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# Pidginization And Linguistic Features Of Saudi Pidgin Arabic

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Abstract

Due to the economic opportunities in the oil-rich Gulf States, many people, chiefly from Asia, have moved to the region with the intention of improving their lives. According to Elbanna and Fatima (2023), this foreign workforce constitutes two-thirds of the population in the Gulf States (p. 292). Consequently, these people have been instrumental in creating Gulf Pidgin Arabic (GPA), especially Saudi Pidgin Arabic (SPA). In the last decade, GPA has been discussed from a linguistic perspective, as in Hobrom (1996), Almoaily (2013), and Aljutaily (2018). This pidgin exhibits interesting properties and differs from its lexifier Gulf Arabic (GA) in significant ways. Although early studies have presented a set of proposed properties of GPA that reveals multiple mismatches with its superstrate language (GA), almost none of them have noted the cross-linguistic typological features of GPA as spoken in different Gulf States in a single body of research. The current study explores our own first-hand examples and compares them to several studies conducted in various Gulf countries. Many examples fit nicely into the category of simplicity, while others might be a product of transfer; however, we were able to trace some signs of complexity and multifunctionality.

Keywords: Pidginization, Saudi Pidgin Arabic, Adult, Simplification, Contact language, substrate language.

## 1. Introduction

The main goal of this paper is to investigate the linguistic features of Saudi Pidgin Arabic (SPA). Pidginization in general has been a topic of interest in numerous linguistic studies. Research on the phenomenon of language contact has sought to document the interactions between speakers of various languages. The historical background and linguistic effects of this contact have been discussed by several scholars (e.g., Aljutaily, 2018, 2021; Spears & Winford, 1997; Thomason, 1997, 2008; Thomason & Kaufman, 1992; Winford, 2003). A number of linguists have discussed pidgins and creoles and have reflected on the similarities between them and developing interlanguage systems (Al-Jasser, 2012; Lefebvre, 2004; Thomason, 2008). Although some agree about such interactions, their defining mechanisms remain a matter of debate. Thomason (2008) has made it clear that specialists in pidgins and creoles have agreed on nearly nothing and continue to debate "the most fundamental matters" (p. 243). Our concern is not to delve deeply into these varying ideas but to briefly elaborate on the phenomenon of pidginization in Saudi Arabic, which has resulted in Saudi Pidgin Arabic (henceforth, SPA).

Language contact arises when a group of speakers of different languages come into contact with one another, resulting in "a language that arises as a direct result of language contact and that comprises linguistic material which cannot be traced back primarily to a single source language" (Thomason, 1997, p. 3). In this case, pidginization is a kind of language contact that refers to a process that occurs when nonnative speakers of a certain language find themselves obliged to initiate spoken discourse with speakers of other languages. The initial stage for pidginization appears to be motivated by the underlying need to "break the ice" and communicate with others, which is achieved by carrying over varying

linguistic features that are linked in some way to the speaker's substrate language (normally, the mother tongue). However, according to Yule (2010), pidgins are language varieties "that developed for some practical purpose, such as trading, among groups of people who had a lot of contact, but who did not know each other's languages" and, accordingly, "have no native speakers" (p. 247). However, Yule's definition fails to explain the complexities of various contact situations. For example, a given group of people would fail to learn the other's language if their contact is only fleeting and occasional, and many communicative situations involve more than two languages.

Thomason (2008) has referred to pidgins as "mixed languages" that evolve as modes of communication between distinct first language (L1) speakers, allowing them to establish common communicative mediums for necessary, everyday needs (pp. 243–244). She added that such a medium is not spoken as an L1, and its structure tends to be limited. Furthermore, she divided pidgins into "newer" and "older" varieties, noting that in order to learn how to speak these varieties, pidgin speakers must learn their lexicons and rules of sentence formation. A creole is an expansion of a pidgin "that has acquired native speakers, although some linguists prefer to label this as 'expanded pidgins'" (Winford, 2003, as cited in Næss, 2008, p. 19). Thomason (2008), however, viewed creoles as the language of a new generation that has depended entirely on the accumulation of many linguistic features from more than one language. In this view, a pidgin is seen as the result of "imperfect learning" of the superstrate language (Thomason, 2008, p. 244). A creole is a language that has been created by its young speakers.

This crucial difference in manner of acquisition is the underlying rationale behind Muysken and Smith's (1994) differentiation between pidgins and creoles, in which pidgins, unlike creoles, do not have native speakers. This distinction, however, tells us nothing about the systems themselves. Miller (2002) stated that the main two

distinctions are the simplification/reduction processes and their use as second languages, adding that "many linguists consider that one has to know the history of a particular language to identify it as a pidgin or a creole" (p. 7). Historical situations resulting in pidgin/creole emergence include the slave camps or slave plantations of the Caribbean islands, as well as the trade bases and the European colonial military. Within such contexts, speakers are expected to have limited contact with the speakers of the superstrate language but continuous contact with other speakers of different L1s. Thus, they create a common system for communication, resulting in the emergence of pidgins.

### 1.1 Pidginization in Saudi Arabia

Geographically, Saudi Arabia is distinguished by its strategic location among Gulf countries (i.e., Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab of Emirates and Oman), from which it controls several important seaports that play a significant role in the trade development of the countries of Asia, the African continent and the Arabian Peninsula (Aljutaily, 2018). Economically, Saudi Arabia witnessed a rapid change in its economy and demography over a short period, particularly after the discovery of oil in 1938 (Aljutaily, 2018; Al-Azraqi, 2020). Consequently, Saudi's economy became strong enough to sustain massive development and unprecedented prosperity through the development of large construction projects. As Aljutaily (2018) explained, such mammoth projects have required the Saudi government to hire foreign laborers, since "the majority of the national labor force sought to work in administrative professions and office work in the governmental sector, refusing to work in the services sector or any low-income jobs like construction, agriculture, cleaning, wholesale, restaurants and fishing" (p. 23). As a result, many immigrant workers with different linguistic backgrounds (Tagalog, Urdu, Bengali, Nepali, Indonesian, Malayalam, and many others) came and work in Saudi Arabia. The coalescence of the abovementioned factors, including Saudi Arabia's strong economy and strategic location, together with the flow of numerous immigrants from

different linguistic backgrounds and social distance has promoted the emergence of a new pidgin: Saudi Pidgin Arabic (SPA). In the subsequent sections, we discuss the main functional and linguistic characteristics of this new variety as taken from recorded real-world data. The current paper provides a systematic analysis of the data to address the following research questions:

1. What are the linguistic features of SPA?
2. Do these features relate to matters of simplification, transfer or complexification?

