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Faculty of Arts and Humanities

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A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia

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by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

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A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and
Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia

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This thesis examines language attitudes and linguistic behaviour among Jizani women living in Najdi-dominant contexts in Saudi Arabia. Situated within Arabic sociolinguistics, the study examines how speakers evaluate, interpret, and enact Jizani Arabic and Najdi Arabic in everyday interaction. It addresses a significant gap in existing research by integrating attitudinal, ideological, and behavioural dimensions within a single sociolinguistic framework. To date, few studies in Arabic sociolinguistics have examined how evaluative orientations, language ideologies, and real-time linguistic practices intersect within contexts of sustained intra-national dialect contact.

Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study combines matched-guise evaluations, semi-structured interviews, and naturalistic conversational data. The matched-guise test captures implicit evaluations of Jizani Arabic and Najdi Arabic along dimensions of status and solidarity, while interviews explore speakers' metalinguistic reflections, experiences, and ideological interpretations of dialect use. Naturalistic conversational data enable an analysis of patterns and frequencies of Jizani and Najdi feature use, alongside an examination of the interactional and social factors that shape variant choice. This interactional perspective captures how linguistic choices emerge moment by moment in response to interlocutors, topics, and social positioning.

The findings reveal a clear prestige hierarchy in which Najdi Arabic is associated with education and institutional authority, while Jizani Arabic is linked to warmth, intimacy, and regional belonging, but also to lower social status. Crucially, the study demonstrates that dialect behaviour cannot be explained as a linear shift towards a prestigious variety; rather, it is shaped by interactional context, topic, family socialisation, and broader ideological pressures. These

findings illuminate how regional hierarchies and sociopolitical change shape everyday communication practices in contemporary Saudi society.

By foregrounding the voices and experiences of Jizani women, this thesis advances research on dialect contact, language attitudes, and linguistic inequality in Arabic-speaking societies. It shows how prestige, stigma, and identity are dynamically negotiated through everyday interaction, offering a socially embedded account of variation in a context of regional hierarchy and social change.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Samah Mushabbab Alsufyani

Title of thesis: A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Parts of this work have been published:

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Signature: Date:.....

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Phonetic Transcription

Arabic transcription in this thesis follows the IPA system, which is also used in Arabic dialectology (the Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics). Below is the list of symbols used.

IPA	Arabic symbol	
ʔ	أ	' glottal stop hamza
b	ب	voiced bilabial stop bā'
t	ت	voiceless dento-alveolar stop tā'
θ	ث	voiceless interdental fricative ṭā'
dʒ	ج	voiced palato-alveolar affricate jīm
ħ	ح	voiceless pharyngeal fricative ḥā'
x	خ	voiceless velar fricative xā'
d	د	voiced dento-alveolar stop dāl
ð	ذ	voiced interdental fricative ḍāl
r	ر	voiced alveolar trill rā'
z	ز	voiced alveolar fricative zāy
s	س	voiceless alveolar fricative sīn
ʃ	ش	voiceless alveo-palatal fricative šīn
s ^ʕ	ص	voiceless velarized alveolar fricative ṣād
d ^ʕ	ض	voiced velarized dento-alveolar stop ḍād
t ^ʕ	ط	voiceless velarized dento-alveolar stop ṭā'
ð ^ʕ	ظ	voiced velarized interdental fricative ḍā'
ʕ	ع	voiced pharyngeal fricative ʕayn
ɣ	غ	voiced uvular fricative ġayn
f	ف	voiceless labio-dental fricative fā'
q	ق	voiceless uvular stop qāf

Phonetic Transcription

k	ك	voiceless velar stop kāf
l	ل	voiced dental lateral lām
m	م	voiced bilabial nasal mīm
n	ن	voiced alveolar nasal nūn
h	ه	h h voiceless glottal fricative hā'
w	و	voiced labiovelar glide wāw
j	ي	voiced palatal glide yā'

Vowels

a	(=)	فتحة
a:	ا	مد بالألف
i	(=)	كسرة
i:	ي	مد بالياء
u	(=)	ضمة
u:	و	مد بالواو

Definitions and Abbreviations

AAVE.....	African American Vernacular English
CA	Classical Arabic
CAT.....	Communication Accommodation Theory
FD.....	Faifi dialect
FLP	Family language policy
GLMM	Generalised linear mixed model
GPA	Gulf Pidgin Arabic
JA.....	Jizani Arabic
JLHS	Jizani linguistic heritage speakers
MGT.....	Matched-Guise Test
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
NA	Najdi Arabic
JMS.....	Jizani Migrant Speakers
NOS.....	Najdi-Origin Speakers
PSAU	Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University
QA	Colloquial Arabic
SA.....	Standard Arabic
SAT.....	Speech accommodation theory
SIT	Social identity theory
VGT.....	Verbal-Guise Test

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Research on Arabic has long privileged the written, standardised form of the language, positioning Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as the primary object of linguistic inquiry while relegating spoken varieties to the margins. As Al-Wer and Horesh (2019, p. 2) observe, attitudes towards the study of spoken Arabic varieties, including regional dialects and accents, ‘had for a long time been negative’ across much of the Arab world. This orientation has shaped not only scholarly agendas but also public and institutional discourses, contributing to a persistent hierarchy in which spoken practices are treated as informal and linguistically deficient. These issues are discussed further in Chapter 2.

While this hierarchy has increasingly been acknowledged, much research continues to prioritise structural description over speakers' lived experiences of dialect use. Spoken varieties are often documented as phonological or morphosyntactic systems yet are less frequently examined as socially evaluated resources whose meanings emerge in interaction. Sociolinguistic scholarship has emphasised that dialects function as indexical resources through which speakers negotiate identity, belonging, and legitimacy (Meyerhoff, 1998; Soliz & Giles, 2012; Tabouret-Keller, 2017; Woolard, 2020). Nevertheless, the relationship between evaluative orientations and observable linguistic behaviour remains insufficiently integrated in empirical research, particularly in contexts of sustained dialect contact.

However, this sociolinguistic turn has not always been accompanied by a sustained empirical examination of how evaluative orientations and linguistic practices intersect in real time. Studies of language attitudes and studies of linguistic behaviour have often developed along parallel tracks, leaving unresolved questions about how speakers' beliefs, ideologies, and perceptions are enacted, negotiated, or contradicted in everyday interaction. Without directly addressing this relationship, studies of dialect contact may portray linguistic change as either mechanically driven by prestige or as an abstract ideological process, rather than as a socially situated practice emerging from speakers' lived experiences.

This study is situated within, and seeks to advance, this emerging sociolinguistic orientation. It examines spoken Arabic varieties in Saudi Arabia, focusing specifically on attitudes, social evaluation, and dialect behaviour in contexts of sustained contact. Rather than treating attitudes and linguistic practices as separate analytical domains, the study approaches them as mutually constitutive dimensions of social life, arguing that dialect hierarchies are produced and negotiated through everyday interaction.

By centring speakers' experiences and perceptions, this research contributes to a growing body of work that documents Arabic not only as a linguistic system but as a socially embedded practice. In doing so, it complicates approaches that conceptualise dialect use as a linear movement toward prestige varieties, and instead foregrounds linguistic resources as a dynamic process through which speakers negotiate regional inequality, institutional authority, and social belonging in contemporary Saudi society.

1.2 Research Background

Saudi Arabia presents a complex linguistic ecology in which MSA functions as the official language of education, religion, administration, and formal media, while spoken Arabic varieties are used in everyday interactions. As in many Arabic-speaking societies, this functional differentiation has been in place since the establishment of the Saudi state in 1932 (Al-Rojaie, 2020). Despite the centrality of spoken Arabic to social life, these varieties have historically received limited scholarly attention, and the dialect diversity of large areas of the Arabian Peninsula remains under-documented (Watson, 2011) (see Chapter 2 for further details).

While recent studies have begun to explore Saudi varieties – particularly those spoken in central regions (e.g. Abboud, 1964, 1979; Alajmi, 2019; Ingham, 1982; Prochazka, 1988) and in the western region (Al-Shehri, 1995) – research on Jizani Arabic (JA), spoken in the southwestern region of the kingdom, remains comparatively scarce. Existing work on JA has largely focused on phonological and syntactic description (Hamdi, 2015; Himli, 2014; Ruthan, 2020; Shamakhi, 2016), providing important structural insights. However, far less is known about how Jizani speakers use their dialect in social interactions, particularly in contexts where they engage with speakers of a different Saudi variety. This absence is significant. Without attention to social use, evaluation, and interactional meaning, our understanding of JA remains incomplete. Exploring how speakers evaluate their own dialect and other dialects, and how these evaluations relate to everyday linguistic behaviour, is essential for understanding linguistic ideologies in the Saudi context.

In recent years, Saudi Arabia has undergone substantial social transformation, characterised by rapid urbanisation, increased social mobility, and internal migration towards major central regions, particularly Najd. These movements have intensified contact between speakers of different regional dialects in workplaces, educational institutions, and residential communities. Such contact creates a fertile context for examining how dialectal hierarchies are produced, reinforced, or contested (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Woolard, 2020). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and Bourdieu (1991) highlight how language hierarchies operate as forms of symbolic power that reproduce social inequality and constrain people's opportunities for social participation. In

these settings, speakers are routinely exposed to varieties associated with different social meanings, levels of prestige, and degrees of institutional legitimacy. Attitudes towards dialects, therefore, have a central role in shaping everyday communication, influencing how speakers perceive each other and how they manage linguistic differences in interaction (Garrett, 2010)

A core assumption of sociolinguistics is that language cannot be studied in isolation from its social context. As Edwards (2009, p. 1) argues, any investigation that focuses solely on language risks missing the social meanings, identities, and power relations that language both reflects and constructs. From this perspective, linguistic forms are embedded in social experience: they are evaluated, interpreted, and imbued with meaning by both listeners and speakers. Language attitudes are central to this process. Garrett (2010) emphasises that attitudes towards language ‘permeate our daily lives’ and operate at multiple levels, shaping how people evaluate linguistic forms and their users. These evaluations often extend beyond language itself, influencing perceptions of speakers’ education, competence, social status, and regional belonging. In contexts of dialect contact, such attitudes become particularly salient, as listeners draw inferences that affect interactional dynamics and social relationships.

In Arabic-speaking communities, sociolinguistic research has shown that dominant urban or national varieties tend to be associated with authority and prestige, whereas regional varieties often carry strong local meanings and, in some contexts, lower overt status (Al-Wer, 2007). Consequently, dialect use becomes a site where broader social hierarchies and inequalities are enacted, negotiated, and sometimes resisted. For example, Holes (1986) demonstrates how speakers in Bahrain systematically orient towards supra-local and prestigious forms, while Miller (2005) documents similar patterns among speakers of Upper Egyptian Arabic in relation to Cairene Arabic. These studies illustrate how dialect use is shaped not only by structural factors but also by social evaluation and ideological positioning.

In the Saudi context, Najdi Arabic (NA) occupies a particularly salient position (Alhazmi & Alfalig, 2022; Al-Rojaie, 2021). Closely associated with the political centre of the kingdom, it is widely linked to urban modernity, institutional authority, and national identity. In contrast, southern varieties such as JA are often positioned as peripheral, carrying strong regional associations and, in some contexts, lower prestige (Alrumaih, 2003; Ruthan, 2020). These asymmetries are not unique to Saudi Arabia but reflect broader patterns observed across the Arabic-speaking world.

This study adopts a sociolinguistic perspective, treating language as a lived social practice rather than an abstract system. It focuses on how speakers’ linguistic behaviour is intertwined with their attitudes, experiences, and social positioning. While sociolinguistic variation has been widely studied in Arabic, relatively few studies have examined it from a social-evaluative

perspective that integrates attitudes, perception, and natural interaction – particularly in Saudi Arabia.

Situated in this broader context, the present study focuses on Jizani women living in Najd, a group whose linguistic practices have not previously been examined through sustained naturalistic interaction. By combining attitudinal measures with linguistic data from everyday conversations, the study examines how Jizani speakers evaluate Jizani and Najdi Arabic, how they negotiate prestige and stigma within a Najdi-dominant environment, and how these evaluations interact with social and interactional triggers shaping patterns of linguistic behaviour.

These dynamics unfold alongside significant institutional and societal change in Saudi Arabia, particularly under the Vision 2030 reform programme (Abdullateef et al., 2023), which has reshaped public discourse around education, professionalism, social mobility, and cultural heritage. While such reforms operate at the macro-institutional level, everyday linguistic practices are also shaped within the family, where attitudes towards dialect use are transmitted, negotiated, or re-evaluated across generations. Together, these macro- and micro-level forces form the broader social ecology within which Jizani speakers navigate linguistic choice.

Rather than viewing dialect behaviour as the outcome of a single social factor, this study understands linguistic practice as shaped by intersecting influences, including family socialisation, interactional networks, institutional norms, and wider ideological pressures surrounding prestige and regional identity. From this perspective, dialect use is not a linear movement from one variety to another, but a social practice through which speakers negotiate belonging, status, and legitimacy in everyday interactions.

Taken together, these structural asymmetries, patterns of internal mobility, and prestige hierarchies create a sociolinguistic environment in which dialect use is both socially consequential and ideologically charged. Yet while the Saudi linguistic landscape has been described in structural or attitudinal terms, less attention has been paid to how these hierarchies are experienced, interpreted, and enacted in everyday interaction. It is this analytical gap that the present study addresses.

1.3 Research Problem and Research Gap

Research in Arabic sociolinguistics has demonstrated that dialect variation and evaluation play a central role in the production of social meaning. Speakers orient to prestige hierarchies, regional stereotypes, and interactional expectations, particularly in contexts shaped by mobility and contact

(Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Garrett, 2010; Lambert, 1967). At the same time, language attitude research has shown that Arabic varieties are evaluated along socially salient dimensions such as status and solidarity (Alrumaih, 2003), with implications for speakers' identities and social positioning (Dragojević et al., 2021; Garrett, 2010).

Despite these insights, two strands of research have largely developed independently. Variationist studies have tended to document patterns of linguistic behaviour in relation to social variables such as region, gender, and age, often without sustained attention to speakers' evaluative orientations (Aldarsoni, 2011; Al-Rojaie, 2020; Al-Twairish et al., 2018; Procházka, 2021). Conversely, attitude studies have relied heavily on experimental or perceptual methods to capture listeners' evaluations, without examining how these evaluations are enacted or negotiated in natural interaction (Aldosaree, 2016; Al-Hakami, 2023; Alrumaih, 2003). As a result, we lack an empirically grounded account of how dialect hierarchies operate simultaneously at the level of belief, interpretation, and real-time linguistic practice.

This analytical separation is particularly evident in the Saudi context. Research on Saudi varieties has primarily focused on structural description or quantitative variation, while attitudinal studies have explored perceptions of prestige and stigma. However, to the best of my knowledge, no studies have integrated attitudinal evidence, personal reflection, and naturally occurring speech within a single analytical framework. Consequently, dialect contact is often interpreted either as structurally conditioned variation or as prestige-driven shift, rather than as a socially mediated process shaped by speakers' ideological orientations and interactional contexts.

The gap is especially pronounced in relation to Jizani Arabic. Existing work has largely treated Jizani as a bounded linguistic system, focusing on descriptive features (Hamdi, 2015; Himli, 2014; Ruthan, 2020) rather than examining how those features are evaluated and managed in interaction with dominant varieties such as Najdi Arabic (NA). Moreover, several features presented in this study have not previously been examined comparatively in relation to their Najdi and MSA counterparts, as detailed in Chapter 2. Their sociolinguistic distribution and evaluative positioning within the Saudi prestige hierarchy, therefore, remain undocumented.

Addressing this gap requires an integrated approach capable of linking evaluation, ideology, and observable linguistic behaviour. By focusing on Jizani women living in Najdi-dominant environments, this study investigates how speakers interpret, negotiate, and manage dialectal repertoires under conditions of social asymmetry and regional mobility.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding how linguistic inequality is reproduced and negotiated in contexts of internal mobility within Saudi Arabia. By examining the experiences of Jizani women living in Najdi-dominant environments, the study foregrounds speakers whose dialect practices are shaped by both regional marginalisation and sustained exposure to dominant norms.

Empirically, the study expands documentation of southwestern Saudi varieties by analysing previously underexamined Jizani features and situating them comparatively alongside Najdi Arabic. This comparative perspective illuminates how structurally distinct forms acquire differential social value within a stratified linguistic landscape.

Theoretically, the study contributes to sociolinguistic debates on prestige, ideology, and dialect contact by conceptualising variation as repertoire management rather than unidirectional shift. It demonstrates how prestige hierarchies are not merely abstract social structures but are enacted, negotiated, and sometimes reconfigured through everyday interaction.

Methodologically, the integration of matched-guise testing, qualitative interviews, and natural conversational data offers a model for examining the relationship between evaluative orientations and linguistic practice within a single analytical framework. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how implicit attitudes, explicit reflections, and interactional behaviour intersect.

More broadly, the study situates the Saudi case within comparative discussions of dialect contact, linguistic stratification, and social mobility in Arabic-speaking societies. By centring speakers' lived experiences, it contributes to a more socially grounded account of variation in contemporary Arabic contexts and provides a foundation for future research on regionally marginalised varieties.

1.5 Research Aims and Research Questions

The overarching aim of this study is to examine how Jizani women living in Najdi-dominant environments understand, evaluate, and enact linguistic variation in their everyday interactions. The study investigates how linguistic behaviour is shaped by speakers' attitudes, ideological orientations, and lived social experiences.

Specifically, the study aims to provide an integrated account of language attitudes, ideological interpretations, and observable linguistic practices by combining experimental matched-guise data, interview evidence, and naturalistic interactional data. It thus addresses a key gap in

Arabic sociolinguistics by empirically linking what speakers say about language to how they actually use linguistic resources in interaction.

To achieve these aims, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Jizani and Najdi women evaluate JA and NA across dimensions of status and solidarity?
2. How do Jizani women understand, evaluate, and explain their linguistic behaviour in Najdi-dominant contexts?
3. What social, interactional, and linguistic factors shape the use of Jizani and Najdi features in natural interaction?

To answer these questions, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data to capture both evaluative orientations and everyday linguistic behaviours. The quantitative component comprises a Matched-Guise Test (MGT) designed to elicit implicit attitudes towards JA and NA across dimensions of status and solidarity. This is complemented by a qualitative interview component that explores the participants' metalinguistic reflections on dialect use, including experiences of socialisation, evaluation, and identity negotiation in Najdi-dominant contexts.

In addition, the study draws on naturalistic conversational data recorded in everyday settings. These data enable the analysis of speakers' actual use of Jizani and Najdi features across selected phonological and morphosyntactic variables to identify the social and interactional factors shaping variant choice. By triangulating attitudinal evaluations, interview narratives, and naturally occurring speech, the study provides a comprehensive account of how language attitudes and ideologies are reflected in everyday linguistic practice.

This mixed-methods design enables the study to move beyond isolated analyses of attitudes or behaviour, providing an integrated perspective on dialect use as a socially embedded and ideologically mediated process in contemporary Saudi society.

Building on these research aims and questions, the study is further informed by a set of theory-driven working hypotheses grounded in sociolinguistic research on language attitudes and ideology. These hypotheses are treated as analytically informed expectations that guide the analysis and are examined through the integration of quantitative and qualitative data.

H1: Najdi Arabic will be evaluated more positively on status-related dimensions, while Jizani Arabic will be evaluated more positively on solidarity-related dimensions, reflecting an underlying prestige hierarchy.

H2: Speakers' linguistic behaviour in Najdi-dominant contexts will be shaped by their attitudes towards Jizani and Najdi Arabic, with awareness of prestige, stigma, and social evaluation influencing feature selection.

H3: Family will function as a key site for the formation and negotiation of language attitudes, contributing to the maintenance or re-evaluation of Jizani features despite dominant Najdi norms.

H4: The use of Jizani and Najdi features will vary according to interactional context and social factors, including audience, setting, topic, education, class, style, interlocutor group, and participant group.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised into nine chapters, each of which examines how language attitudes, ideologies, and everyday linguistic practices intersect in contexts of dialect contact in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 2 provides the sociolinguistic and linguistic background to the study. It outlines linguistic diversity and dialect variation in Saudi Arabia, presents a detailed linguistic profile of the Jizani and Najdi varieties, and discusses issues of mutual intelligibility, contact, and interaction. The chapter also situates Saudi Arabia in broader sociolinguistic patterns, including diglossia, multilingual contact, and the role of English in contemporary Saudi society, while considering how national transformations associated with Vision 2030 are shaping language ideologies, notions of prestige, and expectations of 'appropriate' linguistic behaviour in public and institutional domains.

Chapter 3 reviews the relevant literature and theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. It examines research on language ideology, attitudes, prestige and standard varieties, stereotypes, linguistic prejudice, linguistic (in)justice, and family language policy (FLP). The chapter also discusses communication accommodation theory (CAT) and related sociolinguistic approaches, critically situating them in the study's focus on linguistic use, ideology, and dialect contact.

Chapter 4 describes the study's methodological framework. It outlines the research approach, design, and paradigm, as well as the research setting and participant selection, and explains the data collection instruments and analytical procedures. Ethical considerations and the researcher's positionality are also discussed.

Chapter 1

Chapter 5 reports the findings of the first empirical component of the study: the MGT. The chapter presents the quantitative results of the implicit evaluations of JA and NA across dimensions, including status, solidarity, and social class, followed by a summary of key attitudinal patterns.

Chapter 6 presents the second empirical component: the semi-structured interviews. The chapter reports the findings on the participants' explicit attitudes, experiences, and reflections on dialect use. It examines positive and negative evaluations of JA, factors shaping attitudes, speakers' use of Najdi features, and the relationship between implicit and explicit attitudes.

Chapter 7 presents the third empirical component, based on participant observation and natural conversational data. The chapter analyses linguistic variation triggers for Najdi and Jizani feature use, and correlations between attitudes and linguistic behaviour, supported by qualitative extracts from natural interactions.

Chapter 8 integrates and discusses the findings across the three empirical components. Organised around the three research questions, the chapter synthesises the results on attitudinal hierarchies, speakers' interpretations of their linguistic behaviour, and the social meanings of variant choice. It brings together evidence from matched-guise testing, interviews, and natural speech to show how attitudes, ideologies, and repertoire management intersect in dialect contact settings.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by providing an overview of the study, summarising its key findings, and outlining the study's contributions to knowledge. It discusses the theoretical and methodological implications, acknowledges limitations, provides recommendations for future research, and closes with final reflections.

Chapter 2 Historical and Sociolinguistic Context of Jizan, Najd, and Saudi Arabia

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the study's contextual foundation by outlining the geographical, historical, social, and linguistic landscape of Saudi Arabia, with a focus on the Jizan and Najd regions. Understanding these contexts is essential to interpreting the social meanings attached to dialectal variation and the attitudinal dynamics explored in later chapters. The chapter begins by situating Jizan and Najd geographically and historically, followed by a discussion of Saudi Arabia's social structure and stratification. The chapter also considers the transformative influence of Vision 2030, the national project that has accelerated internal migration, reshaped social mobility, and reconfigured attitudes towards regional identity and linguistic diversity.

The chapter then provides an account of the Arabic language varieties and linguistic diversity in Saudi Arabia. This is followed by a linguistic profile of the Jizani and Najdi varieties, emphasising the phonological and morphological features that distinguish them and carry substantial social indexing value. These linguistic contrasts are situated in the broader sociolinguistic context of Arabic and Saudi Arabia, including patterns of diglossia and dialectal diversity, as well as the role of English in contemporary Saudi Arabia.

By bringing together regional history, social structure, and linguistic variation, the chapter provides a comprehensive basis for analysing how Jizani speakers navigate linguistic behaviour and social evaluations in Najdi-dominant environments.

2.2 Location of Jizan

Jizan is an administrative region in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, situated in the far southwestern corner of the country, approximately between 42°–43° east (longitude) and 16°–17° north (latitude) (Habib, 1988). It is bordered to the north and east by the Asir region, to the west by the Red Sea, and to the south and southeast by the Republic of Yemen (see Figure 2-1).

Owing to its location on the Red Sea and its proximity to Yemen, Jizan has historically served as a linguistic and cultural bridge between the Arabian Peninsula and the southern Arabian world. This role is crucial to understanding why its dialect differs markedly from those spoken in central Saudi Arabia.

This strategic location has historically facilitated migration from Yemen, with approximately 20,000 *Zaydis* (Yemeni migrants) residing along the southern borders of Saudi Arabia, particularly in Jizan and Najran. Jizan covers an area of 40,457 km², making it the second-smallest region in Saudi Arabia after Baha, which is located to the northwest of Asir, in the southwestern part of the country. Additionally, the region includes approximately 80 islands in the Red Sea, with the most notable being the Farasan Islands, which collectively cover an area of around 702 km² (Lowry, 2020).

Jizan is geographically isolated from the central Najd region, where the socially prestigious Najdi dialect is spoken, and its coastal location and proximity to Yemen have contributed to a linguistic and cultural distinctiveness compared with other Saudi regions. This separation has enabled local linguistic features to persist over centuries while also incorporating influences from southern Arabian speech. Such isolation could explain why JA remains distinct from the more prominent NA, which dominates official and urban settings, such as the cities of Riyadh and Jeddah. Moreover, as this geographic isolation contributes to linguistic distinctiveness, it causes social marginalisation.



Figure 2-1 Map of the Jizan region, adapted from d-maps.com (2025)

2.3 Historical Background of Jizan

The contemporary Jizan region was historically known as al-Mikhlāf (المخلاف) from the pre-Islamic era through the Islamic period to the modern era. The name originated from the ruling tribes of the region, including Mikhlāf Ḥakam (مخلاف حكم) and Mikhlāf A'athar (مخلاف عثر) (Alaqili, 1989).

Jizan was ruled by the Idrisi State from 1906 to 1934 (Bang, 1996; Vassiliev, 1999). However, following the death of Muhammad ibn Ali al-Idrisi, the Idrisid Emirate weakened in 1923, leading to increasing pressure from neighbouring political forces. As a result, Alhasan ibn Ali al-Idrisi signed a treaty in 1926 with King Abdulaziz Al Saud, known as the 'Treaty of Joining', which placed the Idrisid Emirate under the authority of the Kingdom of Najd and Hijaz – the political entity that became the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1930.

This historical transition is significant not only politically but also linguistically, as it marks the beginning of intensified contact between people from the southwest and central regions of Saudi Arabia. At the time, Najd (in central Arabia) and Hijaz (along the western coast and including cities such as Makkah and Medina) were independent regions unified by King Abdulaziz before the formation of Saudi Arabia. Jizan experienced internal conflicts between different factions, which weakened its tribes. These struggles hindered the region's development during the Idrisi era. However, after Jizan came under Saudi rule in 1930, the region witnessed economic recovery, with new roads, infrastructure, and educational institutions leading to a cultural and intellectual revival.

This period of recovery created the conditions for new patterns of migration and contact, which would later influence the linguistic profile of JA, especially among those who relocated to urban centres such as Riyadh. From that time (1930) to the present day (95 years), Jizan has continued to develop, fostering scholars, intellectuals, writers, and poets and having an increasingly significant role in Saudi Arabia's cultural and economic landscape.

2.4 Economic Status of Jizan

As shown in Figure 2-1, the Jizan province is the furthest from the Saudi urban core areas in the eastern, western, and central parts of the country. It is the area least affected by the recent rapid urbanisation in the country. According to Pinar et al. (2019), the region has experienced low economic growth and poor job opportunities, encouraging individuals to migrate to larger cities such as Riyadh and Makkah, which have witnessed a dramatic increase in their populations (Cheshire et al., 2008).

Lowry (2020) claims that Jizan and its people experience marginalisation owing to their peripheral location, since the high peaks of the Sarawat mountains create a barrier between Jizan and the rest of the country. The Jizan region is largely economically underdeveloped, as the first highway connecting the area with the rest of the country, through Abha, a city in the southern part of the country, 148 km from Jizan, was only built in 1975 (Lowry, 2020, p. 125). Furthermore, Jizan is 1,000 km from Riyadh, isolating it from economic and social development. Pinar et al. (2019) claimed that Jizani people prefer to live in Riyadh, which is to be expected

owing to its urbanisation and the various services and facilities it provides for its residents as the country's economic and commercial hub. This movement of Jizani migrants towards the capital is one of the central dynamics shaping the linguistic contact examined in this study.

2.5 Demography of Jizan

There are three main societal groups in Jizan (Arishi, 1991; Lowry, 2020). These social groups are urban, rural, and mountainous Jizanis. They are classified according to the linguistic features they use, their interests, and their lifestyle. Urban areas are considered the core centres in Jizan, while rural and mountainous regions share similar features related to the nature of life there and the low levels of development.

While Jizan province is still at the early stages of development, urban areas (in Jizan, Sabya, Abu Arish, Baish, Faifa, and Sametah) are distinguished from rural areas by their more significant development, which characterises the lives and people in these areas (Arishi, 1991). Jizan also includes approximately 927 villages distributed throughout these six urban centres and across the wider province (Arishi, 1991).

Jizani speakers living in Riyadh are the focus of this study as they share certain phonological and morphological features that differentiate them from mountainous Jizanis, whose dialects are linguistically distinct and often not mutually intelligible with those spoken in urban and rural areas (Lowry, 2020, p. 67). Several linguistic studies have examined the varieties spoken in Jizan's mountainous areas. Prochazka (1988) was among the first to document the key phonological features of the Al-Qahabah and Bani Malik tribes that reside in the mountains.

Recently, the Faifi dialect, located in a mountainous area in Jizan, has been examined by several researchers (Alaslani, 2017; S. Alfaifi, 2018; A. Alfaifi, 2016; M. Alfaifi, 2014). Lowry (2020, p. 67) stated that each tribe in the mountains speaks a unique dialect, characterised by distinguishing linguistic features that other tribes in the mountains can understand. However, other, non-mountainous tribes have difficulty understanding these dialects.

Jizan exhibits significant linguistic diversity, with each city and village having distinct spoken features. For example, the dialect spoken in Sabya differs from that in Beish, which in turn differs from Abu Arish. Likewise, villages such as Al-Mujassas, Al-Garadiyah, Al-Khashabiya, and Al-Daghareer each have unique linguistic characteristics. However, despite these variations, urban and rural Jizani speakers share key phonological and morphological features.

While mountainous Jizani dialects have received descriptive attention, there is a notable absence of research examining the linguistic features of spoken in urban and rural Jizani areas. These varieties are often subsumed under broader labels in the literature, despite sharing

features that distinguish them from mountainous speech and shape mutual intelligibility in everyday interaction.

The present study addresses this gap by focusing on speakers living in Najdi-dominant contexts, where some of these shared features become particularly salient in interaction and social evaluation.

2.6 Location of Najd

Najd, where NA is spoken, is a rocky plateau located in the centre of Saudi Arabia, bordered by Jordan and Iraq to the north, the Empty Quarter to the south, the Arabian Gulf to the east, and the Hijaz mountains to the west (see Figure 2-2). Owing to its inaccessible location, NA has remained relatively uninfluenced by non-Arabic languages (Ingham, 1994).

In contrast to Jizan's coastal and cross-border exchanges, Najd's inland position has historically limited external linguistic contact, and its variety has gained prestige in connection with Najd's central political role. Administratively, Najd is divided into three regions: Riyadh, Al-Qassim, and Ha'il. While the terms 'Riyadh' and 'Najd' are often used interchangeably, this study distinguishes between them, as Riyadh refers specifically to the capital city and its surrounding region. In contrast, Najd encompasses a much larger area, including Al-Qassim and Ha'il as shown in Figure 2-2.



Figure 2-2 Map of Saudi Arabia, highlighting the Jizan and Najd regions, adapted from Wikimedia Commons contributors (2025)

The Riyadh region is distinguished as the starting point in the unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, led by King Abdulaziz Al Saud in 1902. Riyadh was later declared the country's capital in 1932, when the kingdom was officially established, and it also became the seat of government and administration.

The rise of Riyadh as the administrative and political hub in the kingdom elevated NA to a position of linguistic prestige: what had once been a regional speech variety became increasingly identified with authority, education, and modernity.

2.7 Demography of Najd

Before the era of oil prosperity and urbanisation, central Najdi society (Riyadh) was divided into two social groups based on their lifestyles: the Bedouin and the Sedentary settlers (Alajmi, 2019; Al-Semmari, 2010). The term 'Sedentary' is used in the literature to refer to settled tribes permanently residing in small villages (AlOboudi, 2015). In contrast, 'Bedouin' refers to the nomadic tribes that frequently move across the desert.

Najdi Arabic (NA) is internally differentiated according to the social and regional origins of its speakers, commonly distinguished as Bedouin and Sedentary varieties. As someone who has lived in Najd for more than 35 years, I can recognise the linguistic differences between these varieties in everyday interaction. Although both varieties form part of the broader Najdi dialect continuum, urban Sedentary Najdi is generally more closely associated with institutional authority and urban prestige in Riyadh. However, the Najdi features examined in this study are not restricted to one sub-variety; rather, they represent widely recognised Najdi forms used across both Bedouin and Sedentary speech.

By clarifying these internal distinctions, this chapter provides the necessary sociolinguistic background for understanding how Jizani speakers orient towards Najdi features more broadly, particularly in relation to prestige, stigma, and belonging.

2.8 Social Structure and Stratification of Saudi Arabia

Saudi society is characterised by a structured social hierarchy based on various factors, including geographic origin, tribal affiliation, professional status, economic class, and historical background (Zuhur, 2011, pp. 199–200). Aba-alalaa (2015) and Al-Sultan (1988) classify Saudi social stratification into three main tiers: the upper class, comprising the royal family, religious scholars, influential business elites, and prominent tribal groups; the middle class, which includes educated employees, professionals, and small business owners; and the working

class, which consists of farmers, fishermen, industrial workers, labourers, non-tribal groups, and expatriates.

