tendency to use multiple Arabic dialects during interdialectal communication than other Arabic speakers. Since the Lebanese and Egyptians may consider themselves more culturally sophisticated and are highly recognized throughout the region, they may not feel the need to converge as strongly as other groups. The Gulf speakers are relatively few both in their individual nations and the region as a whole, and tend to travel a great deal. These factors may contribute to the Gulf sentiment that they should converge more to other interlocutors, which would highlight both their skill and pan-Arab identity. Further, some Gulf speakers may refrain from using highly localized dialectal features when interacting with other interlocutors.² This phenomenon could be similar to how the Maghreb speakers modify their language choices when interacting both with non-Maghreb speakers and with individuals from different countries within the Maghreb. Thus, the speech patterns of Gulf speakers during interdialectal communication, between other Gulf dialects and between speakers from other parts of the Arabic-speaking world, deserve further examination.

Finally, future research should also examine how speakers use Dialectal Arabic to express identity, both local and Arab. The tendency for speakers to maintain their

² Dana Abdulrahim, email messages, June-August 2014.

native variety of Dialectal Arabic during interdialectal communication may not simply be due to the ease of using this linguistic variety, but also to affirm a local or national identity. *Arab Idol* embraced the multiplicity and diversity present within the Arabic-speaking world, and the data included examples in which the speaker used Dialectal Arabic to celebrate a broad Arab identity. Not only should researchers examine expressions of identity in interdialectal interactions linguistically, but also they should study it through language perceptions and attitudes to gain a deeper understanding of speakers' motivations. These complementary aspects of the analysis would mirror S'hiri's (2002) methodology. The ways in which speakers express local and broad Arab identity need deeper exploration.

These options for future research would continue to enhance our understanding of interdialectal communication and pan-Arab identity. All three opportunities deserve examination.

APPENDIX I

NORMAL SPEECH SAMPLES

As mentioned in Chapter V, this appendix includes the randomly selected segments of longer speech from the hosts and judges for each season.

A. Season One Segments

1. Annabella Hilal, host

¹ (A1) AH: akīd mā ti-ns-ō la-kill yilli badd-ō ya-ḡrif axbār nujūm a^ydol

² wa-axbār al-barnāmij fī-h yi-tābiḡ-ā awwal bi-awwal ḡal-fa^ysbūk wa-twīttir /

³ wa-la-kill axbār al-kawālīs wa-Ḥayāt al-mištariḡin bi-l-barnāmij

⁴ mā ti-ns-ō ta-Ḥḡdar-ō arab a^ydol ekstra kill an-nahār urbaḡ tisaḡ wa-nuṣṣ

⁵ bi tawḡīt as-saḡudiyya

¹ AH: Of course, do not forget for everyone who wants to know the news of *Idol* stars

² and the news of the program he can follow right away on Facebook and Twitter.

³ And for all the backstage news and the lives of the contestants in the program,

⁴ do not forget to watch *Arab Idol Extra* every Wednesday, 9:30

⁵ Saudi time. (Season 1, Episode 13)

2. Abdallah Tulehi, host

- ¹ (A2) AT: la ti-ns-ō inna a^ydan fī-kum t-tābṣ-ūn Ḥalga mubāšaratan Ṣabra¹
² aōir il-iḏāṣat al-mawjūda ism-hā Ṣala asfal iṣ-šaša // aš-šabāb wa-l-banāt fī
³ a^ydol xāḏu tajrubat al-barnāmij munḏa ašhur / wa-kull
⁴ ašbaḤ al-lān Ṣā[?]ila waḤida ruġum al-munāfasa lli ba^yn-hum / xallī-nā n-šūf lamma
⁵ il-muštariḱīn bi-y-Ṣīšū maṢ baṢḏ haḏi l-fatra / ka^yf ti-šbaḤ Ṣalaḡāt-hum maṢ baṢḏ