The paper is organized as follows. Section (2) describes the general linguistic features of pidgins and reviews the most relevant studies that have investigated Arabic pidgins. Section (3) lays out the database collection. Then, Section (4) analyzes and discusses the linguistic features of SPA. Section (5) summarizes the main points of the current study and suggests avenues for future work.

## 2. Literature Review

Before discussing and analyzing the Arabic pidgins and SPA, we first provide an overview of the general features of pidgins worldwide. This section consists of two subsections: 2.1 demonstrates the general linguistic characteristics of pidgins, while 2.2 reviews previous studies of Arabic pidgins.

### 2.1 General linguistic characteristics of pidgins

Pidgins worldwide share several linguistic characteristics (i.e., at the levels of semantics, syntax and morphology) (Al-Azraqi, 2020). In general, pidgins display a tendency toward simplification, an innate human capacity in which reduced linguistic forms of the superstrate languages are demonstrated at different linguistic levels. For instance, phonologically, universals contribute to the shaping of pidgin phonology (Holm, 1989); pidgins have a reduced sound system compared to their source languages, which results from the reduction of marked sounds and their substitution with the closest counterparts in the speaker's L1. As a concrete example taken from GPA, its speakers tend to substitute the voiceless interdental

fricative /θ/ for the universal sound /t/, as in [θa:ni] 'second' becoming [ta:ni], while substituting the voiced interdental fricative from /ð/ to /d/, as in [haða] 'this' becoming [hada] (Næss, 2008). In the same vein, pidgins tend to have a reduced vowel inventory in comparison with their lexifier, comprising mainly the most universal vowels, including /i/, /a/, and /u/ (Klein, 2006). At the syntactic level, pidgins employ the universal word order SVO with simplified structure and do not use complicated sentences (e.g., embedded clauses). In addition, most pidgins use one pattern for negation, in which the negative particle is positioned in front of the verbal phrase (Holm, 2000). Morphologically, pidgin speakers prefer simple morphology without inflections that represent any grammatical function (e.g., avoiding inflections marking tense or agreement). In terms of lexicon, pidgins use a small vocabulary with a preference for semantic transparency and employ words with multiple meanings and functions ( Al-Azraqi, 2020; Sebba, 1997).

2.2 Previous studies of Arabic pidgin

Arabic pidgins are less common than English-based pidgins (Aljutaily, 2018). Versteegh (1984) described the process and history of Arabic pidginization, which was followed by creolization and then decreolization. According to Versteegh, the Arabic pidgins were initially found only in Africa due to the isolation of Arab communities when these pidgin languages first appeared. The most well-established Arabic pidgin languages in Africa were Chad Arabic, Juba Arabic and Nubi Arabic (see Versteegh 1984; Kihm 2011). Recently, the Arabic Gulf region has witnessed the emergence of non-African Arabic lexified pidgins as workplace pidgins, and Gulf Pidgin Arabic (GPA) is currently used in the Gulf area as a result of continuous interactions between the immigrants and indigenous Arabic speakers (Aljutaily, 2018). Avram (2014) noted that the term "GPA" is an umbrella term that also encompasses the other Gulf States' pidgin varieties; therefore, the first letter in the acronym could be replaced by the first letter of any state

to refer to its particular variety (e.g., SPA for Saudi pidgin, KPA for Kuwaiti pidgin, or QPA for Qatari pidgin).

It has been reported by Bakir (2010) that migrant workers have flooded into the Gulf region, particularly the Emirates, in two waves. The first wave hails from India and some of its bordering countries, such as Bangladesh, while the second wave is primarily from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Almoaily (2013), among others, have asserted that GPA is not likely to be a native language of any work groups in the Gulf since the majority of its speakers are adults. It has been noted that most speakers of GPA send their children to international schools or to schools where their native country's curriculum (e.g., English, Hindi, Urdu) is taught. In this case, the children would have fewer chances to find peers who speak Gulf Arabic (GA), and they would be disinclined to use it in everyday interactions outside of school settings. Such situations lack the conditions for GPA to become a creole. Another important reason for the decline of GPA at home is the short work permits given to the parents. Since parents and families do not expect to stay in the Gulf States for long, parents have even less motivation to transfer knowledge and fluency of GPA to their children. In line with Almoaily's (2013) observation, we assume that the length of stay will not matter if there are no interactions in GPA. It is worth noting that businesses and service jobs such as maids and drivers are the main settings for GPA (Alrojaie, 2023), which is used by GPA and GA speakers alike. We will now review some of the related studies concerning GPA, beginning with Smart (1990) and continuing in chronological order with later contributions by other linguists.

Smart (1990) initiated the main scholarly discussion of GPA. He depended primarily on a written corpus consisting of 34 jocular cartoon speech bubbles presented weekly in two national newspapers in what Smart called "excerpts in pure pidgin" from 1985 to 1987. The other data came from his personal observations, although he did not comment extensively

on how he performed these observations. The main themes of his research were phonology, morphology, syntax, and non-GA words. Similar to other non-Arabic-based pidgins, his results revealed that reduction and simplification of the linguistic structures were the most significant features of GPA. He also found that the particular fi functions as a copula. As the oldest study featured in this literature review, Smart's research played an important role in the establishment of the formal study of GPA. Subsequent researchers have expanded the focus to include other aspects of GPA.

Næss (2008) framed her research around an essential question, revealed in her thesis's title "Gulf pidgin Arabic: Individual strategies or structured variety", seeking to determine whether GPA is the result of individual production strategies or reflects motivated structure. She descriptively analyzed the phonological differences between GPA and GA and commented on some morphological, syntactic, and lexical behaviors obtained from her data, which were collected in an Omani territory bordering the Emirates from 16 participants from eight different substrate languages (Urdu, Sinhala, Bengali, Malayalam, Javanese, Tamil, Tagalog, and Chavacano). In contrast to Smart, whose data was derived mainly from cartoons and personal observations, Næss used a more direct, personal method of data collection and analyzed the same linguistic themes of Smart's paper in greater detail. Among her essential results, she argued that the morpheme fi in GPA is taken from the lexifier GA and functions as (a) a copula verb, (b) an expletive subject, or (c) a tense-aspect-mood (TAM). In addition, simplification was observed when speakers used various morphological patterns on the same consonant root to derive nouns and verbs with similar meanings. Other researchers have opted to focus on specific themes or aspects of GPA, such as Bakir (2010), who focused on the verbal formation of GPA.