Other researchers have contended that factors such as religious sect, geographic origin, and gender influence social discrimination (Zuhur, 2011). In addition, social inequality persists owing to specific ideologies and norms that sustain a hierarchical system (AlMunajjed, 1997).

This entrenched social structure is important for understanding language attitudes and linguistic behaviour in Saudi Arabia, as attitudes towards particular dialects often mirror perceptions of class, region, and tribe. Dialect use, therefore, becomes both a marker of and a way to reinforce these social distinctions.

Within Saudi Arabia, tribal affiliation has historically played an important role in shaping regional and social identity and continues to influence patterns of linguistic affiliation and dialect perception. In many cases, tribal and family associations remain socially connected to particular regions, contributing to the maintenance of regional identities even in contexts of migration and urbanisation. Consequently, dialect affiliation in Saudi Arabia cannot always be understood solely in relation to current place of residence or birthplace, but may also reflect broader kinship networks, lineage ties, and inherited social identities. Although tribal identification is neither fixed nor entirely determinative of linguistic behaviour, it remains a significant sociocultural dimension within the Saudi dialect landscape and may influence both how speakers position themselves linguistically and how they are perceived by others in interaction (Zuhur, 2011; Alhazza, 2015).

In the Saudi context, a tribe (*qabīlah*) refers to a kinship-based social unit, traditionally linked to a common ancestor, shared customs, and a historical territorial presence. Tribal identity has a significant role in social classification, distinguishing those belonging to well-established tribes from non-tribal groups. For example, tribal groups such as the Bedouins enjoy privileges owing to their historical role in the formation of modern Saudi Arabia and their ongoing political influence (Zuhur, 2011).

It is worth noting that tribal allegiance has a significant influence on both social interactions and perceptions (Alhazza, 2015). In this sense, language and tribal belonging are closely intertwined: dialects associated with dominant tribes or prestigious regions tend to carry symbolic capital, while those tied to marginalised or peripheral groups, such as the Jizanis, may be stigmatised. Within many Saudi sociocultural contexts, an individual's social standing and group affiliation may be closely associated with tribal identity. It is important to note that such associations reflect socially circulating ideologies rather than fixed socioeconomic realities, and individual speakers' class positions may vary significantly

Non-tribal groups include people and communities that do not primarily identify with a particular tribal affiliation. These groups, such as urban dwellers, expatriates, and individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, often face marginalisation. Some common non-tribal classifications in Saudi Arabia include *Al-'Abd*, meaning 'slave'. Slavery did exist historically, but it was abolished by King Faisal in 1962, who freed all slaves in the country (Alhazza, 2015). Nevertheless, tribal members continue to use this term. *Al-'Abd* is frequently used as a derogatory term for dark-skinned individuals, while *AlKhaḍīrī* refers to non-tribal people. The term 'Hajj settler' refers to a large population in the Hijaz region, located west of Saudi Arabia, who come from different countries to perform Hajj in Makkah. Many of these people have remained in Saudi Arabia and acquired Saudi nationality. This group is often regarded as a lower-class outsider by tribal groups (Alhazza, 2015).

These distinctions reveal how linguistic prejudice intersects with ethnic and tribal hierarchies: language becomes a visible symbol of belonging or exclusion. Understanding this social context is essential for interpreting the attitudinal and linguistic behaviours explored later in the thesis.

2.9 Vision 2030

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, launched in 2016 by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is a national framework designed to diversify the economy, expand global engagement, and modernise social structures. Its reforms target multiple sectors, including the economy, governance, culture, education, and quality of life, with the overarching goal of positioning the kingdom as a leading international model of development. Alongside its economic ambitions, Vision 2030 serves as a cultural project, reshaping national identity and redefining the values of modern Saudi society.

Vision 2030 is structured around three pillars: a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. The first emphasises cultural heritage, social participation, and national identity. The second focuses on economic diversification and employment, while the third pillar aims to strengthen governance and institutional performance (KSA 2030 Vision, 2016).

Vision 2030 has accelerated the profound social transformation in the country, influencing patterns of interaction, mobility, and public participation. A central component of Vision 2030 is the increased participation of women in higher education and the workforce. As women enter new professional and public roles, they participate in increasingly linguistically diverse environments, including customer service settings, universities, hospitals, and corporate offices. For Jizani women in Najd, these contexts often bring their speech into contact with dominant urban NA norms, sometimes triggering shifts towards forms associated with professionalism or social prestige. These shifts are not only linguistic but social: peripheral

dialect speakers like the Jizanis navigate pressures to conform in order to gain social acceptance, employment opportunities, and upward mobility. Vision 2030 thus directly interacts with existing inequalities and marginalisation, shaping how individuals manage their linguistic identities in urban, globalising contexts.

Vision 2030 has also accelerated internal migration. Economic diversification projects in central cities have attracted workers from across the kingdom, reshaping the demographic profile of major urban areas. Such mobility reduces linguistic isolation for minority dialects, but it also increases pressure to adopt prestigious forms associated with urban professionalism. At the same time, these migration patterns reflect broader globalisation trends: Saudi cities are becoming hubs of linguistic and cultural exchange, where English and regional dialects coexist. The interplay of local and global pressures highlights how Vision 2030 fosters both integration into international networks and negotiation of regional identity.

Vision 2030 has further reshaped narratives of identity and belonging. Its emphasis on cultural pride and national cohesion has encouraged recognition of regional heritage, including dialect diversity. These ideological shifts have the potential to influence dialect evaluations, gradually reducing the stigma previously attached to non-central varieties such as JA, particularly among younger generations.

Vision 2030 has created a dual linguistic dynamic. On the one hand, the initiative promotes international engagement, giving English a prominent role in business, technology, and education. Bilingual proficiency is increasingly framed as a marker of ambition, opportunity, and global competitiveness. This elevation of English has reshaped perceptions of linguistic capital, particularly among young Saudis entering globalised labour markets.

On the other hand, Vision 2030 has actively reaffirmed Arabic as the foundation of cultural identity. Heritage, history, and national cohesion are strongly foregrounded, reinforcing the symbolic value of MSA and regional dialects. This creates a productive tension typical of globalising societies: English indexes progress, while Arabic indexes authenticity and emotional belonging.

The NA dialect, historically linked to the royal family and the political centre of the kingdom, has long held prestige. Vision 2030 has intensified this status. Riyadh's centrality to economic diversification, administrative reform, and international investment reinforces NA as a supra-regional prestige dialect.

Several elements have contributed to this strengthened prestige. Riyadh's leadership in national campaigns and media discourses has elevated NA as a symbolic voice of modernisation and unity. Also, interregional migration into Riyadh has increased exposure to Najdi norms in

professional settings, prompting a shift among newcomers seeking social integration or workplace acceptance. Furthermore, NA is increasingly associated with economic mobility, education, and national progress, reinforcing its perception as the ‘default’ or unmarked variety in formal contexts. However, this linguistic centralisation also reproduces older hierarchies. Peripheral dialects like JA risk being subtly marginalised even as national discourse celebrates diversity.

Vision 2030 has reshaped the social, economic, and cultural environment of Saudi Arabia. Its reforms influence language attitudes, increase interdialectal contact, and intensify pressures towards certain prestigious varieties while simultaneously promoting national pride in linguistic diversity. These dynamics directly inform the triggers, attitudes, and interactional behaviours explored in later chapters of this study, particularly among Jizani speakers navigating Najdi-dominated settings.

2.10 The Arabic Language and its Varieties

Arabic is the sole or official language in 20 independent states, comprising a large geographical area across the Middle East and Africa (see Figure 2-3). It is the mother tongue of Arab citizens in Israel and Palestinians residing in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, significant Arabic-speaking communities have lived in the United States (US) and Europe since the end of the 19th century (Holes, 2004).

Arabic dialects are often classified based on their geographical locations (Biadisy et al., 2009, p. 55) and shared linguistic features among speakers in each region (Abunasser, 2015).

While Arabic provides a unifying symbol of religious and cultural identity across the Arab world, its spoken forms reflect deep regional histories and local identities. Understanding this internal diversity is essential to realising how JA and NA fit within the broader Arabic dialect continuum.



Figure 2-3 Map of the Arabic-speaking countries, adapted from WorldAtlas.com (2025)

Arabic dialects are typically classified into the following five geolinguistically major dialect groups (Biadisy et al., 2009; Versteegh, 2014):

- Egyptian Arabic (dialects of the Nile valley; widely understood owing to media influence);
- Levantine Arabic (spoken in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine);
- Gulf Arabic (spoken in the Arabian Peninsula, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, and Yemen);
- Maghrebi Arabic (spoken in North Africa, including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Mauritania); and
- Mesopotamian Arabic (spoken in Iraq).

Beyond these classifications, Arabic dialects are also spoken by minority communities in regions outside Arab-majority countries, where Arabic no longer holds official status or political authority. This geographical spread illustrates Arabic's historical mobility and its capacity to adapt to new cultural and linguistic environments while retaining core structural features. In Asia, these dialects are found in parts of northern and southern Iran, in Balkh, Afghanistan, in Uzbekistan, and in southern Turkey. In Africa, Arabic is spoken in areas of northern Nigeria, Mali, and Chad. The Maltese Arabic dialect is also spoken in Malta, and traces of Arabic influence persist in parts of Spain (Holes, 2004; Watson, 2012).

Furthermore, Arabic is a dominant and influential language in the Arabian Peninsula, with deep historical, cultural, and linguistic roots. While Standard Arabic (SA) is the language of formal written documents, education, media, and literature, linguistic diversity can distinguish each country and often each region of those countries (Versteegh, 2001).

Johnstone (1967) classified the Arabic dialects spoken in the Arabian Peninsula into four regional dialect groups based on shared linguistic features: Southwestern Arabian, Omani, North Arabian, and Hijazi. Southwestern Arabic encompasses the dialects of Yemen and the southwestern regions of Saudi Arabia. Omani includes the dialect spoken in Oman, and Northern Arabian includes the dialect spoken in the centre and the north of the Arabian Peninsula and the East Coast. Hijazi covers the dialects spoken in the west of Saudi Arabia.

2.10.1 Arabic in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a geographically vast country where Arabic is the official language, making it predominantly monolingual. However, despite this linguistic unity, Saudis speak 23 different dialects, reflecting the country's rich dialectal diversity (Al-Twairesh et al., 2018). Additionally, a small group, mainly from the Mehri tribes near the Yemeni and Omani borders and the Empty Quarter desert, continue to speak Mehri, an endangered oral Semitic language (Al-Azraqi, 2017)

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This internal diversity challenges the notion of a uniform Saudi Arabia and underscores the importance of regional identity in linguistic practice. Each dialect indexes a particular local history and social status.

Historically, the country was established in 1932, and large oil reserves were discovered shortly afterwards. These two events have contributed to a significant transformation of Saudi society, both politically and socioeconomically. Such dramatic changes, particularly the unprecedented spread of education, urbanisation, modernisation, contact, and migration, are all suggested as influences on Saudi speakers' patterns of linguistic variation and change. These patterns have shifted as speakers moved towards urbanisation, and the norms have become supralocal.

Thus, the linguistic story of Saudi Arabia is inseparable from its economic and political trajectory: as the nation has modernised, dialect boundaries have blurred, and new hierarchies of prestige have emerged, with NA increasingly associated with education and professional mobility.

Early research on Saudi dialects mainly concentrated on descriptive and historical analyses, exploring their connection to Classical Arabic (CA) and differences across various regions and tribes. These investigations were based on the work of medieval Arab grammarians and were later expanded by European dialectologists in the 20th century (Abboud, 1964; Ingham, 1971; Johnstone, 1967).

For example, Ingham (1971, p. 273) conducted a phonological and morphological analysis of Meccan Arabic (Hijazi dialect), focusing on syllable structure, verb morphology, and affixes. Rather than providing a comprehensive description, his study highlights key linguistic features that differentiate the dialect and its relationship to other Arabic varieties. Based on data from a native Meccan speaker, Ingham's research ensures an authentic representation of the dialect. Al-Azraqi (1998) provided morphological and syntactic descriptions of the dialect spoken in Abha, the region's administrative capital.

By the 1980s and 1990s, research shifted towards sociolinguistic approaches, particularly in the study of language variation, contact, and change. Influenced by Labov's variationist framework, these studies examined how social and regional factors shape linguistic patterns in Saudi Arabia. More recently, research has expanded to include topics such as code-switching and language policy.

This historical overview demonstrates that research in Saudi Arabia has progressed from description to social interpretation, laying the foundation for this study's focus on attitudes and linguistic behaviour as expressions of social change.

2.10.2 Dialect Variation in Saudi Dialects

Dialects in Saudi Arabia exhibit significant regional variation, forming a continuum based on geographical proximity and social factors, primarily through the use of phonological and morphological features (Al-Rojaie, 2020; Al-Twairesh et al., 2018; Procházka, 2021).

Aldarsoni (2011) surveyed dialect distribution in Saudi Arabia based on lexical differences and identified five major regional dialects: Najdi, Southern, Western, Northern, and Eastern. Each of these dialects contains various subdialects, including notable subvarieties in Eastern Arabic (Al-Rojaie, 2020). The dialects spoken in each region are distinguished by unique grammatical structures, syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary, reflecting the influence of both historical and social factors. Furthermore, Alrumaih (2003) examined dialect areas in the country using a perceptual dialectology method known as the ‘map-drawing task’. In this task, participants were asked to draw the boundaries of regional varieties in Saudi Arabia. Alrumaih (2003) found the same dialect areas as identified in Aldarsoni’s (2011) survey. Similarly, employing the map-drawing task, Alrojaie (2021) revealed the same dialect areas as those found in the research by Aldarsoni (2011) and Alrumaih (2003).

This methodological convergence across studies demonstrates a strong perception among Saudis of clear dialect boundaries, even as mobility and modernisation continue to blur them in practice. Accordingly, the Saudi dialects identified in previous research are as follows:

- The NA dialect is spoken in central Saudi Arabia, particularly in the Najd region. It is often described as the closest dialect to MSA (Anishchenkova, 2020) and is regarded as the most ‘correct’ dialect in Saudi Arabia (Alrumaih, 2003). The Najd region is relatively isolated, which has helped the dialect remain largely unaffected by external linguistic influences and change (Ingham, 1994). Additionally, Najd has historically been the official home of the royal family, who also speak the Najdi dialect (AlRojaie, 2021). As a result, Najd’s geographical location and political importance have contributed to its dialect being regarded as the most prestigious in the Arabian Peninsula (Aldosaree, 2016).
- The Northern dialect is spoken in regions such as Tabouk, Al-Jouf, and Arar. This dialect is primarily a Najdi–Bedouin variety. It has been influenced by neighbouring Jordanian and Iraqi Arabic owing to historical tribal links and geographical proximity.
- The Eastern dialect is spoken in Dammam, Al-Hofuf, and Al-Qatif. It is distinct due to strong Gulf Arabic influence and shows close linguistic affinity with the dialects of Bahrain and Kuwait (Holes, 2004). In fact, the Eastern dialect can be classified based on religious affiliation, distinguishing between Sunni and Shia varieties.

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- The Western (Hijazi) dialect, spoken in Jeddah and Mecca, exhibits features similar to the varieties spoken beyond the Arabian Peninsula. Ingham (1971) described it as belonging to the Egypto-Levantine linguistic group.
- The Southern dialect is spoken in Abha, Al-Baha, and Jizan. Studies on the Yemeni subdialect have revealed a notable similarity between it and several Southern dialects in Saudi Arabia, such as Asir, Tihama, and Jizan (Watson, 2014).

Scholars have consistently highlighted that southern regions are among the least developed areas in Saudi Arabia. Anishchenkova (2020, p. 13) stated that Tihama is less developed than other parts of Saudi Arabia, and its people are among the poorest in the country. Lowry (2020, p. 41) examined language ideology in the Jizan region, noting that it was one of the least developed areas in the country until the 1990s. Habib (1988) identified three key reasons why Jizan is considered the most underdeveloped region: low-income levels, the late introduction of higher education, and weak infrastructure. However, following the launch of Vision 2030, the region has been developing rapidly, leading to the implementation of economic projects in the area.

These socioeconomic contrasts between the central and south are mirrored linguistically in attitudes towards dialects: Najdi features are associated with progress and education, while Jizani features are often stigmatised as rural or unrefined. This perception forms the sociolinguistic backdrop for the present study.

Socially, dialects are categorised into Bedouin and Sedentary varieties, a distinction that historically reflected nomadic or settled lifestyles. Sedentary dialects are further divided into urban and rural varieties. However, owing to urbanisation and migration, these distinctions are no longer tied to lifestyle but remain relevant in linguistic features, such as pronunciation and vocabulary (Palva, 2006; Rosenhouse, 2006).

As mobility increases, the old Bedouin–Sedentary opposition has transformed into a symbolic rather than geographical distinction – speakers may adopt Bedouin features to assert traditional authenticity or Sedentary forms to signal modern urban identity. Despite ongoing dialect contact and change, these classifications continue to shape Saudi Arabia’s sociolinguistic landscape.

In addition to regional differences, sectarian dialects are also present in eastern Saudi Arabia, particularly in Qatif and al-Ahsa. The Shia dialect, spoken by the Bahranah people, is Sedentary and is similar to Bahraini Arabic, while the Sunni dialect reflects its Najdi Bedouin origins (Al-Mubarak, 2016; Procházka, 2021). These differences stem from historical religious segregation and further illustrate the linguistic diversity of Saudi Arabia. Together, these examples

emphasise how language in Saudi Arabia operates as both a reflection of and a response to complex social hierarchies, regional identities, and mobility patterns.

The variation among Saudi dialects can be demonstrated with examples like the phrase ‘you went’ and the word ‘now’. Despite phonological and morphological differences, these examples emphasise structural similarities across dialects. For instance, the verb ‘you went’ derives from the same trilateral root (ع-ط-ل / T-L-ʿ) across all dialects but shows phonetic and morphological differences. In Hijazi Arabic, it appears as [teleʕti], in Najdi and Gulf dialects as [talaʕti], and in Southern dialects as [teleʕtin]. These variations mainly involve vowel changes and suffix differences; yet, the fundamental verb root stays consistent across dialects.

Similarly, the word ‘now’ follows a common morphological pattern: it consists of a demonstrative element (‘this’) plus a noun (‘time’). While the noun *ħi:n* (‘time’) is consistently used across dialects, the initial demonstrative element varies: [daħi:n] in Hijazi Arabic, [halħi:n] in Najdi and Gulf dialects, and [ðalħi:n] / [ðahħi:n] in Southern dialects. This illustrates a pattern of predictable variation in which dialects preserve a shared basic structure but modify specific phonetic components.

These comparative examples underscore the interconnectedness of regional varieties: even in variation, a profound structural unity exists in Arabic. Understanding this helps frame the analysis of Jizani and Najdi use not as separate systems but as interacting ends of a shared linguistic spectrum.

This pattern aligns with broader trends in Arabic dialectology, where phonological, lexical, and grammatical variations follow systematic rules while preserving shared linguistic structures. A more detailed theoretical explanation of such variations between SA *fuṣṣḥá* and Egyptian Arabic *āmmīyah* is discussed in Khalil’s (2022) book *Arabic Writing in the Digital Age*, which offers a helpful framework for understanding the systematic nature of Arabic’s dialectal differences.

2.11 Linguistic Profile of the Jizani and Najdi Varieties

The Jizani variety is considered a non-standard Saudi dialect spoken in Jizan. Jizani speakers who migrated from Jizan to Najd often consider the Jizan dialect to be a rural form that portrays its speakers as uneducated, unsophisticated, and backward. In contrast, the Najdi dialect, associated with the Najdi people, particularly those in the Riyadh region, is viewed as a modern, prestigious dialect that makes its speakers appear well-mannered and educated. Some Jizani speakers in Najd view the Najdi dialect as a linguistic tool that connects them with the Najdi community and enhances their sense of belonging to the Saudi nation.

The stigma associated with JA reflects a broader sociolinguistic pattern observed in many language communities, where urban varieties, particularly those spoken in capital cities or economic centres, are linked to prestige, modernity, and upward mobility. Similar trends can be seen in other Arabic-speaking countries, such as Egypt, where Cairene Arabic is considered more prestigious than rural and regional dialects (Bassiouney, 2009; Sadiq, 2016). These patterns of linguistic prestige often lead speakers of non-standard varieties to accommodate towards dominant urban dialects as a means of social mobility and acceptance. Similarly, Ammani Arabic is preferred in Jordan over rural or Bedouin dialects (Abdel-Jawad, 1986; Al-Wer, 2002).

It is important to note that Jizani individuals often resist being classified as Yemeni. Al-Hakami (2023) argues that Jizanis may experience forms of prejudice involving the ‘de-Saudising’ of their identity, whereby they are positioned by some Saudis as socially or culturally external to the Saudi national identity. Although certain linguistic features of JA share similarities with neighbouring Yemeni dialects, Jizanis frequently emphasise their Saudi identity through social affiliation, interactional practices, and accommodation towards NA in particular contexts.

JA and NA differ across several phonological and morphological features that are socially salient within Saudi Arabia and contribute to the perceptual distinction between the two varieties. Previous research and the present observations indicate that features such as the use of /ʔm/ as a definite article, the /-n/ feminine verb endings, /m/ neutralisation, and the use of //j/ as a future marker are strongly associated with Jizani speech and are widely recognised by Saudi listeners as characteristic of southern dialects.

Several of these features are particularly relevant to the present study because they function not only as linguistic variables but also as social markers linked to regional identity, prestige, and stigma. The study, therefore, focuses on these salient features in analysing language attitudes and dialect practices among Jizani speakers in Najdi-dominant contexts. Detailed phonological and morphological descriptions, comparative paradigms, and extended examples are provided in Appendix A.

2.11.1 Linguistic Profile of the Jizani Variety

The linguistic description of JA presented in this study is based on a combination of published research (e.g. Hamdi, 2015; Ruthan, 2020), participant observation, recorded conversations, and interviews. Given the limited documentation available on JA, these sources provide an important basis for identifying the phonological and morphological features associated with the

variety in naturally occurring interaction within contexts where Najdi Arabic was socially dominant.

It is important to note that many participants in the present study were living in Najdi-oriented environments at the time of data collection, and some had spent substantial portions of their lives outside Jizan. Consequently, the JA features discussed here should not be interpreted as representing a fixed or isolated variety spoken uniformly across Jizan, but rather as features associated with the speech of Jizani participants living within contexts of ongoing dialect contact and linguistic change.

Because the present study focuses primarily on the relationship between language, identity, and attitudes, only the linguistic features most relevant to sociolinguistic perception are discussed in this chapter. A more detailed phonological description of JA, including its consonantal inventory and additional phonetic features, is provided in Appendix A.

The following sections outline the salient linguistic features of JA that are particularly relevant to identity construction, dialect perception, and language use.

2.11.1.1 Phonology

Some salient phonological features associated with JA include:

- **The Deletion of the Glottal Stop**

One feature of JA is the variable deletion of the glottal stop /ʔ/ in specific phonological environments (Hamdi, 2015). This process contributes to consonant cluster simplification and distinguishes JA from several other Saudi varieties. The feature forms part of the broader phonological profile socially associated with southern Saudi dialects.

- **The Realisation of /m/ Neutralisation**

Another salient feature of JA is the realisation of /m/ as [n] in certain plural suffixes, including possessive and verbal forms (Hamdi, 2015). Unlike some other Arabic dialects where this alternation is restricted or context-dependent, JA applies this pattern more broadly across masculine and feminine forms. This feature is highly perceptible in interaction and functions as an important marker of Jizani regional identity.

- **The Definite Article /ʔm/**

JA also differs from NA in its use of /ʔm/ as a definite article in contexts where MSA and NA use /ʔl/. Previous research links this feature to older southern Arabian linguistic patterns (Hazeem,

2015). Within Saudi Arabia, the feature is strongly associated with southern speech varieties and frequently contributes to perceptual evaluations of JA speakers.

- **Verbs Ending in /-n/**

JA differs from NA and other Saudi dialects in its use of /-n/ endings in certain feminine past-tense verb forms. Forms corresponding to NA /-at/ and /-ti/ may surface in JA as /-an/ and /-in/ respectively (Behnstedt, 2007). This feature is widely recognised by Saudi listeners as characteristic of southern speech and therefore constitutes an important variable in the present attitudinal analysis.

- **Gemination in /inn/ and /ann/**

Another feature associated with JA is the gemination of /nn/ in certain second-person feminine singular verb forms. This contributes to the dialect's distinctive phonological profile and may index regional affiliation in interaction.

- **/j/ as a Future Marker in Jizani Arabic**

JA uses /j/ as a future marker, whereas NA and many Gulf dialects typically use /b-/ (Persson, 2008). This feature is particularly noticeable in interregional interaction and is commonly associated with southern Saudi speech. Among some younger Jizani speakers in Najd, the suppression of /j/ may function as a form of accommodation towards NA, reflecting broader processes of prestige orientation and identity negotiation.

- **Apocope Before a Pause**

JA also exhibits apocope in certain phonological environments, particularly through the deletion of final consonants before pauses. This contributes to the dialect's distinctive rhythmic and phonetic profile.

- **Non-Emphatic /l/**

Another feature distinguishing JA from NA is the realisation of /l/ as non-emphatic in contexts where NA frequently exhibits velarisation. This distinction contributes to broader perceptual differences between the two dialects and forms part of the recognisable phonological profile associated with JA.

- **Vowels**

Jizani Arabic shares the core vowel system found in MSA, consisting of three long vowels (/i:, a:, u:/) and three short vowels (/i, a, u/). In addition, JA exhibits monophthongisation

patterns in which the Classical Arabic diphthongs /aj/ and /aw/ are realised as /e/ and /o/, respectively, a feature also observed in other Arabic dialects (Youssef, 2010).

Another phonological distinction between JA and NA involves the preservation and lengthening of final vowels in certain first-person past-tense verb forms. Whereas JA retains or lengthens final /u/ vowels in specific grammatical environments, NA more commonly favours consonant-final forms. This difference contributes to the distinctive phonetic quality of JA and is sometimes socially perceived as producing a comparatively ‘soft’ or ‘drawn-out’ speech style associated with southern Saudi dialects.

2.11.2 Linguistic Profile of the Najdi Variety

Najdi Arabic (NA) is one of the most widely spoken Arabic varieties in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the central and northern regions. Previous research describes NA as relatively conservative in relation to Classical Arabic (CA), preserving several phonological and morphological features that have undergone change in other Arabic dialects (Ingham, 1994; Versteegh, 2001). Owing to its association with the political and administrative centre of Saudi Arabia, particularly Riyadh, NA has also acquired considerable social prestige within the Saudi sociolinguistic landscape.

Najdi Arabic is not a single uniform variety but comprises several regional subgroups. According to Ingham (1994), these include Central Najdi, Northern Najdi, Mixed Northern-Central Najdi, and Southern Najdi varieties. The present study focuses specifically on Central Najdi Arabic, particularly the Riyadh-based variety, because it functions as the socially dominant dialect within the contact setting examined in this research.

Within contemporary Saudi Arabia, NA is frequently associated with education, urbanity, authority, and national identity. Its linguistic features are commonly represented in institutional, educational, and media contexts, contributing to its status as a socially prestigious variety. For this reason, NA functions not only as a regional dialect but also as an important prestige norm toward which speakers of other Saudi dialects may orient.

Several phonological and morphological features distinguish NA from JA. These include the use of affricated forms such as /dz/ and /ts/ in some phonetic environments, the retention of interdental consonants /θ/ and /ð/, and differences in pronoun forms, verb morphology, and vowel realisation (Ingham, 1994; Alajmi, 2019). Many of these features are socially salient and contribute to the perceptual distinction between Najdi and southern Saudi speech varieties.

Because the present study focuses primarily on language attitudes, prestige, and dialect practices, only the linguistic features most relevant to sociolinguistic perception are discussed

in this chapter. Detailed phonological and morphological descriptions of NA, together with comparative examples involving JA, are provided in Appendix A.

2.11.2.1 Phonology of Najdi Arabic

NA exhibits several phonological features that distinguish it from JA and other Arabic dialects. One of the most recognisable features is the use of affricated forms such as /dz/ and /ts/ in particular phonetic environments (Ingham, 1994; Alajmi, 2019). These features are especially associated with Central Najdi speech and are socially salient within Saudi Arabia, where they frequently index Najdi regional identity.

Another characteristic feature of NA is the retention of interdental consonants such as /θ/ and /ð/, which are maintained in many Najdi varieties rather than merging with other consonants, as occurs in some Arabic dialects. Previous research has also noted the existence of phonological processes linked to older Bedouin and sedentary dialect distinctions within Najd (Ingham, 1994; Alajmi, 2019).

Several of these phonological features contribute to the perceptual distinction between NA and JA and play an important role in shaping listener evaluations and dialect attitudes. In the present study, these distinctions are particularly relevant because they form part of the broader prestige associations attached to NA within Saudi society.

2.11.2.2 The Bedouin and Sedentary Dialects of Najd

Previous research distinguishes between Bedouin and Sedentary varieties of NA, a distinction that has historically been recognised across Arabic dialectology (Versteegh, 2001). In general, Bedouin varieties are described as relatively conservative, while Sedentary varieties tend to exhibit greater innovation associated with urbanisation and increased dialect contact.

Bedouin and Sedentary Najdi varieties differ across several phonological and morphological features, including variation in pronoun realisation, imperfect verb prefixes, and vowel quality (Ingham, 1994; Alajmi, 2019). Some of these features also carry social meanings within Saudi Arabia, where particular Bedouin forms may be evaluated differently from urban Sedentary forms.

Although the present study does not focus specifically on intra-Najdi variation, these distinctions remain relevant because they contribute to the broader prestige associations attached to Central Najdi speech within Saudi society.

2.11.3 Shared/Common Features Between Najdi Arabic and Jizani Arabic

Despite their perceptual differences, JA and NA also share several phonological features common across Gulf and Peninsular Arabic varieties. These include the realisation of /q/ as /g/, the merger of certain emphatic consonants, and the reduction or loss of medial glottal stops in some lexical items (Ingham, 1994; Ruthan, 2020). Such shared features contribute to the overall structural similarity between the two varieties despite their socially salient differences.

At the same time, some shared features may carry different social meanings depending on context and speaker orientation. For example, variation involving vowel realisation and consonantal patterns may index distinctions associated with Bedouin, Sedentary, regional, or urban identities within Saudi Arabia. These similarities and differences collectively shape how JA and NA speakers perceive one another linguistically and socially.

2.11.4 Mutual Intelligibility, Contact, and Interaction Between Najdi and Jizani Arabic Varieties

Although JA and NA differ across a number of phonological, lexical, and morphosyntactic features, they remain largely mutually intelligible due to their shared grammatical structures and substantial lexical overlap. However, several regionally marked features remain highly perceptible and socially salient within interaction.

The coexistence of intelligibility and perceptual difference is sociolinguistically important because it creates conditions under which speakers may evaluate, accommodate toward, or distance themselves from particular dialect forms. Features associated with JA, such as the use of /j/ as a future marker or the /-n/ feminine endings, are often immediately recognisable to Saudi listeners and may trigger social evaluations linked to regional identity and prestige.

Differences between JA and NA may occasionally create moments of reduced comprehension, particularly for Najdi speakers with limited exposure to southern dialects. However, accommodation strategies and repeated exposure through migration, education, media, and social interaction generally facilitate communication between speakers of the two varieties.

Importantly, exposure to NA is considerably more widespread among Jizani speakers than exposure to JA is among Najdi speakers, owing to the dominance of NA in institutional, educational, and media contexts. This asymmetry contributes to differing patterns of accommodation and dialect awareness between the two groups and forms an important background to the attitudinal patterns explored in the present study.

2.12 Sociolinguistics of Arabic Dialects

Arabic, a diglossic language, is spoken natively by over 200 million people in the Arab region and as a heritage language by millions more worldwide. It is an official language in more than 20 Arab countries and is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Additionally, as the language of Islamic scholarship and liturgy, it is used by many non-Arab Muslims, who often read it but may not speak it fluently.

Beyond its role as a global language, Arabic exhibits a unique sociolinguistic structure characterised by the coexistence of two main varieties: SA and Colloquial Arabic (QA). This situation was first introduced by Ferguson (1959), who identified it as a classic example of diglossia. Diglossia is a linguistic situation where 'Two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, each having a definite role to play' (Ferguson, 1959).

Standard Arabic encompasses both CA – the language of the Qur'an and early literature – and MSA, which retains many classical features but incorporates modern vocabulary. In contrast, QA refers to the regionally spoken dialects used in everyday communication, which lack official status or a standardised orthography. While SA is relatively uniform, QA displays substantial dialectal variation between and within countries (Versteegh, 2001). As geographical distance increases, mutual intelligibility tends to decrease (Albirini, 2016, p. 4).

In this framework, SA functions as the high variety, while QA functions as the low variety. The choice between them depends on the situation, audience, and purpose. Standard Arabic dominates in schools, universities, political speeches, and Friday sermons (*khutbah*), although QA is often used to clarify meaning and engage audiences. In informal domains, cafés, homes, and popular media, QA is expected, while SA can sound unnatural or can even be ridiculed.

The functional distribution of SA and QA in the Arab world is deeply embedded in sociolinguistic norms. The distinction between the two is widely recognised, and misuse in inappropriate contexts can lead to confusion, ridicule, or a loss of credibility. In reality, code-switching between SA and QA is common, with speakers adjusting their language to the audience and context.

The distinction between SA and other spoken Arabic dialects has led many researchers to explore this phenomenon, examining the differences between the two forms. For example, Albirini (2016) investigated the social functions of code-switching between SA and QA – the dialects studied were Egyptian, Levantine, and Gulf Arabic. The researchers analysed 35 audio and video recordings from religious lectures, political debates, and football commentaries. The

findings reveal that speakers strategically use SA for formal, complex, and serious topics, while DA is preferred for informal and accessible discussions.

