The Use of the Second Person Feminine Singular Suffix in Qasimi Dialect

استعمال الضمير المخاطب المؤنث المفرد في اللهجة القصيمية

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ABSTRACT

Affrication is a phonological process that is commonly found in many Arabic dialects, especially in Gulf dialects, including most Saudi dialects. This study investigated how female Qasimi speakers vary in using the affricate [ts] as a realization of /k/, the second-person singular feminine suffix, in their formal and informal styles. There are two different assumptions mentioned in previous studies about the use of this suffix in this dialect, but separately in different styles of speech. Thus, this study collected data in both formal and informal styles by the same speakers. The participants in the current study were 20 women from Al-Qasim. The data were collected through observations, taking notes, and WhatsApp voice notes, and analyzed quantitively using Microsoft Excel (2022). The results showed that female Qasimi speakers used [ts] and [k] differently when speaking formally and informally. The local variant [ts] was used 64.03% of the time when the participants spoke informally, while it was used 35.97% of the time when they spoke formally. At least two exceptions were found: some participants maintained the local variant [ts] in both their formal and informal speech, and some speakers used the supralocal variant [k] 100% of the time.

الملخص

تستخدم الأصوات المركبة (الشديدة الاحتكاكية) في العديد من اللهجات العربية، ومنها اللهجات الخليجية بخاصة. ومن ضمنها لهجات بعض مناطق السعودية. يقصد بالأصوات المركبة فيها، استخدام [تش] و[تس] عند الدلالة على المفردة المؤنثة المخاطبة، بدلا من كاف الخطاب/ك/ في الفصحى. ويتناول البحث ذلك التنوع باستعمال [تس] و[ك] في اللهجة القصيمية؛ وذلك في السياقين الرسمي وغير الرسمي. وقد تعرضت دراسات سابقة لافتراضين مذكورين حول استخدام هذه اللاحقة في اللهجة ذاتها، لكن في سياقات مختلفة. وقد عمدنا في هذه الدراسة إلى جمع البيانات الصوتية لعشرين امرأة من منطقة القصيم، الواقعة وسط السعودية. وقد جمعت من خلال الملاحظة والتسجيلات الصوتية على برنامج WhatsApp. ثم حللت كميا باستخدام برنامج Microsoft Excel 2022. وقد أظهرت النتائج، أن الناطقات باللهجة القصيمية. يستخدمن [تس] و[ك] بصورة مختلفة في الحديث بشكل رسمي عنه في الحديث غير الرسمي: إذ استخدم المتغير غير المستقل [تس] في حديث المشاركات في مجالات غير رسمية بنسبة 64.03%، في حين تم استخدامه في حديثهن في المجالات الرسمية بنسبة 35.97% مع وجود بعض الاستثناءات، إذ حافظت بعض المشاركات على [تس] في خطاباتهن الرسمية وغير الرسمية على حد سواء، بينما استخدم بعضهن الآخر البديل [ك] بنسبة 100%.

1. Introduction

In specific phonological environments /k/ is further fronted and affricated as the alveolar affricate [ts] in Najdi Arabic (Ingham, 1994). Al-Mahmoud (2020) concluded that Najdi Arabic alters /k/ into [ts] under phonologically conditioned contexts. He argued that the affricate [ts], the allophone of the velar /k/, is in free variation with the non-affricated one. One case of affrication is the alternation of /k/ into [ts] when speakers use the second-person singular feminine suffix (2 F.SG.) in Najdi Arabic. In texts in Classical Arabic, this feature is called kaskasah. Moreover, /k/ is also altered into [ʃ] and [tʃ] to indicate the 2 F.SG. in other dialects that are used in the eastern and southern regions of Saudi Arabia; in these regions, it is known as kaʃkaʃah (Al-Azraqi, 2006, 2007). The two words, kaʃkaʃah and kaskasah, refer particularly to the use of /ʃ/ and /s/ as markers of the second-person feminine singular bound pronoun instead of the Standard Arabic /k/ as it occurs in qalamiʃ and qalamis (lit. your pen). Sibawaih (n.d.), ʔibn jaʕiʃ (n.d.), and ʔibn ʒinni (1952) observed that kaʃkaʃah means to replace the second-person feminine singular bound pronoun /k/ with /ʃ/ as in ʔaʕṭaytiʃ or adding /ʃ/ to /k/ as ʔaʕṭaytukiʃ (lit. I gave you). Here, the substitution or addition occurs when a pause ends the word. As for kaskasah, Sibawaih (n.d.) described it as adding /s/ to /k/, as in ʔaʕṭaytikis (lit. I gave you) when there is a pause at the end of the word. Neither Sibawaih nor ʔibn jaʕiʃ mentioned the substitution of /s/ for /k/, but ʔibn ʒinni clarified that kaskasah is similar to kaʃkaʃah, i.e., the /k/ is replaced by /s/ to mark the second-person feminine singular bound pronoun when there is a pause at the end of the word (see Al-Azraqi, 2006, 2007; Al ɣunaym, 1985).

