A HEAVY WORKLOAD: (Q) AS A MARKER OF (SUPRA) LOCAL IDENTITY IN GAZA CITY

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SCHOOL OF ANTHROPOLOGY
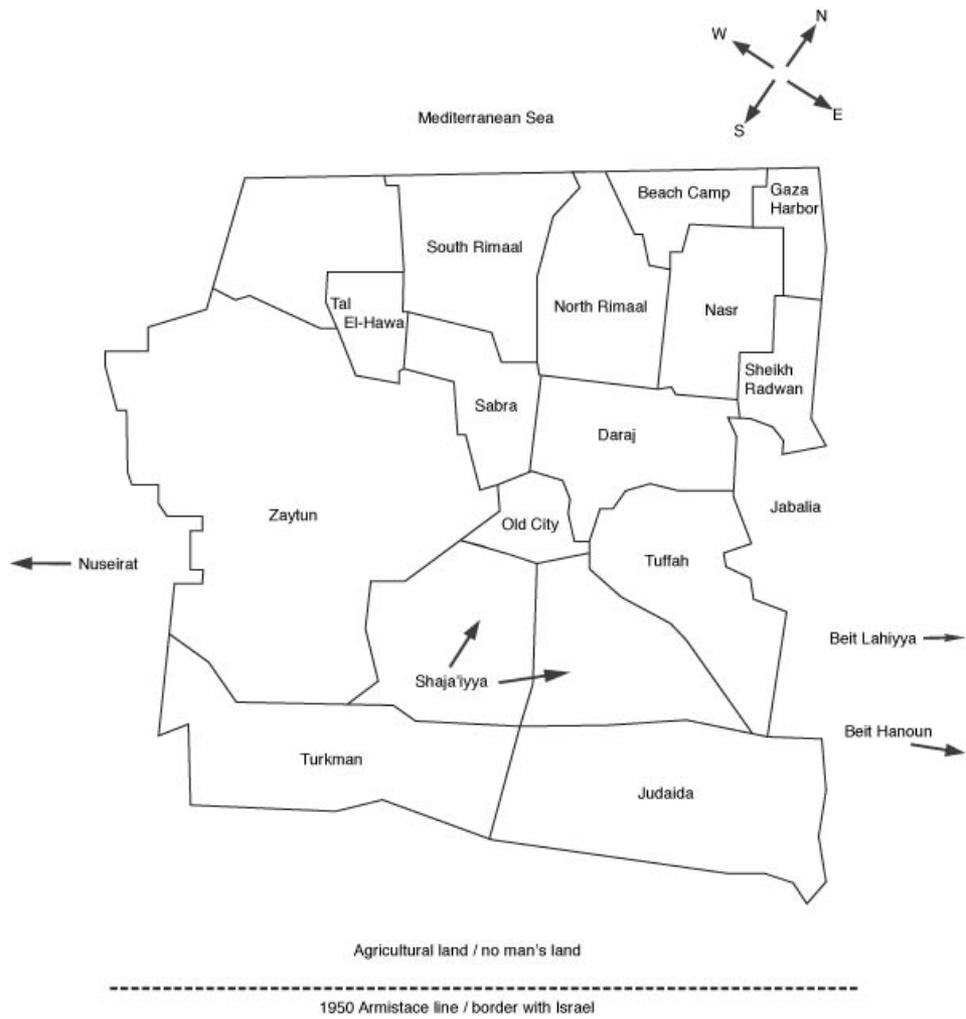
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

THE PLAN

- The corpus
- (Q) in Gaza City
- Indexical fields of (Q)
- (Q) in Gaza City through an anthropological lens
- Looking forward / conclusion

THE CORPUS

- Collected in May 2013

- Full corpus: 39 interviews with indigenous Gazans and Jaffan refugees
  - Varied neighborhoods, ages, genders, religious affiliations

- Today's talk: seven Jaffa refugees in Gaza City
  - All of whom are either residents of Beach Camp or Tel Al-Hawa in Gaza City