Moreover, globalisation is reshaping the Arabic sociolinguistic arena. Languages such as English and French, as well as Indigenous languages such as Berber and Kurdish, are increasingly shaping education, business, and technology (Albirini, 2016). Media and digital platforms further accelerate the spread of new forms, creating a more multilingual landscape. This means that Arabic diglossia is not a static system but is in constant negotiation. At the same time, they expand access to SA, regional dialects, and various languages – both global and local. These developments have the potential to reshape the sociolinguistic map of the Arab world and establish new patterns of language use in the region.

The coexistence of multiple varieties also raises questions about how prestige and stigma are distributed. For example, while SA enjoys wide symbolic value, dialectal hierarchies persist. Some spoken forms (e.g. Egyptian Arabic in the media, NA in Saudi Arabia, etc.) carry prestige, while others (e.g. JA) are marginalised. Such hierarchies highlight that standardisation is not only a linguistic process but also a social one, reinforcing existing power relations.

In Saudi Arabia specifically, dialect contact is frequent, and factors such as migration, family networks, and social class mediate whether speakers shift or resist dominant forms. Understanding these dynamics is vital for analysing how Jizani and Najdi speakers negotiate their linguistic choices, and why such change occurs in particular interactional contexts.

2.13 Sociolinguistic Composition of Saudi Arabia

2.13.1 Diglossia in Saudi Arabia

This diglossic configuration produces a distinctive sociolinguistic tension in Saudi Arabia: while MSA symbolises national and religious unity, local dialects express regional belonging and everyday solidarity. Speakers constantly balance these two values, alternating between the sacred and the social.

2.13.2 Gulf Pidgin Arabic and Multilingual Contact

In addition to dialectal variation, linguistic contact with expatriate workers has led to the emergence of Pidgin Arabic. According to Muysken and Smith (1994), pidgin develops in multilingual settings where speakers lack a common language. In Saudi Arabia, interactions between Saudis and foreign workers have led to the adoption of simplified Arabic forms of communication (Gomaa, 2007).

Bedairi and Al-Doubi (2020) investigated attitudes towards Pidgin Arabic in Yanbu, involving Saudi citizens and foreign workers from Kenya, Indonesia, and India. The study identified linguistic features including insertion, word addition, and code-switching. While Saudis viewed Pidgin Arabic negatively in terms of its impact on Arabic, they acknowledged its practicality for facilitating communication.

Pidgin Arabic demonstrates how contact-induced simplification can establish new linguistic norms in multicultural settings. While often stigmatised, it functions as a practical bridge between diverse communities, reflecting Saudi Arabia's increasingly globalised labour market.

2.13.3 Variationist Studies on Saudi Dialects

In recent years, Saudi sociolinguistics has shifted from descriptive dialect studies to a variationist approach, influenced by Labov's work in the 1960s (Alahmadi, 2016). This approach examines how dialect variation is shaped by social factors, such as age, gender, and education, revealing patterns of linguistic change in Saudi Arabia. One key area of research is dialect accommodation, particularly among rural migrants in urban centres, such as Mecca, Jeddah, and Abha.

Al-Jehani (1985) studied dialect contact in Mecca between the urban population and Bedouin tribes, focusing on the shift in the realisation of Arabic interdental fricatives (/θ/, /ð/, /ðˤ/). Owing to Mecca's long history as a migration hub, its urban dialect has developed through contact with various Arabic and non-Arabic languages. Unlike most Arabian Peninsula dialects, where interdentals are retained, the Meccan dialect replaces them with stops ([t], [d], [dˤ]). Among Bedouin tribe speakers who have recently migrated from the periphery, interdentals are mainly preserved; however, younger and less educated speakers are shifting towards urban stop variants, indicating linguistic convergence driven by social factors.

Similar patterns of dialect contact and linguistic convergence have been observed in other regions of Saudi Arabia. Alajmi (2019) investigated dialect contact and convergence between Bedouin and Sedentary groups in central Najd, examining three linguistic variables: vowel merger (/u/ → /i/), the 3SM suffixed pronoun (-ih vs. -ah), and imperfect verb prefixes (ya- vs. yi-). Using sociolinguistic interviews with 23 Bedouins and 13 Sedentary speakers, the study employed statistical modelling to analyse variation patterns.

These findings show that dialect convergence in Saudi Arabia is neither uniform nor complete. Instead, it is selective, socially motivated, and influenced by local prestige hierarchies, reflecting broader global patterns of urban linguistic levelling.

The findings show that Bedouins are converging towards the Sedentary dialect, but the rate of convergence varies. The vowel merger (/i/) shows high convergence, influenced by tribe, education, and social contact. The suffixed pronoun (-ah) exhibits low convergence, mainly among younger speakers, while imperfect verb prefixes show no convergence. Sedentary speakers maintain their dialect, with only occasional code-switching to SA.

Further evidence of phonological variation and change is seen in Al-Qahtani's (2015) study, which investigated the Tihāmi Qaḥṭāni dialect in 'Asīr, in southwest Saudi Arabia. Using a variationist approach and statistical analysis (Rbrul), the study explored the impact of age, gender, geography, and social factors on the realisation of *ḍād*. The findings indicate that younger women lead the shift towards [ḍ^h] for *ḍād*, while social identity, ambition, and mobility also influence variation. This study highlights how phonological change unfolds in regional Saudi dialects.

Building on this exploration of dialectal change, Al-Bohnayyah (2019) examined linguistic variation in the Al-Ahsa urban dialect, a Najdi-type dialect spoken in Hofuf and Mubarraz. The study focused on two vocalic features influenced by linguistic and social factors (i.e. age, gender, and socio-economic affiliation). Data from sociolinguistic interviews with 36 native speakers were analysed using Rbrul in a variationist framework.

The findings reveal that traditional vowel rounding (ɑ:) and vowel raising in the feminine ending are changing. The shift towards un-rounding (ɑ:) is progressing faster than the lowering of the feminine ending (-a), which is likely owing to its association with socio sectarian identity. Overall, the Al-Ahsa dialect is levelling out local features, adopting characteristics of the supralocal variety of central Saudi Arabia. Social factors such as age, gender, and sectarian identity have a crucial role in this change, reflecting broader social dynamics, gender roles, and linguistic choices in the community.

Together, these studies indicate that Saudi Arabia is undergoing a process of supralocalisation, in which regional features are increasingly being replaced by urban and nationally recognised variants – particularly those linked to NA. This process mirrors the social changes promoted by Vision 2030, connecting linguistic modernisation with national reform.

These studies show a gradual shift in Saudi dialects, where supralocal variants are replacing local features owing to urbanisation, dialect contact, and socioeconomic changes. This process reflects the evolving social significance of linguistic features in contemporary Saudi speech. The following section examines language beliefs and social evaluations, highlighting how Saudi speakers perceive and socially evaluate linguistic variation and change.

2.13.4 The Role of English in Contemporary Saudi Arabia

In addition to Arabic dialects and Pidgin Arabic, English has a significant role in the linguistic landscape of Saudi Arabia, primarily owing to globalisation, economic development, and its status as the dominant international language. Under Vision 2030, the status of English in Saudi Arabia has evolved rapidly over the past few years and is expected to continue changing and growing in the future. English is extensively used across various fields, including education, public perception, the workforce, and media, underscoring its role as the primary means of communication between Saudi citizens and expatriate residents.

English holds a complex position in Saudi society: it is both a symbol of modernity and a potential source of cultural tension. Its growing prominence not only reflects global integration but also raises questions about linguistic identity and language policy.

English has become an essential skill in Saudi Arabia, viewed as a valuable asset for both individuals and the nation. On a personal level, English proficiency enhances career opportunities, access to knowledge, cultural understanding, study-abroad prospects, and global engagement. On a national level, it is crucial for economic growth, modernisation, and maintaining global competitiveness. However, English in Saudi Arabia is primarily used for external purposes, such as international business, technology transfer, and economic expansion, rather than for internal communication. Its role remains instrumentally motivated, serving as a tool for progress rather than for cultural integration (Al-Seghayer, 2023, p. 83).

Saudi Arabia's sociolinguistic landscape is shaped by social stratification, linguistic diversity, and the increasing role of English. Tribal affiliations, dialectal variation, and attitudes towards language prestige contribute to language use and identity. While Arabic remains the dominant language, English is increasingly having a role in education, employment, and international communication.

Understanding these dynamics provides an essential context for this study's focus on language attitudes and linguistic behaviours among Saudi speakers, particularly how Jizani migrants navigate linguistic hierarchies in the Najdi-dominated urban environment of Riyadh.

2.14 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has outlined the historical, geographical, and sociolinguistic context necessary for understanding the dynamics of Jizani–Najdi dialect contact. It has shown how regional histories, social hierarchies, and linguistic diversity intersect to shape the prestige and stigma attached to different varieties. It has also demonstrated how Vision 2030 and broader

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processes of modernisation intensify interdialectal contact and influence language attitudes across Saudi society.

This contextual grounding provides the foundation for the next chapter, which introduces the theoretical frameworks that guide the study's analysis of attitudes, identity negotiation, and linguistic behaviour among Jizani speakers in Riyadh.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the key literature that informs this study's analytical framing. While earlier sociolinguistic research tended to foreground structural accounts of language variation, contemporary work stresses that deeper ideological, attitudinal, and identity-related processes shape linguistic behaviour. For speakers such as Jizani women living in Najdi-dominant environments, language choices are not simply linguistic options, but social actions embedded in wider hierarchies of prestige, stigma, and belonging. Understanding these dynamics necessitates situating this study in several interconnected strands of scholarship.

The chapter begins by examining research on language ideologies and language attitudes, highlighting how social meanings, including status, solidarity, and stigma, shape speakers' perceptions of varieties and influence linguistic behaviour. This discussion is followed by a review of the literature on stereotypes, linguistic prejudice, discrimination, and linguistic injustice, which provides a critical lens for understanding the structural inequalities that underpin the positioning of JA in Saudi society. The chapter then turns to Family Language Policy (FLP) to explore how language ideologies and practices are negotiated and transmitted within the family domain, and how these processes shape everyday language choices.

The review then considers theoretical perspectives on code-switching and communication accommodation. These perspectives are not competing models but complementary approaches that illuminate interactional and social factors resulting in linguistic practices in mixed-dialect encounters. The chapter also considers translanguaging as a contemporary perspective that views linguistic repertoires as fluid and integrated, while critically assessing its relevance to the context of ideologically mediated dialect variation examined in this study.

This chapter establishes the conceptual foundations needed to interpret the attitudinal and conversational data presented in the subsequent chapters.

3.2 Language Ideology

Language ideology is another key sociolinguistic concept. Silverstein (1979, p. 193) defined it as 'sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure and use', while Kroskrity (2010, p. 192) emphasised 'beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language' that often reflect wider political or economic

interests. These definitions underscore two points: ideologies are not neutral, and they are embedded in broader struggles over power and identity. De Bres and Lovrits (2021, p. 3) highlighted that ideologies must be discursively reproduced to persist, while Woolard (2020, p. 2) showed that they sustain linguistic hierarchies by legitimising some varieties and stigmatising others. In effect, ideologies transform linguistic forms into markers of prestige or stigma depending on their association with socially powerful or marginalised groups (Philips, 2004).

However, what is missing from some of these general definitions is a clear sense of *how* ideologies develop in different sociolinguistic settings. A comparative lens is useful here; for example, ideologies surrounding English often invoke discourses of globalisation and neoliberal competitiveness, while Arabic ideologies frequently invoke nationalism, authenticity, and religious legitimacy. Recognising these differences is crucial for situating Najdi and Jizani varieties in Saudi Arabia's own ideological hierarchies.

3.2.1 Language Ideology in English

A recognised ideology associated with English is its perceived role as a global language linked to discourses on international trade, business communication, and economic advancement. Piller and Cho (2013, p. 23) connected this belief to neoliberal discourses that frame English as essential for international competitiveness, while Piller (2015, p. 8) noted that the continuing global rise in English learning and use demonstrates the persistence of this ideology. Wiley (2000, p. 84) identified another ideology, English monolingualism, which positions English as dominant and ties it to Americanisation processes. He argued that English has historically been imposed under various justifications ('civilising', 'assimilating'), regardless of whether these were genuinely educational or primarily political (Wiley, 2000, p. 85). These examples illustrate how English ideologies operate at a *macro level*, extending beyond language to economics, education, and global mobility.

At the level of English varieties, studies such as Coupland and Bishop's (2007) 'BBC Voices' survey demonstrate how ideological hierarchies manifest in public attitudes. They found that younger respondents were more tolerant of accent diversity, women were less critical than men, and people were more accepting when they reported openness to linguistic diversity. Garrett (2010, p. 177) interpreted these results as evidence of enduring ideological structures. However, these survey methods capture stated attitudes more than interactional practices. For this reason, in this study, I complement attitudinal elicitation (MGT, interviews) with naturalistic observation to assess whether stated tolerances towards JA and NA match actual speech behaviours.

3.2.2 Language Ideology in Arabic

Like other languages, Arabic is deeply shaped by language ideologies, some of which mirror those found in other contexts. A central ideology historically associated with Arabic is its link to Arab nationalism. Walters (2018, p. 478) explained that this ideology rests on the idea that to be an Arab is to speak Arabic, a belief famously expressed in the quote, 'إنما العربية اللسان، فمن تكلم العربية، فهو عربي' ('Being an Arab is a matter of tongue; whoever speaks Arabic is an Arab'). This reflects the 'one nation, one language' principle (Bassiouney, 2009, p. 202), illustrating how language has long been tied to collective identity in the Arab world.

Language ideologies also manifest in attitudes towards the various Arabic dialects. Hachimi (2013, p. 269) described the 'Maghreb–Mashreq ideology', which positions Middle Eastern varieties as more authentic and closer to SA, while North African varieties are often viewed as less legitimate or deficient (Hachimi, 2013, p. 271, 287). Such hierarchical views reinforce the prestige of some dialects compared to others.

Another widespread ideology is the claim of Arabic's inherent superiority over other languages, which Ferguson (1959) identified in his classic work on 'myths about Arabic'. As Eisele (2003, p. 44) explained, this sense of superiority is rooted in three sources: (1) aesthetic, based on the beauty and rhythm of Arabic, particularly in poetry; (2) linguistic, tied to the perception of Arabic grammar as logical and its lexicon as rich; and (3) religious, grounded in the fact that Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and thus considered sacred. Suleiman (2003, p. 67) noted that these myths often operate less as objective truths and more as uniform cultural attitudes.

Arab intellectuals and writers have also reinforced these ideologies. For example, Taha Hussein argued that intellectuals who failed to master SA were 'incomplete' in both intellect and masculinity (quoted in Mubaarak, 1979, p. 21). Similarly, Al-Rafi'i expressed admiration for Arabic in highly idealised and exaggerated terms (Albirini, 2016, p. 81). While these perspectives celebrate the Arabic language, they also reinforce social hierarchies: deviation from the standard or reliance on regional varieties can attract stigma, discrimination, or social exclusion (see also Ibrahim, 2000, p. 23).

In summary, language ideologies surrounding Arabic, whether tied to nationalism, dialect hierarchies, or claims of linguistic and religious superiority, continue to exert a significant influence on both perceptions of the language and the lived experiences of its speakers. These ideological positions clarify why JA, as a regional and stigmatised dialect, is often treated as socially inferior to NA, which benefits from its association with prestige.

3.2.3 Language Ideologies and Language Attitudes

Language attitudes are closely intertwined with language ideologies. While ideologies provide the overarching frameworks of belief about language, attitudes can be understood as the specific evaluations that emerge when language becomes a central issue. Walters (2006, p. 651) suggested that attitudes can be seen as smaller components of broader ideological systems, while Harrison (2021) argued that ideologies both shape and provide the sources from which attitudes are formed.

Arabic examples clearly illustrate this interplay. The prestige attached to SA, often celebrated as a symbol of pan-Arab nationalism, reflects ideological positions that sustain positive attitudes across Arab societies. Similarly, the widespread belief that Middle Eastern dialects are ‘closer’ to SA and are therefore more authentic than North African varieties (Hachimi, 2013) fuels hierarchical attitudes towards speakers of different regional dialects. Such hierarchies demonstrate that authenticity is ideologically constructed rather than linguistically inherent.

The link between ideology and attitudes is equally visible in English in Saudi Arabia. English has been promoted as prestigious and valuable in education (Faruk, 2013), which has generated a strong motivation among Saudis to learn it for employability benefits (Nouraldeen & Elyas, 2014). Here, language is tied to neoliberal ideals of productivity and employability, revealing how ideologies of modernity produce instrumental, economically-oriented attitudes towards English.

Simultaneously, ideologies often operate through myths and stereotypes. Schiffman (1996) highlighted religion as a powerful source of linguistic mythology, noting that Arabic’s association with Islam contributes to perceptions of sacredness and superiority. Garrett (2010, p. 33) explained that when beliefs about varieties become ideologised, they often create stereotypes about their speakers. For example, media portrayals of non-standard varieties often depict their users in a negative light (Dragojevic et al., 2021), thus reinforcing stigma. These representations are not neutral; they naturalise social inequalities by making linguistic prejudice appear legitimate or even commonsensical.

In summary, while distinct, ideologies and attitudes are deeply interconnected and best studied together. Ideologies provide broad frameworks of value and legitimacy, while attitudes reflect the evaluative responses that arise from them. Both concepts highlight that language is never neutral but is always entangled with issues of identity, status, and power. Analysing them in tandem enables this study to trace how structural ideologies in Saudi Arabia, particularly those surrounding dialect prestige, shape everyday attitudes towards JA and NA.

However, to understand how these ideological and attitudinal meanings become attached to specific linguistic forms, it is necessary to examine the mechanism through which dialect features acquire social significance in interaction. The following section, therefore, introduces the concept of indexicality, which explains how linguistic forms come to index layered meanings within particular sociocultural contexts.

3.3 Indexicality and Social Meaning

Indexicality provides a crucial theoretical lens for understanding how linguistic forms acquire social meaning. In sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, indexicality refers to the process by which linguistic features “point to” or signal social meanings beyond their referential content (Silverstein, 2003; Eckert, 2008). Rather than merely conveying propositional meaning, linguistic variants can index regional origin, social status, stance, group affiliation, or ideological positioning. Through repeated social use, these associations become socially recognisable and ideologically structured.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, speakers do not operate within rigidly separated linguistic systems but draw on a repertoire of available dialectal resources (Gumperz, 1964; Busch, 2012). In contexts of regional variation, this repertoire may include phonological, morphological, and lexical features associated with different varieties.

Silverstein’s (2003) notion of indexical order is particularly relevant to this study. He argues that linguistic forms acquire layered social meanings over time. At a first-order level, a form may simply correlate with a particular group or region. At higher orders, the same form becomes associated with socially evaluative meanings such as prestige, refinement, rurality, or marginality. These meanings are not inherent in the form itself; rather, they emerge through social interaction and become sedimented within local language ideologies.

In the Saudi context, Jizani and Najdi features operate within such an indexical hierarchy. At a first-order level, variants such as /ʔam/, /n/ (third-person feminine), /inn/ (suffix), and /j-/ (future marker) index regional origin—specifically association with Jizan. Similarly, variants such as /ʔaʌ/, /t/, /i/, and /b-/ index association with Najd. At this level, the forms function primarily as regional markers.

At a second-order level, however, these regional associations take on evaluative dimensions. The linguistic features then reflect broader sociolinguistic hierarchies in which one occupies a central political and symbolic position while the other is frequently constructed as peripheral. Through repeated ideological framing—within family discourse, educational institutions, and media representations—linguistic forms become shorthand for social categories.

At a third-order level, these associations may crystallise into more explicit ideological positions. For instance, characterisations of speech as “rural,” “uneducated,” or inappropriate in formal contexts illustrate how linguistic forms become embedded in broader narratives of prestige and stigma. Conversely, the use of standard variants in institutional settings may index alignment with authority, competence, or social mobility. These higher-order meanings reveal how dialect features become socially consequential beyond their structural properties. This indexical framework helps explain why linguistic variation in this study is sensitive to interactional context. If linguistic forms carry layered social meanings, speakers may select variants strategically depending on audience, topic, and setting. From an interactional perspective, such choices can be understood as stance-taking, through which speakers evaluate, position, and align with others (Du Bois, 2007).

Sociolinguistic research increasingly conceptualises speakers’ linguistic resources as repertoires rather than discrete, bounded varieties. A repertoire refers to the range of linguistic forms available to speakers, which they deploy selectively according to social context, interactional goals, and identity positioning (Blommaert, 2010; Eckert, 2008; Gumperz, 1982). This perspective highlights flexibility and social meaning, emphasising how speakers draw on different features to index belonging, stance, and social alignment.

By situating Jizani–Najdi variation within an indexical framework, this study moves beyond correlational accounts of dialect difference. Linguistic features are not merely markers of demographic categories; they are resources through which speakers position themselves within existing prestige hierarchies, negotiate belonging, and respond to perceived stigma. Indexicality thus provides the theoretical bridge linking language ideologies (Section 3.2.1), language attitudes (Section 3.3), and the context-sensitive linguistic behaviours examined in Chapters 6 and 7.

An indexical perspective thus clarifies how dialect features become socially meaningful resources within prestige hierarchies and identity negotiations. Building on this framework, the following section therefore turns to the concept of language attitudes, examining how such socially embedded meanings are consciously and unconsciously assessed.

3.4 Attitudes

3.4.1 Defining Attitudes

The concept of attitudes has long been debated in both social psychology and sociolinguistics, mainly owing to its multidimensional nature. Garrett (2010) emphasised that attitudes include

cognitive, affective, and behavioural components, making it challenging to capture the concept with a single definition. Likewise, Falk and Lieberman (2012) noted that attitudes extend beyond mental dispositions to encompass practical orientations that influence how individuals behave in specific contexts, ranging from politics to intergroup relations.

Attitudes became particularly important in sociolinguistics with Labov's (1966) pioneering work on the social stratification of speech in New York City. He revealed how changes in the city's social structure influenced both the local dialect and the evaluations associated with it, demonstrating that attitudes have a crucial role in linguistic variation and change processes. Labov's later research (1972) further indicated that attitudes, expressed through perceptions of prestige or stigma, can directly influence language use patterns. Preston (1999) also emphasised this point by demonstrating how everyday speakers' evaluations of dialects affect not only their own speech but also broader community-level change. This reinforces the idea that attitudes function as both conscious judgments and subconscious forces in language change processes.

While attitudes have been the subject of extensive research in both social psychology and sociolinguistics, their definition remains challenging (Garrett et al., 2003). Scholars from disciplines such as psychology and sociology have proposed various accounts of what constitutes an attitude, why the concept is challenging to define precisely, and how it can be best observed. Oppenheim (1982) offered a particularly influential definition, describing attitudes as:

A construct, an obstruction which cannot be directly apprehended. It is an inner component of mental life that expresses itself, directly or indirectly, through such more obvious processes as stereotypes, beliefs, verbal statements or reactions, ideas and opinions, selective recall, anger or satisfaction, or other emotions, as well as various other aspects of behaviour (P. 39).

This definition emphasises a key challenge in attitude research: attitudes are not directly observable. Instead, they must be deduced from indirect indicators, such as behaviour, discourse, or reported beliefs. This raises important methodological questions, as what individuals express regarding their attitudes may not always align with their actual behaviours. Therefore, language attitudes research relies on carefully crafted tools to elicit and interpret these underlying orientations.

However, most definitions assume a universal tripartite structure of cognition, affect, and behaviour, which may not capture cultural variations in how attitudes are expressed or enacted. In contexts such as Saudi Arabia, for example, public expressions of attitude may be moderated

by social norms or regional hierarchies, highlighting the need for context-sensitive approaches to attitude measurement

According to this definition, attitudes comprise three main components: cognition, affect, and behaviour (Garrett, 2010). The cognitive component refers to the influence of stored and pre-existing beliefs on a person's interpretation of the world. At the same time, the affective element encompasses positive or negative emotions towards a particular object. The behavioural component can be observed in how attitudes are enacted in practice, functioning both as an input that shapes willingness to act (e.g. learning a new variety) and as an output that is visible in observable behaviours (Kristiansen et al., 2005). This 'tripartite model' (Kristiansen et al., 2005, p. 15) has been widely applied in sociolinguistics because it provides a practical framework for exploring how beliefs, feelings, and actions interrelate when people evaluate languages and their speakers.

While the tripartite model is useful, it can risk oversimplifying the dynamic interplay between internal beliefs and external behaviour. Particularly in multilingual or dialectally stratified societies, the behavioural component may be shaped as much by social pressures as by personal attitudes, suggesting that empirical work should carefully consider the social context.

More recent research has added further nuance. For example, Kristiansen (2010) showed that subconscious attitudes, rather than overtly expressed ones, are key drivers of linguistic change in Denmark. This suggests that while explicit judgments remain significant, they may not fully reflect the attitudes that most strongly influence linguistic behaviour. Taken together, these perspectives highlight why attitudes are regarded as a 'core concept in sociolinguistics' (Garrett, 2010, p. 19): they function both at the conscious evaluation level and at the more subtle, subconscious level, influencing how languages and dialects evolve.

3.4.2 Language Attitudes

As language surveyors know well, 'social psychological factors', language attitudes and community identity issues are equally important for explaining how and why dialects converge or diverge. (Auer et al., 2005)

Despite their acknowledged importance, studies often under-theorise the mechanisms through which attitudes shape linguistic practice, particularly in societies experiencing rapid social transformation. Language attitudes research primarily involves the opinions, beliefs, stereotypes, and prejudices that speakers hold about a particular language or speech variety, as outlined by Garrett (2010). Notably, these attitudes are responsive to situational factors, including the salience of a language or variety in a given context and the formality inherent to the

situation, as emphasised by Kristiansen (2010). Attitudes towards language or speech varieties, which encompass stored beliefs that one may hold, will result in acting positively or negatively towards a language or speech variety (Kristiansen et al., 2005). These deeply rooted beliefs contribute to the intricate interplay between cognitive evaluations and behavioural responses, further highlighting the complexity of language attitudes in sociolinguistic research.

In addition, language attitudes can impact positive or negative reactions towards a speaker who uses a specific language or speech variety and can influence others' choice of language (Garrett, 2010). These attitudinal influences extend beyond individual preferences, shaping social interactions and contributing to the broader dynamics of linguistic choices in a community. Positive attitudes towards a language or speech variety can contribute to its use in a community, fostering a sense of identity and continuity. Conversely, negative attitudes may accelerate language shift, leading individuals to adopt languages perceived as more prestigious or advantageous. However, this relationship is often presented as straightforward, even though real-world patterns of linguistic behaviour frequently reveal more complex, contradictory dynamics.

Critically, many studies assume a linear relationship between attitudes and language change, but empirical evidence shows that speakers may maintain or shift varieties for strategic reasons unrelated to their overt evaluations. This suggests that models of language attitudes should account for situational, pragmatic, and identity-driven motivations that may override simple cognitive or affective preferences.

A key feature of language attitudes research is the recognition that attitudes influence both interpersonal perceptions (e.g. judging a speaker as 'friendly' or 'educated') and community-level outcomes (e.g. the maintenance or erosion of a minority language). Positive attitudes can foster language maintenance and vitality, while negative attitudes may accelerate language shift (Rosiak, 2023). Nonetheless, this binary framing of attitudes as either positive or negative risks ignoring the nuanced ways in which a single variety may index multiple, sometimes contradictory social meanings simultaneously. For instance, a dialect may be stigmatised in formal settings while valued for solidarity in informal contexts, complicating predictions about language shift or use. Such cause-and-effect interpretations risk oversimplifying the attitudinal landscape, as communities may maintain a variety despite negative evaluations, or abandon a highly valued dialect owing to social pressure, mobility, or institutional norms.

However, it is important to note that attitudes do not always directly translate into behaviour; there can be a gap between what speakers say they believe and what they actually do linguistically, a point often underexplored in previous studies. This gap underscores a limitation in much of the literature: studies often treat attitudes as static properties of speakers rather

than as dynamic constructs emerging through interaction. Recognising attitudes as contextually activated, rather than fixed, allows for a more accurate understanding of linguistic adaptation in social encounters.

This study addresses this gap by examining not only what participants report about JA but also the specific interactional triggers – such as topic, setting, role, and interlocutor identity – that shape their real linguistic behaviours in natural conversations. By linking attitudinal evaluations with observable patterns of variation, the study re-evaluates the assumed connection between belief and practice in Saudi dialect contact.

The literature on language attitudes is extensive in English-speaking contexts. Classic studies, such as Lambert's (1967) matched-guise experiments, revealed how listeners assign social meaning to accents. Coupland and Bishop (2007) demonstrated, through the 'BBC Voices' project, how perceptions of prestige and solidarity vary across British accents. Their findings revealed generational differences, gendered patterns of evaluation, and persistent hierarchies between standard and non-standard language forms. Similarly, McKenzie (2008) demonstrated how Japanese speakers rated their own English accents as more socially attractive than those of native speakers, highlighting how identity and solidarity can outweigh external prestige in shaping attitudes. These examples illustrate the diversity of language attitudes and the methodological richness of the field.

Studies on language attitudes are typically identified through two key measures – status and solidarity (Garrett et al., 2003) – which provide evaluation measures. Status is labelled and perceived as prestigious, with evaluative traits related to status, competence, and education; solidarity is associated with integrity, social attractiveness, and friendliness (Garrett, 2010).

Other studies, such as that by Cargile et al. (2006), have further complicated the picture. Their research on Japanese listeners' perceptions of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) showed that AAVE is stigmatised in terms of 'status' but admired for its 'solidarity' value. This duality highlights a fundamental issue in language attitudes research: while status and solidarity are functional analytical categories (Garrett et al., 2003), they may oversimplify the multidimensional nature of attitudes. In many sociolinguistic settings – including in Saudi Arabia – regional dialects simultaneously index warmth, authenticity, stigma, and marginality, making it difficult to map them neatly onto binary evaluative dimensions.

After defining the key terminology used in the language attitudes field, I now discuss the three main research approaches used to gather data on people's perceptions of English varieties: direct, indirect, and mixed methods. Following this, I explore the significance of measuring language attitudes.

3.4.3 Approaches in Language Attitudes Research

This section reviews the main paradigms in language attitudes research that inform the methodological choices discussed in Chapter 4. Building on the previous conceptual discussion, this section highlights how previous research, including Saudi-based studies such as Alabdali (2017), has informed the design of the present investigation. Scholars have long debated whether participants reveal their true attitudes or modify them for social reasons (Garrett et al., 2005b; Kristiansen et al., 2005; Labov, 1982). This methodological challenge has led to the development of techniques that capture both overt and covert orientations towards language varieties. However, even sophisticated methods cannot fully eliminate observer effects, and studies must remain cautious about assuming that indirect measures capture 'true' attitudes. In Saudi contexts, social hierarchies and regional sensitivities may further shape responses, meaning that any measure reflects both individual orientation and the interactional context of evaluation.

3.4.3.1 Direct Approach

The direct approach measures explicit attitudes by asking participants to evaluate languages or speakers through questionnaires, interviews, or rating scales. These methods elicit overtly held beliefs and feelings – the 'controlled' or 'conscious' processing of attitudes (Garrett, 2010; Garrett et al., 2005a, p. 40). Since respondents are aware that their attitudes are being assessed, their answers are intentional and self-reported (Fazio & Olson, 2003; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). This means that direct measures can capture personal beliefs and prejudice (Devine, 1989), but they are also vulnerable to self-presentation effects and social desirability bias: respondents may modify or conceal their underlying views (McConnell et al., 2008). This vulnerability is amplified in settings where linguistic hierarchies are socially sensitive, making direct methods less reliable for studying potentially stigmatised varieties, such as JA.

Direct approaches have nonetheless generated a large body of evidence on how communities evaluate languages. For example, Garrett et al. (2009) surveyed attitudes towards Welsh in three distinct communities (Wales, North America, and Patagonia) using a two-part questionnaire with both open and closed questions. They found positive affiliations with Welsh across all three communities and a willingness to participate in activities supporting the language and culture, showing how direct methods can reveal overt pride and motivation. Similarly, MacKinnon's (1981) survey of over 1,100 respondents in the Scottish Lowlands, Highlands, Skye, and the Western Isles revealed that 40%–50 % expressed positive attitudes towards Gaelic. Both studies illustrate the strength of direct questioning for capturing explicit evaluations of minority or heritage languages.

Saudi research has also adopted this direct approach. Abed (2018) combined semi-structured interviews with an online questionnaire to explore attitudes towards Gulf Pidgin Arabic (GPA), discovering widespread negative assessments that highlight the social marginalisation of GPA. Alabdali (2017) used a Likert-scale questionnaire to survey 51 Southerners in Jeddah to examine their attitudes towards their Southern dialect, and reported generally positive self-evaluations. This is particularly salient given that the present study examines Jizani speakers in Najdi-dominant settings, where prestige and power relations differ significantly from those studied by Alabdali in the Hijazi context. However, the broad definition of a ‘Southern dialect’ in that study, which included multiple distinct varieties such as JA, reveals a methodological weakness of direct surveys: when categories are not clearly defined, results may conceal intraregional differences. This limitation is particularly relevant to the present study, which differentiates Jizani from other Southern varieties to obtain more accurate attitudinal patterns.

These examples demonstrate the value and limitations of direct methods. They are effective for uncovering explicit, self-reported orientations towards languages, but they may overstate prestige or understate stigma when respondents adjust their answers for social reasons. These limitations highlight the need to incorporate an indirect approach, as discussed in the following subsection, to elicit covert attitudes in the Jizani–Najdi context. Moreover, while indirect approaches reveal covert evaluations, they may still overemphasise relative prestige hierarchies and underrepresent the social strategies speakers employ to manage identity and group membership. A comprehensive analysis must therefore interpret implicit measures in relation to situational and interactional factors.