Kaskasah, which is the affrication of /k/ to [ts], is a noticeable feature in the dialect of the Al-Qasim[1] region, which is located in the centre of Saudi Arabia where Najdi Arabic is used. This process may occur in the stem or suffix. However, in terms of the affrication of the suffix /k/ in Najdi Arabic, it is affricated into [-ts], as in mints (lit. from you) (Al-Rojaie, 2013). The affrication of /k/, especially the affrication of the second-person feminine singular suffix, which is the focus of the present study, is widely used among female Qasimi speakers who live in the Al-Qasim region.

The affrication of /k/ can be affected by many social factors, such as age, gender, or educational level (Al-Azraqi, 2006, 2007; Al-Essa, 2009; Al-Rojaie, 2013; Ismail, 2019). Other social factors, such as the style of speech, the context of interaction, and the addressee's style, might also affect the affrication of /k/. Speakers tend to use different styles that depend on whether the interaction is formal or informal. In formal settings, speakers usually prefer to express their respect by using the standard dialect, whereas in informal situations, speakers use an informal style, the vernacular, to express solidarity (Holmes, 2013). In Al-Qasim, female speakers sometimes use the affricate [ts] as a variant of /k/ to indicate the 2 F.SG. in formal and informal speech in different social settings. The focus of this study is to investigate the occurrence of [k] and [ts] in the two styles.

1.1. Styles of Speech

Joos (1967) concluded that people may use different language styles for varying needs and occasions when they speak the same tongue. According to Holmes (2013), a person's choice between the vernacular or standard dialect may depend on the context of the speech, on whom they address, or on the context they are in. Furthermore, Holmes (2013) argued that speakers employ an informal style with people they know well and employ a formal style with people with whom they are less familiar. Thus, speakers' styles may vary depending on whether they are speaking to a child or an adult or to a friend or a stranger. The present study investigated to what extent the style of the speech, whether formal or informal, affects the speaker's use of the affricate [ts] as a variant of /k/ to indicate the 2 F.SG.

In sociolinguistics, stylistic variation in spoken language has been mainly analyzed as an independent variable. The speaker is expected to modify their speech style given the extralinguistic context. This view has become prominent in linguistics and still motivates linguists' methodologies to the extent that many tend to believe that speakers actively select their speech style.

Labov's (1972) famous study of stylistic and social stratification of speech variables was pioneering. He investigated speech styles quantitatively with respect to variables, such as setting, region, social class, age, and social networks, which were dependent on extralinguistic context and linguistic environments (cf. Selting, 1989, p. 171).

1.2. The Al-Qasim Region

The Al-Qasim region consists of Buraidah, Unayzah, and many small towns, including Almethnab, Arras, Al-Bukhairiyah, Baday'a, Uyun Aljawa, Riyadh Al-Khabra, and Nabhaniya. Moreover, it includes many

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Please note that name of the region is sometimes written as 'Al-Qassim'. In this study we used the spelling shown in the official electronic site of the region which is 'Al-Qasim'. 1

small villages, such as Dukhnah, Qusaiba, Thebea, and Aroudhah (Ministry of Interior, 2022).

However, most citizens who live in these small towns have tribal origins and, because the Qasimi dialect only refers to the speech of sedentary people, ḥaḍar, as they are known in Al-Qasim, the present study examines the speech of sedentary people (women in particular) and not the speech of the Bedouin tribes (Ministry of Interior, 2022).