- ¹ AT: Do not forget, also, that you all can follow the episode directly through
² the radio channel whose name is on the bottom of the screen. The guys and gals on
³ *Idol* have participated in the program's experience for months and everyone
⁴ has become now one family, despite the competition amongst them. Let us see when
⁵ the contestants live together for this time what becomes of their relationships together.
(Season 1, Episode 17)

3. Ragheb Alama, judge

- ¹ (A3) R: yi-saṣḏ al-masa masa l-xer la-il-kun la-kill Ṣam bi-y-šūf-ū-nā /
² wa-kill lli mušarifi-nā wa-l-lejne l-kaṛīme lli maṢ-nā // badd-ī [?]ūl awwal ši
³ inn-ī ktīr inbaṣaṭ-t bi-hal—al-*medley* lli sār-it / ana saṣīḏ jiddan wa-ya-Ṣṭī-kun
⁴ al-Ṣāfiya kamān al-ma^ystro ilī Ṣaliya wa-l-fir^a l-musi[?]yye lli
⁵ tabaṢ-o ha^yda ši // b-a-Ḥibb bass il-awwal innu al-yōm / al-yōm šakl-u Ḥa-ya-kūn
⁶ al-yōm iktīr Ḥilū / šakl-u š-šabāb wa-š-šabāya Ḥa-ya-ġann-ū iktīr Ḥilū liannu
⁷ bi-l-*medley* ġann-ū rawaṢ wa-b-a-Ṣti[?]id innu xall— zakkir al-Ṣālim

¹ The phrase [fī-kum tābṣ-ūn] is a normal Gulf expression and does not include any influence from the Lebanese dialect. The construct of [fī] with a pronominal suffix to mean 'can do' is often used in the 2nd person in the Gulf, but rarely with other persons, according to my Yemeni informant.

⁸ bi-hal-əaqafe al-musiqiyye al-mawjūde bi-kill al-bilād min tunis ila l-mağrib ila maşr
⁹ ila l-urdun ila kill al-bilād al-Şarabiyye ila s-saʕudiyya ʕabʕan ʕala rās-nā
¹⁰ aš-šaʕb as-saʕudiyy al-Ḥabīb fa-mi-n-Ḥayyī-un ya-ʕī-un alf ʕāfiye ya ra^y-t dayiman
¹¹ bi-y-kaəəir-u min-hal—min-hal-ağānī lli niḤna ni-šti[?]-l-o ni-smaʕ-o wa-jadīde
¹² ʕala—ʕala—idān kul al-jumhūr al-ʕālim

¹ R: Good evening, good evening to all of you watching us
² and all of our guests and the generous panel that is with us. I want to say first of all
³ that I really enjoyed this *medley* that happened. I am very happy and I give
⁴ well-wishes also to the maestro Elie Alia and the musical ensemble that
⁵ accompanied him. I would like just first that today, today's form will be
⁶ very nice, the guys and ladies will sing very nicely because
⁷ in the *medley* they sang amazingly well. And I think that it reminded the people
⁸ of this musical culture present in all of the countries from Tunisia to Morocco to Egypt
⁹ to Jordan to all of the Arab countries, to Saudi Arabia of course, we are at the service
¹⁰ of the dear Saudi people. So, we salute them, giving them many well-wishes. Always,
¹¹ I hope these songs that we miss listening to increase and are new
¹² to the ears of all the world's audience. (Season 1, Episode 17)

4. Ahlam, judge

¹ (A4) A: ʕand-ī bass ʕand-ī kilimat-a^yn a-bğī a-gūl-hum //
² innu al-muštariķīn al-arbaʕ haḏēla / Ḥaḳīqatan yi-staḤaqq-ūn at-tašwīt //
³ wa-yi-staḤaqq-ūn inn al—al-mušāhidīn / yi-şawwt-ū-la-hum li[?]anna / ʕand-hum
⁴ ašwāt Ḥilwa // a-tamannā inna al— baʕḏ an-nās lli bi-t-şūf-nā // badil mā y-şūf-un