3.4.3.2 Indirect Approach

The indirect approach aims to reveal implicit or covert language attitudes by minimising participants’ awareness of what is being evaluated. Instead of openly asking for opinions, it uses techniques that shift the focus away from the research, encouraging more spontaneous responses (Garrett et al., 2005a; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). This approach is particularly valuable for eliciting socially sensitive evaluations and stereotypes that may not emerge through direct questioning.

Two well-established techniques are MGT and the Verbal-Guise Test (VGT). In MGT, a single speaker records the same content in different varieties, so listeners believe they are hearing multiple speakers. In contrast, in VGT, each variety is performed by a different native speaker (Garrett, 2010; Kircher, 2015). Both methods enable researchers to focus on the listeners’ evaluations of the variety itself rather than the message or individual speaker.

Classic studies reveal the power of this approach. Lambert et al. (1965) demonstrated that Jewish and Arab teenagers rated identical messages differently when delivered in Arabic versus Hebrew, revealing implicit stereotypes. The Jewish participants rated Arabic speakers as less humorous, friendly, honest, and desirable than their friends or partners. Conversely, the Arab participants perceived Hebrew speakers negatively in terms of being intelligent, confident, good-hearted, friendly, honest, and desirable for marriage. Giles's (1970) experiment with British schoolchildren found that Received Pronunciation was consistently rated highest in terms of prestige and pleasantness, reflecting the standard-language ideology. Ladegaard (1998) used MGT to uncover class stereotypes in Denmark, which the participants had denied when questioned directly. These examples show how indirect methods can reveal evaluative hierarchies that are hidden from self-reported methods.

Indirect methods have also been used in Arab contexts. For example, El-Dash and Tucker (1975) used VGT to reveal a clear status hierarchy among CA, Egyptian English, and QA in Egypt, while Alkahtany (1995) found that Saudi English as a Second Language (ESL) students rated Standard American English more positively than Black or Indian English. Together, these studies demonstrate how indirect approaches can uncover patterns of prestige, solidarity, and stigma that may remain hidden under direct methods.

These findings highlight a key strength of indirect methods: they are capable of uncovering implicit prestige hierarchies that speakers may deny or downplay when questioned directly. This makes them particularly suitable for exploring attitudes towards regional Saudi dialects, where stigma may be subtle, normalised, or socially silenced.

As explicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes often differ, this study uses both direct and indirect approaches to measure both the overt and covert aspects of Jizani speakers' language attitudes. This integrated design enables a more robust analysis of how prestige, power, and identity influence evaluations of JA in Najdi-dominant settings.

3.4.3.3 Mixed Approach

Building on the strengths and limitations of the direct and indirect approaches, a growing body of research has adopted mixed or integrated methods to capture both the explicit (overt) and implicit (covert) dimensions of language attitudes (Garrett, 2010; Giles, 1970).

As the explicit and implicit dimensions of language attitudes often differ, many scholars have argued that combining direct and indirect methods can provide a more comprehensive view of how languages and varieties are assessed (Garrett, 2010; Giles & Coupland, 1991). Mixed designs enable researchers to observe both openly expressed, self-reported opinions and more covert stereotypes or emotional reactions that may not be verbalised.

Recent Saudi studies have highlighted this potential. Almahmoud (2022) examined the attitudes of 260 male undergraduates towards SA, QA, and English using an integrated approach that combined questionnaires with MGT and focus groups. While QA was used more frequently in daily life, English received the most positive evaluations, reflecting its prestige in the Saudi context. Similarly, AlHakami (2023) combined VGT with semi-structured interviews to elicit both covert and overt attitudes towards Qassimi Arabic, Hasawi Arabic, and JA. While the respondents expressed overall positive attitudes towards these varieties, participants from Central Saudi Arabia showed more negative evaluations. This pattern became evident only when the indirect and direct data were compared.

Following these examples, this study uses a mixed approach to capture both the explicit and implicit attitudes of Jizani speakers towards their variety. This combined strategy not only aligns with practices in language attitudes research but also overcomes the limitations of relying on a single method, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of how conscious beliefs and subconscious orientations interact in Najdi-dominant contexts.

Therefore, adopting a mixed design is methodologically necessary, not optional, for this study. Direct and indirect tools complement each other by revealing both the socially acceptable narratives participants express and the underlying evaluative patterns that guide their behaviour in Najdi-dominant settings. This dual perspective enables a more precise link between attitudes, interactional triggers, and actual linguistic practice.

In sum, while mixed approaches represent methodological best practice, the literature often underexplores how conscious and subconscious attitudes interact with social pressures, prestige, and identity negotiation. This study aims to address this gap by situating attitudes within the naturalistic, power-sensitive context of Jizani–Najdi interactions, highlighting the importance of linking theoretical constructs with real-world communicative behaviour.

3.4.4 Language Attitudes Beyond the Arab World

Research on language attitudes across diverse sociolinguistic settings demonstrates that prestige hierarchies, language shift, and identity negotiation are global phenomena rather than region-specific processes.

Research on the Tolaki language in Kendari City demonstrates how prestige hierarchies linked to education, urban mobility, and socioeconomic advancement contribute to language shift (Sain et al., 2025). Using a mixed-methods design combining surveys, interviews, and observations, the study shows that younger speakers increasingly favour Indonesian, which is associated with modernity and opportunity, while Tolaki is perceived as less useful in contemporary life.

Although moderate levels of language pride persist, particularly among older speakers, low language loyalty indicates declining commitment to everyday use. Crucially, the study reveals a gap between awareness of linguistic norms and actual usage, highlighting that knowledge of a heritage language does not guarantee its maintenance.

While the study provides valuable insight into the relationship between prestige and language shift, its analysis remains primarily framed within language maintenance and revitalisation rather than broader ideological inequality. It stops short of explicitly interrogating how prestige hierarchies are embedded in power structures or how dominant language ideologies shape perceptions of value. Nevertheless, the findings illustrate how linguistic hierarchies are socially constructed and tied to mobility, status, and modern identity (Sain et al., 2025). This dynamic resonates with contexts where speakers orient toward socially dominant varieties for symbolic and practical capital, making the study relevant for understanding prestige-driven linguistic behaviour beyond national language shift contexts.

Research on attitudes toward the two major Albanian dialects, Gheg and Tosk, provides important evidence that sociolinguistic evaluation can shape dialect change (Riverin-Coutlée et al., 2024). Using a verbal-guise experiment with 125 listeners, the study examined responses to specific phonetic features associated with dialect variation. The findings revealed that features undergoing change in Gheg were consistently rated as lower in status than stable features, suggesting a link between evaluative hierarchies and ongoing linguistic change. At the same time, all variants were rated highly on friendliness, indicating that low status does not necessarily preclude solidarity value.

The study situates these evaluations within Albania's historical language ideology, particularly the institutional promotion of a Tosk-based standard following the 1972 orthographic reform. This standardisation process appears to have entrenched perceptions of Tosk as educated and prestigious, while Gheg features index rurality and non-standardness. Crucially, the findings show that features perceived as low status are more susceptible to levelling and standardisation, highlighting the interaction between language-internal processes and socially constructed prestige hierarchies (Riverin-Coutlée et al., 2024). While the study is methodologically sophisticated, its reliance on isolated words and visual analogue scales introduces interpretive challenges, including variability in listener response strategies and uncertainty about whether evaluations target dialects or specific phonetic cues. Nonetheless, the research provides strong evidence that attitudes constitute a language-external force shaping dialect change, reinforcing the need to consider ideological and social factors alongside structural explanations.

A large-scale speaker evaluation experiment conducted in Sweden demonstrates that attitudes toward foreign-sounding accents are structured by socially embedded hierarchies rather than purely linguistic differences (Bijvoet, 2026). Using a verbal-guise design with over 2,000 participants, the study reveals that accents associated with North-Western European languages are evaluated more positively, while those linked to immigrant backgrounds receive less favourable evaluations. Importantly, the findings show that listeners' judgments are influenced not only by the acoustic properties of speech but by assumptions about speakers' ethnic and cultural identities. Accents misidentified as Arabic, for example, were evaluated more negatively, indicating that linguistic perception functions as a proxy for broader social categorisation.

The study's methodological incorporation of accent identification tasks is particularly significant, as it demonstrates that misrecognition itself reveals underlying ideological structures and linguistic stereotyping. By linking accent evaluation to social inclusion, employment prospects, and structural inequality, the research foregrounds the role of language attitudes in processes of marginalisation. Although conducted within a migration context, the study offers broader insight into how linguistic stigma emerges from social hierarchies rather than linguistic features, highlighting the ideological processes through which speech becomes socially stratified.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that linguistic hierarchies are socially constructed through prestige, standardisation, and broader ideological processes. The Indonesian case shows how associations with modernity and mobility encourage speakers to shift toward dominant varieties, while the Albanian context illustrates how state-supported standardisation can institutionalise status distinctions that accelerate dialect change. The Swedish findings further reveal that such hierarchies extend beyond linguistic structure to shape social evaluation and inclusion, with speech serving as a proxy for identity and belonging. In Saudi Arabia, similar dynamics are observable in the elevated status of Najdi Arabic and the marginalisation of Southern varieties, suggesting that attitudes toward dialects are embedded in wider social hierarchies that influence linguistic behaviour, identity negotiation, and patterns of variation.

3.4.5 Language Attitudes Research in the Arab World

Over the past two decades, research on language attitudes in the Arab world has expanded markedly, driven by increased regional mobility, globalisation, and the growing public visibility of minority and regional varieties in education and the media. This shift has created a rich environment for examining how Arabic speakers evaluate SA and vernacular varieties, making

this literature particularly relevant for the study of JA in Najdi-dominant settings. However, the scope of this growing body of research often remains uneven, with some regions and varieties (e.g. Gulf and Southern Saudi dialects) significantly underrepresented. This uneven coverage suggests a potential bias in our understanding of Arabic language attitudes: well-studied regions may dominate theoretical models, while peripheral or minority varieties remain under-theorised. Consequently, conclusions drawn from Arab-world studies may not generalise to less-researched contexts, such as JA.

Much of the early research compared SA with colloquial varieties. Studies consistently demonstrated positive attitudes towards SA owing to its greater prestige than CA (Albirini, 2016; Shalaby, 2018), which is not surprising given its association with the Qur'an and Islamic identity (Shalaby, 2020). This standing was motivated by its codified status, fixed orthography, and institutional roles in education, government, and the print media, in contrast to the informal status of vernacular Arabic. In other words, attitudes are influenced not only by linguistic form but also by the symbolic value linked to a variety in a speech community, an important factor when analysing responses to JA. However, the privileged position of SA reflects ideological investments rather than intrinsic linguistic superiority, illustrating how power, religion, and nationalism have shaped attitudinal hierarchies.

Critically, much of this literature conflates prestige with inherent linguistic value, potentially obscuring the complex social, political, and religious factors that shape attitudes. This raises the question of whether attitude patterns reflect linguistic properties or broader sociopolitical dynamics—a distinction highly relevant to Saudi Arabia, where regional dialects intersect with national identity politics.

El-Dash and Tucker's (1975) matched-guise study of Egyptian students compared CA, Cairene Egyptian Arabic, Egyptian English, British English, and American English. Over 70% of the respondents correctly identified the speakers' nationalities, and SA emerged as the most preferred variety, followed by Egyptian Arabic, with English varieties being less favoured. This early work highlights both the prestige of SA and the local allegiance to Egyptian Arabic. It also demonstrates how strongly national stereotypes can influence evaluations, a pattern that later studies have repeatedly confirmed, complicating purely linguistic interpretations.

Using a matched-guise technique, Herbolich (1979) examined the attitudes of 80 female Cairene Egyptians of various ages towards Egyptian, Syrian, Saudi, and Libyan Arabic dialects. In the first phase, native speakers from each country were recorded narrating a set of eight neutral pictures of an Arab couple deciding to eat in a restaurant and the subsequent restaurant scene, in their own vernacular. Immediately afterwards, the same non-Egyptian speakers were given a second, comparable set of pictures and asked to retell the story in Egyptian Arabic,

aided by Cairene interlocutors to ensure a natural 'Egyptian guise'. The results showed Egyptian Arabic was rated most favourably, followed by Syrian, Saudi and Libyan Arabic. Herbolich (1979) observed that respondents seemed to evaluate guises in part based on perceived nationality rather than solely linguistic factors. This highlights a methodological limitation of many Arab-world attitude studies: listeners often respond to perceived identity categories rather than to linguistic attributes, understood here as socially perceptible aspects of speech such as accent, phonological realisation, lexical choice, morphosyntactic variation, and prosodic patterns.

This observation underscores a persistent challenge: language attitudes may be conflated with social or ethnic stereotypes. While informative, these studies risk attributing evaluative differences to linguistic features when they may actually reflect broader social categorisations, such as nationality, class, or urban-rural distinctions.

Later research has examined loyalty and cross-regional perceptions in more depth. Ibrahim (2000) employed questionnaires and conducted interviews with 70 participants from Egypt and Morocco. He found strong loyalty to Egyptian Arabic among Egyptians and, interestingly, a preference for Egyptian Arabic over their own dialect among some Moroccan respondents. This suggests that Egyptian Arabic is a prestige dialect that extends beyond national borders, paralleling how NA may be perceived throughout Saudi Arabia. However, such findings must be read critically, as prestige here reflects media dominance and cultural soft power rather than linguistic structure, understood here as the grammatical and phonological organisation of a linguistic variety.

In contrast, Serreli (2017) employed observation and interviews to study bilinguals in Siwi and Egyptian Arabic, discovering that using Siwi signalled solidarity and belonging in minority groups. Serreli (2017) showed that Siwi remains the default, unmarked language of everyday in-group communication in the oasis, while Egyptian Arabic is used in schools, workplaces, and interactions with outsiders. These findings demonstrate that vernaculars can indicate prestige or solidarity depending on the context, an insight vital for interpreting attitudinal data on JA. Crucially, these studies have shown that attitudes are highly context-sensitive; however, most Arab-world studies rely on single-method designs that fail to capture this complexity.

Other North African studies reveal similar tensions between local loyalty and external prestige. Bentahila (1983) found that Moroccan college students viewed Arabic as more attractive than French but considered French to have a higher status, reflecting its association with employment opportunities. Chakrani (2013) also showed that Moroccan university students linked French with modernity and open-mindedness, while avoiding local languages such as Moroccan Arabic and Berber, attributing this shift to the enduring legacy of French colonialism and the resulting social and linguistic inequalities. Conversely, Gabsi (2022) documented

positive attitudes among Berber speakers in southern Tunisia, linking this reversal to the political changes that followed the Arab Spring (2011–2020), suggesting that political change can reshape prestige hierarchies. These examples demonstrate that attitudes are not fixed but shift in response to social and political conditions, which is directly relevant to Saudi Arabia's own transformation under Vision 2030. The contrasting results across these studies underscore how political history, colonial legacies, and shifting ideologies disrupt simple binaries of 'prestige' versus 'low-status', a point highly relevant to the Saudi case, where regional inequalities shape dialect hierarchies.

While these studies highlight the dynamism of attitudes, they also illustrate a limitation: most research treats change as reactive rather than considering how speakers actively negotiate and contest hierarchies in daily interaction. This perspective is crucial for understanding JA, where speakers' use and resistance to Najdi dominance may actively shape the dialectal landscape rather than merely respond to it.

Finally, a recent large-scale study in Jordan (Mashaqba et al., 2023) combined MGT with an online questionnaire administered to 234 respondents across four dialect groups, including urban and Bedouin dialects. Participants assessed eight speakers on traits including intelligibility, prestige, education, social status, courage, generosity, and accent thickness. Results demonstrated that the urban dialect was evaluated positively regarding intelligibility, prestige, social status, and education, but lower on courage and generosity, where Bedouin dialects scored higher. This demonstrates how attitudes can differ across various evaluation dimensions (status versus solidarity), emphasising the importance of multidimensional measurement in the present study. These multidimensional patterns caution against relying on single-trait measures, which risk flattening complex evaluative landscapes; this study avoids this limitation by applying both status and solidarity dimensions.

Overall, research on the Arab world has shown consistent patterns: SA is highly esteemed, urban varieties are viewed more favourably than rural ones, and attitudes blend aspects of status and solidarity. Simultaneously, studies have revealed differences across regions, genders, and political settings. These studies have shown how linguistic hierarchies in the Arab world reflect broader structures of regional inequality, centralisation, and normative pressure, rather than purely linguistic distinctions.

3.4.6 Language Attitudes Towards Regional Saudi Dialects

Research on language attitudes in Saudi Arabia is relatively recent but is growing rapidly, reflecting both internal migration and the increased public visibility of regional dialects in the media, education, and social life. Most of the studies have focused on how speakers from

different regions evaluate each other's varieties and how social factors influence these evaluations. This is directly relevant to the present study, which examines how JA is perceived in Najdi-dominant contexts. Reviewing this literature enables the identification of baseline patterns of prestige, stigma, and intragroup loyalty, against which this study's findings can be interpreted.

An early and influential study by Alrumaih (2003) examined the perceptions of the Najdi people towards major Saudi dialects. The participants completed mapping tasks to outline dialect regions and rating tasks to evaluate 'correctness', 'pleasantness', and the 'degree of difference' on a seven-point scale, followed by interviews. Results showed strong linguistic security among Najdi speakers, who rated their own speech highly for both correctness and pleasantness. However, they rated Southern dialects very negatively on both measures and as markedly 'different'. This pattern of self-favouring and the downgrading of Southern dialects provides an early benchmark of attitudes that this study can compare with.

However, these findings largely reflect explicit, self-reported evaluations, which may overstate social conformity and underrepresent covert stigma or subtle strategies of dialect management among speakers. The study of JA benefits from examining these implicit dimensions to capture a more nuanced picture of regional attitudes.

Subsequent work by Alahmadi (2016) examined attitudes towards Urban Meccan Hijazi Arabic using a direct approach (a five-point Likert scale questionnaire administered to 80 participants). Age, sex, and education were measured as potential influences. The respondents expressed positive attitudes towards their own dialect, highlighting its role in identity, distinctiveness, affiliation, and solidarity. However, unlike Alrumaih's open-ended tasks, Alahmadi's study relied solely on fixed attitudinal phrases, preventing respondents from elaborating on their perceptions. This emphasises the importance of combining direct and qualitative methods, as the present study does, to gain a deeper understanding of speakers' perceptions. Moreover, reliance on fixed scales risks flattening the multidimensionality of attitudes, such as how prestige, solidarity, identity, and context interact. Qualitative insights are therefore essential for revealing the subtleties and contradictions inherent in JA speakers' attitudes. Since many of the previous studies have relied on direct attitudinal measures, they risk reproducing socially desirable responses that obscure the covert stigma attached to marginalised varieties such as JA.

Aldossaree (2016) employed MGT to compare attitudes towards Najdi, Hijazi, and Janoubi (Southern) dialects among Saudi university students from various regions. The participants evaluated informal audio recordings on a five-point scale for traits including shyness, formality, and outgoingness, selected adjectives from a list, and responded to open-ended questions

about the speakers. Consistent with Alrumaih (2003), the Najdi speakers received more positive evaluations, while the Southern speaker was rated negatively across both the questionnaires and interviews. These two studies suggest that negative stereotyping of Southern dialects is a widespread pattern across Saudi Arabia. They also reveal how linguistic hierarchies in Saudi Arabia reflect broader structures of regional inequality, centralisation, and normative pressure, rather than purely linguistic distinctions.

Critically, while these studies document hierarchies, they rarely interrogate how participants negotiate their own social identities in relation to these hierarchies. This neglect limits the explanatory power of the findings, which may overemphasise structural factors at the expense of individual agency

Focusing specifically on JA, Ruthan (2020) adopted a qualitative approach with 183 Saudi students studying in the US recruited through a Facebook page, who rated Jizani speakers on a six-point Likert scale for being 'slow', 'smart', 'educated', and 'friendly'. The Najdi participants displayed the most negative attitudes, while the Southerners expressed positive evaluations of their own variety. These findings align with those of Alrumaih (2003) and Aldossaree (2016) in illustrating the persistent negative stereotyping of Southern varieties, while also highlighting intragroup loyalty among Southerners. Yet, the diasporic context of Ruthan (2020) introduces additional complexity: attitudes expressed abroad may differ from those in situ due to exposure to non-local norms and prestige hierarchies. This highlights the necessity of in-country investigation to accurately capture context-sensitive attitudes. Ruthan's participants were Saudi students surveyed abroad via a Facebook group; the data reflect evaluations formed in a mixed diasporic context rather than in the respondents' home regions. In contrast, the present study investigates Jizani speakers in Saudi Arabia, enabling attitudinal patterns to be examined on-site and reducing the contextual bias that can occur in expatriate settings. At a time of intensified mobility under Vision 2030, these ideological patterns may be evolving, making it essential to re-examine attitudes in on-site, Najdi-dominant contexts rather than diasporic or aggregated settings.

Recent research has begun to explore how social factors influence these attitudes. Alhazmi (2023) employed VGT with 568 participants to examine attitudes towards four Saudi dialects. The findings show that gender, birthplace, and the level of education all affect perceptions: female participants and those with higher levels of education generally exhibited more acceptance of dialect variation and less biased attitudes towards it. Some of these social factors are relevant to the present study's participant profile and analysis.

Other studies have introduced innovative methods to capture dialect dominance perceptions. Alhazmi and Alfalig (2022) used a keyword technique, novel in the Saudi context, to elicit the

participants' initial impressions of each variety and asked which variety they considered most dominant. Their results confirm a widespread stereotype of Najdi dominance. Similarly, Al-Rojaie (2021) employed a perceptual dialectology approach, using a Geographic Information System, to map the recognition of five major dialects: Najdi, Hijazi, Southern, Eastern, and Northern. Both of these studies identified the common stereotype of the Najdi variety as dominant and easily recognisable owing to its salient features. This reinforces the idea that NA has symbolic power in Saudi Arabia, providing a backdrop for understanding Jizani speakers' linguistic features use and attitudes in Najdi-majority settings.

These studies present a consistent pattern. Across two decades of research, NA (and to some extent Hijazi Arabic) has generally received more positive evaluations and is associated with prestige and power. In contrast, Southern varieties, including JA, are stereotyped more negatively but also display strong in-group loyalty. Simultaneously, gender, education, and setting influence these evaluations, with women and more educated respondents showing greater acceptance of variation. This context highlights the importance of the present study: by focusing on Jizani speakers in Najdi-dominant settings and combining direct and indirect methods, it examines whether these long-standing patterns persist, change, or become more complex under conditions of interdialect contact. Nevertheless, much of the existing research has either aggregated Southern dialects into a single category or examined attitudes only in the respondents' home regions. The present study addresses these gaps by isolating JA as a distinct variety and examining how the attitudes and experiences of Jizani speakers unfold in Najdi-dominant settings. By applying both direct and indirect approaches, it provides a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between prestige, stigma, and identity that shape attitudes towards a marginalised variety in contemporary Saudi Arabia.

Nevertheless, even with mixed methods, the study must remain cautious not to assume a one-to-one mapping between attitudes and behaviours; social desirability, context, and linguistic practices may mediate this relationship, which the analysis explicitly considers.

3.5 Standard and Prestige Varieties

Most of the research on language attitudes has examined how social evaluations differ between 'standard' and 'non-standard' varieties (Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Ibrahim, 1986). Generally, a standard variety is the spoken or written form regarded as the most correct or acceptable, which is usually codified, taught in schools, and associated with educated speakers (Cushing, 2021). Such varieties are often seen as official and 'proper' because those with the most power in a speech community determine the forms that are considered 'standard' (Cheshire et al., 2014). In contrast, non-standard varieties differ from the standard in their pronunciation,

grammar, or vocabulary (McKenzie, 2008) and are often assigned a lower status. However, Cheshire et al. (2014) highlighted that non-standard dialects often serve communicative functions that standard varieties cannot (e.g. differentiating singular from plural 'you/yous'), a fact that linguists acknowledge but that public stigma continues to overlook. This reveals that linguistic value is not tied to structural adequacy but to ideology: 'standard' is a social judgement, not a linguistic fact.

It is worth noting that this ideological construction of 'standard' can obscure the communicative richness of non-standard varieties, such as JA. Evaluations based on codified norms may therefore misrepresent speakers' linguistic competence, reinforcing structural inequalities rather than reflecting actual communicative ability.

In the English-speaking world, this distinction is particularly evident: Received Pronunciation, Standard American English, and Glasgow Standard English are regarded as high-status forms used by upper or dominant social groups. Simultaneously, accents from Birmingham, Liverpool, the Glasgow vernacular, and Southern American English are seen as non-standard and associated with working-class identities (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Dragojevic et al., 2017; Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; McKenzie, 2008). Evaluation studies have consistently shown that standard varieties are rated higher in status but lower in solidarity, while non-standard varieties exhibit the opposite pattern: greater warmth and local identity, but less perceived prestige (Ahmed et al., 2014; Garrett, 2010). This duality demonstrates how socioeconomic status and social power influence language attitudes. Crucially, these attitudes do not emerge organically; they are reinforced through schooling, media representations, and institutional norms that privilege certain groups at the expense of others.

From a critical perspective, this indicates that prestige is not merely descriptive but prescriptive: it dictates which forms are socially rewarded or sanctioned. In the Saudi context, this mechanism systematically privileges NA over regional dialects like JA, shaping perceptions of competence and social belonging.

Arabic sociolinguistics complicates the standard/prestige equation. While some scholars have treated the terms interchangeably, Abd El-Jawad (1986) demonstrated that they are not synonymous. Modern Standard Arabic is codified, formal, and considered 'correct', but 'prestige' can also be associated with particular urban dialects depending on the country and context (Eltouhamy, 2015; Hussein & El-Ali, 1989). For example, in Egypt, Cairene Arabic is widely regarded as prestigious by non-Cairenes (Bassiouney, 2009), while in Jordan, the urban variety holds the highest prestige, and Bedouin or rural varieties are highly stigmatised (Abd El-Jawad, 1986; Almhairat, 2015). This shows that prestige is not intrinsic but is socially negotiated, varying across geography, politics, and group identity. In many cases, 'prestigious' dialects

reflect the speech of socially dominant groups, urban elites, political centres, or media hubs, revealing the extent to which linguistic prestige mirrors existing power structures.

Such socially contingent prestige underscores the importance of examining not only how JA is evaluated but also why certain features are valorised in Najdi-dominant settings. It cautions against essentialising linguistic hierarchies as inherent properties of the dialect itself.

Most Arabic studies have agreed that urban colloquial varieties are regarded as more prestigious than other local varieties (Abd El-Jawad, 1986; Al-Raba'a, 2016; Al-Wer, 2007; El-Dash & Tucker, 1975; Eltouhamy, 2015; Herbolich, 1979). This prestige is closely linked to the socioeconomic status and power of their speech communities (Albirini, 2016) and, in many cases, to the capital city. For example, NA, spoken in Riyadh, is recognised as Saudi Arabia's most prestigious variety (Ruthan, 2020), just as Cairene and Damascene dialects are considered prestigious in Egypt and Syria, respectively (Kojak, 1983; Schmidt, 1986). Such cases illustrate that 'prestige' operates as a form of linguistic inequality: dialects associated with rural, peripheral, or lower-income regions, such as JA, are often marginalised not because of their linguistic properties but because of the social positioning of their speakers. This ideological dimension is central to understanding the attitudinal patterns examined in the present study.

However, this perspective also highlights a limitation of much existing research: analyses often emphasise prestige hierarchies without fully exploring speakers' resistance, use, or creative negotiation of these hierarchies—processes likely to be important for JA in Najdi-dominant contexts.

3.6 Stereotypes, Linguistic Prejudice, and Linguistic Discrimination

Language attitudes can have positive or negative consequences. Negative attitudes often take the form of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, which can reduce speakers' self-esteem and restrict their social participation (Baugh, 2018). These practices are particularly relevant in contexts such as Saudi Arabia, where Jizani and Najdi varieties occupy contrasting social positions but have, to date, rarely been examined through this lens. Understanding these processes is therefore crucial for interpreting how linguistic hierarchies emerge and are sustained in everyday interactions. It is also important to distinguish between overt and covert forms of prejudice. JA speakers may encounter subtle forms of bias, such as joking, teasing, or implicit social exclusion, which are not always captured in survey data but are integral to understanding real-world experiences of marginalisation.

These three forms are interconnected. Stereotyping occurs when traits, characteristics, or behaviours are attributed to individuals based on generalised beliefs about the social groups to which they belong (Locksley et al., 1982, p. 270; Puddifoot, 2019, p. 71). The term ‘stereotype’ refers to the familiar mental image associated with a social group and its language, which can then feed into linguistic prejudice. Language ideology research shows that such stereotypes can become naturalised through processes that link linguistic features with social types and values, making these associations appear inherent rather than socially constructed (Irvine & Gal, 2000). Linguistic prejudice consists of preconceived judgments about a speaker’s language use – such as accent, pronunciation, or dialect (O’Neil & Massini-Cagliari, 2019, p. 32) – that often operate without conscious reflection. These prejudices arise in a range of contexts, including educational, professional, and social settings, and may lead to significant disadvantages for speakers of non-standard or marginalised varieties.

In response to linguistic prejudice, speakers may actively adjust their speech in order to avoid stigma and social exclusion. Lippi-Green (2012) demonstrates how accent-based discrimination pressures speakers to conform to dominant linguistic norms, particularly in institutional contexts such as employment and education. Similarly, Bucholtz (2003) shows that speakers strategically manage linguistic features to align with socially valued identities and to distance themselves from negatively stereotyped groups. Such adjustments reflect the social consequences of linguistic hierarchies, illustrating how stigma can shape everyday language practices and contribute to the marginalisation of non-prestige varieties. Linguistic discrimination involves the unfair treatment of individuals based on language use and stems from these prejudiced evaluations (O’Neil & Massini-Cagliari, 2019, p. 32). Crucially, discrimination is not just attitudinal; it also has material consequences for access to opportunities, credibility, and social acceptance.

In the Saudi case, these dynamics may intersect with regional hierarchies, gender norms, and urban-rural divides, producing compounded effects for JA speakers in Najdi-majority environments. Analysing these intersectional consequences is crucial for a full understanding of linguistic inequality.

These phenomena are not random but are embedded in broader structures of power. In the Saudi context, stereotypes linked to regional dialects reinforce longstanding inequalities related to class, region, and identity. Stereotypes about dialects are not formed solely through direct interaction; they are also circulated through media representations and public discourse. Media caricatures and stylised performances can index social types and reinforce ideological associations that audiences adopt even without personal experience of the speakers (Cavanaugh, 2005). The negative stereotyping of Southern varieties, including JA, often reflects

wider socioeconomic narratives rather than any inherent linguistic difference. This process mirrors global patterns where marginalised regional speech is treated as a proxy for assumptions about intelligence, trustworthiness, or modernity. From a methodological perspective, it also signals the need to combine both direct and indirect measures of attitudes: explicit self-reports may understate the extent of stereotyping or bias due to social desirability, while indirect measures can uncover covert patterns that affect JA speakers' everyday experiences.

Recognising these dynamics provides an essential analytical backdrop to understanding the attitudinal data presented in later chapters in this thesis. As stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination are rooted in social structures rather than being individual attitudes alone, they form part of a wider system that shapes how Jizani speakers are evaluated in Najdi-dominant environments. To situate these inequalities in a broader ethical and sociopolitical framework, the following section introduces the concept of linguistic justice, which provides a lens to examine how such hierarchies affect speakers of marginalised varieties. Framing the discussion in terms of linguistic justice also foregrounds the normative stakes: evaluating JA is not a neutral linguistic exercise but implicates rights, dignity, and equitable participation in social, educational, and professional domains.

3.7 Linguistic (In)Justice

3.7.1 Theoretical Foundations of Justice

Justice has been extensively theorised in political philosophy. Rawls' (2017) 'justice as fairness' notion prioritises equal basic liberties and fair opportunity, while Sen's (2009) capabilities approach shifts the focus from resource distribution to enhancing individuals' fundamental freedoms. These models underpin a linguistic-justice perspective that concerns not only the right to use a language but also the fair valuation of linguistic varieties across institutions. In other words, linguistic justice considers whether speakers of all varieties can participate on equal terms, free from stigma or exclusion. Adopting these frameworks in sociolinguistics enables researchers to treat linguistic disadvantage not as a matter of individual prejudice alone but as a structural injustice embedded in institutions, public discourse, and everyday interactions. However, applying political theories of distributive justice to language requires careful adaptation, as dialectal hierarchies often operate symbolically rather than through formal policy, making injustice diffuse and normalised rather than legally codified.

3.7.2 Linguistic Injustice in Global Contexts

Drawing on these foundations, scholars such as Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and Bourdieu (1991) argued that language hierarchies reproduce social inequalities and restrict individuals' access to full participation in society. Linguistic injustice arises when speakers of marginalised or non-prestigious varieties face pressure to shift or suppress their linguistic identity to conform to dominant norms. For example, Bourdieu's notion of 'linguistic capital' explains how dominant varieties acquire value through social power rather than linguistic merit, making speakers of marginalised varieties structurally disadvantaged regardless of competence (Bourdieu, 1991).

Van Parijs (2011) offered a systemic framework for linguistic justice, concentrating on the global dominance of English as a lingua franca. He emphasised how privileging a single language can restrict opportunities in education, employment, and civic life, thus reinforcing inequality. While Van Parijs highlighted efficiency and inclusion, critics have pointed out that such solutions may re-establish hierarchy unless protection for minorities is equally prioritised in policy design. While Van Parijs advocated for the spread of English as a means of democratic inclusion, he also acknowledged the risks of linguistic homogenisation. He advocated for safeguarding minority languages alongside promoting a shared language for global communication.