Bakir (2010) carried out a study of 10 informants (50% male, 50% female) in Doha, Qatar. This research offered insight into the verbal formation of GPA and discussed its

syntax and morphology in terms of tense and aspect, modality, mood, fī "the fii particle," negation and compound verbs. Bakir stated that for most of the GA verbs that morphologically require an inflection, the affixation process is simply lost, yet a lexical insertion is adapted to make the sentence understandable by the other interlocutor. For instance, morphosyntactically, Bakir found that GPA used Arabic verbs in their unmarked form, devoid of any inflections, to specify grammatical features representing gender, person or aspect or tense but using only one form to differentiate among them. Similar reduction was observed in object clitics of the verb system, as occurred in GA. Beyond examining certain themes or features, other researchers have focused on specific populations that had not yet been the subject of concentrated study. Two years after Bakir's work on GPA speakers in Qatar, a similar study was conducted by Albakrawi (2012).

Albakrawi (2012) focused on recording and interviewing Asian workers in Saudi Arabia. In this study, the researcher approached speakers of Saudi Pidgin Arabic (SPA) at different locations to elicit data. An effort was made to stratify the sample by sex, social status, job title, and substrate languages. However, Albakrawi did not reveal or acknowledge the exact identity and distribution of his subjects, excepting the evidence reflecting that his subjects were workers from Asian countries. His results were compatible with pidgin universals, as SPA displayed seven simplified grammatical categories with alterations such as the lack of inflections, tenses expressed adverbially, omissions of definite articles, masculine cardinals, a preference for SVO word order, and ma and la as common negation particles.

Almoaily (2013) quantitatively investigated the production of GPA by considering the contributions of both the superstrate language (GA) and the substrate languages of speakers (i.e. Bengali, Malayalam, Urdu, and Punjabi). His study was based mainly on the participants' length of stay in Saudi Arabia and divided participants into two groups, short and long stay, with

the “short stay” group being characterized as having resided in the region for 5 years or less, and the “long stay” group as being resident for more than 10 years. The productions of the aforementioned ethnicities were examined to determine whether the morphosyntactic features of their substrate languages had undergone modified or fossilized adjustments when communicating in GPA. Almoaily (2013) included a comparison of GPA and its sub-/superstratum languages. His findings revealed that neither L1 nor the length of stay in Saudi Arabia appeared to significantly influence the participants’ selections of the examined morphosyntactic features. Some of the participants produced the definiteness particle al, even though it does not exist in their substrate languages.

Salem (2013) conducted a study of Arabic pidgin as spoken by housemaids in Kuwait focused on phonological transformations and features of lexical items. He collected samples by recording an oral interview with forty Asian workers who had been in contact with Asian Pidgin Arabic (APA) for between 6–18 years. Twenty had less exposure because they had been in the country for 6 years, and the other twenty were divided equally into (a) a group of 10 individuals with 8 years of exposure to GA and (b) a group of 10 individuals with 18 years of exposure. Salem asserted that the L1 of the speakers exerted an impact on interspeaker variation in syntax. He also found that APA speakers used just one demonstrative pronoun (haza ‘this’), no plural markers, and no dual noun forms. Instead, they used pro-pose cardinal number to indicate plurality and duality, while they used the personal pronoun ʔana to represent first and second singular. In the verbal system, they used copula fi and one negation particle occurring before the verb.

In 2014, Alghamdi collected data from 10 migrant workers of five different linguistic backgrounds. The subjects were Asians living in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (seven males, three females) with residency lengths ranging from 1.5 to 21 years. Alghamdi analyzed the nominal

inflectional morphology, pronominal system, sentence structure, tense, aspect, modality, negation and lexicon. He also discussed the sociolinguistic environment of the GPA speakers that appeared as a result of social distance. He found fewer inflected words and a strong preference for independent words with the predominant SVO word order. Imperative and imperfective verbs were the most commonly used verbs in the data. Expression of time was shown through lexical adverbs. The preferred negation marker was mafi. He noted the multifunctionality of the verb ʃel in GPA since it can mean 'to withdraw, to take, to get paid, to carry, to lift and to steal'. Finally, he confirmed the stability of pidgin languages, as the speakers continued to use GPA in their communication.

Potsdam and Alanazi (2014) concentrated solely on the behavior of fī as it appears in GPA. According to their analysis, fī can act like a copula, a verb, a possessive marker, and as a TAM marker. Later, Al-Zubeiry (2015) conducted an experiment with 30 informants from six various substrate languages (Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Tagalog, Indonesian, and Malayalam) to analyze their use of SPA. In this article, Al-Zubeiry explored word order and forms of verbal nominal phrases. His results indicated inconsistency in the usage of word order (OVS, SOV, and OSV). One interesting case was the tendency in GPA to begin a sentence with a predicate even when its counterpart sentence in GA sentence was headed by a demonstrative pronoun. He attributed the fluctuation in word structure as the result of transfer from L1. He also observed the usage of the verbal nouns kalām 'speech', ʃuɣul 'work', and akel 'food' as verbs.

Al-Azraqi (2020) investigated three syntactical aspects—definiteness, predication and pronouns—in the pidgin used by some Asian speakers in Abha city (located in the southern region of Saudi Arabia). She described the multifunctionality of fi as a preposition, an existential pronoun, and predicate marker. In addition, she found that the demonstrative pronoun hada 'this' had been refunctionalized to mark definiteness.

As evidenced by these studies, there is consensus regarding some grammatical features of pidgins despite the inconsistent usage of morphosyntactic features demonstrated in many cases, which might be due to different grammatical development. Our study here seeks to describe and analyze SPA as spoken in the Qassim region. Because Arabian Peninsula pidgins have not been extensively studied compared to English-based pidgins, we contextualize SPA among other Arabic pidgins examined in different countries from different linguistic backgrounds and confirm the universals of pidgin grammar. Accordingly, we focus on examining the main linguistic features of SPA and linking their development (if applicable) to transfer, simplification, or complexification. The next section describes the data collection employed in the current study.

**3. Data Collection**

In this qualitative study, 20 male participants from varying spoken linguistic backgrounds (Malayalam, Urdu, Bengali, Tagalog) were recruited and selected randomly (aged 20–61 years old). The data was collected by conducting and recording semistructured face-to-face interviews at participants' place of employment or home. Each interview began by collecting their demographic information (age, L1, job, length of stay [in years] in Saudi Arabia). This was followed by asking about general topics related to their daily routines, culture and traditions, experiences, and social practices. These interviews generated a total of 10 hours of recordings, which were transcribed for easier and more accurate analysis and description of the issues in question.