⁵ mikyādġ-ī wa-šaġir-ī wa-libs-ī wiš labisa wiš ġamla wiš kallam-t wiš
⁶ akal-it wa-ka^yf ġaĤak-t ya-rakkiz-ūn akōar fī-l-muštariġin za^ʔid innu iġa wujūd-ī
⁷ fī arab a^ydol / zad an-nujūmiyya fa-haġa šaraf l-ī šukran

¹ A: I have just, I have two words I want to say,
² that these four contestants truly deserve the vote
³ and they deserve that the viewers vote for them because they have
⁴ beautiful voices. I hope that—some of the people that watch us, instead they see
⁵ my make-up and my hair and my clothes, what I wear, what I do, what I said, what
⁶ I ate, and how I laughed—they focus even more on the contestants so that my presence
⁷ on *Arab Idol* then adds star appeal. This is an honor to me, thank you. (Season 1,
 Episode 23)

5. Hassan El Shafei, judge

¹ (A5) H: wallāhi in-nahār-da il-ġadād bi-t-^ʔill / wa-l-munafsa aqwa / wa-n-nahār-da
² Ĥa-n-šūf Ĥatta l-*performance* ibtāġ kulla Ĥadd / ana šayf iĤna kull waĤid yi-ġannī
³ aktar min uġniyya / ġašān iĤna wašil-nā marĤala / yaġnī šaġba inna—inna kull waĤid
⁴ lāzim yi-zbit nafs-u innu huwwa faġalan ahhil inna huwwa yi-ksab aw inna huwwa
⁵ ya-xud laqab bitaġ arab a^ydol // fa ana šayf inn in-nahār-da al-munafsa / yaġnī ba^ʔat
⁶ ašadd / wa-innu kull waĤid lāzim al-maġhūd illi kan bi-ya-ġmil-u lāzim ya-ġmil-u
⁷ akbar ġašar marrāt ġašān yi-zbit nafs-u wa-yi-zbit innu huwwa ^ʔādir yu-w^ʔaf
⁸ ġal-masraĤ-da wa-^ʔādir yi-zbit li-n-nās inna huwwa faġalan mumkin yi-kun arab a^ydol
⁹ / fa Ĥa-n-šūf in-nahār-da

¹ H: For sure, today the number decreases and the competition is stronger and tonight
² we will see the *performance* of each one. The way I see it, we, everyone sings
³ more than one song because we reached a tough phase, that everyone
⁴ must prove himself that he actually qualifies, that he earns or that he
⁵ takes the title of *Arab Idol*. So, the way I see it, tonight the competition is
⁶ more intense and that everyone must, the effort that he was doing, he must now do
⁷ ten times greater so as to prove himself and prove that he is able to stand
⁸ on this stage and he is able to prove to the people that he actually can be Arab Idol.
⁹ So we will see today. (Season 1, Episode 21)

B. Season Two Segments

1. Annabella Hilal, host

¹ (A6) AH: šukran la-il-kun la-Ḥuḍūr-kun maṣ-nā / wa-halla² al-layla ṣan jadd laḤ
² ta-kūn layle ṣaṣbe ṣale-nā wa-ṣal-muštariḱīn / nānsi wa-akīd iktar
³ al-mušāhidīn ṣam yi-tsa²al-ō wa^yn il-arbaṣ muštariḱīn il-ba²iy-īn / il-jawab raḤ
⁴ in-šuf-ū-h la²inn ha-ṣ-ṣabāya raḤ yi-²addim-ō ajmal *medley* la-ḍa^yfit-nā al-layle /
⁵ samīra saṣīd / xallī-nā na-smaṣ-o sawa

¹ AH: Thank you to all of you for your attendance with us. And now tonight really will
² be a tough night for us and for the participants. Nancy, and of course, most of the
³ viewers are asking themselves where are the four other contestants, the answer we will
⁴ see, because these ladies will present the most beautiful *medley* for our guest tonight
⁵ Samira Said. Let us listen together. (Season 2, Episode 14)

2. Ahmad Fahmi, host

¹ (A7) AF: at-taṣwīt wiʿif // wa-n-naṭīga wiṣl-it // an-nuṣṣ al-awwal min al-Ḥalʿa