Similarly, arguments emphasising the practical benefits of English for global integration (e.g. in India) often overlook the internal linguistic conflicts such policies generate, where communities struggle to preserve local languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). These dynamics illustrate how linguistic power can erode minority languages and threaten cultural diversity.

These global debates highlight a key point for this thesis: linguistic injustice is rarely about language alone. It is shaped by mobility, modernisation, and political ideologies, forces that are increasingly salient in Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030.

3.7.3 Linguistic Justice in the Saudi Context

While Arabic is the official and dominant language in Saudi Arabia, the country is home to a notable dialectal diversity. Prevailing ideologies of linguistic standardisation often elevate varieties such as NA as more 'correct', 'educated', or 'prestigious', while other regional dialects, such as JA, are socially marginalised (Alrumaih, 2003). This study examines how such ideologies shape the experiences of Jizani speakers residing in Najdi-speaking areas, where they may encounter subtle pressures to modify or adapt their speech in their daily interactions.

Linguistic justice provides a valuable lens for interpreting these dynamics. It involves not only the right to use a language or dialect but also the fair and respectful treatment of all varieties

across social, educational, and institutional domains. For speakers of marginalised dialects, language is not only a tool for communication but also a key aspect of identity and belonging.

In the Saudi context, linguistic justice also intersects with regional inequality, centre–periphery dynamics, and state-led narratives of national unity, which can obscure, or sometimes reinforce, stigma towards non-central varieties.

By foregrounding these issues, this study highlights that the challenges faced by Jizani speakers are not isolated or anecdotal but part of a wider system of symbolic marginalisation. Such marginalisation may persist even without overt discrimination, illustrating how linguistic injustice often takes subtle, normalised forms that can nonetheless restrict belonging and self-worth.

In this thesis, linguistic justice is an interpretive lens for examining symbolic inequalities. Jizani speakers in Najdi-dominant settings report subtle pressures to conform to certain features of their own speech to avoid stigma. Such pressures may not result in formal exclusion, but they can shape participation, belonging, and self-worth, key outcomes for a justice-oriented account of language.

This perspective enables examination of potential tensions between national narratives of inclusivity under Vision 2030 and the everyday linguistic hierarchies that structure social interaction.

3.7.4 Language Rights and Linguistic Human Rights

Understanding linguistic justice requires distinguishing between language rights and linguistic human rights. Language rights refer to the use of specific languages in particular contexts (e.g. education, legal settings, media, etc.). Linguistic human rights are universal and essential, applying to all languages and considered necessary for a life of dignity (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995) argued that individuals should have the right to use and learn their mother tongue, alongside at least one official language of their country. Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) further distinguished between two key interests: the expressive interest (language as a marker of identity) and the instrumental interest (language as a means of communication). Necessary rights relate to expressive interests, ensuring individuals can use their mother tongue without restriction and maintain their cultural identity. In contrast, instrumental rights, while important, pertain to access through dominant or official languages.

Linguistic human rights also encompass both individual and collective aspects. At the individual level, they relate to the right to identify with and use a mother tongue in everyday life and

education. On a collective level, they correspond with minority rights, including the right to conserve a language and to participate in political and cultural activities through it. Education has a crucial role in either preserving or undermining linguistic rights, depending on whether mother tongue instruction is accessible (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

In this study, expressive interests align with dialect identity work in family and peer networks discussed in Section 3.8. In contrast, instrumental interests align with upward mobility logics associated with Najdi speech in education and employment. This distinction helps to explain why Jizani speakers may feel pride in their dialect yet still experience pressure to shift in specific contexts, illustrating the layered nature of linguistic inequality.

Building on this justice-oriented perspective, the following section examines family language policy as a micro-level arena where these broader hierarchies and ideologies are reproduced, challenged, or reshaped in everyday practices. If linguistic justice frames the structural value of varieties, family language policy reveals how those values are enacted in the intimate domain of the home.

Importantly, this study does not assume injustice a priori; rather, it examines how speakers describe, negotiate, or contest linguistic hierarchies in their own accounts.

3.8 Family Language Policy

Family language policy provides a powerful framework for examining how language beliefs, practices, and management emerge in the home. As the primary socialising unit, the family has a decisive role in shaping children's linguistic repertoires and aligning them with wider social ideologies. While FLP has been most widely applied to transnational or immigrant families, internal mobility in Saudi Arabia – particularly among Jizani families living in Najdi-dominant cities – creates similar tensions between identity, prestige, and assimilation. This makes FLP directly relevant to the present study.

Because FLP scholarship has largely emerged from multilingual Western and migration contexts, its conceptual tools often presuppose language-level distinctions rather than dialect hierarchies. Its application to intra-Arabic dialect contact, therefore, requires careful adaptation.

3.8.1 Core Components of Family Language Policy

Language ideologies are a core component of FLP. Its definition in FLP refers to parents' beliefs and attitudes towards language and its use. These ideologies are shaped by macro-level

influences, such as political decisions and social views on the value of minority languages and bilingualism, as well as micro-level factors, such as parental beliefs about raising children bilingually (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, 2014; Curdt-Christiansen & La Morgia, 2018). This dynamic interplay suggests that FLP is not fixed but evolves as families continuously negotiate and reshape their language use (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, 2014; Curdt-Christiansen & La Morgia, 2018).

Despite extensive theorisation, ideologies surrounding intradialectal prestige (rather than language-level prestige) remain underexamined. This suggests that existing FLP models may under-theorise situations where variation is socially stratified but not institutionally codified as separate languages. In Saudi Arabia, the perceived superiority of NA functions ideologically in ways comparable to dominant languages in bilingual settings; however, the FLP literature rarely considers dialect hierarchies.

Language practices, as another significant aspect of FLP, have been defined by Schwartz (2010) as linguistic practices that refer to the habitual patterns of language choice and preferences in families, influenced by different contexts. According to Spolsky's model, language practice describes how families use language in their daily interactions, including choosing a particular language for specific situations and employing translanguaging strategies (2006, p. 5).

Language management is the third element of FLP, referring to efforts to guide or influence language use. Spolsky (2009, p. 4) defined it as 'the explicit and observable efforts by a person or a group that either has or can claim authority over participants in a domain to modify their language practices or beliefs'. In the family context, Curdt-Christiansen (2013, p. 57) expanded this to include conscious and unconscious parental efforts to create the right conditions for language learning and literacy development.

In the Saudi context, Jizani parents may engage in active management to preserve their dialect, particularly when their children are immersed in NA at school and in the media. However, few studies have addressed how parents manage *dialect* rather than language maintenance, a gap this study helps to address by examining how Jizani families negotiate pressures to align with high-prestige Najdi features.

3.8.2 Language Use Strategies

Barron-Hauwaert (2004) identified seven types of language use strategies in the family context. The first is the One Parent, One Language – Majority Language (OPOL-ML) strategy, where each parent speaks a different language with a child, and one uses the majority societal language. This often results in a stronger acquisition of the majority language, potentially at the expense of

the minority language. The second is the One Parent, One Language – Minority Language (OPOL-mL) strategy, in which each parent speaks a different language, but one maintains consistent use of the minority language. This approach has shown greater success in retaining minority languages, particularly when supported by regular and meaningful exposure. The third is the Minority Language at Home (mL@H) strategy, in which both parents speak the minority language in the household while the child acquires the majority language through school or external environments. This model is widely regarded as one of the most effective for maintaining the minority language.

The fourth is the Trilingual or Multilingual Strategy, which involves the use of more than two languages in the family and requires deliberate planning to ensure a balanced input and development. The fifth, the Mixed Strategy, enables parents and children to switch between languages fluidly, promoting flexible bilingualism, though it may risk weakening the minority language if not well managed. The sixth, the Time and Place Strategy, assigns specific languages to particular routines, contexts, or times (e.g. weekdays versus weekends), which can support structured bilingual development. Finally, the Artificial or Non-Native Strategy occurs when a parent uses a non-native, often high-status or global language, to raise their child bilingually. The effectiveness of this strategy depends heavily on the parents' fluency and consistency.

Ultimately, successfully transmitting a minority language at home alongside a majority language depends on family language ideologies, the quality and frequency of linguistic input, and the strategies parents adopt in everyday interactions. In the Saudi context, such strategies illuminate how families decide whether to prioritise NA for mobility, JA for identity, or both.

3.8.3 Parental Language Ideologies

Parental language ideologies significantly influence language practices. Research by Lanza (2007) indicated that these beliefs can differ widely regarding language use. For example, they may promote multilingualism and active engagement with various languages. Conversely, they may encourage a preference for one language over others, often supporting the use of a heritage language. Numerous studies have shown that immigrant parents, regardless of their ethnolinguistic backgrounds, strongly support passing down their heritage language to their children (Ferguson, 2013; Pauwels, 2016). Their main motivation is to preserve the heritage language along with its cultural values and ethnic identity. For example, Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) ethnographic study of 10 Chinese families in Quebec highlighted how parents stressed the importance of Mandarin as a symbol of Asian identity. Ferguson's (2013) research on Yemeni families in the United Kingdom (UK) revealed that parents considered transmitting Arabic as both a cultural and religious act, linking it to the Islamic faith. Another key reason for

parents passing on the heritage language is to strengthen their ties with extended family, particularly when grandparents are living in the home (Melo-Pfeifer, 2015).

In Saudi Arabia, the ideology–practice gap is particularly striking: parents may explicitly value JA as an identity marker while implicitly encouraging Najdi use for schooling, employment, and social acceptance. This tension mirrors global patterns but has not been examined in intra-Saudi contexts.

3.8.4 Review of Family Language Policy Research

Research on FLP has consistently shown how families navigate heritage-language maintenance under the pressures of dominant societal languages. Across diverse contexts, studies have demonstrated that language beliefs, practices, and management are shaped not only by parental intentions but also by institutional constraints, ideological pressures, and the practical realities of daily life.

Curdt-Christiansen's (2013) study of English–Chinese families in Singapore clearly illustrates this complexity. While parents valued Mandarin as an identity resource, the dominance of English – reinforced through schooling and homework – shifted everyday practices towards the majority language. The focus on mother–child interactions revealed the mother's central role in language transmission but offered limited insight into how other family members shape FLP. Crucially, the study showed how state policies that privilege English constrain heritage-language maintenance, even when parents are ideologically committed.

King and Fogle (2006) similarly demonstrated how Spanish–English families in the US use strategies such as OPOL and mL@H to maintain bilingualism. However, they emphasise that parental motivations alone cannot guarantee success; institutional support is often lacking, and social pressures push families towards English. Their findings parallel Curdt-Christiansen's (2013) in showing that FLP decisions are often aspirational – limited by structural conditions that restrict heritage-language opportunities. Similarly, Fang and Yao (2025) examine family language practices among Chaoshan households, showing that the home plays a central role in maintaining the Teochew dialect and reinforcing local identity. Although Teochew remains actively used in family interaction, younger generations are transmitting it less consistently. The findings highlight how intergenerational transmission within the family shapes dialect vitality.

Dünkel et al. (2025) examine the language use of 803 migrant adolescents in Germany with German–Russian and German–Turkish backgrounds, combining standardised reading assessments with questionnaires on language use in family and peer contexts. Research indicates that adolescents' language practices are shaped not only by family use but also by

peer networks. Friendships with speakers of both majority and heritage languages support balanced bilingual competence, highlighting the role of social relationships in language use. Likewise, Kohn et al. (2020) show that adolescents often accommodate to peers' speech patterns, sometimes diverging from their home variety. They highlight that during adolescence; peer interaction can be as influential as the family in shaping language practices and patterns of transmission.

Yousef (2022) examined Arabic-speaking families in Australia, focusing on how frequent transnational mobility influences language maintenance. The study identified several strategies families use to support bilingual development, including home use of Arabic, language mixing, Arabic literacy practices, media exposure, and home-country visits. The findings revealed that mothers, in particular, play a central role, employing both planned and spontaneous strategies to sustain Arabic, highlighting the fluid and adaptive nature of FLP in contexts of regular movement between host and home societies. As Hirsch and Lee (2018) suggested, such mobility significantly shapes decisions about which languages to maintain and why. However, while the study demonstrates the dynamic nature of FLP in transnational settings characterised by language-level contrasts, it does not address how dialect hierarchies operate within a single national context, a gap that is particularly relevant for intra-Saudi dialect contact.

Said (2021) focused on Arabic–English families in the UK and showed that mothers' language ideologies strongly influence heritage-language literacy. However, Arabic's diglossic nature and the scarcity of learning resources limit their efforts. While the study emphasises home literacy practices, it pays less attention to structural inequalities, such as the availability of Arabic-language schooling or institutional support, which significantly affect language maintenance.

Other studies have highlighted the broader social environment. Othman (2006) showed that Arabic–English children in Manchester maintain Arabic through home, friendship networks, mosques, and the media. Gomaa's (2011) work with Egyptian families in Durham demonstrated how religious and cultural motivations sustain Arabic transmission, aided by access to Arabic schools and community institutions. Similarly, Moustauoui Srhir (2020) found that Moroccan families in Spain maintain Arabic to preserve ties with relatives and their wider social networks.

Bahhari (2023) provided an important Saudi perspective, revealing that Saudi families in Australia maintain Arabic for religious reasons and to ensure smooth reintegration into Saudi education. This study shows how religion and return migration shape FLP decisions among Saudi families living abroad.

Collectively, these studies show that FLP is shaped by intersecting ideological, social, and institutional forces. Parents may value the heritage language, but dominant-language

pressures, educational environments, and access to community resources affect outcomes. These findings provide an essential foundation for this study, which examines how Jizani families navigate heritage-dialect maintenance in Najdi-dominant settings, where prestige hierarchies favour NA.

By situating Jizani FLP in a linguistic justice framework, this study explores how families balance identity, mobility, and regional inequality when making everyday language choices, revealing how home-based practices may reproduce, resist, or reconfigure broader linguistic hierarchies in Saudi Arabia.

To examine the social and interactional triggers underlying the use of Najdi linguistic features by Jizani speakers, this study draws on insights from both communication accommodation theory and research on code-switching. They are used here as complementary analytical tools that help illuminate why speakers shift, adapt, or maintain particular features in specific contexts. Together, they offer a way to link speakers' moment-to-moment linguistic choices to broader social factors such as audience, setting, perceived prestige, and ideological positioning. The following sections, therefore, review key literature on communication accommodation theory and code-switching, focusing on how each framework contributes to understanding the triggers and motivations behind dialectal variation in contact settings.

3.9 Communication Accommodation Theory

Developed by Howard Giles (1973) as Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT), Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is a foundational sociolinguistic framework for understanding how speakers adjust their communication in interaction. Initially inspired by Byrne's (1971) similarity-attraction theory—which proposes that people are drawn to those sharing similar attitudes—CAT posits that speakers modify their linguistic and communicative behaviours to manage social distance and build rapport. Early SAT focused on the speaker's linguistic features (e.g., accent, speech rate, pitch, volume, lexical choices, pauses, and topics) to predict how interactional adjustments could create or reduce social distance (Gasiorek & Giles, 2012; Soliz & Giles, 2012). The theory was later expanded in the late 1980s to address broader communicative processes, including discourse structure and non-verbal behaviour, and renamed CAT to reflect this increased scope.

CAT has been applied across diverse contexts, from interethnic and intergroup communication to online and organisational settings, demonstrating its versatility in explaining how linguistic adjustments reflect social motivations, relational goals, and identity processes (Gallois et al., 2005; Griffin, 2012). Crucially, CAT considers both interpersonal and intergroup dynamics,

recognising that speakers' choices are influenced by power hierarchies, social norms, and the identities activated during interaction (Gallois et al., 2005; Soliz & Giles, 2012). In the Saudi context, where regional dialects carry varying degrees of prestige and stigma, CAT provides a valuable lens for examining how Jizani (JA) speakers navigate interactions with Najdi (NA) interlocutors.

CAT identifies two primary strategies for adjusting speech: convergence and divergence, with maintenance representing a third, intermediate behaviour. These strategies reflect both conscious and unconscious decisions to decrease, maintain, or emphasise social distance (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

Convergence occurs when speakers modify their communicative behaviours to appear more similar to their interlocutors, fostering affiliation and reducing perceived social distance (Soliz & Giles, 2012). Linguistic convergence can involve adapting phonology, vocabulary, syntax, or paralinguistic cues such as pitch, speech rate, or gesture. Divergence, in contrast, emphasises the differences between speakers, reinforcing distinct group identities or asserting autonomy (Giles & Ogay, 2007). This strategy allows speakers to symbolically mark their belonging to a particular social group and maintain their distinctiveness. Maintenance refers to retaining one's original speech style without adapting to the interlocutor. This strategy may reflect deliberate identity preservation, indifference to social approval, or a situational mismatch between the speaker's goals and interactional expectations.

CAT links linguistic adjustment to social motivations and identity negotiation. Speakers' choices are guided by the desire to manage social distance, signal group membership, assert individuality, or achieve effective communication (Giles & Soliz, 2014; Dragojevic et al., 2016).

In the Saudi context, the NA is widely perceived as prestigious, especially in Riyadh, whereas JA is often stigmatised (Ruthan, 2020). Speakers of JA, therefore, face social and ideological pressures when interacting with NA speakers. Similarly, Cairo Arabic functions as a prestige variety within Egypt, influencing speakers of other dialects to converge in formal or public settings (Bassiouney, 2009; Mazraani, 1997).

Intergroup communication is shaped not only by dialect prestige but also by social categories such as age, gender, ethnicity, and geographic origin, which interact with identity in complex ways (Stohl et al., 2016; Palomares et al., 2016). For example, a JA speaker may retain certain regional phonological markers when speaking with out-of-town friends, highlighting group identity, while converging on NA features in professional or urban contexts to reduce social distance. CAT thus captures the interactional and ideological triggers for style-shifting in this study.

By situating dialect alternation within CAT, the study interprets style-shifting not as random variation but as socially and ideologically motivated behaviour. This approach highlights how JA speakers strategically mobilise linguistic resources to navigate prestige hierarchies, negotiate belonging, and manage social positioning in Najdi-dominant contexts.

While CAT has been criticised for at times overemphasising interpersonal motivation at the expense of broader structural constraints, its integration with a linguistic justice perspective in this study allows micro-level interactional shifts to be interpreted within wider ideological hierarchies.

By situating dialect alternation within CAT, the study can interpret ideologically mediated choices in the JA–NA interactional context, showing how speakers strategically draw on linguistic resources to navigate prestige hierarchies, maintain social identities, and achieve communicative goals.

3.9.1 Audience Design Approach

The Audience Design model, developed as an extension of Labovian sociolinguistics, conceptualises style-shifting as speakers' responses to their audience (Bell, 2001; Coupland, 2007). Empirical studies, such as Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994), show that speakers adjust linguistic features depending on the addressee. For example, African American girls in California used more African American Vernacular English when interviewed by African American speakers than by European American speakers. This illustrates that style-shifting can signal social closeness or distance.

Bell (1984) further refined this perspective by distinguishing between different audience roles, showing that speakers adjust their style not only for addressees but also for auditors and overhearers. This highlights that style variation is sensitive to the social dynamics of interaction and to speakers' orientation toward their listeners.

However, Audience Design primarily frames variation as responsive to audience configuration, which may underemphasise the role of speakers' agency, identity work, and ideological positioning. In contexts such as the Jizani–Najdi contact zone, speakers' linguistic choices are often strategic: participants report using Najdi to facilitate integration or avoid stigma, while retaining Jizani features to signal identity and belonging. Thus, while Audience Design provides a valuable framework for understanding audience-sensitive variation, it is complemented by approaches that account for ideological motivations, identity negotiation, and socially meaningful variation, including indexicality and interactional approaches to code-switching.

Building on audience-sensitive variation, the following section turns to code-switching and translanguaging, which examine how speakers strategically navigate multiple dialectal resources within interactional and sociocultural contexts.

3.10 Code-Switching

While the term ‘code-switching’ is often linked to Blom and Gumperz’s (1972) influential work, the phenomenon itself was studied much earlier. Weinreich’s (1953) influential investigation on language contact is often regarded as the first systematic effort to describe how bilingual people alternate between linguistic systems. Weinreich (1953, p. 1) described these alternations as ‘deviations from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language’. Importantly, the researcher maintained that such deviations are not random but reflect structured and patterned behaviour emerging from language contact. Later studies (e.g. Clyne, 2003; Vogt, 1954) further illustrated that switching can happen across various levels of the linguistic system – phonological, lexical, and syntactic – and that bilingual speakers use these resources in systematic and socially meaningful ways. However, these early definitions are largely structural and do not fully account for the interactional or ideological functions of switching, a limitation that later work sought to address.

In this study, code switching denotes the shifting use of Jizani and Najdi Arabic—socially and ideologically distinct varieties within a shared Arabic repertoire—rather than genetically unrelated languages. From a sociolinguistic perspective, such alternations are structured, socially meaningful, and shaped by interactional goals rather than by deficiency or lack of competence (Blom & Gumperz, 1972).

Several factors motivate code-switching in the dataset. Speakers shift toward Najdi when interacting with Najdi interlocutors to ensure intelligibility or avoid stigma, while retaining Jizani forms with in-group members to signal solidarity and identity. Topic, style, and setting may also influence shifts, with emotionally salient narratives or identity-linked content often triggering selective Jizani forms within predominantly Najdi speech. Social positioning, education, and prestige hierarchies can further shape speakers’ choices, reflecting strategic negotiation of authority, belonging, and social roles.

From a discourse-analytic perspective, code-switching functions as a resource for managing meaning, identity, and social relations (Gumperz, 1982; Auer, 1998). The patterns observed align with Accommodation Theory and Myers-Scotton’s (1993) Markedness Model, both of which foreground speaker agency and socially meaningful choice within structured hierarchies.

Together, these frameworks provide a critical lens for understanding the social, interactional, and ideological triggers of dialect alternation in this Najdi-dominant environment.

3.11 Translanguaging

Translanguaging originates from bilingual education research and has been extended to sociolinguistic contexts to challenge the assumption that languages or dialects are discrete systems. It emphasises the fluid, strategic deployment of all available linguistic resources, particularly in multilingual or multidialectal communities, and foregrounds speaker agency in constructing meaning across perceived boundaries. From this perspective, speakers do not ‘switch’ between bounded varieties but draw dynamically on a unified repertoire in ways that may render distinctions between named codes analytically unstable. Translanguaging is particularly relevant in contexts where speakers exhibit fluid intra-utterance blending, stable hybridised forms, or patterns that resist classification as belonging to one identifiable variety.

For instance, García & Li Wei (2014) and Creese & Blackledge (2010) document cases where speakers integrate lexical, phonological, and syntactic features from multiple languages within the same utterance, often without conscious awareness, producing hybrid forms that resist classification as belonging to one language. Translanguaging is thus most applicable where speakers’ repertoires appear undifferentiated or intrinsically hybrid.

Certain aspects of the present dataset might, at first glance, invite comparison with this framework, particularly in cases where speakers born and raised in Najd occasionally produce Jizani features, or where lexical and morphological elements associated with both varieties appear within extended stretches of discourse. However, closer analysis suggests that translanguaging does not fully capture the sociolinguistic dynamics observed in this study. Participants demonstrate clear metalinguistic awareness of dialect boundaries, explicitly reporting that they “speak Najdi” to integrate, avoid stigma, or ensure intelligibility, while maintaining Jizani forms to index identity and belonging. Variation is strongly conditioned by interactional context, audience, and topic, with speakers frequently maintaining relatively stable Najdi or Jizani realisations across stretches of speech, rather than exhibiting pervasive intra-utterance blending. Where Jizani features surface in predominantly Najdi speech—such as during emotionally salient narratives—these shifts function as stance- or identity-indexing moves rather than as evidence of an undifferentiated repertoire.

Translanguaging is therefore acknowledged as a relevant comparative framework; however, the patterns documented in this study are more consistently explained through ideologically mediated code-switching and accommodation within a prestige-stratified dialect ecology.

3.12 Language and Identity

Language is not merely a medium of communication; it functions as a symbolic resource for constructing, negotiating, and projecting identity (Evans, 2016; Tabouret-Keller, 2017). Speakers signal group affiliation, social positioning, and personal identity through lexical, phonological, and pragmatic choices, which can vary across contexts and interlocutors. In contact situations, such as interactions between Jizani (JA) and Najdi (NA) speakers, these choices are ideologically charged, reflecting both audience considerations and social hierarchies. Language allows individuals to mark boundaries, indicate solidarity, and navigate social inclusion or exclusion, thereby mediating both interpersonal and intergroup relations.

Identity is dynamic and contextually situated. Speakers may adopt different linguistic repertoires depending on audience, setting, and communicative goals, aligning with Audience Design principles (Bell, 2001; Coupland, 2007), while also negotiating ideologically mediated pressures. For instance, JA speakers may shift toward NA in formal or urban contexts to increase intelligibility and social integration, while maintaining JA features in in-group or emotionally salient interactions to assert regional identity. This reflects a broader principle: linguistic variation both produces and indexes social meaning, linking language to the construction of self and group membership.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) further illuminates these processes by framing identity as derived from membership in social groups (Tajfel, 1972, 1978; Hogg, 2021). Individuals derive self-esteem and social meaning from in-group affiliation, often distinguishing themselves from out-groups through overt or subtle behaviours, including language use. SIT explains why speakers may strategically adopt or resist certain linguistic features: the use of a prestigious variety like NA can signal inclusion or mobility, whereas maintaining JA asserts local belonging, cultural heritage, and identity resilience. Language choice, therefore, becomes a negotiation between social aspirations and identity preservation.

Empirical work highlights that linguistic variation can signal not only group membership but also attitudes toward others. For example, listeners evaluate speakers based on perceived competence, friendliness, or social status associated with their accent or dialect (Evans, 2016; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010a). These evaluations influence speakers' strategic use of dialect: JA speakers may consciously deploy NA features to avoid stigma in intergroup interactions, while retaining JA to reinforce in-group solidarity. This dynamic interplay between audience, context, and ideology is central to understanding dialect maintenance and shift within intra-national contact zones.

The section focuses on interactions between stigmatised and prestigious dialects and those associated with majority groups. Adopting a prestigious or widely used variety can shape speakers' sense of belonging and social positioning. Drawing on studies from Western and Arabic contexts, particularly Saudi Arabia, the review highlights how and why speakers adjust their linguistic practices within prestige-stratified settings.

3.12.1 Shift Towards Prestigious Varieties

Salvesen (2016) conducted an acoustic study of the accommodation between speakers of two Scottish Standard English (SSE) varieties: Scots-SSE and Anglo-SSE. Scots-SSE is characterised by traditional Scottish phonological features and is regarded as a prestigious variety, while Anglo-SSE emulates Standard Southern British English, which uses more anglicised features. The author examined the overt and covert linguistic prestige of these varieties and used CAT to identify the linguistic variation used by speakers during various interactions. He also determined the possible social implications of their behaviours, focusing on using /e/ and /o/, which are monophthongal in quality for Scots-SSE speakers and diphthongal for Anglo-SSE speakers.

Salvesen (2016) quantitatively analysed the speech production of eight Scottish-born, lower-middle-class women aged 18 to 25 who spoke both of these Scottish varieties. He chose female participants because they are considered sensitive to social pressure and the prestigious variety of languages. However, Milroy (1992) claimed that describing women as favouring prestige forms is misleading; rather, women create prestige forms that make the forms they use appear overtly prestigious in a speech community. Salvesen (2016) asked the participants to play a game of 'Guess Who?' and utter complete sentences in their responses to elicit speech samples. The researcher recorded 12 minutes of each interaction, following the premise that phonetic accommodation between speakers occurs in the first 10 minutes (Clark & Garrett, 2004; Pardo, 2006). The author found that high sensitivity to linguistic prestige motivated the female speakers' linguistic behaviours. Anglo-SSE speakers strongly shift towards Scots-SSE to reduce their sense of out-group and to gain solid affiliation with the Scottish community.

These findings echo those of Stuart-Smith et al. (2007), who examined language variation and change in a socially stratified Glaswegian corpus. They discovered that middle-class Glaswegian speakers tend to prefer regional Scottish features over anglicised variants, as the former help them to forge strong ties with the Scottish community. Salvesen (2016) conducted his study in informal contexts; however, comparing the proportion of anglicised and Scottish forms used by Anglo-SSE speakers in formal contexts could show a different perspective on the potential stigmatisation of some Scots-SSE features.

This comparison demonstrates that local identity and solidarity often outweigh overt prestige in shaping linguistic choices. However, most studies in Western contexts focus on middle-class or urban populations, leaving questions about rural or socially peripheral groups relatively underexplored. For the present study, this implies that examining both urban and rural Jizani speakers is essential to understand how social networks mediate linguistic behaviours.

The sample used in Salvesen's study mirrors that in my research. My sample included females aged between 18 and 45 because, as Salvesen (2016) stated, females are more sensitive to social pressures and are more likely to adopt prestigious varieties. These patterns reflect Arabic sociolinguistic research that shows systematic gender differences in dialect shift and prestige orientation (e.g. Al-Wer 2014; Bassiouney 2009; Khalil 2018). These findings support the present study's focus on female speakers, who may be particularly receptive to prestige norms when engaging with Najdi-dominant environments.

Although Salvesen's focus on women is justified by their social sensitivity, the small sample size (n=8) limits the statistical generalisability of the findings. Additionally, the reliance on a game-based elicitation may not capture naturalistic speech patterns in broader social contexts. These limitations underscore the importance of complementing controlled experimental tasks with real-life observations, as employed in the present study of Jizani speakers.

Nilsson (2015) undertook a study on dialect situations in West Sweden, identified by its extensive intra-individual variation. The study focused on intra-individual variation and accommodation in interactions, how speakers shift and accommodate their use of dialect and standard variants to their interlocutors, and the reasons for these behaviours.

The data used in this study consisted of conversational extracts from a corpus of recordings of 120 speakers. These recordings were sociolinguistic interviews collected in West Sweden between 2007 and 2010 as part of the 'Dialect Levelling' project. The participants were adolescent people aged 16–18, interviewed in three groups across nine locations. Two traditional dialect areas represented rural and urban zones, referred to as 'inland West Sweden' and 'coastal West Sweden'. In addition, Nilsson (2015) made new recordings in the same areas, particularly in Kinna (inland West Sweden) and Skärhamn (coastal West Sweden).

The researcher adopted conversational analysis as she believed that the production of an utterance is always governed by previous turns (Sacks et al., 1978). The data showed that the informants were more likely to shift towards their interlocutors. In interviewing the participants about their motives for converging, they opted to be more traditional to mitigate the social distance between themselves and their families and relatives. These motives that encouraged them to adopt traditional dialect variants reflected their willingness to maintain interpersonal

relationships and stress their local identities. However, the same participants who converged with their family members also diverged their speech with friends from the same area and vocation.

Nilsson's findings illustrate the fluidity of accommodation within intra-individual variation, yet they also reveal a tension between familial and peer-group norms that is contextually specific. Applying these insights to Jizani speakers requires caution: social hierarchies and prestige markers in Riyadh may operate differently than in Swedish dialect contexts, and the direction of shift may depend more heavily on urban prestige varieties than on family ties.

Woods and Rivera-Mills (2012) conducted a sociolinguistic study to investigate communication between two social communities in the US: Salvadorans and Hondurans. The study explored the linguistic attitudes of the target groups towards using *voseo* and *tú*, meaning 'you', as distinguishing features of Central American Spanish. Furthermore, the study aimed to examine the implications of these attitudes on Salvadoran and Honduran ethnolinguistic identity in US communities that are mainly Mexican American.

The researchers adopted a qualitative approach to examine the perceptions and attitudes towards linguistic behaviour and its link to identity. The study sample comprised 20 participants: 10 Salvadorans (seven men and three women, with an average age of 32) and 10 Hondurans (six men and four women, with an average age of 39) who were mainly from urban areas in their countries. The researchers used a social networking method, providing a convenient sample. The informants recruited from Oregon and Washington did not know each other. Woods and Rivera-Mills (2012) used sociolinguistic interviews and ethnographic observation conducted by a bilingual American posing as a Spanish-speaking US citizen. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour, with each participant interviewed individually in their own homes. The interviews aimed to gather comments and reflections on linguistic attitudes towards the use of *voseo*.

The study revealed that the Salvadoran and Honduran Spanish speakers developed ethnolinguistic masks to aid integration into the broader Latino-Spanish-speaking community. The Salvadoran and Honduran participants broadened the use of the pronoun *tú* to foster a sense of solidarity and approval in the local Latino community. Conversely, the data showed linguistic insecurity in the use of *voseo*, as the participants preferred to distance themselves from their interlocutors. Thus, intragroup interactions experience linguistic prejudice and discrimination rather than fostering solidarity among group members (Woods & Rivera-Mills, 2012).

While this study highlights the role of linguistic insecurity in intragroup interactions, its applicability to Jizani speakers may be limited by the distinct sociolinguistic and cultural norms of Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, the concept of ethnolinguistic masking is valuable for understanding how Jizani speakers may strategically modulate speech to navigate complex intergroup and intragroup social dynamics.

Woods and Rivera-Mills (2012) study identified both subconscious and conscious behaviours that can influence speech patterns in any social setting. This research may enhance the present study by exploring different factors that can prompt the linguistic behaviours of the Jizani speakers during their intergroup and intragroup interactions, using participant observation followed by interviews that establish a strong connection between the two methods.

Collectively, these Western studies illuminate the multifaceted interplay of age, gender, prestige, social networks, and identity. However, they also reveal a consistent limitation: findings are highly context-dependent, and methodological constraints—small samples, single methods, or artificial elicitation tasks—often restrict generalizability. This reinforces the need for context-specific research in Arabic-speaking and Saudi contexts, where social hierarchies, urban–rural divides, and prestige norms differ substantially from those in Western settings.