**4. Analysis and Discussion of SPA**

This paper examined the linguistic features of SPA and investigated whether these features are a matter of simplification, transfer, or complexification. The considerable variability in pidgins is imposed by the constraints on nonnative speakers who have come into contact with GA speakers in different periods across many decades, hindering their ability to produce a fully accurate utterance. In what follows, we examine data

that illustrate the role of simplification in the grammar and a few cases of possible transfer. We also incorporate some features motivated by ease of production, such as multifunctionality and complexification.

## 4.1 Simplification

### 4.1.1 No inflection

Gulf Arabic is richly inflected with multiple grammatical features (e.g., agreement, gender, person) that are missing from most SPA utterances. Consider example (1) below:

(1)

**a.** ana **rūh** bakala dʒ**i:b** akil (SPA)
1SG IMP-go grocery IMP-get food
'I go to the grocery store to get some food'

**b.** ʔa**rūħ** ʔal-baqalah ʔaʃtiri ʔal-ʔakil (GA)
1SG-go DEF-grocery buy the food
'I go to the grocery store to buy the food'

As shown in (1a), the two bolded verbs rūh 'go' and dʒi:b 'get' are the imperative forms with no clitics. However, some verbs in the data are shown in their imperfective forms. Therefore, as noted by Bakir (2010), the origin of the two most frequently used verbal forms in SPA, the imperative and imperfect, remains uncertain because of the similarity between them in the lexifier, Gulf Arabic (GA). Alghamdi (2014) has sought to mediate this discussion by claiming that these verbs are a creation of the imperative in some of the data; however, this function has been attested for the imperfective third singular masculine in other data. In contrast with the observations of some previous studies (Bakir, 2010; Næss, 2008) that there are inflected imperatives, particularly when the verb refers to feminine, the pidgin speakers in Bakir's (2010) data generalized this suffixation for masculine, as shown below in (2) and (3).

(2)

**a.** ahmad ʔaʃʃ**i** kalās, rūh**i** fōg (GPA)
Ahmed dine.3SG done go.3SG upstairs
'Once Ahmed has finished eating his dinner, he goes upstairs' (Bakir, 2010, p. 212)

**b.** ʔiða xallaṣ aħmad al**ʔaʃʃ**a, yerūħ fōg (GA)
when done Ahmed DEF-dining go.3SG up
'when Ahmed has finished his dinner, he goes upstairs'

(3)

**a.** ana ukt**i** bint**i** sawwi arūs la (GPA)
1SG sister-1SG daughter-1SG LV marriage NEG
'[but] my sister's daughter marrying [him], that's not possible' (Næss, 2008, p. 54)

**b.** bint ixti teʕres ʕalēh, la-yumken!! (GA)
daughter sister-1SG marry-3SG PREP-3SG NEG-possible
'for my niece, to marry him is impossible'

Nevertheless, these orders in the imperative are believed by GA speakers to be highly inflected, especially when uttered by elders, who in most cases retain the GA register when communicating in GPA and tend not to simplify the discourse. For instance, the forms ʔaʃʃ**i** 'he eats dinner' and rūh**i** 'he goes' are inflected verbs in GPA, and the GPA speaker in Bakir's example has generalized the suffixation mechanism of the feminine to be used for the masculine, which is completely imperfect. The proper mode of affixation is to insert prefixes that show the imperfective form, as in the GA form **ye**rūħ. Moreover, if we compare the sentences in GPA and GA in (3), we notice an exaggeration of affixation application in bint**i** 'my daughter' and ukt**i** 'my sister'. This exaggeration is a poor imitation of the way GA speakers speak since the combinations of "sister" and "daughter" match the English way of saying the "daughter of my sister," in which we see the possessive marker is associated only with "sister."

As for the imperative forms **rūh** and dʒ**i:b** in (1a), they are not inflected because of the lexical pronoun ʔana. In these cases, the SPA speakers resorted to the strategy of positing the first singular pronoun to pave the way for

the two verbs to be presented with no affixational variations. In contrast, the case of (2a) indicates the opposite, since the suffix **i** is not processed as in its GA counterexample. First, consider the verb of GA (2b) **ʔaʃʃ** 'dine' which, instead of being introduced as a verb, has been incorporated in its nominal form due to its syntactic position in the sentence. Second, the verb **rūh** in GA (1b) has become affixed by a prefix to give its imperfective form in the dialect, reflecting that the GPA speakers mistakenly generalized the insertion of morphemes. In the case of the two nominals in (3a), ukt**i** and bint**i**, the production by the data provider was good because the word final inflection is the target, as opposed to the one in (2a), ʔaʃʃ**i** and rūh**i**. This speaker's strategy in (3a) would be improved if s/he elided the pronoun and left out the suffix on bint**i** but kept the one on ukt**i** as less problematic and more economical.

4.1.2 Reduced pronouns

The minimization of pronoun usage among SPA speakers is due to their limited language access and the difficulty of switching back and forth between pronouns. Saudi Arabic (SA) has a wide variety of pronouns, including ant 'you-masculine-singular', anti 'you-feminine-singular', antum 'you-masculine-plural', antin 'you-feminine-plural', hu 'he', hi 'she', hin 'they-feminine', hum 'they-masculine', ana 'I', and ħinna 'we'. The current data demonstrated the presence of specific pronouns in SPA speech, with SPA speakers tending to employ singular personal pronouns but neglecting the other, more complicated GA pronouns. The personal pronouns most common in SPA were the first person ana 'I', the second person anta/inta 'you', and the third person hū 'he'. On the one hand, the masculine pronouns were predominant, particularly in the case of the second and third persons. On the other hand, the first person is neutral, as it is used by both sexes, which is identical to GA usage.

(4)

**a. ana** sawwi tartiib (SPA)
1SG. make arrangement
'I have made an arrangement'

**b.** rattabt (GA)
1SG.arrange
'I have arranged'

(5)

**a. inta** fī ħarami (SPA)
2SG.M COP thief
'you are a thief'

**b.** ħarami (GA)
1SG.M.thief
'you are a thief'

(6)

**a. hū** omur ħada sittɑh sɑnɑh (SPA)
3SG.M age DEM. six year
'He is six years old'

**b.** kebīr, ʕumr**uh** sitt ɪsnīn (GA)
old-3SG.M age-3SG.M six years
'not a baby, he is six years old'

Similar to findings attested in Smart (1990) and Albakrawi (2012), in the current data given in (4–6), we note that the singular pronouns are those most commonly used by the SPA speakers in our data. Overall, the data for this paper support the conclusions of several previous studies (Albakrawi, 2012; Alghamdi, 2014; Smart, 1990) regarding the minimality of pronouns in GPA compared to the larger number of pronouns in GA. This observation also follows Bakir's (2010) assumption that "all pronouns are independent and never morphologically bound to the verb" (p. 210). Bakir's assertion is clearly demonstrated by contrasting the SPA pronouns (4) and (6) with those in GA. None of the GA data are required to have independent pronouns (free morphemes). Rather, they are dependent on certain content words (prosodic words) and have thus been instantiated in the verb or the adjective in the sentence. In addition, ħarami 'thief' in (5b) is different than in (4b)

and (6b) because it has a null subject. In contrast, for ħarami and similar adjectives when uttered in isolation, the null subject is highly dependent on the context within the flow of the conversation.