² Ḥa-na-ḡrif naṭīgat al-banāt / wa-n-nuṣṣ at-tāni Ḥa-na-ḡrif naṭīgat

³ aṣ-ṣabāb / lakin ʿabla-hā / xall-u na-ṣūf iz-zayy kān-it taḤḏīrāt / li-layla-di

¹ AF: The voting stopped. And the results arrived. The first half of the episode

² we will know the results of the ladies and the second half we will know the results of

³ the guys, but before that let us see how were the preparations for tonight. (Season 2, Episode 9)

3. Ragheb Alama, judge

¹ (A8) R: ṣūf-ī hallaʿ / ḡan mawḏūḡa aṣ-ṣōt // faḡaṭ aṣ-ṣōt / kān hadi iyyām

² il-izāḡa al-libnāniyye wa-izaṣāt ʿabil-mā kān ya-kūn fī televisiyyon //

³ min baḡd-mā yaḡnī as-sittīnāt wa-bi-ṭ-ṭāliḡ sār-it iktīr ḡam ti-tḡayyar lōn-u /

⁴ liannu sār fī niḤna sir-nā bi— yaḡnī ḡālim aṣ-ṣōt wa-ḡ-ṣūra [R looks to A] lli—lli—

⁵ lli bidd-ī ʿūl-u al-yōm innu— iktīr muhimme l-ʿubūl / miṣ bass al—

⁶ aṣ-ṣōt aṣ-ṣōt niḤna bi-daraja l-ūlā inn-nā ka-lejnit Ḥakim / leh ḡam

⁷ t-ṭallaḡ- ī fiyyi hēk [R looks to A] ka-lejnit Ḥakim

⁸ AH: naṭrit-ak ti-tḡalliṭ bi-kilme [audience claps]

⁹ R: ṣaḤīḤ ana b-a-Ḥibb-ā la-aḤlām / la ana b-a-Ḥibb-ā la [A laughs] eh— niḤna

¹⁰ ka-fannānīn ḡam ni-xtār aktar ḡala ṣ-ṣōt / bass kamān iktīr bi-ya-ḡnī-l-nā ṣway—

¹¹ AH: iṣ-ṣakil

¹² R: al-ʿubūl ʿubūl la ana bi-nisba-la-ili

¹³ masalan / fī an-nuʿṭa iktīr b-a-Ḥuṭṭ-ā ḡala zakā bi ixtiyār al-uḡniyye // yaḡnī

¹⁴ il-waḤad lāzim ya-kūn iktīr— daʔīʔ bi-ixtiyār al-uġniyye / wa-Ṣam b-šūf // innu miš
¹⁵ iktīr ya-tamattaṢ-o bi-hal—bi-ha-n-naṢme / naṢmit iz-zakā ixtiyār al-uġniyye //
¹⁶ xuṣūṣan lamma bi-y-kūn Ṣam bi-y-ġann-o liv / ʔidām an-nās / lāzim iktīr yi-drus-u
¹⁷ ixtiyarāt-un išiya ti-lbaʔ-l-on / ana šif-t mawāhib maraʔ-it Ṣan-nā
¹⁸ kin-t iktīr i-zṢal innu leh ixtar-t hal-uġniyye leh ixtar-t
¹⁹ hal-uġniyye hayde mā ti-lbaʔ-l-ak wa-inte hay mā ti-lbaʔ-l-ik / bass niḤna
²⁰ Ṣārif-īn kill-nā *deep inside* innu haʔde mawhibe jayyide wa-lāzim ti-nṢaṭā
²¹ furṣa taniyye