The previous sections discussed Western empirical studies, focusing on methods, sampling, and key variables that may influence linguistic practices. Understanding how these studies were conducted assisted data collection in the present study. The next section reviews recent research in the Arabic and Saudi contexts to enhance the exploration of the present study.

3.12.2 Shifts in Arabic Dialects

Most variation research has focused on the West, and studies related to the Middle East, particularly Saudi speech communities, are limited. This section describes the shift in dialect-based studies among Arab speakers and how identity factors influence switching.

Alghamdi (2021) examined the use of linguistic variables in the speech of Ghamdi migrants who had moved from Al-Baha (southwestern Saudi Arabia) to Mecca (western Saudi Arabia) to improve their lives and financial situation. The dialects of Al-Baha and Mecca differ in syntax, morphology, phonology, and semantics. However, the study concentrated solely on the use of the interdental (θ), (δ), and (δ^c) concerning three social variables: education, age, and gender. The author recruited male and female participants aged between 14 and 62 with different educational backgrounds. When interviewing the migrants, Alghamdi initiated free conversations and prepared questions to manage the flow of exchange and promote the production of the necessary variants.

The results reveal that the younger female participants adapted to the Meccan dialectal variants – using stops [t], [d], and [d^ɕ] to replace (θ), (ð), and (ð^ɕ), respectively – to appear friendly and cooperative towards Meccan speakers. In contrast, the male Ghamdi migrants were highly conservative about their heritage variants, considering them a variety of the standard Saudi dialect. Alghamdi asserted that [θ], [ð], and [ð^ɕ] are features of most Saudi dialects, which explains why male Ghamdi migrants tended to diverge from Meccan variants; they were inclined to adopt characteristics of the majority groups and discard those spoken by minority groups. The differences in linguistic behaviours between males and females may stem from gender identity. In other words, this may account for the distinct social roles and beliefs of each gender, where social norms promote females to be more affiliative and men to be more conservative and assertive in interactions.

While Alghamdi demonstrates clear gender differences in dialect use, the study focuses narrowly on interdental stops without addressing other phonological or morphosyntactic variables. Additionally, the role of social networks or peer influence is not fully explored, which may limit understanding of why younger women shift their use of the language more than men. This suggests that in studying Jizani speakers, broader linguistic features and social ties should be considered to capture the full spectrum of language use.

Ismail (2019) assessed how individuals living in Riyadh who speak three dialectal varieties of Arabic use /-k/ – a second-person feminine singular (2 F.SG.) object/possessive pronoun suffix – in relation to the community-wide usage. The author examined their use of three prominent regional reflexes of the clitic [-tʰ, -tʃ, -j] and considered four extralinguistic variables: gender, age, education, and occupation status. The [-k] form of the second-person feminine clitic is commonly spoken in most urban centres in Saudi Arabia, such as Riyadh, and in western areas including Jeddah and Mecca (Al-Essa, 2008; Al-Rojaie, 2013). The [-tʰ] form is linked with the Qassimi dialect spoken in north-central Saudi Arabia, while the affricated [-tʃ] appears in parts of the Eastern Arabian Peninsula, the neighbouring Gulf regions, and Iraq (Al-Rojaie, 2013). The [-j] form is used in southwestern Saudi Arabia (Ingham, 2009).

Ismail (2019) carried out informal observations and interviews to explore the participants' use of [-tʰ, -tʃ, -j] in public settings, including banks, hospitals, universities, and shopping centres, as well as among friends and family networks. The researcher recruited 107 male and female speakers from the three regional dialects. All of the participants, aged between 21 and 57, were born and had lived in Riyadh. The results showed differences in the native variants of [-k]. The local dialects of high-status occupations involving [-tʃ] and [-j] fully shift with the use of the supralocal [-k], enabling speakers to gain social approval and reinforce group identity. Nonetheless, native clitic users of [-tʰ], particularly women, younger people, and those in low-

status occupations, diverged from the supralocal [-k], indicating that [-tʰ] users perceived [-tʰ] as a marker of belonging to the central region of Saudi Arabia, where Riyadh is situated. This study successfully described how speakers from northwestern, southwestern, and eastern Saudi Arabia adapt to the use of [-k] in Riyadh. Unlike [-tʰ], [-tʃ], and [-ʃ], [k] is part of SA and is considered a positive marker of local membership in Riyadh.

Although Ismail identifies occupational status as influencing the use of the supralocal [-k], the study does not systematically examine the interaction between gender, age, and prestige orientation. Moreover, the focus on urban public spaces may not reflect intra-community dynamics or private interactions. For Jizani speakers, both public and private contexts likely affect dialect adaptation, underscoring the need for participant observation alongside interviews.

In another study (Hammoudi, 2021), speakers in Tlemcen, Algeria, appeared to accommodate various rural populations to avoid stigmatisation and negative attitudes towards the use of the urban variety. The researcher aimed to examine the sociolinguistic situation of the Tlemcen speech community concerning the use of the glottal stop [ʔ] by urban Tlemcenians. Tlemcen is a city located in northwestern Algeria and is characterised as an urban area. Hammoudi (2021) conducted his study to explore the ongoing use of the glottal stop compared to its counterpart [g] in the speakers' speech and their attitudes towards the spoken variety. The researcher sought to understand the mechanism behind the dialect change adopted by the Tlemcen speakers, focusing on the reasons that promote or reduce the variant's use.

Hammoudi (2021) used both qualitative and quantitative methods using various tools, including community profiles, direct and indirect observations, in-depth semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and a sociolinguistic questionnaire. Data were gathered from 122 participants categorised by gender, age, and ancestry, representing speakers of rural and urban varieties in Tlemcen. Participants were selected based on their ease of contact in public places, such as shopping malls, markets, streets, and libraries. According to Saunders et al. (2007), this sampling method is termed 'availability sampling', where participants are available and willing to take part. Hammoudi (2021) showed that children aged 5 to 16 and adults aged over 60 of both genders use the urban Tlemcenian variety in various contexts, including family settings, with friends, and in schools. This suggests that children maintain the urban variety regardless of the addressee or environment. In other age groups, including those aged over 16, aged around 35, and senior people aged over 40, the data indicated significant changes, particularly among males. Males tended to replace the glottal stop [ʔ] with the [g] variant typical of rural speech in everyday interactions. Conversely, the females tended to resist this change, continuing to use the glottal stop [ʔ]. It can be argued that such shifts are not only driven by prestige or stigma but

may also reflect salience and gendered stereotypes, with [ʔ] viewed as a feminine feature and [g] as a masculine one.

An essential finding of the study was that the male participants had strong motives to adopt the rural variant, particularly in using [g] as the glottal stop [ʔ], which characterises the urban speech community and is considered a marker of stigma, generating feelings of embarrassment and shame as it aligns with stereotypes. Hammoudi's findings reveal the interplay of stigma, gendered stereotypes, and prestige in dialect choice. However, the unbalanced sample (fewer male participants) and the reliance on convenience sampling may skew the representation of male linguistic behaviour. For research on Jizani speakers, ensuring balanced gender representation and triangulating methods can improve the validity of conclusions regarding socially motivated linguistic shifts.

Dendane (2013) claimed that when males use [g] instead of the glottal stop [ʔ], they gain power and social approval from both insiders and outsiders. The use of [ʔ] is linked to 'effeminacy' that may undermine their masculinity and manliness, leading to negative attitudes and stigmatisation. However, AlWer (2014) stated that the Amman participants' shift to the rural variant [g] is not associated with choosing a prestigious or stigmatised variant; rather, the glottal stop [ʔ] is prominent in female speech and is stereotypically associated with feminine language in Jordan.

While Hammoudi (2021) provided more details regarding the sample groups in his study and employed multiple methods to achieve a significant result, the researcher failed to achieve a balanced sample size, with fewer male participants than female participants. Milroy and Milroy (1978) argued that language change studies can be based on unbalanced sample sizes. However, providing a reasonable justification for the unbalanced sample would strengthen the study. My research may benefit from Hammoudi's study by examining more closely why certain features are stigmatised and how people perceive them.

Mohamed et al. (2019) explored the linguistic behaviours and language ideologies of speakers in their hometowns and those who migrate between dialect regions in contemporary Algeria. The study investigated three distinct linguistic features of Tiaret, a major city in northwestern Algeria, and compared them with the features acquired by individuals travelling to other dialect areas. The research examined two fricative sounds, [ð] and [θ], and the plosive [d'] as produced by local speakers of the Tiaret community. The diverse nature of Tiaret, which provides a meeting point for various linguistic landscapes, makes it an ideal setting for sociolinguistic research.

The researchers examined the phonological variables concerning three social variables: age, gender, and social class. The study used a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with two main groups: 50 local university students in Tiaret and 50 migrant students who had moved to Mostaganem University. The researchers stated that the phonological features of the Mostaganem dialect differ from those of Tiaret. The participant interviews, which sought to elicit natural conversational speech, lasted 30 minutes for individual interviews and 1.5 hours for group interviews on topics that matched the speakers' interests.

The findings from the group interviews show that the local speakers used the three sounds naturally and pronounced them without difficulty. In contrast, the migrant students were influenced by the Mostaganem dialect as they adopted new sounds specific to that region. Moreover, the results indicate that migrant speakers altered the three sounds when chatting with local people in Tiaret. The individual interviews provide further insights into how local and migrant students adapt their speech. Local students tended to be conservative about their phonological features, which helped to reinforce their identity and pride in belonging to their community. Conversely, the migrant students who admitted to consciously adjusting their phonological features emphasised that they did so to create a sense of distance from those who remain in their hometowns. This demonstrates that migrating to a new place involves adopting a different culture and way of life.

Mohamed et al. (2019) provided further details about the data collection process by clarifying essential points, such as the period the migrant students spent in the host community. They interviewed the participants about the observations they noted during the group interviews, which helps complete the picture of the linguistic behaviours adopted by the participants and their motives for doing so. The study clearly shows that the speech community of Tiaret is experiencing numerous social and external pressures that lead to language change in certain contact situations. This study contributes to my research on when migrant students consciously modify their speech to appear different from local students, which I examine among Jizani speakers living in Riyadh.

While Mohamed et al. provide insights into conscious dialect adaptation among migrants, the study primarily examines university students, which may not represent broader age or socioeconomic groups. Applying these insights to Jizani speakers requires careful consideration of the full social spectrum, as the use of linguistic features may vary across age, gender, and occupational contexts.

In an intriguing sociolinguistic study exploring dialect convergence across two varieties spoken in Egypt, Sadiq (2016) investigated the influence of Cairo Arabic on Minya Arabic. Minya Arabic is the regional dialect spoken in the Minya Governorate, which is one of Egypt's largest

governorates. Conversely, Cairo Arabic is the dialect of Cairo, the political, administrative, economic, cultural, and religious centre of Egypt (Mazraani, 1997; Miller, 2005). Cairo Arabic is considered a prestigious Arabic variety both in Egypt and globally. The study aimed to demonstrate how Minya speakers adapt to Cairo Arabic and to explore the reasons behind the convergence and divergence. Five linguistic variables were analysed: consonantal (q); vocalic (KaLLiM), (XaLLiF), and (WaSSaL); and suprasegmental features such as stress.

Sadiq (2016) employed a quantitative and qualitative approach, using 40-minute-long sociolinguistic interviews with 62 Minya speakers and online perception questionnaires with 61 participants, to explain why Minya Arabic speakers converge on Cairo Arabic in their speech. Four social variables were considered while analysing the data: age, gender, education, and place of residence.

The findings indicate that age and gender do not significantly influence dialect convergence. However, education and residence had a notable impact on the convergence on Cairo Arabic. This suggests that the degree of convergence on Cairo Arabic increases with higher educational attainment and the time spent in Cairo by Minya speakers. A key point from the data analysis was that Minya speakers prefer to converge towards Cairo Arabic to decrease social distance and lessen linguistic differences between themselves and their Cairene interlocutors. Furthermore, they connected to Cairo Arabic when interacting with other Minya Arabic speakers to align with the linguistic stereotypes of the group they wished to belong to. In addition, the data demonstrated that Minya Arabic speakers converge on Cairo Arabic because it is a prestigious variety and, more importantly, for economic reasons.

Sadiq highlights the impact of education and residence on dialect convergence, emphasising economic and social motives. However, the lack of longitudinal tracking limits understanding of whether these changes persist over time. For the present study, monitoring Jizani speakers across repeated interactions could reveal whether the use of NA is temporary, context-dependent, or indicative of long-term identity shifts.

Cotter and Horesh (2015) examined three phonological variables distinguishing the Jaffa and Gaza dialects: the lenition of the voiced pharyngeal fricative (ʕ), raising of the feminine ending vowel (AH), and the realisation of /q/. Their findings indicate that Jaffa refugees in Gaza shift toward local norms by reducing lenition and adopting the unraised vowel [a]. With respect to /q/, male speakers in particular converge toward the Gazan [g] realisation, while female speakers more frequently retain the Jaffan glottal [ʔ], suggesting the role of this feature as an identity marker.

The researchers noted that the Jaffa speakers in Gaza were linguistically and socially marked as refugees due to the violence that erupted in 1984, leading them to form bonds with the social community in Gaza through language and develop a new identity in the host community.

Similarly, a study by Mesthrie (2007) described the linguistic situations of Indians living in South Africa under Apartheid. The study revealed that young Indians shifted their speech patterns to align with other Indian groups, signalling their integration into South African society and distinguishing them from the Asian population. The study by Cotter and Horesh (2015) illustrates how speakers from Jaffa adapt their speech to connect with the host community, which may help the present study identify factors that could negatively affect Jizani identity, prompting them to accommodate Najdi and other Jizani interlocutors.

The Jaffa-Gaza study illustrates how forced migration and social marking shape linguistic shift, yet it is contextually specific to refugees experiencing extreme social disruption. While parallels exist for Jizani migrants navigating Najdi-dominant environments, the sociopolitical pressures are less acute. This suggests that identity-driven dialect use in Riyadh may be subtler and more closely tied to prestige, solidarity, and economic factors rather than survival or resettlement pressures.

Overall, these Arabic and regional studies underscore the complex interplay of gender, age, occupation, education, prestige, and social identity in shaping linguistic behaviours. However, most studies focus on specific linguistic variables or demographic groups, leaving gaps in understanding multi-layered social dynamics in urban–rural or migrant–host interactions.

3.13 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has brought together key strands of sociolinguistic research that collectively underpin the analytical framework used in this study. It has shown how language ideologies, attitudes, and evaluative practices shape speakers' perceptions of the Jizani and Najdi varieties, and how these perceptions intersect with wider structures of prestige, stigma, and inequality. The review has also demonstrated that stereotypes, prejudice, and linguistic discrimination are not isolated phenomena but are embedded in broader social hierarchies that influence how Jizani speakers navigate everyday interactions.

By examining scholarship on code-switching and CAT, the chapter has highlighted how speakers use linguistic choices as strategic resources to negotiate identity, manage social relations, and respond to contextual triggers. These perspectives complement each other, providing a nuanced understanding of both structural patterns and interactional dynamics.

Chapter 3

Overall, the literature reviewed has provided the conceptual foundations for analysing the attitudinal patterns and conversational behaviour explored in subsequent chapters and frames the study in a broader discussion of linguistic ideologies, social positioning, and interactional practice in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology, encompassing the research approach, design, and paradigm. Additionally, the sections followed present the research context and participant selection process. This chapter also describes the data analysis procedure and delves into the quality of the research, emphasising validity and reliability. It concludes with ethical considerations and the researcher's position.

4.2 Research Approach

According to Cresswell (2014), a research approach should outline the study plan and methods, starting with the initial assumptions and concluding with data collection, analysis, and interpretation. A study may use a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approach. Historically, quantitative approaches dominated social science research until the mid-20th century, when interest in qualitative methods grew. This growing interest in the qualitative approach then led to the emergence of mixed-methods research (Creswell, 2014).

In this study, a mixed-methods design was selected because it enables a comprehensive investigation of language attitudes and their relationship to the speakers' linguistic behaviours. This approach comprised the examination of implicit attitudes using MGT, the exploration of explicit attitudes through semi-structured interviews, and the observation to find out what factors motivate the participants' linguistic practices through natural conversations.

In addition, this approach enables triangulation and a deeper understanding of both overt and covert perceptions. This combination aligns with the complexity of sociolinguistic behaviour, where both numerical and interpretive data are necessary to capture the entire situation.

Qualitative research can be defined as an interpretive theoretical framework that informs research problems by addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) showed that qualitative researchers attempt to understand the issue they are studying from multiple dimensions, which requires them to work back and forth between the themes rather than simplifying their observations. For this reason, qualitative research does not rely on a single source for data collection. However, it is generally multi-method in focus, where researchers gather multiple forms of data from observations, interviews, reports, and documents (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

These methods involve an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the issue under investigation. Qualitative researchers examine the phenomenon in natural settings according to the meanings people interpret. Merriam and Tisdell (2015, p. 15) noted that the primary purpose of qualitative research is often to understand how people make sense of their lives and interactions, focusing on meaning-making rather than the overall outcome.

On the other hand, quantitative research seeks to examine a theory by creating hypotheses, testing the relationships between variables, and collecting data to support or reject the research predictions. It mainly focuses on numerical data analysed using statistical procedures (Golafshani, 2003). The researcher analyses the data using statistical methods, aiming for an unbiased outcome that can be generalised for a broader population. Quantitative methods are used to validate the accuracy of hypotheses and determine which are supported by the data.

The mixed-methods approach combines qualitative and quantitative data to yield insights and perceptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Qualitative and quantitative data collection neutralises the limitations and weaknesses associated with each data form (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). This enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. Collecting both data types provides a more comprehensive view of the research topic and questions. Rossman and Wilson (1985) noted three reasons for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. First, combining both paradigms in a single study enables triangulation. When researchers rely on more than one data type, it improves the accuracy of their findings, as one method confirms and supports the other. Second, using one data type enables the elaboration of the other, providing richness in detail. This supports a greater understanding of the phenomenon under investigation through refinement and improvement. Third, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches can create new ways of thinking about the data by focusing more on the contradictions and paradoxes that result from the two approaches (Carranza, 1982, p. 81; Levitt et al., 2018; Rossman & Wilson, 1985).

Each of these approaches provides distinct advantages and limitations. Quantitative methods are valued for their objectivity, generalisability, and ability to test hypotheses across large samples. However, they may not fully capture the complexity of social behaviours or speaker intentions. In contrast, qualitative methods provide rich, detailed insights into participants' experiences and the meaning behind their behaviours, although they are sometimes critiqued for being less generalisable and more prone to researcher bias. A mixed-methods approach combines the strengths of both by enabling the statistical testing of broad patterns while also exploring the contextual and interpretive dimensions that shape human interaction. This blend is particularly suitable for sociolinguistic research, where both numerical trends and in-depth insights into speakers' perspectives are essential.

A mixed-methods approach has rarely been applied to studies of language attitudes. Using this approach in this study is of theoretical importance because it examines the linguistic choices people make in their interactions with different groups, as well as their beliefs and attitudes towards these choices.

The limited use of mixed methods approaches in research on communication and language attitudes may stem from the methodological complexity of integrating both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Researchers often specialise in one tradition, making it less common to design studies that require expertise in both. In addition, much of the earlier work in these areas has tended to rely on either controlled experiments or naturalistic observation, focusing on behaviour without incorporating participants' interpretations or the social meanings behind linguistic choices. This study aims to address this gap. By adopting a mixed-methods design, this thesis contributes a more holistic framework that links attitudes to actual speech patterns, demonstrating not only how speakers evaluate dialects but also how these evaluations shape their linguistic behaviour in real interactions.

4.3 Research Design

Creswell and Creswell (2023) introduced four designs in the mixed-methods field. A convergent mixed-methods design is the primary mixed-methods approach, where the researcher typically collects both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously and then integrates the information when interpreting the overall results. The second, the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, is a fundamental approach where the researcher begins with quantitative data, analyses its results, and then uses qualitative research to explain the findings. The third approach, the exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, contrasts with the previous method. In this design, the researcher begins with the qualitative research to explore the views and beliefs of the participants. After analysing the qualitative data, the researcher builds on this through quantitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Dörnyei, 2007). The fourth approach, the complex mixed-methods design, involves embedding one or more fundamental designs in a process.

This research employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. In this approach, quantitative data are collected and analysed first, with the results from this phase guiding the development of the qualitative strand. The qualitative interviews and naturalistic observations were therefore designed to explain, contextualise, and elaborate on the attitudinal patterns revealed by the MGT. This design is appropriate for studies where initial statistical trends require deeper interpretive insight to understand participants' motivations, beliefs, and the social meanings underlying their responses. By commencing with quantitative attitudinal evidence

and subsequently using qualitative data to interpret these findings, the study achieves a coherent integration between broad patterns and rich contextual explanations.

In this study, the methodological and analytical approach was informed by a piloting phase, which enabled me to refine the data collection methods and ensure the reliability of the gathered information before the full analysis. Creswell and Clark (2017) emphasised the importance of carefully considering several factors when conducting mixed-methods research. These factors involve understanding the research problem, which enables the implementation of appropriate research methods (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Furthermore, the researcher's proficiency in both qualitative and quantitative skills, together with addressing any challenges associated with their application, is a crucial factor in accurately managing the data.

While mixed-methods studies are becoming increasingly common in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics more broadly (Gasiorek & van de Poel, 2012; Hewett et al., 2015), they remain relatively underused in research specifically addressing communication and language attitudes. This is particularly the case in Arabic-speaking contexts, where most studies continue to rely on either observational or experimental designs alone. However, when applied, mixed methods approach that incorporate in-depth sociolinguistic interviews or discourse analysis alongside quantitative methods offer the opportunity to investigate real-life behaviours and attitudes more comprehensively.

4.4 Research Paradigm

Selecting a research paradigm is pivotal, as it shapes all subsequent methodological decisions and provides the philosophical foundation for how knowledge is generated and interpreted (Merriam, 2009). Paradigms differ in their assumptions about what constitutes valid knowledge and how researchers should study social phenomena (Cohen et al., 2007). This study is situated in a pragmatic paradigm, which is particularly compatible with mixed-methods research.

Pragmatism is a practical approach to understanding human behaviours, their underlying beliefs, and their consequences. This paradigm emphasises the researcher's active role in developing a comprehensive understanding of the target phenomenon (the 'what') and its underlying mechanisms (the 'how'), thus providing reliable and valid answers to the research questions (Chatterji, 2004; Creswell et al., 2003).

In this study, the pragmatic paradigm underpins the integration of quantitative evidence of implicit attitudes (MGT), qualitative accounts of explicit attitudes (interviews), and naturally occurring linguistic behaviour (participant observations). This flexibility is essential for capturing both the measurable and the interpretive dimensions of dialect attitudes and use.

Pragmatism also aligns with the study's aim of examining not only what speakers think about the Jizani and Najdi varieties but also how these attitudes relate to communicative practices in everyday interactions. It supports methodological pluralism, enabling the convergence of numeric patterns, experiential accounts, and interactional data to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the sociolinguistic phenomenon.

The following sections outline the data collection and analysis procedures that ensured the credibility of the findings. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (1998), techniques such as researcher reflexivity, triangulation, and maintaining an audit trail enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative components in mixed-methods research. These strategies were systematically applied throughout this study to ensure its transparency, consistency, and analytical rigour.

4.5 Research Setting

The research was conducted in Al-Kharj, a city located approximately 80 km south of Riyadh in the Najd region of Saudi Arabia, where NA is the predominant dialect. Al-Kharj is a rapidly expanding urban centre that has attracted residents from across the kingdom, including a significant number of Jizani families who have relocated there for work, education, or marriage. This demographic diversity provides an ideal setting for examining dialect contact, social evaluations, and linguistic adaptation between Jizani and Najdi speakers.

Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU) in Al-Kharj was the starting point for recruiting the research participants. I am an academic member of the university, which provided me with initial access to potential participants, particularly students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Through these students, I was introduced to their families and wider social networks, many of whom later contributed to the study's conversational and interview components.

While recruitment began at PSAU, the data collection, including participant observations and semi-structured interviews, occurred in private and public settings, such as social gatherings, homes, cafés, and chalets across Al-Kharj. These environments provided authentic contexts for observing naturally occurring interactions among Jizani and Najdi women, enabling the collection of spontaneous and contextually grounded speech data, but may not capture speech practices in institutional settings.

4.6 Research Participants

Qualitative research primarily aims to describe, understand, and explain human experiences. It seeks to illuminate the unique components that constitute individualised lived experiences (Dörnyei, 2007). Accordingly, well-designed qualitative studies typically involve a relatively small number of participants in order to generate rich, in-depth, and saturated data that enable a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Research quality is therefore closely linked to the sampling strategy and methodological design employed (Cohen et al., 2007).

This study utilised purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to investigate Jizani speakers' linguistic behaviours when interacting with Najdi interlocutors in Najd (Cohen et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007). Purposive sampling involves selecting participants who are knowledgeable about and experienced in a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Patton, 2015). It allows the researcher to deliberately recruit individuals who can provide information-rich data relevant to the research aims.

Participants were purposefully selected to form two primary groups: Jizani and Najdi female speakers. This approach ensured that the data collected were directly aligned with the research questions and maximised the depth and relevance of the findings.

Initial contact with participants was made at the end of July 2022 through ten students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. Subsequently, snowball sampling was employed, whereby initial participants were asked to recommend family members or acquaintances who met the study criteria (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This approach facilitated access to additional information-rich cases.

Access to the initial student participants was mediated by their teachers, who introduced me as a researcher. Some of these students were group leaders responsible for WhatsApp course groups used for academic communication. After explaining the aims of the study and the target participant criteria (Jizani and Najdi origin), five group leaders confirmed the presence of eligible students in their groups and added me to the WhatsApp chats.

I introduced myself to the groups and invited interested students to contact me privately. However, response rates were low. After waiting six days, only two Najdi students expressed interest. Consequently, I contacted 28 students individually to request participation. This process resulted in the recruitment of 14 students from both Jizani and Najdi backgrounds.

Through these initial participants, I arranged meetings with family members who were potentially willing to participate. Meetings took place in public settings and summer schools,

where mothers and elder sisters accompanied children to activities. These contexts provided naturalistic environments for informal interaction. Ultimately, 14 female participants were recruited for participant observation and interviews, and 149 participants completed the Matched-Guise Test (MGT) and questionnaire.

Recruiting participants for recorded conversations was particularly challenging due to religious and cultural sensitivities surrounding the recording of women's voices in Saudi society. Despite providing clear information about confidentiality and privacy protection, several potential participants declined. Time constraints and the nature of the research limited the possibility of expanding the sample further. Nevertheless, the data collected yielded a sufficient number of linguistic tokens to analyse Jizani speakers' practices in Najd (see Section 7.1.1). To address this, I prioritised relationship-building through repeated informal interactions before requesting consent for recording (see Appendix K). Data collection began only once trust had been fully established. Women's social gatherings provided linguistically rich, naturalistic data that would not have been accessible in mixed-gender settings.

Participants were aged between 18 and 45 years. This age range was selected to minimise the effects of age-grading on linguistic variation, without incorporating an older comparison group. Individuals within this age range are typically socially active, adaptable, and engaged in developing new social networks (Wyn & Woodman, 2006; Cleveland et al., 2019), making them particularly relevant to the study of attitude and linguistic behaviour. The study does not aim to provide a generational comparison but rather to examine attitudes and dialect use within an economically and socially mobile cohort.

The study focuses exclusively on female participants. This decision was theoretically and empirically motivated. Previous research in Saudi Arabia and other Arabic dialects demonstrates the significant role of gender in dialect shifting. For example, Al-Rojaie (2013) found that Qassimi women increasingly used the supralocal variant [k] over the local [ts]. Similarly, Alqahtani (2015) reported that women led the adoption of innovative features in the Tihama Qahtani dialect, and Abu-Haidar (1989) observed that Baghdadi women favoured prestige varieties more than men. These findings suggest that women often lead prestige-oriented linguistic change. Focusing on women, therefore, enables a closer examination of the motivations, attitudes, and social meanings underpinning dialect use in a prestige-dominant context. Moreover, women in Saudi Arabia are increasingly visible in social transformation processes, making their linguistic practices particularly significant.

In addition, gender-segregated social networks in Saudi society mean that women's speech communities function as relatively distinct interactional spaces. Investigating female-only networks allows for the collection of naturalistic conversational data that would not be

accessible in mixed-gender settings. Findings, therefore, prioritise depth within female speech networks rather than gender comparison.

Participant selection was guided by the analytical aims of the study rather than statistical representativeness. The research investigates linguistic behaviour and dialect contact between Jizani and Najdi speakers within Najd, where Najdi Arabic functions as the locally dominant and socially prestigious variety. For this reason, purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who were actively embedded in dialect contact situations and who could provide linguistically rich data relevant to the research questions.

In this study, the categorisation of participants as 'Jizani' or 'Najdi' was not based on birthplace but was established through broader criteria of dialect affiliation. The classification was based on a combination of:

- self-identification,
- family origin,
- home dialect use,
- sustained social networks,
- and patterns of regional affiliation.

Based on that, three analytically distinct groups were identified:

1. **Jizani Migrant Speakers (JMS):** These participants were born and raised in Jizan and later relocated to Najd. They continue to use Jizani Arabic (JA) in domestic and intra-community contexts and maintain close ties with family and friends in Jizan. Their language use and social connections reflect a sustained Jizani identity despite residing in Najd.
2. **Jizani Linguistic Heritage Speakers (JLHS):** These participants are of Jizani parentage but were born and raised in Najd. Although they had limited or occasional visits to Jizan, they were exposed to Jizani Arabic through interactions with parents, close family members, and Jizani friends. JA was used as the primary language in the household, either alone or alongside Najdi Arabic (NA). These participants represent a generation of heritage Jizani speakers who acquired the dialect through family and social networks within Najdi-dominant contexts.
3. **Najdi-Origin Speakers (NOS):** These participants were born, raised, and continue to reside in Najd. Their families are of Najdi origin, and they consistently use Najdi Arabic

across all social domains. They represent the prestige variety against which Jizani speakers' linguistic practices are often evaluated.

In line with the discussion of language and identity in Chapter 3, the categorisation of participants in this study as 'Jizani' or 'Najdi' should not be understood as fixed, essential, or exclusively determined by birthplace. As discussed earlier, identity is socially constructed, contextually negotiated, and interactionally performed through linguistic and social practices (Bell, 2001; Coupland, 2007; Hogg, 2021). Regional affiliation in Saudi Arabia is therefore shaped through intersecting factors including self-identification, family origin, dialect use, social networks, tribal affiliation, and broader cultural practices.

Within Saudi sociocultural contexts, regional identity is often socially recognised and maintained beyond the place of birth alone. Individuals may continue to identify, and be identified by others, as 'Jizani' or 'Najdi' through enduring kinship ties, family lineage, home dialect practices, tribal affiliation, and participation in regionally associated social and cultural practices. These practices may include patterns of speech, forms of social interaction, food practices, styles of dress, domestic traditions, and social networks. Such practices may remain connected to a particular regional community despite migration or long-term residence elsewhere. In many cases, tribal and family names may also be socially associated with particular regions and may function as socially recognised markers of regional affiliation within Saudi society. Such associations, however, are neither absolute nor universally fixed, and should be understood as socially mediated rather than deterministic.

For this reason, participants in the present study were not categorised solely according to birthplace or legal residence. Rather, categorisation was based on a combination of self-identification, family origin, home dialect use, sustained social networks, and socially recognised regional affiliation. This approach reflects the understanding that regional identity in Saudi Arabia is relational and socially negotiated, rather than reducible to a single objective criterion. The categorisation adopted in this study therefore reflects participants' lived sociolinguistic affiliations and community orientation rather than a strictly geographical definition of identity.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that these categories inevitably involve an element of subjectivity and fluidity. As discussed in Chapter 3, speakers may foreground or background different aspects of identity depending on context, audience, and interactional goals. For example, some heritage Jizani speakers born and raised in Najd may orient toward Najdi linguistic practices in institutional or public settings while simultaneously maintaining Jizani affiliations within family and in-group networks. Identity categories in this study should

therefore be understood as analytical and sociolinguistic constructs used to capture broad patterns of affiliation and dialect contact, rather than rigid or permanent social boundaries.

Most participants occupy lower-middle to middle-class positions, reflected in their educational attainment (secondary education, diploma, or bachelor's degrees) and occupations (e.g., teachers, nurses, laboratory specialists, and housewives). They are socially integrated into Najdi institutional and neighbourhood contexts.

It is important to acknowledge that many Jizani migrants to Najd are employed in working-class or manual labour sectors. The present study does not claim to represent the full socioeconomic spectrum of Jizani migrants. Instead, it focuses specifically on socially integrated and educationally mobile Jizani women who are in sustained contact with the prestige Najdi variety through institutional, neighbourhood, and professional networks, examining their attitudes toward their dialects and the motivations underlying their linguistic practices.

This socioeconomic positioning is analytically significant. Middle-class and institutionally integrated speakers are likely to experience heightened exposure to prestige norms and increased pressure to adopt features of the Najdi dialect. Their speech practices, therefore, provide insight into how prestige hierarchies and regional marginalisation operate within socially mobile segments of the migrant population.

The findings should consequently be interpreted as reflecting the perceptions and linguistic practices motives among this specific sociolinguistic group rather than generalised to all Jizani migrants in Najd. Future research may usefully examine how working-class or recently arrived migrants navigate similar dialect contact situations.

The sampling strategy was therefore designed to prioritise depth of sociolinguistic insight within a clearly defined contact setting, rather than statistical representativeness across all regional and class groups.

4.6.1 Participants in the participant observation and semi-structured interviews

The following table presents the demographic and linguistic information for the participants who took part in the natural conversations and interviews.