However, we propose that the sentence in (4a) can be viewed as a null subject in the case where the pronoun ana is dropped to surface as sawwi tartiib, which implies that some speakers of SPA may already know that the pronoun is unnecessary because the verb sawwi 'make' signals the end of the action and indicates that the tartiib 'arrangement' has finished. It could also be that the pronoun is implemented in these sentences to mark the sentence as assertive. In this sense, if one of the common pronouns mentioned earlier is used, it should mean either 'I', 'you', or 'he' and not something else. One issue ought to be raised regarding the pronoun in (6a), hū 'he', where the sentence is a part of a larger conversation, and the SPA speaker is trying to keep up with the main subject of the sentence. Additionally, lack of vocabulary knowledge from the superstrate language has forced the speaker to add a demonstrative marker hādɑ to compensate for the lack of words. Nevertheless, it appears ambiguous whether the demonstrative marker refers to the pronoun or indicates an approximate estimate with the meaning 'about'.

Another usage for pronouns in SPA is that the independent subject pronoun is extended to function as an object pronoun, as illustrated below in (7).

(7)

**a.** anta sawwi itisal **ana.** (SPA)
You 1SG. make calling me
'You call me'

**b.** ʔitisˁl-bi (GA)
Call 1SG-me
'call me'

In this example, the independent subject pronoun is extended to act as an object pronoun (7a) ana 'I' and has kept its original representation with no modifications. Still, what is needed here to match the GA demonstration

of the object pronoun is to be agglutinated to the verb synthetically, as in (7b) ʔitisᶜl-**bi** 'call me'. This process has also been attested in other Arabic pidgins in which the pidgin speakers extended the usage of the subject pronoun as an object pronoun:

māmā **y**abi **ana** (GPA) (Bakir, 2010, p. 211)
madam want 1SG
'madam wants me'

Notably, the subject in Bakir's data (2010) is feminine, so what would be needed here to give the GA example is to have a **t**-morpheme **t**abīn rather than the masculine prefix ***y**abīn. We assume that GPA's reliance on using the subject pronoun for the object is that the inflectional morphology of the verb abi to obtain the feminine, not the masculine, involves obligatory affixation at the word's two edges: **t**---**n**. However, this is not the case with the masculine, which requires affixation only at the left edge: y---Ø. We assume that this simpler nature would motivate the adoption of the masculine verbal form over the feminine one. Further motivation might arise from the relative frequencies of the gender markers, in which the chosen form has the upper hand.

Alternatively, the same independent subject used above for object pronouns has been attested in Næss's (2008) work, as demonstrated in (8a) ana 'I' and in the current data (9a) anta 'you'.

(8)

**a.** bilād **māl** enti bilād **māl** ana (GPA)
country POSS 2SG.F country POSS 1SG
'your country, my country' (Næss, 2008, p. 53)

**b.** bilād**ik** wa bilād**i** (GA)
country-2SG PREP country-1SG
'your country and my country'

(9)

**a.** hada jawwal **hagg** zabun mafi **hagg** anta (SPA)
DEM mobile POSS customer NEG POSS 2SG
'this is the customer's mobile, it is not yours'

**b.** hāða jawaal alzubun, mihib jawwal**ik** (GA)
DEM mobile customer-1SG NEG mobile-2SG
'this is my father's car, it is not your car'

Unlike in (7a), where the same stem of the subject ana is used identically for the object, here, the possessive adjectives have inspired analytical forms that precede the pronoun. These bolded words māl/hagg, in (8a) and (9a), have made it easy for GPA interlocutors to use these simple words across the board. We should mention here that the two possessives mal and hagg are employed for either animate or inanimate possession. With inanimate possession, a GPA speaker could say agrād māl/hagg mahal 'the shop's goods' < ʔaɣrāḍ ʔalmaħal. Nevertheless, there are no anaphoric pronouns referring to inanimates, at least in the current data; hence, GPA speakers instead use proper nouns.

4.1.3 No duality and reduced prepositions

Saudi Arabic contains numerous prepositions (Husni & Zaher, 2020), which have persisted in current Arabic varieties. As illustrated thus far, speakers of SPA have difficulty navigating these prepositions. The use of dual nouns also posed a challenge for these speakers. The current data displayed that the dual number category is challenging for SPA speakers to incorporate into their routine speech. In particular, SPA speakers produced duality quite economically simply by using the number 2 followed by the word marrah 'once', as in (10).

(10)

**a.** ana rūh axu Jeddah **tanēn marrah** (SPA)
1SG went brother Jeddah two time
'I visited my brother in Jeddah twice'

**b.** zert ʔax-oi fi. Jeddah **maretēn** (GA)
visited-1SG brother-my PREP Jeddah times-dual
'I visited my brother in Jeddah twice'

The SPA speakers in this example retained the word for the number of times as-is without any inflections. To count any number or measure any amount, they placed

a number before the multiplicative adverb marrah ‘once’. Unlike in English, which has three multiplicative sequential numbers (i.e., once, twice, thrice), in GA, there are only two: marrah ‘once’ and maretēn ‘twice’. The current analysis is consistent with what has been reported in previous studies of Arabic pidgins (e.g., Alghamdi, 2014; Næss, 2008; Salem, 2013), in which the dual isnēn sana ‘two years’ **<** sentēn ‘two years’ and itnen patʃa ‘two kids’ **<** ṭeflēn ‘two kids’ (Salem, 2013). Importantly, the mismatch between the forms employed by pidgin speakers and GA speakers in Salem’s data indicates a kind of transfer, a point that will be discussed later.

Aside from the loss of duality, the preposition for place has been optionally applied by GA in (10b) but lost in SPA. It is unclear whether the users of (10a) were aware of this optionality, although we doubt that ignoring the preposition was driven by knowledge of its lower importance, particularly in this sentence. In contrast, the sentence in (11a) has preserved the preposition and safeguarded its implementation. The reason for the difference seems to be that the sentences in (11) are archaic with no preposition, but this is not the case in (10), giving some indication that some SPA speakers demonstrate some level of consciousness concerning what to keep and what to leave out.