Mediterranean Sea

Beach Camp

Gaza Harbor

South Rimaal

Tal El-Hawa

North Rimaal

Nasr

Sheikh Radwan

Sabra

Daraj

Zaytun

Old City

Jabalia

Nuseirat

Tuffah

Beit Lahiyya

Shaja'iyya

Beit Hanoun

Turkman

Judaida

Agricultural land / no man's land

- -

1950 Armistace line / border with Israel

(Q) IN GAZA CITY

- Cotter, William M. and Uri Horesh. (In press).
  - Compared the speech of Jaffa refugees in Gaza with Jaffans in Jaffa itself
  - (Q) was one of three variables examined

- Our analysis suggested that (Q) was not a variable for Jaffans in Jaffa proper

- Invariably realized as [ʔ], barring some very limited exceptions

- In line with what we expect (Shahin 2007, Al-Wer 2007, Horesh 2000)

- So (Q) was only actually variable in Gaza City
  - Two variants present:
    - [ʔ] – "Jaffan"
    - [g] – "Gazan" (Barnea 1973, Cotter 2013, de Jong 2000)

(Q) IN GAZA CITY (COTTER, IN PRESS)

- (Q) is a variable for both indigenous Gaza speakers, as well as Jaffa refugees
- (Q) correlates with dialect background and gender

Table 1. Results for (Q) correlated with dialect background (R^2 = .473 p=8.23e-35)			
Background	Tokens	%?	Logodds
Jaffa	198	55% (N=109)	1.539
Gaza	377	14% (N=54)	-1.539

Table 2. Results for (Q) correlated with gender (R^2 = .473 p=2.54e-29)			
Gender	Tokens	%?	Logodds
F	268	46% (N=123)	1.437
M	307	13% (N=40)	-1.437

LOOKING AT GENDER

- Among indigenous Gaza Speakers, (Q) was only realized as [ʔ] by female speakers

- The degree to which female Gaza speakers have picked up [ʔ] appears to be more limited
  - Issues of marriage enter into the mix here as well

Table 3. Cross tab of (Q) in Gaza City by dialect background			
Background	[ʔ]	[g]	Total tokens
Gaza	54	323	377
Jaffa	109	89	198
			575

LOOKING AT GENDER

- For Jaffa refugees variation in (Q) is perhaps more profound

Table 4. Cross tabulation of (Q) by Gender for Jaffa refugees			
Gender	[?]	[g]	Total tokens
F	79	3	82
M	30	86	116
			198

- Is this simply female speakers opting for a supra-local variant? (Al-Wer 1997, 2007)
- Is this simply male speakers opting for a localized variant?

(Q) AND INDEXICALITY

- When we talk about indexicality we're talking about meaning related to variation
  - Something that we haven't thoroughly explored in Arabic yet (Al-Wer 2014, Hachimi 2012)

- Eckert (2008: 454)
  - In slx, "meaning has been the stuff of casual speculation, but not part of the enterprise."
  - Meaning has mainly been the realm of linguistic anthropology (Silverstein 2003)

- The indexical field (Eckert 2008: 454)
  - "meanings of variables are not precise or fixed but rather constitute a field of potential meanings...any one of which can be activated in the situated use of the variable. The field is fluid, and each new activation has the potential to change the field by building on ideological connections."

INDEXICAL ASSOCIATION(S) OF (Q)

Masculine

Local

Rural

[g]