1.3. Aim of the Study

This study does not explore the history of the phonological phenomenon of the affrication of /k/, nor does it explore its syntactic function. Instead, it investigates the use of [ts] and [k] to indicate the 2 F.SG. in both formal and informal styles among female Qasimi speakers. The current study seeks an answer to the following question - what is the variation in the use of the variants [ts] and [k] as the 2 F.SG. in formal and informal styles among Qasimi female speakers?

2. Literature Review

According to Johnstone (1963), /k/ is affricated to [ts] or [tʃ] in some Arabic dialects in the Arabian Peninsula. Moreover, the distribution of the affricate reflex of /k/ across the Arabian Peninsula demonstrated that the reflex [ts] is a variant of the spoken languages of the tribes in Najd and north-central Arabia and that the affrication of kaf appeared to be phonetically conditioned and occurred in front vowel environments. Shriberg and Kwiatkowski (1980) argued that affrication is the process of changing the manner of articulation of a particular sound to an affricate, such as affricating the voiceless velar plosive [k] to the voiceless palate-alveolar affricate [tʃ] (as cited in Alrasheedi, 2015). In the Najdi dialect, the process of /k/ affrication may affect the stem or the suffix. It has a phonological feature when it occurs in the stem, a morphophonemic feature when it occurs in the suffix, and a syntactic function when it is used to distinguish gender in the second-person possessive/object pronoun as in [-its] for feminine and [-ik] for masculine (Al-Rojaie, 2013).

The affricate reflex [ts] has been described and discussed extensively in previous studies that focused on describing its phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic particularities across particular regions and tribes of the Arabian Peninsula (Alrashed, 2018; Alrasheedi, 2015; Holes, 1986; Ingham, 1994). Furthermore, several studies have examined sociolinguistic variations and changes among Arabic dialects in several Arabic regions, including Bahrain (Holes, 1986), Egypt (Haeri, 1991), Saudi Arabia (Al-

Azraqi, 2007), and Al-Qasim (Al-Rojaie, 2013).

In one of the significant studies of the Najdi dialects, Ingham (1994) collected data on Najdi Arabic through observations and recordings. He noted that the Najdi dialect had distinctive features, such as the affrication of voiced velar stops /g/ and /k/ to voiced alveolar affricate [dz] and the voiceless alveolar affricate [ts], that distinguished it from other varieties. In addition, he found that [ts] and [dz] occurred in front vowel environments.

Al-Azraqi (2007) investigated whether education affected the use of [k] among speakers of five cities in Saudi Arabia. Her study mainly examined the change from the old dialectal features of kaʃkaʃah and kaskasah to the dialect-neutral suffix /k/. Her data consisted of 12 hours of recordings of direct communication between her and her informants. Her results showed that Riyadh and Dammam informants adopted the [k] form more often than people from other cities. This difference was attributed to urbanization, modernization, and education.

Al-Essa (2009) examined Najdi speakers who migrated to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; she focused on variation in the affrication of /k/ and /g/ and the correlation between the affricate variants and age, gender, and contact. To elicit data, she interviewed 61 men and women. She argued that Najdi Arabic speakers used /k/ and /g/ as [ts] and [dz], respectively, in front vowel environments. Based on her results, Najdi speakers were more likely to substitute stem [ts] with [k] and stem [dz] with [g]. She also admitted that the de-affrication of [ts] and [dz] among Najdi speakers was attributed to contact with urban speakers in the Hijazi region. Additionally, her data revealed that Najdi speakers used four variants to indicate the feminine gender in the second-person singular suffix: [-ts], [-ik], [-ki], and [-k].

Al-Rojaie (2013) studied the effect of social factors on Qasimi speakers' use of [ts] instead of [k]. The findings indicated a significant correlation between the process of deaffrication of [k] and speakers' ages, genders, and levels of education; young and educated women more frequently used the [k] variant. This change, according to Al-Rojaie, was triggered by socioeconomic changes, given that the newly adopted variant was increasingly associated with urbanity and modernization. Al-Rojaie reported that, in the Najdi dialect, there was affrication in the stem, which occurred in front vowel environments, for example, in atsil (lit. food), and affrication occurred in the second-person feminine suffix as with mints (lit. from you). He considered stem affrication as a phonological feature

and suffix-based affrication as a morphophonological feature. He argued that suffix affrication had a syntactic function that signalled the gender of the speaker - men used [-ik], as in kitabik, and women used [-its], as in kitabits (lit. your book).