(11)

**a.** ana jedʒi **min** beiyt (SPA)
1SG come from PREP house
‘I come from my house’

**b.** ʔaxrudʒ *(min) ʔal-beiyt (GA)
1SG-come PREP DEF-house
‘I come from the house’

4.1.4 A single word for negation

Most pidgins employ one common pattern for negation (i.e., the preverbal negative particle) regardless of the various forms present in the superstrate languages (Aljutaily, 2018; Holm, 2000). The current analysis is

consistent with the common negation pattern, as attested below in SPA data.

(12)

**a.** ana **ma**fi. maluum Arabi (SPA)
1SG NEG.BE know Arabic
'I don't know Arabic'

**b.** **ma**taʕarif ʕarabi (GA)
NEG.know-2SG.M Arabic
'You don't know Arabic'

(13)

**a.** ʔaʃān **mā** ʃurta waddi (GPA)
so.that NEG police take
'so that the police don't take…' (Bakir, 2010, p. 220)

**b.** ʕalaʃān **mā**-wada la aʃ-ʃerṭeh (GA)
so.that NEG-1SG-taken PREP DEF-police
'so that the police don't take…'

(14)

**a.** ana **ma**ku ʃai (GPA)
1SG NEG-be thing
'I have nothing' (Salem, 2013, p. 109)

**b.** **ma**ʕendɪ ʃai (GA)
NEG-have-1SG anything
'I have nothing'

The predominant particle for negation in SPA is mā, which is found in all of our SPA data as well as one of the examples listed in (12a). The negative independent particle was also attested in Bakir's (2010) data, as in (13a); however, it was not inflected because the subsequent word is a noun, which serves as a barrier that blocks the negative from being prefixed to the noun ʃurta 'police' that follows. In (12a) and (14a), the negated form has been attached to the verbs fī and ku 'be' as a form of clitic. Although inflection is still applicable in Arabic pidgins, these inflected forms appear to be motivated by the extensive usage of these kinds of negated forms. Therefore, the SPA speakers in these examples may have acquired this formation as one chunk, **mā**fī and **mā**ku.

Additionally, it does not seem that the inflected negative forms have anything to do with speakers' mastery of the morphology of the superstrate language because, in the same sentences, parts of the three examples (12a–14a) also demonstrate an avoidance of inflections, which is different from their counterparts in GA.

It is helpful here to return to the negation particles stated above in (3a), sawwi arūs **la** 'marrying [him], that's not possible', translated literally as "make a wife no," a case that presents simplicity by articulating the whole sentence and then positing a negative marker analytically at the end (the right edge of the utterance.) Another negation difference between SPA and GA is that GA has preferred the independent negative word mihib (for feminine) and muhub (for masculine) instead of māfi in some constructions, which we believe would be difficult for GPA speakers to produce and use in their speech even if they perceived these differences.

4.1.5 Demonstratives in SPA

The demonstrative pronouns in GA have undergone a reduction from their original form in SA. With some phonological-phonetic change, GA has inherited eight demonstratives: hāða 'this. SG.M. approximate', hāði 'this.SG.F.approximate', ðāk 'this.SG.M.distant', ðīk 'this.SG.F.distant', ðōla 'this.PL.M.approximate', ðōli 'this.PL.F.approximate', ðōlāk 'this.PL.M.distant', and ðōlīk 'this.SG.F.distant'. Based on the current data, we observe that the demonstrative hād**a** 'this' for the singular masculine is the most commonly used demonstrative and is neutralized for both feminine and masculine usage among SPA speakers. Consider the following data.

(15)

**a. hada** nafar mafi kuwais (SPA)
This-DEM.M person NEG-be good
'The person is not good'

**b. hāða** ʔal-ʃaxəsˁ sayəʔ (GA)
This-DEM.M DEF-person bad

‘This person is bad’

(16)

**a. hada** **syyarah kuwais** (SPA)
This-DEM car good
‘This car is good’

**b. hāði** syyarah dʒaidah (GA)
This-DEM.F car good
‘This is a good car’

(17)

**a.** ʔisma **hādi** kāsēt (GPA)
hear DEM cassette
‘Listen to this cassette!’ (Bakir, 2010, p. 214)

**b.** ʔismaʕ **ha** alkāsēt (GA)
hear-2SG DEM DEF-cassette
‘Listen to this cassette!’

(18)

**a.** bādēn ana sīr yistokol **hāda** dākel kuwēt isnēn sana (GPA)
then 1SG go work DEM in Kuwait two year
‘then I went to do that work, in Kuwait, for two years’ (Næss, 2008, p. 35)

**b.** baʕdēn iʃtaɣalt **ha** aʃʃaɣleh ba akkwēt elmudat sentēn (GA)
then 1SG-work DEM work PREP DEF-Kuwait period dual-year
‘Later on, she worked this task in Kuwait for two years’

As shown in the SPA data (15–16), the speakers employed one demonstrative form (hada) for both the masculine noun nafar ‘person’ and feminine noun syyarah ‘car’. Such usage is consistent with Al-Azraqi (2020) and Næss (2008) in that this demonstrative form has been neutralized and refunctionalized to serve as a definite article, as in (15a) and (16a). Previous studies (e.g., Bakir, 2010; Næss, 2008) have demonstrated that the demonstrative ha ‘this’ in (17b) and (18b), which has come to represent both genders in GA, was originally in MSA hāðā for the masculine and hāðihi for the feminine. Consequently, the first syllable has been retained in some modern varieties of GA as well as in some less common varieties. We should stress here that not all speakers of GA have lost the original form. Along with ha, the two demonstratives hāða and hāði are still actively

used in GA, which is likely why the Arabic pidgin speakers in (17a) and (18a) have chosen these common forms (i.e., hada, hadi).

At this point, we may consider how a considerable number of GA speakers can use ha when the final production in Arabic pidgins is hād**a** and hād**i**. We may assume that speakers of GPA use the easier, popular output as employed in their circles, thereby reinforcing the popularity of hād**a** and hād**i**; however, this would cause a significant decline of the GA ha. This, however, is not the case because GA speakers always prefer to use the short form ha with other GA speakers but not with pidgin speakers. One more testament to the wide usage of hād**a** and hād**i** is found among GA speakers themselves. As native speakers of GA, we always say hāða and hāði when we converse in GPA. We sometimes extend the usage of hāða and hāði to refer to any object/s, with no consideration of number. Therefore, we believe that GA speakers have implicitly contributed to the omission of other demonstrative pronouns in Arabic pidgin usage.