¹ R: Look now, on the topic of the voice, just the voice, these were the days of
² Lebanese radio and radios before there was television.
³ After the sixties and onward, they were changing their character a lot
⁴ because it became—the world of the voice and the picture [R looks to A] that—that—
⁵ that I want to say today that—the acceptable presence is very important, not just—
⁶ the voice, the voice, we in the first level, that we as the judging panel, why are you
⁷ looking at me like that [R looks to A] as the judging panel
⁸ AH: She is waiting for you to make a mistake in your words. [audience claps]
⁹ R: Right, I love Ahlam, I love her [A laughs] Yes, we
¹⁰ as artists choose more on the basis of voice, but it means a lot to us a bit—
¹¹ AH: The appearance
¹² R: The acceptable presence, acceptable presence, with respect to me
¹³ for example there is the point I make a lot about cleverness in the choice of the song.
¹⁴ One must be very precise in the choice of the song, and I am seeing that not
¹⁵ many savor in this, in this delight, the delight of cleverness in the choice of the song,

¹⁶ especially when they are singing live in front of people, they must consider a lot
¹⁷ their choices, things that suit them. I have seen many talented people pass before us.
¹⁸ And I would become very upset: why did you choose this song, why did you choose
¹⁹ this song, this does not suit you, and this does not suit you; but we
²⁰ all know *deep inside* that these are good talents and they must be given
²¹ a second chance. (Season 2, Episode 11)

4. Nancy Ajram, judge

¹ (A9) N: al-yōm sabit / ana mā b-a-ʕrif // šu badd-ī ʔūl / ʕan Ḥalʔit al-yōm
² taḤdīdan liannu ana rās-ī al-yōm mʕaffal yaʕnī ʕa-ṭūl as-sabit—bi-y-kūn iktīr ʕaʕb—
³ yaʕnī bi-ni-waḍḍiʕ muʕtarik al-yōm / waḤid badd-o yi-ġādir-nā // wa-ʕ-ʕaraḤa iktīr
⁴ ʕaʕb yaʕnī innu / yaʕnī ʕala j-jumhūr / Ḥamdilla innu al-muhimme miš la-il-nā bass
⁵ niḤna ni-zʕal akīd— yaʕnī al-yōm al-aʕʕab il-iyām [*sic*] liannu intū ʕam ta-ʕlan-u
⁶ an-natije ʕala ṭūl ana—ana ʕaxʕiyyan aʕ-ʕaʕb ʕale-ye yi-mkin liannu—b-i-kūn ʕam
⁷ b-ṭallaʕ bi-šifāf-kun ayya ism raḤ tilvis-o / la-Ḥatta mā b-a-ʕrif tafkīr-i ana
⁸ waʕn badd-o yi-ttijeh / wa-rās-ī waʕn badd-o y-rūḤ fa / bass al—
⁹ ʕay al-Ḥilū al-waḤīd akīd al-yōm yilli huwwe aḤlām / badd-ī i-tʕakkir-ā ʕala ha-j-jaw
¹⁰ illi ʕamil-it-il-na iyyeh—wallaʕat al-masraḤ mitl al-ʕādī

¹ N: Today is Saturday. I do not know what I want to say about tonight’s episode
² in particular because today I can’t think. Right away Saturday is very difficult,
³ we will say good-bye to a contestant today; one must leave us and honestly it is very
⁴ hard on the audience. Thank goodness, it is not our task, but
⁵ we are upset of course. Today is the hardest day because you all will announce the

⁶ result. Right away, for me, for me personally, it is hard on me, maybe because I am
⁷ watching your lips, which name will be televised, even I do not know my thoughts,
⁸ where my thoughts want to point to and where my mind wants to go. So, but,
⁹ the one nice thing of course tonight is Ahlam. I want to thank her for this atmosphere
¹⁰ that she created for us—lighting up the stage as usual. (Season 2, Episode 26)

5. Ahlam, judge

¹ (A10) A: law mā jtahad-ū ṭabʿan

² AF: ahhh

³ A: [A laughs] law mā jtahad-tū [A laughs] yaʿnī lāzim—ta-Ḥṭṭ-ūn al—

⁴ as-sayṭara l-qawiyya / raḏūliyya ʿal-masraḤ / a-bġī a-šūf wuḤūš / ya ṭūl

⁵ al-masraḤ [audience claps] ṭabʿan // a-tawaqqaʿ as-sana / ʿand-ī—tawaqqiʿ /

⁶ an raḤ yi-ḏrab arab a^ydol / šābb [laughs]