Alrasheedi (2015) examined the variation of two phonemes, /k/ and /g/, in Haili Arabic. His findings indicated that the phoneme /k/ has two allophones for: [k] and [ts]. Furthermore, [ts] occurred when preceded or followed by [a] or [i] as in kabd →tsabd (i.e., liver) and bika→ bitsa (i.e., cried). Alrasheedi's study corresponded with previous findings (Ingham, 1994). Additionally, Alrasheedi found that [g] and [dz] were two variants of the phone /g/ and that [dz] usually occurred before or after the high front vowel [i] as in dzidir (i.e., pot). Moreover, his study revealed that affrication contributed to vowel lowering in Haili Arabic as in du:nik→ du:nats (i.e., toward you).

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Alrashed (2018) investigated what triggered the process of affrication in Qasimi Arabic as well as the phonological domain and its activeness. While collecting his data, he used 282 words that contained the sounds /ts/, /dz/, /k/, and /g/ through multiple elicitation methods, including word lists, natural stories, and silent movies. His findings revealed that the alveolar affricate /ts/ occurred in almost all vowel environments given that it occurred before and after [i, e, a, ə, o]; he also provided multiple, contrastive contexts, including several minimal pairs (e.g., jımkın/ jımtsın (lit. maybe), which did not correspond with previous findings (Al-Rojaie, 2013).

Recently, Ismail (2019) investigated the occurrence of the second-person feminine singular suffix [-ki] in the informal speech of young Saudi men and women from Najd, the geographic centre of Saudi Arabia. Her data was collected from peer meetings during mixed-sex situations in natural settings that encouraged the use of the vernacular [-its]. Her data revealed

that participants alternated between both variants; however, they favoured [-ki] over [-its]. Ismail (2019) suggested that this was a phonological change directed by Najdi men.

A few previous studies examined the motivating phonological environments for affrication (Ingham, 1994; Johnstone, 1963), and some studied the phonological blocking environments of affrication processes. However, researchers have explored affrication from different angles and points of view. Al-Azraqi (2007), Al-Essa (2009), Ismail (2019), and Al-Rojaie (2013) all offer sociolinguistic perspectives, but each examined affrication differently. Al-Azraqi (2007), for instance, studied this process in formal settings and focused on the suffix and the effect of education; Al-Essa (2009) examined the affrication of the suffix and stem and focused on gender, age, and contact. Al-Rojaie (2013) examined how age, gender, and education influenced the patterns of variation in Qasimi speakers' use of [ts] for /k/ in informal settings. However, none of these previous studies considered the effect of formal or informal speech style speakers' use of [ts] for /k/ as the second-person feminine singular. Thus, by examining differences in how female Qasimi speakers used [ts] for /k/ as the second-person feminine singular in formal and informal speech styles, this study contributed to the existing literature and knowledge.

3. Methodology
This study followed the descriptive quantitative approach. It was a cross-sectional study where the participants were selected randomly and became acquainted at once. This was apparently the appropriate approach for such a study since the purpose here was to investigate the actual use of [ts] and [k] during formal and informal speech styles. To ensure that there would be no ethical violation, the participants were informed about the study and that they were being observed. In addition, participants whose WhatsApp texts were used were notified as well. The sections below discuss the variables and participants as well as the data collection and analysis procedures.

3.1. Variables
The independent variable of this study was the style of speech, whether it was formal or informal; the dependent variables, on the other hand, were the variants [ts] and [k] that were used as the second-person feminine singular suffix.

3.2. Participants
The data were collected from twenty female Qasimi speakers, who were between 25 and 40 years old.

All participants were educated. They were born and raised in the cities of Buraidah or Uniazah in Al-Qasim. Participants belonged to the sedentary people of the Al-Qasim region. Their parents were all Qasimi speakers. Table 1 below provides some background details about the participants.