4.1.6 Use of temporal adverbs to indicate temporality

In GA, tense is linked to the verb morphologically, creating a dilemma for SPA speakers when deciphering the tense of the sentence from affixes. The current data displayed that tense clitics have been replaced in SPA by temporal adverbs. For instance, one example in the data was the usage of verb **y**akul 'he eats', which in the context "ana yakul elaadʒ amis" has no referent that shows its tense position, although it misleadingly carries the imperfective prefix y-akul 'he eats'. The only clue in the sentence that establishes the time of the action is the temporal adverb amis 'yesterday'. In contrast, the GA form is ʔakal ʔal-ʕilaj ʔams 'he ate the medicine yesterday'. This sentence is understood to be taking place in the past because the clitic ʔa in **ʔa**kal 'he ate' appears as a prefix, which clarifies the tense. In GA, we only need the adverb of time to convey a message to the listener that the time of action did not occur earlier today but rather yesterday.

(19)

**a.** huwa **bukra** fi jedʒi (SPA)
3SG.M tomorrow be come.PRES
'He will come tomorrow'

**b.** **bj**edʒi **bukra** (GA)
2SG.M.come PRES tomorrow
'He will come tomorrow'

(20)

**a. bukra** hattēti māy gassāla, badēn sābūn tiyāb (GPA)
tomorrow put.2SG.F water washing-machine then soap clothes
'tomorrow, I'll put water in the washing machine, then soap, then clothes' (Bakir, 2010, p. 209)

**b.** bukra **aba**ħeṭ mā ba al-ɣassāleh, baʕdēn ṣābūn θiyāb (GA)
tomorrow Future-put.1SG. water PREP DEF-washing-machine then soap clothes
'tomorrow, I'll put water in the washing machine, then clothes soap'

The verb bjedʒi in (19b) is proof that GA is heavily dependent on the morphological process in which words are inflected for tense, number, and person. In the SPA example in (19a), however, it is not at all clear when the action is happening except as suggested by the temporal adverb bukra 'tomorrow'. In this case, the sentence can be produced at the same level for any day, and what is needed for the tense is to replace bukra 'tomorrow' with alħīn 'now' or amis 'yesterday'. However, in the case of novice GPA speakers who have not yet acquired enough temporal adverbs, the sentence will stay floating with no actual timing, potentially making the entire conversation difficult for the listener to understand. For this reason, to transmit their intended message accurately, it is crucial for users of SPA to know the above three adverbs. This issue of referring to temporal adverbs to indicate the action time has also been attested in Bakir (2010), given as (20) in the above data.

4.1 Transfer

4.2.1 Lexical items

Transfer refers to the process of carrying over specific linguistic characteristics from the L1 to the target language during acquisition (Keys, 2001). The amount of input that speakers receive in L2 and their prior linguistic knowledge interact to produce the transfer process.

Transference of linguistic features can occur at all linguistic levels (i.e., syntax, phonology, morphology, lexicon). Unfortunately, due to insufficient first-hand data in our study and the widely varying linguistic backgrounds of informants in other studies, it is difficult to judge transfer in the current data. Generally speaking, however, the lexical items in the available data have been drawn mostly from the superstrate language (the lexifier), which is GA in all but a few cases. We divide such transfer into internal and external types. In internal transfer, some words are used more commonly in one Gulf region than another, such as the possessives māl and hagg as illustrated above in (8) and (9). In Oman, the Emirates, and Kuwait, mal is regularly used, whereas hagg is the predominant word in Saudi Arabia. As indicated by the negation word māku in (14), GPA has also been used in Kuwait, since this type of negation is a register for Kuwaitis, who are believed to have borrowed it from the Iraqi dialect.

(21)

**a.** ana fe itnen **patʃa** (GPA)
1SG have two children
'I have two children' (Salem, 2013, p. 108)

**b.** ʕendɪ ṭefleyn (GA)
have-1SG dual-children
'I have two children'

(22)

**a.** rāh wēn ana?**ambasī**, sapāra (PM)[1]
went where 1SG embassy embassy
'and where did I go? [Well], to the embassy' (Bizri, 2014, p. 395)

**b.** reħt wēn? (li) as-safāreh (LA)
went-1SG where PREP DEF-embassy
'where did I go? to the embassy'

External transfer, by contrast, comprises two types. It may occur from the substrate language or from the L2 (when considering GPA as the L3). The current data showed that the words sidaa 'go straight' (in the context of ana beit yeji sidaa 'to reach my house, go straight') and patʃa 'children' had been transferred from the substrate (Hindi and Urdu, respectively) and were frequently used

by both pidgin and GA speakers. Salem (2013) also found the word patʃa 'children', given in (21) (p. 108). The substrate language is found in (21a), where patʃa 'child' had been transferred from the speaker's L1, Hindi. The other example in (22a) indicates a transfer from the speaker's L2. According to the data, the word ambasī 'embassy' was included in the discourse even though the speakers knew its equivalent in Arabic, sapāra < safārah. One analysis of this usage is that the speaker wanted to translate it so that the listener would know exactly where she had gone. Another explanation is that the speaker mistakenly code-switched to English. As soon as the speaker realized this error, s/he switched back to Arabic.

4.2.2 Word order

Similar to the results of Alghamdi (2014), the current data showed a preference in SPA for the universal word order SVO. More than 62% of structures showed SVO order, although a few cases showed a different word order (VSO), which might represent a transfer from their L1s. Previous studies of Arabic pidgins have demonstrated other word orders, which we assume is because these studies examined pidgin speakers from different linguistic backgrounds than in the current study. For instance, Alghamdi (2014) examined Bengali, Indonesian, Sinhala, and Urdu speakers and found the word order frequencies provided in Table 1 (p. 122).

**Table 1.** Commonly used word order in GPA

| Sentence Structure | Frequency |
|---|---|
| **SVO** | 87 (69%) |
| **SOV** | 23 (18%) |
| **Phrases** | 15 (12%) |
| **Total** | 125 (100%) |

In contrast, Al-Zubeiry (2015) examined speakers speaking Urdu, Tagalog, Malayalam, and Indonesian and found four kinds of word order forms in GPA. He provided the examples in (23) to illustrate these variations in the usage of word order.