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Table 4-1 Key demographic and linguistic information on the research participants

Participant	Group	Age	Birthplace	Residence	Education	Occupation	Home Dialect	Neighbourhood Type
Hanan	JMS	32	Jizan	Najd	Bachelor	Teacher	Jizani	Jizani-majority
Marwa	JMS	35	Jizan	Najd	Diploma	Nurse	Jizani	Jizani-majority
Huda	JMS	36	Jizan	Najd	Secondary	Housewife	Jizani	Jizani-majority
Nadia	JMS	40	Jizan	Najd	Diploma	Teacher	Jizani	Mixed Jizani–Najdi
Faten	JLHS	31	Jizan	Najd	Bachelor	Housewife	Jizani	Mixed Jizani–Najdi
Amal	JLHS	32	Najd	Najd	Diploma	Nurse	Jizani	Najdi-majority
Salma	JLHS	32	Najd	Najd	Bachelor	Housewife	Jizani	Mixed Jizani–Najdi
Zeina	JLHS	35	Najd	Najd	Bachelor	Lab Specialist	Jizani	Najdi-majority
Samia	JLHS	38	Jizan	Najd	Secondary	Housewife	Jizani	Jizani-majority
Amjad	NOS	39	Najd	Najd	Diploma	Nurse	Najdi	Mixed Jizani–Najdi
Shaima	NOS	40	Najd	Najd	Diploma	Nurse	Najdi	Najdi-majority
Lamia	NOS	33	Najd	Najd	Bachelor	Housewife	Najdi	Najdi-majority
Hessa	NOS	29	Najd	Najd	Bachelor	Teacher	Najdi	Mixed Jizani–Najdi
Sheikha	NOS	39	Najd	Najd	Secondary	Housewife	Najdi	Najdi-majority

4.6.2 Socio-Demographic Profiles of The Participants in the MGT

Participants in the questionnaire ranged in age from 18 to 45 years and were Saudi females living in Najd. Out of the 218 initial responses, 69 were excluded for various reasons, including responses from males, females over 45 years old, and females belonging to the Jizani or Najdi groups who did not reside in Najd. Consequently, the analysed dataset comprised 149 responses from Jizani and Najdi participants residing in Najd.

Table 4.2 shows that respondents were divided into two categories based on their city of origin: the Jizan and Najd regions. Among the female participants, 52% were from Jizan (n = 77) and 48% were from Najd (n = 72). Each group was further subdivided into two subgroups for subsequent analysis, focusing on the Jizani participants.

Table 4-2 Distribution of the research participants by their city of origin

City of Origin	Respondents	Percentage
	Count	(%)
Jizan	77	52%
Najd	72	48%
Total	149	100%

4.7 Data Collection Instrument

The primary study took place from July 2022 to January 2023. Data were collected through eight observations conducted in July and September, a questionnaire including a Matched-Guise Test (MGT) distributed online in December, and twelve interviews conducted in December and January. To minimise the risk of researcher bias, the selection of these methods was carefully considered to ensure their suitability for addressing the research questions. The following sections describe each research instrument in detail, illustrating how it contributed to answering the research questions.

Researchers employ various sources to collect data that contribute to understanding the phenomenon under investigation (Yin, 2014; Merriam, 2009). A mixed-methods approach, encompassing multiple data collection techniques, can support data triangulation. In this study, different methods were employed to obtain rich data from Jizani participants regarding their communicative practices with Najdi interactants, as well as their perceptions and beliefs about intergroup and intragroup relations while living in Najd.

All data collection instruments were developed in Arabic, the participants' native language, to facilitate the acquisition of natural and authentic responses. The following sections provide a detailed description of each data collection method.

4.7.1 Matched-Guise Technique and the Questionnaire

The matched-guise technique (MGT) was developed by Wallace Lambert and his colleagues to elicit participants' covert attitudes toward linguistic varieties (Kircher, 2015). As an indirect method, the MGT requires participants to listen to the voices of several speakers reading the same text in different linguistic varieties (Loureiro-Rodríguez & Acar, 2022). Participants are then asked to evaluate the speakers based on a series of characteristics, unaware that the same speaker may be presented multiple times. This method allows researchers to explore differences in evaluation based solely on linguistic variety. The primary goal of using MGT is to control for extraneous variables—such as pitch, tone, clarity, speech rate, speaker gender, and age—that may influence listeners' perceptions. Kircher (2015) emphasised that participants are not informed of the study's true purpose, creating the impression that they are listening to recordings delivered by different speakers. This enables the researcher to focus on linguistic differences without the confounding effects of individual speech traits. Importantly, MGT is designed to assess participants' subconscious attitudes toward spoken varieties, not to obscure the existence of language differences. For further details on reliability at this stage, see below.

Social psychologists have widely used matched-guise experiments to study how speech influences listeners' perceptions. For example, in the United Kingdom, MGT has been employed to evaluate speakers' attitudes toward different accents (Trudgill, 1995, pp. 178–179). In these experiments, recordings of the same or different speakers reading identical texts in various accents are presented to informants, who are then asked to rate the speakers on attitudinal scales, such as “very intelligent” to “very unintelligent” or “very friendly” to “very unfriendly.”

To assess both explicit and implicit language attitudes, the survey instrument in this study incorporated the matched-guise technique. This allowed participants' implicit perceptions of Jizani and Najdi accents to be evaluated while controlling for potential biases associated with the speaker's identity. The MGT was included as a distinct section within the survey, following initial questions that captured participants' explicit attitudes toward language varieties. In this section, participants listened to scripted passages or audio recordings of the same content delivered in Jizani and Najdi varieties. They then rated each guise on two dimensions—status and solidarity—using the following traits: timid, casual, intelligent, educated, and pleasant. (see Appendix B)

The traits were selected based on previous studies evaluating Saudi individuals' attitudes toward Jizani Arabic (Ruthan, 2020) and the researcher's intuition that they represent commonly used descriptors for speech in the Saudi context. Limiting the number of traits also helped prevent participant fatigue, as respondents were asked to listen to four guises and rate each one according to the selected characteristics.

The survey combined explicit questions with the MGT to provide both conscious and subconscious insights into participants' language attitudes, thereby enhancing the richness and depth of the data collected.

Regarding the MGT script, I produced a narrative of approximately 15 seconds describing the weather, which included salient Jizani linguistic features such as /ʔam/, /n/, /j/, and /inn/. Although the script was written in Standard Arabic, the readers produced it in both Jizani and Najdi varieties to enable listeners to evaluate the accents. (For details, see Appendix D).

Five female Jizani speakers were recruited to record the script. Selection criteria included being Jizani, residing in Alkharj for more than seven years, and maintaining frequent contact with Najdi speakers. Each speaker read the script naturally in Jizani and then in Najdi, yielding 10 recordings: five in Jizani and five in Najdi. To ensure accuracy, nine native Jizani speakers verified the Jizani recordings, while ten native Najdi speakers evaluated the Najdi recordings. Following Schüppert et al. (2015), the recordings judged to best represent the targeted accents were selected: two Jizani and two Najdi. Two additional recordings were used as filler voices to reduce the likelihood that participants would detect repetition (Lambert et al., 1960).

Selecting suitable speakers in this context is rare due to the difficulty of producing multiple varieties accurately (Garrett, 2010). To address this, I personally participated in choosing the four recordings that best corresponded to the study's objectives, drawing on my experience as a Jizani who has lived in Najd (JLH). This approach aligns with previous studies in which researchers themselves selected matched-guise speakers (Lambert et al., 1960; MacFarlane & Stuart-Smith, 2012; Schüppert et al., 2015). For reliability, after data collection, participants were debriefed, informed that they had heard two speakers rather than four, and explained the study's true purpose, despite having previously received a debriefing form acknowledging the study involved a degree of deception. (see Appendix L)

The survey consisted of four parts, presented in Arabic and distributed online. Part 1 collected participants' background information, including age, birthplace, city of origin, years lived in Jizan, years lived in Riyadh, and current residence. This contextual information enabled correlations between demographic factors and participants' language attitudes.

Part 2 incorporated the MGT, asking participants to evaluate different Jizani and Najdi speakers based on the specified dimensions of status and solidarity.

Part 3 asked participants to select adjectives from a pre-defined list to describe the speakers they heard during the MGT. This method captured participants' perceptions of personality, communication style, and social impressions, providing insights into their associations between language varieties and evaluative characteristics.

Part 4 examined participants' explicit perceptions of the speakers' social status. Respondents indicated the perceived social status of each speaker and provided reasons for whether they would consider contacting the speaker. Two open-ended questions were included to allow participants to provide richer qualitative feedback, capturing nuanced attitudes and personal interpretations that predefined response options might not reveal.

By integrating the MGT with the survey, this study gathered both explicit and implicit attitudes toward language varieties, providing a comprehensive understanding of participants' perceptions and evaluations.

4.7.1.1 Critique of the Matched-Guise Test

While the MGT is a widely used and methodologically robust tool for assessing implicit language attitudes, it has several limitations that must be recognised when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the MGT assumes that listeners' evaluations are based solely on linguistic features. In practice, subtle cues in speaker delivery or performance may be noticed, especially when the same speaker produces multiple guises. Such recognition can reduce the measure's ability to capture completely subconscious evaluations. In this study, filler voices and careful validation by native speakers helped minimise this risk, but it cannot be fully eliminated.

A further limitation relates to the cultural specificity and potential subjectivity of the evaluative adjectives. Terms such as 'educated', 'intelligent', or 'casual' may have different interpretations across regions, levels of formality, or age groups. To reduce ambiguity, all adjectives were carefully translated into Arabic, reviewed by bilingual speakers, and selected for their cultural recognisability and everyday usage. The Arabic descriptors—*خجولة* (timid), *عفوية* (casual), *ذكية* (intelligent), *متعلمة* (educated), and *لطيفة* (pleasant) were piloted to ensure consistent understanding across participants (see Appendix C). While some degree of subjectivity is unavoidable, these terms reflect socially meaningful dimensions of status and solidarity in Saudi society, providing a culturally grounded measure of participant attitudes. Their selection was informed by prior research on Saudi Arabia (Ruthan, 2020) and my field knowledge as a native Jizani speaker living in Najd, which allowed for careful evaluation of their relevance and

clarity. Nevertheless, future studies might complement such traits with more behaviourally anchored descriptors to improve precision and reduce subjectivity.

Finally, the MGT assesses attitudes based solely on auditory input and therefore cannot account for social meanings, contextual cues, or interactional dynamics that influence evaluations during face-to-face encounters. Consequently, the present study triangulated MGT findings with qualitative interview data and naturalistic conversational behaviour, enhancing the interpretive reliability of the results.

These considerations do not diminish the MGT's value; rather, they emphasise the importance of cautious interpretation and the additional insights gained by combining implicit and explicit attitude measures in a mixed-methods design. By critically reflecting on its limitations and contextualising the evaluative adjectives, the study provides a robust and culturally informed application of the MGT to examine attitudes towards Jizani and Najdi speech varieties.

4.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews form the backbone of primary data collection in qualitative research. Their primary purpose is to explore and explain why a particular phenomenon occurs (Gill et al., 2008). They enable the researcher to obtain in-depth information based on individual opinions. One of the most significant benefits of interviews is the ability to capture detailed, nuanced perspectives. Conducting interviews is akin to completing a picture of events and experiences (Weiss, 1995).

There are different types of interviews: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. The present study employed semi-structured interviews due to their flexibility. In this approach, the interviewer uses a set of predetermined questions while also allowing new questions to emerge based on participants' responses, focusing on personal experiences, attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about the topic under investigation. Semi-structured interviews are commonly used as a follow-up tool in mixed-methods research (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p.139). They constitute a social interaction guided by a flexible interview protocol, in which topics of interest are identified but not rigidly controlled (Stuckey, 2013; Roulston & Choi, 2018).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect attitudinal data from both Jizani and Najdi participants. This method helped explain the motives and perceptions behind the Jizani participants' linguistic behaviours observed during naturalistic interactions and reflected in their responses to the MGT.

Interviews were conducted in informal settings, such as quiet cafés or participants' homes, consistent with Beswick's (2014) approach in examining language use and group membership in

Galicia and Portugal. Participants were not provided with the detailed objectives of the study, but they were asked to discuss their opinions and experiences of living in Riyadh.

All interviews were conducted in Arabic with both Jizani participants living in Najd and Najdi participants. The interview questions were derived from the matched-guise test, allowing an exploration of participants' explicit attitudes. Participants were asked to explain their survey responses and provide the reasoning behind their ratings.

Specific inquiries were directed at Jizani participants, focusing on their life experiences in Riyadh, their accent use when interacting with friends and relatives, and the language varieties used in their homes and workplaces. These questions provided insights into their relationships within the Jizani community and with Najdi speakers. Participants were also encouraged to share experiences with Najdi individuals related to their use of the Jizani variety.

Interviews with Najdi participants primarily focused on their experiences interacting with Jizani speakers, including any challenges or perceptions they held about Jizani individuals. The aim was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social and linguistic dynamics between Najdi and Jizani speakers and explore potential cultural or linguistic factors affecting their interactions.

To ensure internal validity, the interview questions were reviewed by my supervisor and two researchers experienced in language attitudes. Their feedback was used to refine and finalise the interview protocol.

A total of 14 interviews, each lasting approximately 30 minutes, were conducted in Arabic and audio-recorded to ensure effective communication. Recordings were transcribed immediately after each session (Dörnyei, 2007). To ensure accuracy, recordings were reviewed multiple times, and transcripts were sent to participants for verification. Data analysis was conducted using the original Arabic transcriptions to preserve participants' intended meanings. Quotations relevant to the research questions were subsequently translated into English, reviewed by two colleagues, and subjected to back-translation for randomly selected excerpts. To further ensure internal validity, the findings were shared with participants to confirm the accuracy of their statements, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the data (Merriam, 1998).

4.7.3 Participant Observation

Observations of eight out of ten were conducted at their homes over five weeks in August and September 2022. The gatherings typically took place in comfortable, intimate spaces that conveyed a sense of warmth and personalisation. The sitting rooms, where the women usually

convened, were furnished to foster friendly social interaction. Ambient lighting and decorative elements enhanced the relaxed atmosphere, facilitating engagement and conversation. The scent of Arabian incense (*bakhoor*) and Saudi coffee, combined with the sounds of the women's talk and laughter, created a familiar and inviting environment.

Two additional observations took place in chalets, which participants frequented habitually. Visits to the chalets provided an opportunity for women, their children, and even extended family and friends to gather. The chalets, set amidst nature and green spaces, offered a picturesque backdrop that allowed participants to escape daily routines. These gatherings were distinguished by a sense of relaxation and adventure, which contributed to a jovial and lively atmosphere.

The primary aim of these observations was to collect naturalistic data in spontaneous environments, addressing the third research question. Observations included recording conversations between Jizani and Najdi participants to gain insights into the linguistic behaviours of Jizani speakers and the characteristics of their speech in Najd. Importantly, these gatherings were part of the participants' regular routines and were not organised solely for the research. House gatherings typically began after 8:00 p.m., while chalet gatherings started before sunset to allow participants to enjoy the natural surroundings. This unplanned nature of the gatherings ensured that the communicative behaviours and social dynamics captured were authentic and natural.

The use of familiar, natural settings enhanced the validity and richness of the observations. Participants were comfortable in their homes and chalets, allowing them to act and interact in ways consistent with their everyday behaviour. Observations also prioritised participants' privacy, consent, and well-being, with informed consent obtained from each participant prior to commencing the study (see Appendix K).

These naturalistic observations were designed to examine the factors influencing the use of Jizani and Najdi linguistic features in everyday interactions. All-female gatherings in Al-Kharj provided opportunities to analyse context-sensitive dialect use across settings, topics, social class, and interlocutor type, enabling the identification of recurring triggers for variant choice. Detailed information on observation settings, transcription and translation, coding schema (linguistic and social variables), reliability checks, and trigger analyses is provided in Chapter 7, alongside illustrative excerpts and quantitative summaries.

4.8 Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis began with the Matched-Guise Test, which was evaluated statistically to assess participants' implicit attitudes toward Jizani and Najdi varieties. Next, semi-structured interviews were analysed thematically to explore participants' explicit attitudes and the motivations behind their speech choices. Finally, participant observations were examined to identify interactional and social factors triggering the adoption of Najdi features, including interlocutor identity, setting, and conversation topics. Combining these methods allowed for triangulation and a comprehensive understanding of Jizani speakers' attitudes and linguistic practices while residing in Najd.

4.8.1 Analysis to Address Research Question 1: How do Jizani and Najdi women evaluate JA and NA across dimensions of status and solidarity?

The data from the questionnaire and Matched-Guise Test (MGT) were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 28, 2021). The quantitative analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics and was conducted in four stages.

The first stage consisted of descriptive statistics to examine five socio-demographic characteristics of the participants: age, birthplace, city of origin, locality, and length of residence in Najd and the city of origin.

The second stage focused on exploring the attitudes of Jizani and Najdi speakers living in Najd (Riyadh) toward their own and each other's varieties. Participants rated five characteristics—timidity, casualness, education, pleasantness, and intelligence—on a 5-point Likert scale for each voice. Ratings were converted into numerical scores, from which percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated. Each participant chose only one option per item. Additionally, descriptive analyses were conducted on supplementary adjectives, including humbleness, respect, kindness, confidence, arrogance, and laziness, where participants could select all adjectives that they felt applied to each speaker. Participants' perceptions of the social class associated with the two speakers and their willingness for future contact with each speaker were also analysed descriptively.

In the third stage, the Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed-Ranks Test was conducted (Denis, 2020, p.194; Pallant, 2020, p.253) to compare the attitudes of Jizani and Najdi participants toward their own and each other's varieties. This non-parametric test was used because the data did not meet normality and homogeneity assumptions. Differences were assessed in overall ratings and across the five key characteristics.

The fourth stage involved analysis of participants' responses to two open-ended questions following the MGT. These questions elicited in-depth views on their perceptions and attitudes toward the speakers. Using content analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2016), comments were categorised and quantified based on frequency, following the approach of Garrett et al. (2005b). Categories included linguistic features, affective positive and negative reactions, cultural associations, and perceptions of cultured versus uncultured behaviour. This qualitative analysis complemented the quantitative data, providing a richer understanding of participants' beliefs, stereotypes, and social evaluations related to the spoken varieties.

4.8.2 Analysis to Address Research Question 2: How do Jizani women understand, evaluate, and explain their linguistic behaviour in Najdi-dominant contexts?

The analysis of Jizani women's attitudes toward their linguistic behaviour in Najdi-dominant contexts was conducted using qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, complemented by observations and the Matched-Guise Test (MGT). After observing Jizani participants interacting with Najdi speakers and other Jizani residents in Najd, participants completed the questionnaire, including the MGT, to capture covert attitudes toward the Jizani variety and its speakers. Semi-structured interviews with both Jizani and Najdi participants were subsequently conducted to deepen the understanding of explicit attitudes and perceptions regarding the use of the Jizani variety.

An interview protocol was carefully prepared (Appendices E & G). Questions were derived from the research questions and participants' MGT responses, following Castillo-Montoya's (2016) framework (Table 4.3). Each question was evaluated for relevance to ensure it encouraged participants to discuss the status of the Jizani variety in Najdi contexts and to share their experiences freely. To enhance validity and reliability, the interview questions were reviewed by my supervisor, piloted with colleagues, and refined based on their feedback

Table 4-3 Aligning research and interview questions about Jizani individuals living in Najd.

Chapter 4

Qualitative data analysis was adopted for the interview responses. As a Jizani who has spent her entire life in Najd and is fluent in both Jizani and Najdi varieties, I deliberately used the Jizani variety when interviewing Jizani participants. This choice aimed to create a comfortable and

Research questions	Interview Questions
<p>How are the Jizani individuals' attitudes towards their Jizani variety manifested, reproduced, and contested while being in Najd?</p> <p>What factors play a role in shaping, sustaining, and reinforcing attitudes of Jizani individuals toward their spoken variety?</p>	<p>Who do you speak Jizani with?</p> <p>When and where do you usually speak it?</p> <p>What about the Najdi variety?</p> <p>What does each variety mean to you?</p> <p>How does speaking Jizani?</p> <p>How do you feel? What about Najdi?</p> <p>Can you explain these thoughts by drawing from your own experiences?</p> <p>What was your experience living in Najd?</p> <p>Did you enjoy speaking with Jizani speakers?</p> <p>What were the things you did not like?</p> <p>How did your Najdi interlocutors behave with you when you spoke Jizani?</p> <p>How did you overcome these challenges?</p> <p>Which variety do you think Jizani should speak when interacting with Najdi people?</p> <p>Do you think Jizani should speak Najdi? Why? Why not?</p>

authentic environment, allowing participants to express themselves naturally. By using a familiar variety, I established a connection beyond mere linguistic exchange. If participants had perceived me as a member of the Najdi group, speaking a more prestigious variety, they might have felt compelled to respond in the prestigious variety to avoid judgment, stigmatisation, or discrimination against their original variety (Karatsareas, 2022). Such dynamics could have limited their willingness to share personal experiences, views, and feelings.

Conversely, as Karatsareas (2022) notes, some participants might have perceived a researcher adopting their variety as inauthentic, appropriative, or an effort at imitation. To address this, I relied on my familiarity with the participants' linguistic repertoires from prior observations, ensuring communication was comfortable and contextually grounded.

After conducting the interviews and transcribing the audio-recorded data, MAXQDA was used for analysis. Some interview data complemented responses from the MGT, while other data provided in-depth insight into participants' experiences and attitudes regarding the use of Jizani in Najd.

Interviews were particularly valuable for exploring participants' beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about language and the reasons behind these beliefs (Karatsareas, 2022, p.99).

The interview analysis followed thematic analysis, with codes initiated directly from participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Open coding was applied, developing themes inductively from the data without predetermined categories, which reduced researcher bias and allowed for a more nuanced understanding (Al-Hakami, 2023).

Coding was not conducted line-by-line; rather, each transcript segment was coded according to its relevance to the research questions or its significance. Codes were developed iteratively, revised, compared, and refined throughout the analysis. Similar codes were then clustered to form broader themes. For example, codes related to participants' perceptions of their use of the Jizani variety and its evaluation were grouped under the theme *Attitudes toward the Jizani variety*.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.82) highlight that themes emerge to capture important patterns in the data that address the research question, and that theme selection relies on the researcher's judgment. In this study, theme selection was guided by both frequency of occurrence and relevance to the research questions.

Finally, the qualitative interview findings were integrated with the quantitative MGT results. Specific responses from the MGT were expanded upon in the interviews, allowing for a triangulated and comprehensive exploration of participants' attitudes and behaviours. This combined approach provided richer insights into the motivations, beliefs, and social dynamics influencing the use and perception of the Jizani variety in Najdi-dominant contexts.

4.8.3 Analysis to address Research Question 3: What interactional and social factors shape the use of Jizani and Najdi features in natural interaction

The analysis of natural conversations aimed to examine how Jizani speakers living in Najd use linguistic variants when interacting with Najdi interlocutors, and how these patterns reflect accommodation, identity, and dialect contact. The procedure combined quantitative and qualitative techniques within CAT and code-switching to provide a layered understanding of linguistic behaviour.

The analysis followed a systematic, multistage process, beginning with impressionistic listening and culminating in the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings. This process was iterative rather than linear, with multiple cycles of listening, coding, and verification to ensure both accuracy and interpretive depth.

Immediately after each recording, I conducted repeated listening sessions to familiarise myself with the speakers' voices, interactional patterns, and salient linguistic features. Brief analytic notes were made on distinctive phonological and contextual triggers, such as changes in interlocutor or setting, that appeared to influence variant choice. These early observations guided the identification of potential linguistic features, including alternations between /ʔal-/ and /ʔam-/ and between /j-/ and /b-/, as well as sociolinguistic triggers such as topic, setting, or class. My dual fluency in Jizani and Najdi facilitated accurate transcription and interpretation, while reflexive documentation ensured that insider knowledge did not bias the analysis.

Once broad patterns were identified, each conversation was transcribed orthographically and phonetically using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). A second native Jizani speaker reviewed a subset of the transcriptions to ensure the accuracy of feature representation.

Each token was assigned a unique identifier (ID) and coded across all relevant linguistic and social dimensions, resulting in 2,886 coded entries. I re-listened to each recording while verifying the coded dataset to ensure each token corresponded precisely to the audio source. Ambiguous or borderline cases, such as assimilated /l-/ versus /ʔam-/ forms, were rechecked with a linguist familiar with both varieties.

Tokens were categorised by variant and speaker group. Frequency counts and percentages were calculated to compare the relative use of Jizani and Najdi forms among participants, providing a quantitative overview of dialectal variation within and between groups. Cross-tabulations were used to examine relationships between linguistic and social variables, including setting, style, topic, education, and class.

Generalised linear mixed models (GLMMs) were employed to determine how social and linguistic factors jointly influenced variant choice. The GLMMs incorporated fixed effects (e.g., group, topic, setting) and random effects (e.g., speaker) to account for the non-independence of repeated observations within speakers (Bolker et al., 2009). This approach is well-suited to sociolinguistic research involving categorical outcomes and unbalanced data, providing a reliable method to identify factors that significantly predict the use of specific variants while controlling for individual differences.

In parallel, the transcripts were reread qualitatively to interpret the communicative motives underlying variant shifts. Recurrent themes, such as expressing solidarity, managing clarity, and signalling identity positions, were identified and thematically coded. These analyses captured the functional and social meanings behind the linguistic choices.

The observed linguistic behaviours were then compared with the implicit and explicit attitudes obtained from the MGT and interviews (Chapters 5 and 6). This triangulated approach linked

perception-based and behaviour-based evidence, demonstrating how attitudes toward prestige and identity are enacted in natural speech.

All recorded conversations were transcribed both orthographically and phonetically. Selected excerpts were reviewed by participants, who compared the transcripts against the recordings to confirm accuracy. A bilingual colleague cross-checked the English translations to ensure semantic equivalence between Arabic and English, enhancing credibility and validity.

The resulting Excel database included both linguistic and social variables, producing 2,886 coded tokens. Each token represented a distinct instance of a target linguistic feature, allowing for intra- and inter-speaker comparisons. A summary of this database is presented in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4 Coding framework used for the analysis of natural conversations, illustrating linguistic and social variables assigned to each token

Type	Variable	Example Code
Speaker information	Participant ID; Group (JMS/JLH/NOS)	JMS1, JLH4
Linguistic variables	Definite article /ʔal/, /ʔam/, and assimilated form), phonological and morphosyntactic features	/ʔalwalad/, /ʔamwalad/
Style	Conversation/Interview	1 = Conversation, 2 = Interview
Setting	Private/Public	1 = Home gathering, chalet, 2 = 2= Café
Topic	Family/Work/Education/Leisure/language	Topic_ID 1–5
Education	Secondary/Diploma/Bachelor	Edu_ID 1–3
Class	Working/Middle	Class_ID 1–2
Interlocutor group	Jizani/Najdi	Interlocutor variant
Subdivision	Rural/Urban	1 = Rural 2 = Urban
Code-switch	Yes/No	1 = Yes, 0 = No

This structure enabled each linguistic occurrence to be situated within its interactional and social context, supporting the precise mapping of variant use and the identification of potential triggers, such as topic or setting.

In addition to the conversational corpus, the semi-structured interviews were also analysed linguistically to examine whether participants' speech reflected similar accommodation patterns in a more formal and reflective context. Each interview was transcribed and coded using the same framework as the conversational data, with particular attention to the occurrence of Jizani and Najdi variants, moments of code-switching, and stylistic shifts triggered by topic. This parallel analysis allowed a comparison between speakers' spontaneous speech in natural interactions and their self-expressive speech in interviews, providing a more comprehensive understanding of language use across different interactional settings.

Finally, the findings from the natural conversations were compared with those from the interviews and the MGT. This triangulated design linked implicit and explicit attitudes with actual linguistic performance, yielding a holistic understanding of how attitudes translate into behaviour.

To explore the influence of attitudes on linguistic behaviour, the conversational dataset was quantitatively compared with both implicit and explicit attitude measures. For each speaker, the percentage of Najdi variant use was calculated across all coded tokens (e.g., /ʔa/ versus /ʔam/, /t/ versus /n/, /i/ versus /n/, /i:/ versus /inn/, /b/ versus /j/), creating an individual shifting behavioural index. This index was then correlated with two attitudinal measures:

1. Implicit attitudes, represented by Δ status and Δ solidarity scores derived from the MGT, showing rating differences between Najdi and Jizani.
2. Explicit attitudes, measured using an interview attitude code providing a numeric scale indicating whether participants' evaluations of Jizani and Najdi speech were positive, neutral, or negative during the semi-structured interviews.

Given the small sample size (14 speakers across all three phases) and the non-normal distribution of the scores, Spearman's rank-order correlation was used. Three correlation tests were conducted for each group:

1. % Najdi use \leftrightarrow Implicit status (Δ status)
2. % Najdi use \leftrightarrow Implicit solidarity (Δ solidarity)
3. % Najdi use \leftrightarrow Explicit attitude code

This multilevel comparison systematically combined attitudinal and behavioural evidence. Quantitative correlations revealed statistical trends, while qualitative transcript analysis helped interpret mismatches and unexpected results, ensuring a transparent, empirically grounded triangulation across all data sources.

The following chapter presents the results of the linguistic analysis, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative evidence from recorded conversations and interviews. Patterns identified through frequency counts, cross-tabulations, and GLMM modelling are interpreted alongside thematic observations of speakers' interactional choices. These findings illustrate how Jizani speakers in Najd navigate between Jizani and Najdi variants across social contexts. Particular attention is given to social triggers—topic, setting, style, and class—which influence variant selection and reveal the interplay between prestige, and identity. By examining these patterns, the analysis operationalises the methodological framework outlined previously, demonstrating how attitudes and social meanings are enacted through everyday speech.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

Since the current study involved human participants, specific ethical measures were implemented to ensure compliance with research ethics. The study received formal approval from the Ethics Committee Review through the ERGOII online system (Ethics reference 70277).

Before participation, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to all participants. They were informed that the data collected would be used solely for this research. Participants were then asked to provide informed consent by signing an online consent form for each phase of the data collection. Each participant also received a copy of the debriefing form, which contained detailed information about the study (see Appendix L).

To protect participants' anonymity, no personal identifying information, such as names or contact details, was disclosed in this thesis. All participants are referred to using pseudonyms, which do not correspond to any real individual involved in the study.

Special care was taken regarding the ethical treatment of the speakers of the stimuli used in the Matched-Guise Test (MGT) and participants observed during the study. Personal or biographical information about these individuals was never revealed to participants. All audio files containing recordings were securely stored on a password-protected personal computer. Following the completion of data collection, the recordings used in the questionnaire were deleted to ensure privacy. These measures ensured that the study adhered to ethical principles, protecting participants' confidentiality, autonomy, and well-being throughout the research process.

4.10 Researcher's Position

Reflexivity is essential in qualitative and mixed-methods research, particularly in sociolinguistics, where the researcher's identity can influence access, rapport, and interpretation (Bucholtz, 2011; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). My positionality in this study was complex: as a Jizani raised in Najd, I am fluent in both Jizani and Najdi varieties. This dual linguistic and cultural background positioned me as an insider to both communities while providing a degree of analytical distance.

During both observations and interviews, I consciously chose to speak Jizani when interacting with Jizani participants. This decision created a comfortable and authentic environment, encouraging participants to share their thoughts, experiences, and feelings naturally. Speaking the familiar Jizani variety also reduced the risk that participants would switch to the more prestigious Najdi variety to avoid judgment, stigmatisation, or social pressure. When interacting with Najdi participants, I used the Najdi variety to respect the conversational norms of that group. While my insider status facilitated access to women's gatherings and helped participants feel at ease, I was aware of potential risks. Some participants might perceive my use of Jizani as inauthentic or performative. To minimise this, I relied on prior observations of participants' speech patterns and communication styles, maintaining consistent dialect use across all phases of data collection.

My outsider aspects — having no prior personal relationships with participants — also played a role. This unfamiliarity positioned me as a neutral listener during the interview, allowing participants to reflect more freely on their attitudes toward Jizani speech.

To safeguard against bias, I engaged in reflexive practices, including keeping detailed notes, peer debriefing with colleagues knowledgeable in Saudi sociolinguistics, and reviewing sections of transcripts with bidialectical colleagues. Triangulating findings across the MGT, interviews, and natural conversations further strengthened the credibility of interpretations.

Overall, my dual insider–outsider role was a flexible methodological resource. It allowed me to access participants and interpret linguistic and cultural nuances that were sensitively addressed, while reflexive awareness and triangulation ensured that analyses remained rigorous and grounded in evidence.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter provides a comprehensive account of the research design and methodology employed in this study. It begins by outlining the research approach and highlighting the rationale for adopting a mixed-methods design. This is followed by an overview of the research design and a detailed description of the data collection instruments. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the data analysis procedures applied to each instrument, illustrating how the study systematically addressed the research questions.

Chapter 5 Matched-Guise Test Results: Implicit Attitudes

5.1 Matched-Guise Test Results

This section presents the results separately for the Jizani and Najdi listeners. The quantitative analyses (descriptive and Wilcoxon tests) are complemented by the participants' qualitative explanations, providing a more comprehensive interpretation of the implicit attitudes uncovered by the MGT to answer the first research question: How do Jizani and Najdi women evaluate JA and NA across dimensions of status and solidarity?

5.1.1 Descriptive Statistics as Evaluated by the Jizani Participants

5.1.1.1 Evaluation of the Jizani Voice

The participants were asked to evaluate each speaker using a five-point Likert scale based on five adjectives: 'Timid, Casual, Educated, Pleasant, and Intelligent'. For further details on selecting these traits and their description, see Section 4.7.1. Table 5-1 summarises the mean scores assigned by the Jizani participants to the Jizani voice.