Table 1

Some Details about the Participants

Speaker	Age	City	Level of education
S1	32	Buraidah	Master
S2	31	Buraidah	Bachelor
S3	29	Unaizah	Bachelor
S4	27	Unaizah	Bachelor
S5	25	Unaizah	Bachelor
S6	25	Buraidah	Diploma
S7	33	Buraidah	Master
S8	26	Buraidah	Diploma
S9	26	Buraidah	Bachelor
S10	28	Buraidah	Bachelor
S11	32	Buraidah	Diploma
S12	34	Unaizah	Bachelor
S13	33	Buraidah	Bachelor
S14	34	Buraidah	Bachelor
S15	30	Buraidah	Bachelor
S16	29	Buraidah	Bachelor
S17	33	Unaizah	Bachelor
S18	25	Buraidah	Diploma
S19	25	Buraidah	Diploma
S20	40	Buraidah	Master

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The present study investigated the use of [k] and [ts] as the 2 F.SG. suffix in formal and informal styles among twenty women, all of whom were Qasimi speakers. In formal settings, which included workplaces, where speakers usually used formal style, the use of the 2 F.SG. suffix was observed, and notes using observation sheets were taken during the meetings. These sheets were well-planned to ease notetaking without drawing the attention of the participants. It was based on engaged participation since one of the authors was a member of the committees that were holding their meetings. These meetings were held between academics discussing academic issues such as exams, quality standards, and curriculum development. In informal settings, voice notes recorded in WhatsApp were used as a source of data collection. These voice notes were between the participants talking about different topics such as the graduation ceremony and the final schedule. Part of the data in an informal setting was collected through phone calls with some participants. These calls were not recorded according to their wishes, thus, taking notes using the observation sheets was helpful during these spontaneous discussions. Since the participants were aware that their talks were being considered for research, the first few minutes of conversations were not considered as participants might alter the formality level of their speech. Nonetheless, they soon felt less conscious about the research and began talking freely. During the phone calls, participants discussed topics related to education, health, social media news, and travel.

Data was analyzed by using the latest version of Microsoft Excel 2022 to determine the occurrence of the variants [ts] and [k] as 2 F.SG suffixes. The percentage of each variant's occurrence was calculated considering the setting, whether it was formal or informal.

5. Results

To answer the question of the study about the variation in the use of the variants [ts] and [k] as the 2 F.SG. suffix in formal and informal styles among Qasimi female speakers, twenty participants were observed. The observation took place in formal and informal settings alongside people they felt relaxed with, such as relatives and friends, as well as those with whom they did not feel comfortable (e.g., strangers).

The results are shown in Table 2, which presents the use of the linguistic variables, [ts] and [k], and the percentage at which they occurred in the formal and informal speech of each speaker.

Table 2

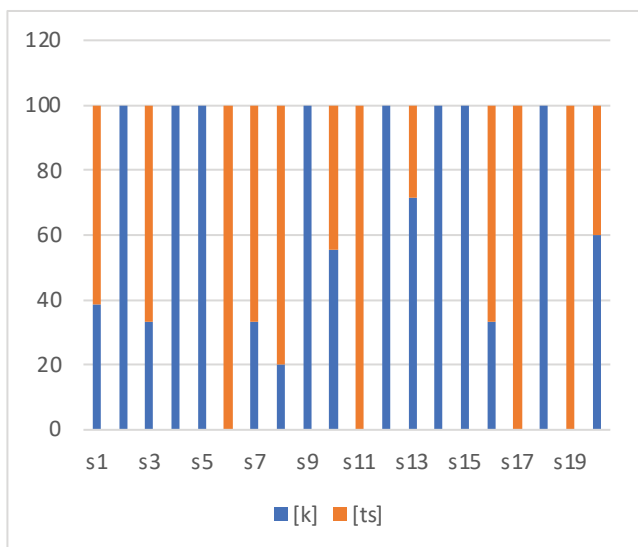*The Use of the [k] and [ts] Among Qasimi Female Speakers in Formal and Informal Settings*

Speaker	Informal style		Formal style	
	[k] %	[ts] %	[k] %	[ts]%
S1	18.2%	81.8%	38.5%	61.5%
S2	33.3%	66.6%	100%	0
S3	12.5%	87.5%	33.3%	66.7%
S4	100%	0	100%	0
S5	100%	0	100%	0
S6	0	100%	0	100%
S7	0	100%	33.3%	66.7%
S8	11.1%	88.9%	20%	80%
S9	66.7%	33.3%	100%	0