⁷ AF: ahhh

⁸ A: bass tawaqqiʿ // tawaqqiʿ

⁹ AF: bass il-banāt miš samiʿīn

¹⁰ A: wa-ana a-bġī al-yōm // al-Ḥīn ana—yaʿnī mā raḤ a-ṭawwil ʿalē-kum bass raḤ

¹¹ a-gūl / taḤiyya / il-kill bēt fī-l-waṭan al-ʿarabī / liʿann-ī mutʿakkida innu kull-hum /

¹² qaʿid-īn y-šuf-ūn šaṣat al-ʿarab / em-bī-sī

¹ A: If you all don't work hard of course.

² AF: ahhh

³ A: [A laughs] If you all don't work hard. [A laughs] I mean, they must demonstrate

⁴ vigorous and masculine domination of the stage. I want to see macho men all the time

⁵ on the stage. [audience claps] Of course, I expect this year, I have an expectation
⁶ that a man will rock *Arab Idol*.
⁷ AF: ahhh
⁸ A: Just an expectation, an expectation.
⁹ AF: But the girls are not hearing you.
¹⁰ A: And I want to today, now, I—I mean I will not go on for long to you all, but I will
¹¹ say salutations to each home in the Arab nation because I am certain that all of them
¹² are sitting and watching the Arab screen, MBC. (Season 2, Episode 7)

6. Hassan El Shafei, judge

¹ (A11) H: laʔ huwwa—fī—fī nas min-hum al-waḥīd bi-yi-bʔa / šayf
² aš-šaxš ʔidām-u da quwwāh ēh aw / ēh il—il *vision* lli ʕand-u aw
³ huwwa Ḥa-yi-fḍal wa-yiddī ʔaddi ēh—fa inta ti-bʔa ʕārif da qudurtu kaza
⁴ wa-ʕārif inna huwwa yi-ʔdar yi-ʔūl aḤsan wa-aḤsan wa-aḤsan / lakin šay ṭabīʕi gidḍan
⁵ inn inta fī-l-baʕḍ al-aḤyān ṭiliʕ ayyi Ḥadd / kan ayyōm zayy mā y-ʔūl yōm *off*—
⁶ mā kan-š yi-fut kuwayyis mā kal-na-š kuwayyis mā
⁷ ta-waffaʔ-aš wa-di—di Ḥāga ṭabīʕi gidḍan wa-mumkin ti-Ḥṣal ayya Ḥadd / lakin—
⁸ al-ʕaks huwwa ṣaḤīḤ inn—inn fī-l-baʕḍ al-aḤyān fī nās t-kun miš šayfīn aw ana
⁹ kunta šayf inn-huma / kuwayyisīn / lakin—kulla marra bi-yi-bʔa aḤsan al-marra lli
¹⁰ ʔabli-hā / wa-faʕalan itfaḡiʔ-hā kaza marra / baʔa bass ana šayf inn huwwa laʔ eh da
¹¹ ana m-kunt-iš mutaxayyil inn inta mumkin—ta-ʕmil kullu da / wa-la-ana bi-šaraḤa
¹² itxaḍḍē-t kaza Ḥadd / bassi bi-šakl iqābi

¹ H: The fact is—there are—there are people, from them [the contestants] one sees that

² person who is in front of him, and sees what is inside of him, what his *vision* is, or
³ whether he will go on and how much he will give—so you know his ability is thus
⁴ and you know that he can do better and better and better, but it is a very natural thing
⁵ that sometimes any person has a day like what you might call an *off* day—
⁶ the day might not have passed well, he might not have eaten well, he was not
⁷ successful, and this—this thing is very natural and can happen to anyone, but—
⁸ the opposite is true that—that sometimes there are people who do not appear or I
⁹ could see that they are good, but—every time they are better than
¹⁰ before and I was actually surprised several times and I see that “No, what’s this?
¹¹ I didn’t imagine that you might do all of that,” and no, honestly
¹² for me I was startled by many people, but in a positive way. (Season 2, Episode 12)

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