(23)

**a.** akel sawi hurma fi bēt (OVS)
food make-1SG woman PREP home
'the woman makes food at home'

**b.** ana kubez akul (SOV)
1SG bread eat
'I eat bread'

**c.** zabun ana kalem (OSV)
customer 1SG speak to
'I speak to the customer'

**d.** yiʃtiri sayyarah ana (VOS) (Almoaily, 2013, p. 172)
3SG-buy car 1SG
'I bought a car'

As we have just observed, the word order of Arabic pidgins speakers reflects mixed systems. Therefore, our finding that SVO was the predominant word order is consistent with previous studies. Although the highest percentage of speakers in our data showed the SVO word order, the variability in word order usage suggests the influence of the speakers' substrate languages on the sentence structure of Arabic pidgins, as suggested by Almoaily (2013), who asserted that "flexibility in GPA word order seems to be a function of substratal effects" (p. 172).

### 4.2 Multifunctionality

Based on the current data, we found that the demonstrative hada 'this' could function as a definite article or a demonstrative in SPA speech, as seen in (15) and (16) above. In addition, the current data displayed the multifunctionality of the particle fī, which functions as a preposition in (23a), as an expletive in (12a), as a copula in (5a), or as the verb "to be" in (19a). This multifunctionality is attested in multiple studies (e.g., Al-Azraqi, 2020; Bakir, 2010; Næss, 2008; Potsdam & Alanazi, 2014; Smart, 1990) that have commented on the multiple usages of fī in GPA; these varieties are reflected

in Table 2. In contrast, Potsdam and Alanazi (2014) claimed that fī can function as a preposition and a copula verb but disagreed with earlier studies that extended its meaning beyond these two.

**Table 2. Summary of the functions of fi in other studies**

| Function | Reference |
|---|---|
| Preposition | Al-Azraqi (2020), Bakir (2010), Potsdam & Alanazi (2014) |
| Expletive subject/predicate | Bakir (2010), Næss (2008) |
| TAM marker | Næss (2008) |
| Copula | Bakir (2010), Næss (2008), Potsdam & Alanazi (2014), Smart (1990) |
| Possessive main verb 'have' | Bakir (2010), Smart (1990) |
| Existential marker | Al-Azraqi (2020) |

However, in some cases, the current data showed that SPA speakers considered the noun as a verb to compensate for the shortage of vocabulary and to avoid the complicated morphology of GA. Likewise, adjectives can be used instead of nouns. Lastly, the verb sawwi 'make/do' is frequently observed in the discourse of SPA speakers since it overcomes the problem of insufficient verbs in their vocabulary. Therefore, sawwi can precede both nouns and adjectives.

### 4.3 A note on complexification in other studies

It is important before concluding this study to comment on some adopted complexity by GPA speakers. The example in (24a), si:r taḥt 'came down', is a phrasal verb that has been introduced in some GPA-speaking regions (Oman and the Emirates), as opposed to the easy GA verb in (24b), ɪnzalat 'dropped', which is spoken in other states. Although GA may pose a difficulty for some users of GPA, speakers of GA have inspired the use of not one but two items. As a result, the data observed in this example may be considered as reflecting a specific regional variety of GPA and not the norm among other GPA speakers. The exposure of the speaker to the language may have influenced this production insofar as picking up words quickly may enable a GPA speaker to

produce advanced utterances in the language. Another possible explanation might be due to the GPA speaker's contact with GA speakers for several years.

(24)

**a.** asʿa:r **si:r taḥt** (GPA)
prices came down
'prices came down' (Smart, 1990, p.104)

**b.** **ɪnzalat** alasʕa:r (GA)
dropped DEF-prices
'prices have dropped'

Accordingly, the case of (25) is related to the issue of pronouns mentioned in Section 4.1.2. The pronoun is not needed in the GA examples of (10b), zert ʔax-oi 'I visited my brother', because of the pro drop process (since the pronoun is embedded in the verb), and therefore, the pronominal is synthetically attached to the verb. However, in (25) we do not have the same straightforward strategy as in (10) because we need the subject to figure out the main doer of that particular action. Close observation of the sentence in (25a) reveals that the most critical element in the phrase is the adjective xarban 'crazy'. In GA, speakers have two options. They can either state the adjective in isolation or postulate a pronoun to give the sentence a sense of exaggeration. However, fī is not needed because it is not a part of the natural syntax of GA, as represented in (25b).

(25)

**a.** huwa fī xarban (SPA)
3SG COP crazy
'you are crazy'

**b.** xarbaan (GA)
3SG.crazy
'He is crazy'

To sum up this section, we mentioned several categories of simplification and commented on two aspects of transfer. We have also discussed the multifunctionality of the particle fī. In our brief discussion of

complexification, we included two examples of complexity: phrasality and independent pronouns.

## 7. Conclusions

This paper discussed the typological constructions of GPA. Through analyzing our own data and cross-referencing with other earlier studies, we concluded that Arabic pidgins have several interesting linguistic features. The grammatical differences between SPA/GPA and their lexifier, GA, represent a number of mismatches that speak to the hypothesis that GPA is a "simplified" variety. Most of the examples of GPA simplification involve morphosyntactic structure. GPA has no inflection, but there are some cases where some usages are inflected, albeit simply. Additionally, our analysis demonstrated that GPA speakers prefer independent pronouns and use singular forms to express both singularity and plurality. SPA speakers tend to avoid inflecting the verb, and for them, object pronouns compensate for the lack of morphological competence. Furthermore, the dual number of the target Arabic language has disappeared completely, and prepositions are (very) minimal. Correspondingly, simplicity in GPA favors mā for negation and is rarely inflected. As in the case of pronouns, the demonstratives adopted in GPA are those for approximate masculine/feminine singular persons hada/hadi. As indicated by the data, when specifying time, GPA speakers tend to use only a few common temporal adverbs.

Moreover, our data support transfer by showing the influence of substrate languages on GPA, with vocabularies coming from the L1 or L2. Furthermore, the superstrate variety of GA has pushed pidgin speakers to establish less-common expressions within particular states. At the syntactic level, word order presented six alternative orderings, but the dominant one remains SVO, with a few cases of VSO or SOV. In addition to word order, the data showed two cases of multifunctionality. Unlike its usage in GA, fī in GPA has been documented in the early GPA literature as being a particle corresponding

to five different semantic interpretations. Another case of multiple usage is that the noun in several examples was extended to act like a verb. We managed to find two instances of complexity: (a) the use of a phrasal verb instead of one verb and (b) the use of a three-word construction at a stage when one or two are sufficient. Finally, the overall data reflected no cases of complementizers or quantifiers.

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**Notes:**

Note 1. (PM) refers to the workers' pidgin Arabic in Lebanon that is based on Lebanese Arabic (LA). I have included the example here since the data was collected from Asians who have previously worked in the Gulf region.