S10	62.5%	37.5%	55.6%	44.4%
S11	0	100%	0	100%
S12	100%	0	100%	0
S13	60%	40%	71.4%	28.6%
S14	100%	0	100%	0
S15	62.5%	37.5%	100%	0
S16	0	100%	33.3%	66.7%
S17	0	100%	0	100%
S18	100%	0	100%	0
S19	0	100%	0	100%
S20	16.7%	83.3%	60%	40%
Total	35.97%	64.03%	58.8%	41.2%

The use of [ts] and [k] variants in formal and informal styles is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 below. Figure 3, in addition, presents and compares the overall rates in which the variants [ts] and [k] were used.

Figure 1

The Use of [ts] and [k] (2 F.SG.) in the Formal Style of Each Speaker

Data in Figure 1 illustrates that when speaking in a formal style, eight of the twenty participants alternated between both variants of the 2F.SG. suffix. However, they did so at different rates - five speakers used [ts] more often than they used [k], and three used [k] more often. Furthermore, eight participants used [k] 100% of the time, while only five participants used [ts] 100% of the time during their observed conversations.

Figure 2

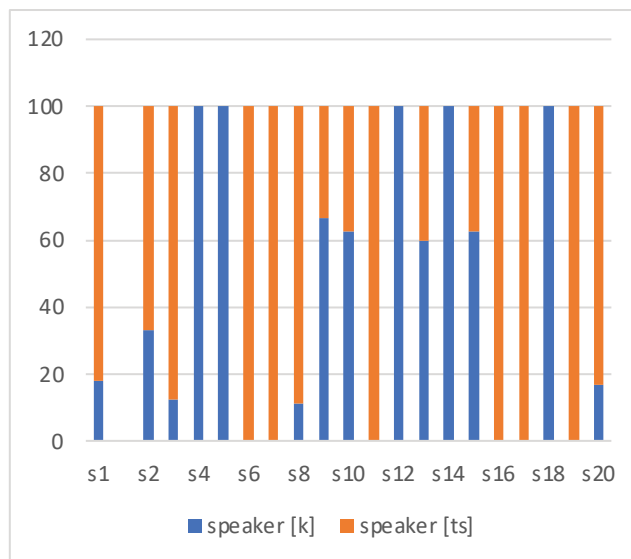The Use of [ts] and [k] (2 F.SG.) in the Informal Style of Each Speaker

Figure 2 shows that, when speaking informally, nine of the twenty speakers alternated between the standard variant [k] and the colloquial variant [ts]. However, five used the variant [ts] more frequently than they used [k], which they used less than 35% of the time; four participants used [k] more than they used [ts]. Speakers who used [k] more often did so approximately 60% of the time. Of the remaining speakers, six used the local variant [ts] 100% of the time, while five used [k] 100% of the time.

The data showed that the variant [ts] and [k] second-person feminine suffix occurred in both the formal and informal utterances of female Qasimi speakers. Figure 3 shows the exact percentage of each variant's occurrences in formal and informal styles. The most used variant was the local variant [ts], which was used 64.03% of the time when participants spoke informally. The [k] variant, which was the least used, occurred 35.97% of the time in the informal style. Moreover, [ts] was used in the formal style almost 41.2% of the time. However, this percentage was less than the average use of the variant in the informal style. Figure 3 also shows that participants used the standard variant [k] 58.8% of the time when speaking formally, but only used the variant 35.97% of the time when speaking informally.
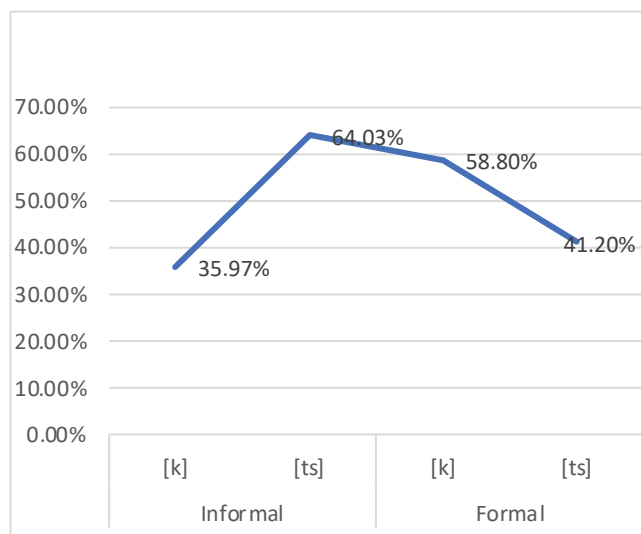
6. Discussion