Tough

Bedouin

Gazan

Feminine

Urban

Effeminate

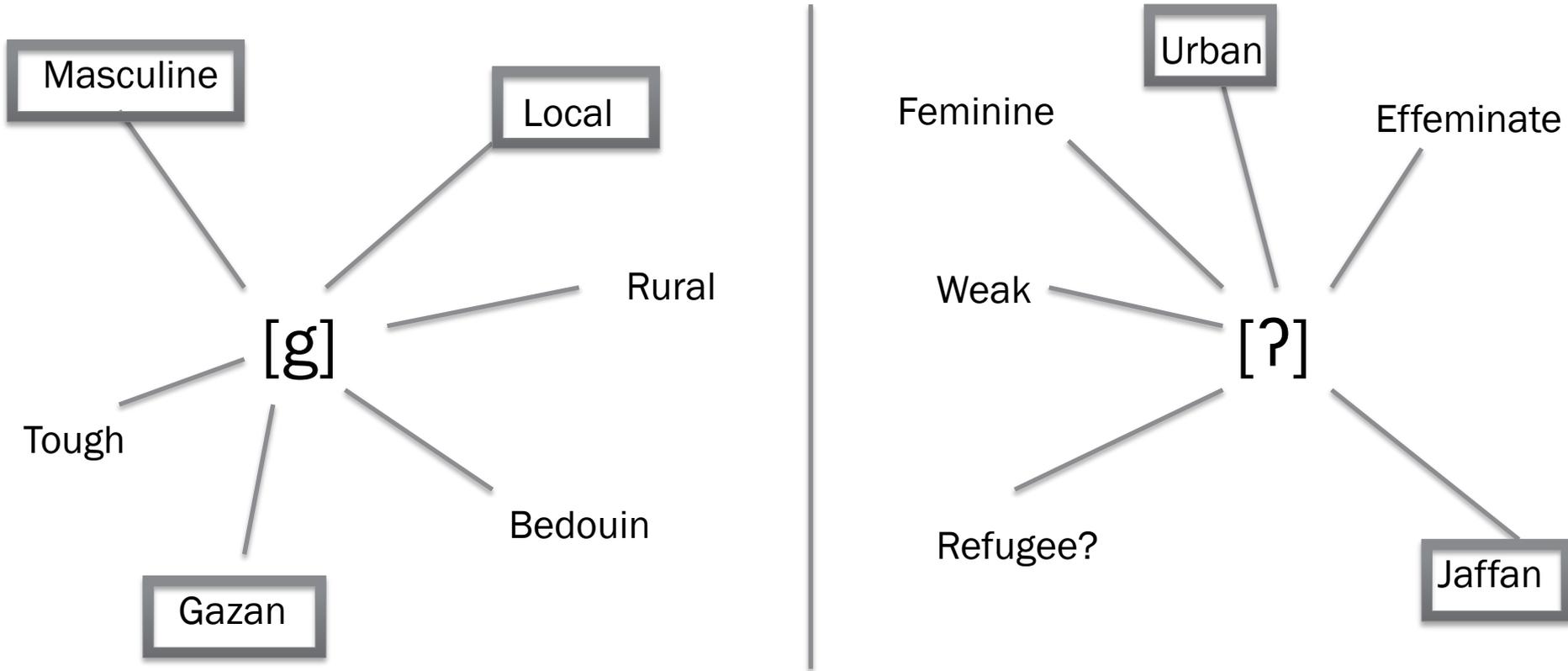Weak

[?]
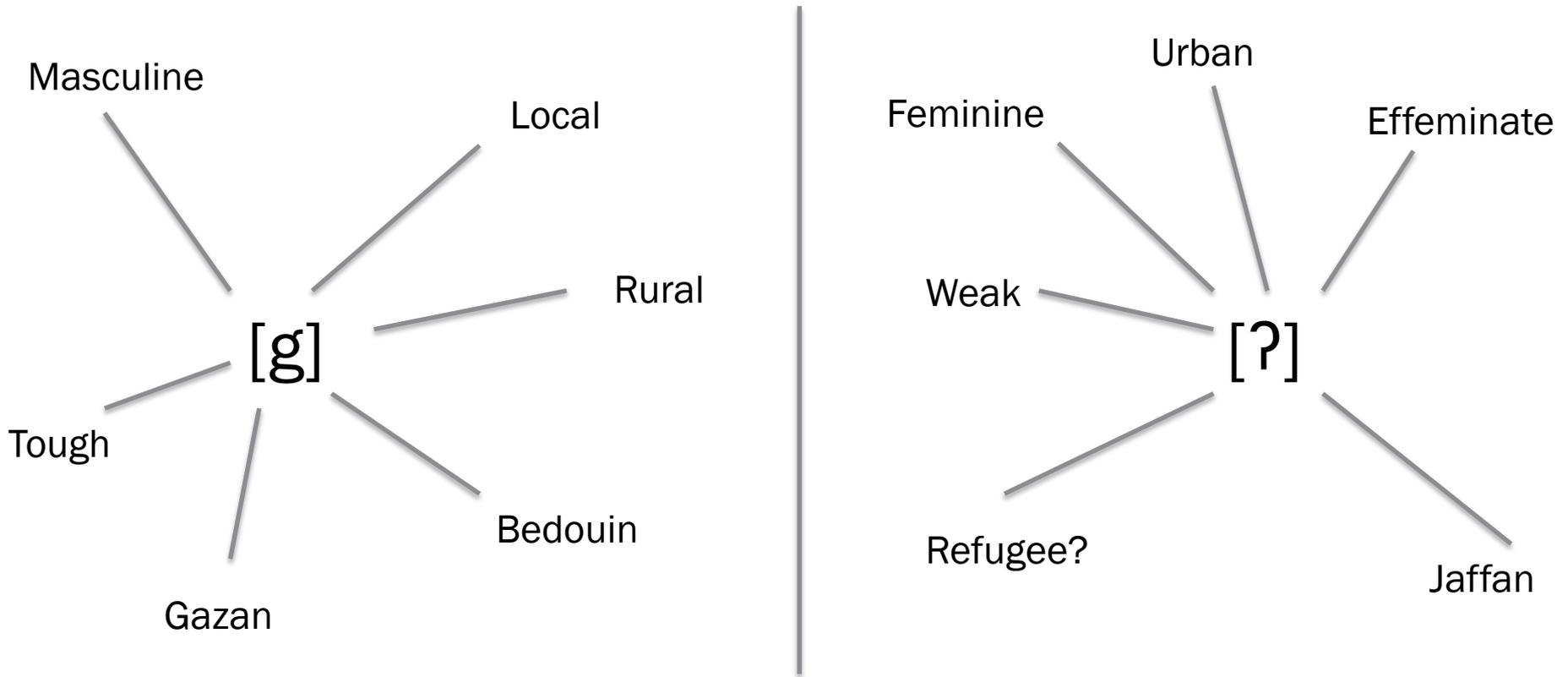
Refugee?

Jaffan

(Q) THROUGH A MORE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LENS

- We saw a clear gender split in the data:
  - Female Jaffa refugees overwhelmingly retaining the [ʔ]
  - Male speakers overwhelmingly appear to have shifted to [g]

- The questions then for me are:
  - How does this variation relate to the way the Jaffa community in Gaza identifies?
  - Or, what is the relationship between linguistic variation and identity formation or maintenance?

- We can draw on these indexical associations to get us closer to an answer

(Q) THROUGH A MORE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LENS

- Analyzing (Q) in the speech of Jaffans in Gaza through the framework of adequation (Bucholtz and Hall 2004: 383)
  - Variation(or linguistic production generally) can take on different meanings at varied levels within the same community

- Ex. Differing linguistic practices across gender lines, which may help to simultaneously locate speakers at both event/interaction based levels, as well as more metapragmatic/metacultural levels (Agha 2007, Eckert 2000, Wortham 2006)
  - Interaction based: daily speech
  - Metacultural: larger conceptualizations of communtiy

INDEXICAL ASSOCIATION(S) OF (Q)

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Local

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Feminine

Urban

Effeminate

Weak

[?]

Refugee?

Jaffan

CONCLUSIONS / LOOKING FORWARD

- Argued that through the practices of Jaffa refugees in Gaza we can begin to see the relationship between linguistic variation and issues related to identity

- Highlight how studies of variation in Arabic can begin to more directly interface with linguistic anthropology and other sociolinguistic work more generally

- If the goal of our analyses is to account for variation, then we have to take into account higher level associations that come with that variation and incorporate that into our analysis
  - For a variable like (Q), one that is very socially salient, simply stopping at the gender split in the data may be leaving out part of the story

- The question now is: what are the indexical association of (Q) in other communities where it is a variable?

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THANKS!

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