After having analyzed the data, differences and similarities in how participants used [ts] and [k] emerged. Participants used both variants [ts] and [k] in both styles but did so at different rates. This finding corresponded with previous research (Al-Azraqi,

2007). However, the results were not similar to those of Al-Rojaie (2013) because he found that all Qasimi informants utilized the variant [ts] 100% of the time in spontaneous conversations although his sample included youth participants, similar to the current study's participants. Figure 3 shows this variation in both formal and informal styles.

Figure 3

The Average Use of [k] and [ts] in Female Qasimi Speakers in Different Styles

The fact that some participants used the variant [ts] informally and the variant [k] formally was important because it indirectly suggested that speakers felt uncomfortable uttering [ts] in formal situations or with strangers. Thus, they might have thought that the use of [k] was related to modernization and urbanization in specific social settings, including communicating with people in formal situations. In an attempt to explain why the colloquial form [ts] was used in participants' formal speech, the current study found that some participants wished to appear as locals, especially when they were interacting with other Qasimi people, so as to ensure solidarity and social bonding. Additionally, some participants who frequently used the standard [k] tried to preserve the nonstandard variant [ts] when they interacted with older people, particularly those who used [ts] in their speech; they tended to show respect and politeness by accommodating the elders' speech preferences. Thus, these results support Holmes's (2013) findings that speaker style is affected by their interlocutors' style of speech.

However, data revealed exceptions among the participants - some participants systematically used [ts] in all instances, regardless of to whom they spoke or where their conversations occurred. They used [ts]

in formal settings, such as workplaces with customers and co-workers, and in informal situations with cousins in family meetings. Thus, in these participants, the production of this local variant was not related to their speech style but instead to their localness or group identity and to preserve the linguistic norms of these environments. Lev-Ari and Peperkamp (2014) concluded that speakers revealed their group affiliations by either constructing their identities through their linguistic productions or expressing a feature in a certain way. The participants of the current study sought to confirm their localness by using [ts] in formal and informal styles.

On the other hand, some participants consistently used the standard form [k] during informal family gatherings and during formal meetings with strangers. Perhaps, these participants cared about prestige and the preservation of their self-image and, therefore, avoided using the local variant. These findings were not consistent with some of the results in Al-Azraqi (2007), which indicated that none of the participants from Buraidah used the variant [k] 100% of the time. Nonetheless, in the present study, eight participants used [k] 100% of the time when speaking informally.

7. Conclusion

The present study examined the speech of twenty female Qasimi speakers across formal and informal settings to determine the use of [ts] and [k] as the 2F.SG. suffix. Some differences and similarities among participants' use of the affricate [ts] rather than [k] emerged. These results provided further evidence for the empirical findings that Qasimi speakers in Buraidah use both [ts] and [k] as the 2F.SG. suffix (Al-Azraqi, 2007). In addition, the results suggested that other factors related to style might significantly influence the speech of female Qasimi speakers. Further studies should elucidate these other factors. Most previous studies have examined social factors, such as gender and age, on the production of [ts]; however, none have investigated the use of its variant in the different speech styles of Qasimi women, which was the purpose of the current study.

There are several limitations of this research. First, the duration of the observations for each participant was not identical. Another issue was the small sample size, given that only twenty women participated. This study could be used as a pilot study for further studies in the examined dialect. However, the results sufficiently proved the variation in the use of both [ts] and [k] among Qasimi female speakers. Nevertheless, a more

in-depth analysis would be worthwhile.

In addition, future studies could focus on how speakers in different areas in Al-Qasim used the variant [ts]. Moreover, it would be interesting to examine how the addressee's age and social status affected Qasimi speakers' use of [ts]. It is also possible that the participants' use of [ts] might be related to other social and cultural factors, which should also be further examined.

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