Table 5-1 Descriptive statistics: Evaluation of the Jizani dialect by the Jizani speakers

Characteristic	Mean	SD
Timid	3.42	1.311
Casual	4.04	1.186
Educated	3.71	1.191
Pleasant	3.95	1.317
Intelligent	3.75	1.126

Descriptively, higher ratings were reported for casualness ($M = 4.04$), pleasantness ($M = 3.95$), and intelligence ($M = 3.75$), while education received a moderately positive score ($M = 3.71$). Timidity had a comparatively lower rating ($M = 3.42$). These patterns indicate that the Jizani listeners tended to associate their own variety with positive interpersonal qualities, particularly those linked to warmth and informality.

5.1.1.2 Evaluation of the Najdi Voice

Table 5-2 presents the Jizani participants' evaluations of the Najdi voice.

Table 5-2 Descriptive statistics: Evaluation of the Najdi dialect by the Jizani speakers

Characteristic	Mean	SD
Timid	2.36	1.287
Casual	3.27	1.411
Educated	4.10	1.059
Pleasant	3.86	1.109
Intelligent	4.00	1.076

Education (M = 4.10), intelligence (M = 4.00), and pleasantness (M = 3.86) received the highest ratings. Casualness was evaluated neutrally (M = 3.27), while timidity was rated low (M = 2.36). The higher scores for education and intelligence suggest that the Jizani listeners implicitly attributed greater status to the Najdi variety, even while maintaining affective positivity towards their own dialect.

5.1.2 Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test: Differences Between the Two Guises Identified by the Jizani Participants

This section adopts a hypothesis-driven approach to answer this question.

The first hypothesis (H1) is “Najdi Arabic will be evaluated more positively on status-related dimensions, while Jizani Arabic will be evaluated more positively on solidarity-related dimensions, reflecting an underlying prestige hierarchy”. To test and verify the validity of this assumption, I conducted the Wilcoxon Matched pairs-signed-ranks Test examining the attitudes of the Jizani speakers (n = 77).

As shown in Table 5-3, the Wilcoxon analysis revealed significant differences between the two guises for timidity, casualness, and education, while pleasantness and intelligence showed no significant differences.

Table 5-3 Results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test: Differences in the attitudes of the Jizani participants towards the Jizani and Najdi guises

Sub-Skill	Signed Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P-value	r_{prb}	Effect Size
Timidity	Negative Ranks (*)	47	34.18	1,606.50	-4.14	0.000	0.37	Medium
	Positive Ranks (**)	16	25.59	409.50				
	Ties (***)	14						
Casualness	Negative Ranks (*)	39	32.63	1,272.50	-3.26	0.001	0.30	Medium
	Positive Ranks (**)	19	23.08	438.50				
	Ties (***)	19						
Education	Negative Ranks (*)	14	22.79	319.00	-2.48	0.013	0.26	Small
	Positive Ranks (**)	32	23.81	762.00				
	Ties (***)	31						
Pleasantness	Negative Ranks (*)	30	21.00	630.00	-0.43	0.661	0.04	Negligible
	Positive Ranks (**)	18	30.33	546.00				
	Ties (***)	29						
Intelligence	Negative Ranks (*)	17	26.47	450.00	-1.66	0.096	0.17	Small
	Positive Ranks (**)	32	24.22	775.00				
	Ties (***)	28						
(*) Najdi Speaker 2 < Jizani Speaker 1; (**) Najdi Speaker 2 > Jizani Speaker 1; (***) Najdi Speaker 2 = Jizani Speaker 1 Note: r_{prb} = Rank biserial correlation, calculated using the equation.								

For timidity, the Jizani guise was rated significantly higher than the Najdi guise ($W = 409.50$, $Z = -4.14$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.37$), indicating that the Jizani voice was perceived as notably timid. For casualness, the Jizani guise also received higher ratings ($W = 438.50$, $Z = -3.26$, $p = 0.001$, $r = 0.30$), showing that it was viewed as more casual than the Najdi voice. For education, the Najdi guise scored significantly higher ($W = 762.00$, $Z = -2.48$, $p = 0.013$, $r = 0.26$), reflecting a modest status advantage associated with the Najdi variety. For pleasantness, no significant difference emerged between the two guises ($W = 546.00$, $Z = -0.43$, $p = 0.661$, $r = 0.04$), indicating similar levels of perceived pleasantness. For intelligence, the difference was also non-significant ($W =$

775.00, $Z = -1.66$, $p = 0.096$, $r = 0.17$), suggesting broadly comparable evaluations of cognitive ability.

Overall, the hypothesis is partially supported as the Jizani participants viewed their own dialect as higher for solidarity-related traits (timidity and casualness), while the Najdi guise received more favourable status assessments (education). Pleasantness and intelligence were rated similarly across both varieties, suggesting no meaningful divergence on these dimensions. These findings show that the Jizani listeners clearly differentiated between the social meanings of the two varieties: their own accent aligns with solidarity-based traits. Simultaneously, NA is positioned in the education and formality domains.

5.1.3 Descriptive Statistics as Evaluated by the Najdi Participants

5.1.3.1 Evaluation of the Jizani Voice

Table 5-4 presents the Najdi participants' evaluations of the Jizani voice.

Table 5-4 Descriptive statistics: Evaluation of the Jizani dialect by the Najdi speakers

Characteristic	Mean	SD
Timid	3.81	1.339
Casual	4.08	1.242
Educated	2.67	1.538
Pleasant	4.08	1.160
Intelligent	3.10	1.247

Timidity received the highest rating ($M = 3.81$), followed by casualness ($M = 4.08$) and then pleasantness ($M = 4.08$). In contrast, education was rated lower ($M = 2.67$), and intelligence was evaluated at a neutral level ($M = 3.10$). The combination of the high timidity and pleasantness ratings indicates that the Najdi listeners perceived the Jizani guise as socially approachable, even though it was not associated with high status.

5.1.3.2 Evaluation of the Najdi Voice

Table 5-5 presents the Najdi participants' evaluations of the Najdi voice.

Table 5-5 Descriptive statistics: Evaluation of the Najdi dialect by the Najdi speakers

Characteristic	Mean	SD
Timidity	2.32	1.309
Casual	3.56	1.472
Education	3.81	1.182
Pleasant	3.85	1.146
Intelligence	3.94	1.033

Higher means were observed for intelligence ($M = 3.94$), education ($M = 3.81$), and pleasantness ($M = 3.85$), while casualness received a moderate score ($M = 3.56$). Timidity had a comparatively low rating ($M = 2.32$). The relatively higher scores for education and intelligence reinforce the perception of NA as the more socially prestigious or competent variety in this community.

5.1.4 Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test: Differences Between the Two Guises Identified by the Najdi Participants

As shown in Table 5-6, the Wilcoxon analysis revealed significant differences between the two guises for timidity, casualness, education, and intelligence, while pleasantness showed no significant difference.

Table 5-6 Results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test: Difference in the attitudes of the Najdi participants towards the Jizani and Najdi guises

Sub-Skill	Signed Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P-value	r_{prb}	Effect Size
Timidity	Negative Ranks (*)	46	27.57	1,268.00	-5.72	0.000	0.57	Large
	Positive Ranks (**)	5	11.60	58.00				
	Ties (***)	21						
Casualness	Negative Ranks (*)	33	23.74	783.50	-2.02	0.043	0.21	Small
	Positive Ranks (**)	15	26.17	392.50				
	Ties (***)	24						
Education	Negative Ranks (*)	10	18.95	189.50	-4.81	0.000	0.46	Large
	Positive Ranks (**)	44	29.44	1,295.50				
	Ties (***)	18						
Pleasantness	Negative Ranks (*)	23	17.24	396.50	-1.36	0.174	0.16	Small
	Positive Ranks (**)	12	19.46	233.50				
	Ties (***)	37						
Intelligence	Negative Ranks (*)	9	26.61	239.50	-4.03	0.000	0.39	Medium
	Positive Ranks (**)	42	25.87	1,086.50				
	Ties (***)	21						
(*) Najdi Speaker 2 < Jizani Speaker 1; (**) Najdi Speaker 2 > Jizani Speaker 1; (***) Najdi Speaker 2 = Jizani Speaker 1 Note: r_{prb} = Rank biserial correlation, calculated using the equation .								

For timidity, the Jizani guise was rated significantly higher than the Najdi guise ($W = 58.00$, $Z = -5.72$, $p < .001$, $r = 0.57$), indicating a strong perception of greater timidity in the Jizani variety. For casualness, the Najdi listeners rated the Jizani voice higher ($W = 392.50$, $Z = -2.02$, $p = .043$, $r = 0.21$), although with a small effect size. For education, the Najdi guise scored notably higher ($W = 1,295.50$, $Z = -4.81$, $p < .001$, $r = 0.46$), reflecting a clear status advantage associated with the Najdi variety. For pleasantness, no significant difference was found ($W = 233.50$, $Z = -1.36$, $p = .174$, $r = 0.16$), indicating similar evaluations across both voices. For intelligence, the Najdi guise again received higher ratings ($W = 1,086.50$, $Z = -4.03$, $p < .001$, $r = 0.39$), demonstrating a moderate status-related preference.

The hypothesis is partially supported: Najdi listeners evaluated the Jizani guise higher for solidarity traits, particularly timidity and casualness, but lower for status traits, with significantly reduced ratings for education and intelligence. Pleasantness did not differ across the guises. These patterns suggest that Najdi participants implicitly positioned the Jizani variety within the solidarity domain while reserving higher-status associations for their own dialect, thereby maintaining a clear status hierarchy while still recognising positive interpersonal qualities. The findings correspond with sociolinguistic research showing that non-local and regional varieties are often rated lower in status (AlWer, 2007; McKenzie, 2008).

5.1.5 Descriptive Statistics of the Additional Adjectives

Figures 5-1 and 5-2 show the adjectives ‘humble’, ‘respectful’, ‘kind’, ‘confident’, ‘arrogant’, and ‘lazy’, chosen by the Jizani and Najdi participants to describe the two guises. These adjectives were grouped into positive and negative connotations to provide further insights into the perceived personality traits.

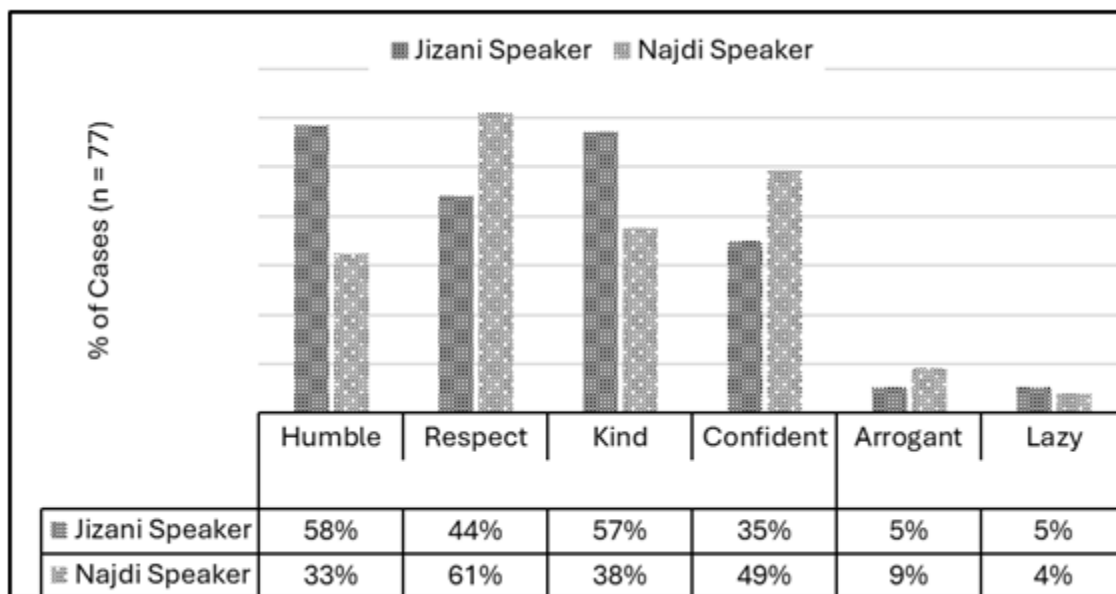


Figure 5-1 Percentage of the Jizani participants based on the top additional adjectives they perceived in the two speakers’ manner of speaking

The Jizani listeners most often associated their own variety with humility and kindness, while the Najdi guise was linked to respect and confidence. Negative traits were generally uncommon: arrogance was more linked to the Najdi guise (9%), while laziness was linked slightly more to the Jizani form (5%).

These associations show that the listeners drew on broader cultural frames when interpreting dialect differences, linking the Jizani accent with regional identity markers such as humility and kindness.

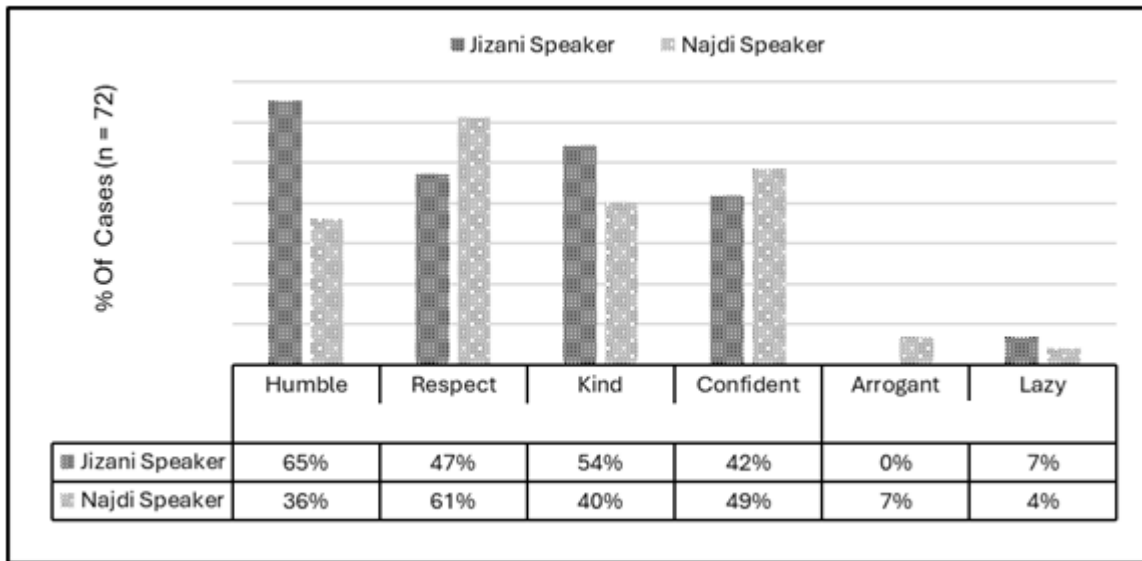


Figure 5-2 Percentage of the Najdi participants based on the top additional adjectives they perceived in the two speakers’ manner of speaking

The Najdi listeners exhibited a similar pattern, linking the Jizani voice with humility and kindness and the Najdi voice with respect and confidence. Arrogance was observed only in the Najdi guise (7%), while laziness was rarely selected for either voice. The similarities between the two groups’ choices indicate shared social imagery associated with the two dialects, despite differences in status evaluations.

The additional adjectives correspond with the broader status and solidarity identified in the MGT results. Both of the groups associated the Najdi voice with higher-status traits, such as confidence and respect, while associating the Jizani voice with solidarity traits, such as kindness and humility. Despite occasional negative stereotypes (e.g. arrogance, laziness), these positive solidarity associations probably contributed to the strong desire for future contact reported by both listener groups. Therefore, the combined adjective patterns strengthen the distinction between affective warmth and perceived competence, mirroring the MGT ratings’ results.

5.1.6 Jizani and Najdi Respondents' Answers Regarding Future Contact with the Speakers

Table 5-7 shows the responses to the question, 'If you have the chance to talk to both female speakers in the future, would you be friendly with them?' Both of the groups expressed overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards such future interactions.

Table 5-7 Results of the responses regarding future contact

Response	With Jizani Speaker		With Najdi Speaker	
	Jizani Respondents	Najdi Respondents	Jizani Respondents	Najdi Respondents
No	5.2%	2.8%	9.1%	5.6%
Yes	94.8%	97.2%	90.9%	94.4%

Among the Jizani participants, 94.8% reported friendliness towards the Jizani voice and 90.9% towards the Najdi voice. The Najdi participants showed similarly high levels of friendliness, with 97.2% for the Jizani guise and 94.4% for the Najdi guise. These consistently positive responses suggest that the attitudes towards the speakers are not socially distancing, even when the status evaluations diverge between the two dialects. (More details can be found in Chapter 8).

While the status evaluations differed in earlier sections, the willingness for positive future contact aligns strongly with the solidarity dimension, suggesting that interpersonal warmth may soften status-based linguistic hierarchies in everyday social settings.

5.1.7 Perceptions of Social Class

Table 5-8 shows how the Jizani listeners categorised the social class of the two speakers.

Table 5-8 Perceived social class of the speakers by the Jizani listeners

Social Class	Jizani Speaker	Najdi Speaker
Working	18%	25%
Middle	75%	63%
Upper	7%	12%

Most of the participants associated the Jizani voice with the middle class (75%), followed by the working class (18%), and then the upper class (7%). The Najdi voice was also primarily associated with the middle class (63%), with slightly higher associations with the working class

(25%) and upper class (12%) than the Jizani voice. The predominance of middle-class categorisation may reflect the general expectation that both voices represent ordinary, socially mainstream speakers rather than extreme class positions.

Table 5-9 presents the perceived social class results for the Najdi listeners.

Table 5-9 Perceived social class of the speakers by the Najdi listeners

Social Class	Jizani Speaker	Najdi Speaker
Working	25.0%	23.6%
Middle	68.1%	69.4%
Upper	6.9%	6.9%

The Najdi listeners' evaluations showed an almost identical distribution: they overwhelmingly placed both the Jizani and Najdi voices in the middle class (68%–69%), with around 23%–25% associating them with the working class and 6.9% with the upper class. The close alignment between the two groups' class evaluations suggests that social class perceptions are less sensitive to dialect variation than status traits such as education and intelligence.

5.1.8 Participants' Explicit Attitudes- open-ended questions

A total of 238 comments were provided by the 149 respondents and were categorised into four main themes – linguistic features, affective evaluations, cultural associations, and perceived education/status – including two subcategories: cultured and uncultured (see Appendix E).

Table 5-10 summarises the distribution of comments across these categories.

Table 5-10 Percentage of the attitude comments in each category

Respondents (n = 149)	Comments (n = 238)	
	%	No.
Linguistic features	24%	56
Affective positive	14%	32
Affective negative	20%	44
Cultural association	6%	12
Cultured	22%	53
Uncultured	14%	32

Linguistic features (24%): The comments received highlighted accent distinctiveness, clarity, and speed of delivery; for example: ‘She talks so fast’, ‘I could not understand her’, ‘Her speech is different’. These remarks reflect perceptions of linguistic markedness and, implicitly, lower intelligibility. These comments highlight that the listeners were attentive to phonetic and prosodic cues and interpreted them through commonly circulating stereotypes concerning clarity and correctness.

Affective evaluations (positive = 14%; negative = 20%): Positive comments received described the speaker as ‘quiet’, ‘timid’, ‘humble’, ‘lovely’, and ‘simple’, signalling emotional warmth towards the Jizani guise. Such affective descriptions reiterate the tendency to associate the Jizani guise with interpersonal warmth, even when linguistic stereotypes are present. Negative comments included descriptors such as ‘annoying’, ‘harsh’, and ‘weird’, or included class-linked remarks (‘seems working class’). These reflect the lingering stereotypes of peripheral varieties as less refined.

Cultural associations (6%): References such as ‘jasmine’, ‘flower headbands’, and ‘Jizani clothes’ reflected regional symbolism and aesthetic identity. These comments were mostly positive. These cultural references point to the strong symbolic link between dialect and regional identity for many of the respondents.

Perceived education and status (cultured = 22%; uncultured = 14%): ‘Cultured’ comments included terms such as ‘fluent’, ‘educated’, ‘confident’, and ‘smart’. ‘Uncultured’ comments involved words such as ‘uneducated’, ‘incorrect’, and ‘not fluent’. This axis indicates explicit class and status positionings related to speech style. These explicit evaluations align closely with the MGT results, reinforcing the notion that NA is widely perceived as the more educated or refined variety.

The findings show that both of the listener groups drew on a shared set of social meanings, differentiating the dialects along a stable status–solidarity axis while expressing sustained interpersonal positivity towards both speakers. Solidarity-based qualities (warmth, humility, cultural pride) coexist with status-based stereotypes (education, refinement), reflecting the contrast between solidarity and status observed in the MGT results.

5.2 Summary

This chapter presented the MGT results alongside the respondents’ open-ended comments, providing an integrated account of the implicit and explicit attitudes towards Jizani and Najdi speech. Across the listener groups, the evaluations of the two guises consistently diverged along the status–solidarity dimension.

For the Jizani listeners, their own variety was implicitly linked to solidarity traits, particularly timidity and casualness, while the Najdi guise received higher status evaluations, most clearly for education and intelligence. For the Najdi listeners, this contrast was even sharper: the Jizani style was rated notably higher on solidarity traits but much lower on status traits, while the Najdi guise was associated with competence, education, and confidence.

Despite these status-based asymmetries, both of the groups showed a predominantly positive willingness to engage in future contact with both speakers, indicating that interpersonal affinity may mitigate hierarchical linguistic judgments.

The explicit comments reflected these patterns. ‘Warmth’, ‘humility’, and ‘cultural pride’ were often linked to the Jizani voice, while status-related descriptors such as ‘educated’, ‘fluent’, and ‘confident’ were more frequently associated with the Najdi voice. The negative comments revealed continuing stereotypes connecting the Jizani accent to unintelligibility, simplicity, or lower class, showing how linguistic prejudice persists alongside positive affective responses.

The quantitative and qualitative findings highlight the ambivalent position of JA in contemporary Saudi Arabia – valued for its social warmth and cultural identity but marginalised in perceptions of status, competence, and refinement. This reflects broader linguistic ideologies that favour central, standard-adjacent varieties while marking peripheral dialects as socially subordinate. These attitudinal insights form a crucial foundation for the next stages of the analysis.

Interpretation of these results in relation to language ideology, dialect contact, and linguistic inequality is developed in Chapter 8, where findings from all data sources are discussed.

Chapter 6 examines how the participants explicitly expressed these beliefs during interviews, while Chapter 7 explores the factors that influence the actual linguistic choices in natural conversations.

Chapter 6 Semi-Structured Interview Results: Explicit Attitudes

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews, which provide insights into participants' explicit attitudes towards Jizani and Najdi Arabic. While Chapter 5 examined implicit evaluations using the Matched Guise Test, the interviews explore conscious evaluations and reasoning behind linguistic behaviour.

In line with the hypothesis that speakers' linguistic behaviour in Najdi-dominant contexts will be shaped by their attitudes towards Jizani and Najdi Arabic, with awareness of prestige, stigma, and social evaluation influencing feature selection, this chapter examines whether participants' accounts reflect these predicted patterns.

6.2 Result of the Semi-Structured Interviews

This section presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews with the 14 Jizani and Najdi participants. The interviews examined how the speakers express their explicit attitudes towards JA and NA, the social meanings they associate with each variety, and the factors influencing their linguistic choices in the Najd region. This section answers the second research question: How do Jizani women understand, evaluate, and explain their linguistic behaviour in Najdi-dominant contexts?

6.2.1 Positive Attitudes Towards the Jizani Accent

This theme captures how the participants – both Jizani and Najdi – positively evaluated the Jizani variety, foregrounding identity and pride, as well as warmth and solidarity. Together, these accounts explain why many of the listeners valued the accent despite broader prestige hierarchies. These positive views show that for many speakers, JA is not simply a way of speaking but is also a valued social resource through which they situate themselves and others in everyday life.

6.2.1.1 The Jizani Accent as an Expression of Identity and Pride

For several of the Jizani women, their accent symbolised authenticity and resistance to social pressure. The Jizani participants had developed a strong emotional bond with their accent, viewing it as a crucial marker of their identity. Meyerhoff (1998) claims that language choices are

a compelling symbol of identity. Furthermore, Kinzler and DeJesus (2013) found that language is a potent tool in signalling the group to which a speaker belongs. They frequently framed their accent as a core marker of self and a deliberate refusal to assimilate in Najdi-dominant spaces. Maintaining Jizani was described as usual, expected, and principled. The participants used impactful words that clearly reflected their deep emotional connection to their linguistic variety, which remained unaffected by the influence of other social groups in Najd. The following extracts represent some of the respondents' views and include multiple references to the concept of true identity.

These accounts indicate that Jizani women are often highly aware of how their accent indexes origin and belonging, and they actively frame its maintenance as a principled stance rather than a passive habit. As Faten explained:

(1) Our accent represents who we are. It is excellent, and there is nothing wrong with it that I should change. This accent is like any other, and you can see each person's accent showing whether they are Hijazi, Najdi, or Hasawi. So, if I were to change, why? Accept me as I am or do not; it is not necessary.

When I asked Faten, a Jizani participant, if she ever felt the need to speak Najdi in specific situations, such as during an official visit to the bank or school, she replied, 'No'. This response interested me, and I wanted to understand her perspective. This respondent expressed strong opinions, emphasising that the Jizani accent is pleasing and without flaws. She asserted that there is no need to change it.

Similarly, Marwa, another Jizani speaker, agreed with using her native accent and being identified by her native ingroup. I presented her with a scenario, questioning her feelings towards a Jizani woman who had just left Jizan and arrived in Riyadh on her first visit, using her Jizani accent. Her answer was as follows:

(2) It is normal; that is her accent. No matter where she goes, I feel like my accent is my accent, and I will not change it.

Comments like these illustrate how language provides a means of self-recognition and group identity (McKenzie, 2008). For some people, maintaining their accent is a symbol of linguistic pride and a form of resistance. Marwa noted that using Jizani in Najd is considered normal behaviour, reflecting a person's original dialect.

Several of the narratives described confident stance-taking in mixed groups. Salma, a Jizani interviewee, recounted a friend who 'led by example', speaking 'Jizani' among Najdi peers and inviting acceptance rather than adapting:

(3) Yes, of course. It is normal and amicable. I had a Jizani friend, 'Zara', from university, who used to gather with girls from different areas in Najd. Zara spoke with them in Jizani, and she would say, 'Why should I change my speech? Why don't they accept how I speak, just like how I take their speech?' The girls, I mean her Najdi friends, were about six girls who spoke just like her in the Jizani dialect. She always said, 'Why should I follow them? Why don't I become a leader?' She had confidence, and we were surprised by her attitude and asked her if it was okay with her to speak in Jizani with them, and she replied, 'Why should I be influenced by them when I do not influence them?' Our friends enjoyed her speech, started speaking like her, and accepted her.

In this quotation, Salma described a self-assured friend who persisted in using her Jizani dialect among her Najdi peers, encouraging others to value her speech rather than imitate theirs. Her friend Zara appeared to have high confidence, as demonstrated by her adherence to the original group's norms and her solidarity with the Jizani speech patterns. Zara's behaviour indicated a sense of Jizani identity linked to her native tongue. Her words show that she believed a person's accent is the key identity factor, associating them with a specific group they favour (Abrams & Hogg, 2006).

These narratives suggest that some of the speakers explicitly reverse the usual prestige hierarchy by using Jizani as a source of strength and leadership, even in Najdi-majority spaces. Others rejected Najdi lexical items in everyday transactions, linking choice of form to ingroup belonging:

(4) I would not say I like speaking Najdi. When I go to a bank or with my friends, I talk in my native language. For example, I would not say I like the Najdi word /ʔbi/ (أبي) at all. I will say /ʔbya/ (أبغى) or /ʔja/ (أشا) in my Jizani accent. I would not know /ʔbi/ ['I want']. No one will accept when I say /ʔbi/; neither the Najdi people nor the Jizani, because my accent is distinct, and I am not from Najd, so I would be different from how they say it.

This quotation was based on my question to Marwa about a situation in which she felt she needed to speak to Najdi. She explained how she could not imagine herself speaking Najdi by giving an example of a simple Najdi word that demonstrates the lexical variation between the two varieties of /ʔbi/ ('I want'). Her comments also show that speakers anticipate how others will categorise them based on lexical choices, and they manage these expectations by aligning their speech with their preferred in-group.

Marwa's view indicates a strong connection to the Jizani community when she says that speaking the Najdi variety would make her appear different. Her comment about not being

accepted implies deep respect for her identity as a Jizani and emphasises the distinctiveness of her speech.

These examples emphasise the role of language as an ‘honest signal’ of social identity, group membership, and a resource for boundary maintenance. Pride and resistance co-occur: the participants retain Jizani to remain recognisably Jizani, not simply out of habit but as a value-laden stance. Hogg (2021, p. 264) stated that how people speak their languages, accents, and dialects is grounded in group membership, which fundamentally defines who they are and how members relate to others and their identity. Accordingly, the participants demonstrated a clear awareness that their linguistic practices both reflect and reproduce group boundaries, which they may choose to reinforce or challenge.

6.2.1.2 Warmth, Simplicity, and Emotional Connection

Some of the participants, including both Jizani and Najdi speakers, remarked that the Jizani accent evokes feelings of warmth, sincerity, and a casual approach to communication. Many of the respondents emphasised the effortless friendliness of Jizani speech, creating an inviting atmosphere during conversation. Amjad, a Najdi participant, commented on this quality, noting how the Jizani accent has a welcoming tone that fosters connection and openness.

(5) I love Jizani people, and their accent fascinates me. I feel simplicity and kindness in it, without any exaggeration. Their accent gives you a sense of ease and comfort. If someone speaks Jizani, you might be drawn to her and Jizani people in general, and honestly, I love Jizan. I feel a strong connection with the people of Jizan because, in a way, they are simple in a manner I have not seen in Najdi at all.

Amjad articulated her thoughts and emotions regarding the Jizani variety. She described the Jizani accent using words such as ‘ease’, ‘comfort’, and ‘simplicity’, suggesting a strong sense of familiarity and warmth. She emphasised how these characteristics contribute positively to her perception of Jizani culture and its speakers. In her concluding remarks, she highlighted the strong relationships and close-knit bonds she observes in Jizani social groups. This perspective contrasts with her feelings towards the Najdi people, suggesting a complex interplay of social identity and connection that informed her views on different cultural groups in her broader regional context.

This description illustrates how regional accents can embody a community’s broader moral image, with Jizani speech associated with simplicity, kindness, and close-knit social relations.

(6) I do not know, I feel ... but our speech is innocent, and when you talk to any Jizani, they give you positive energy. Engaging in conversation with the Jizani people is like a

breath of fresh air, as their words carry a genuine, pure vibe. Interacting with them is a pleasure, and their contagious positivity creates a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Huda, a Jizani speaker, described the Jizani accent in a few sentences. She characterised her accent as refreshing and friendly. Other short comments echoed this affective tone: ‘spontaneous’, ‘from the heart’, ‘simple and comfortable’. The participants linked these qualities to closeness and informality, suggesting why the accent received favourable interpersonal responses in everyday encounters. Ruthan (2020) found that Jizani speakers are frequently evaluated as low in prestige and associated with rurality and limited education, although they may also be linked to friendliness and simplicity. Short evaluative phrases such as ‘from the heart’ and ‘positive energy’ indicate that the speakers associate JA with an emotionally rich style of interaction rather than simply a group of phonological features.

These findings suggest that positive attitudes towards Jizani speech are grounded in its perceived emotional authenticity. For many of the speakers, dialect indexes familiarity, sincerity, and social warmth, values that reinforce a sense of group cohesion and mutual respect. Conversely, the following section presents views that contrast with these perceptions.

These evaluations map onto the solidarity dimension observed in the MGT (e.g. pleasantness/casualness). The participants attributed authenticity and approachability to Jizani's speech, which helps to explain their apparent willingness to engage in future contact, even when status stereotypes persist. Simultaneously, these positive accounts coexist with an awareness that Jizani speech is not equally valued in all domains, foreshadowing the tension between warmth and stigma explored in the following sections.

These evaluations confirm the hypothesis, showing that participants' positive attitudes toward Jizani reinforce solidarity traits. Speakers' appreciation of Jizani as a marker of identity and social closeness illustrates how attitudes shape linguistic behaviour in contexts where social relationships matter.

6.2.2 Negative Attitudes Towards the Jizani Accent

Notwithstanding the positive sentiments described previously, many of the participants – both Jizani and Najdi – also expressed negative evaluations of the Jizani accent. These evaluations typically linked the accent to lower education, rural backgrounds, and a lower social status. Two related negative forms emerged: linguistic prejudice (general negative attitudes towards the accent) and linguistic discrimination (social or institutional consequences). The participants' accounts, therefore, move beyond simple personal preferences and reflect a wider system of

social stereotyping in which ways of speaking are linked to assumptions on worth, competence, and class.

6.2.2.1 Linguistic Prejudice

Several of the participants echoed dominant Saudi prestige ideologies by characterising the Jizani accent as inappropriate or inferior in formal contexts. In several cases, Jizani speakers internalised this hierarchy.

(7) She should speak something other than Jizani here; people from Najd probably will not accept her. She must try to change her speech and vocabulary. She could talk a bit about Jizani, but still, pay attention to her voice because our Jizani speech is not just about words; our tone also differs. So, she must change the tone of her voice as well. It is not enjoyable.

In this quotation, Amal, a Jizani respondent, revealed a notable bias against the Jizani accent. She evaluated her own dialect as irritating or unacceptable in Najdi contexts, demonstrating internalised stigma. Moreover, her prejudice towards Jizani speakers extended to the belief that they should modify their speech when in Najd to avoid potential annoyance and rejection from the Najdi community. Such internalised evaluations show that prestige hierarchies can shape how Jizani speakers hear themselves and not only how they are heard by others.

Some of the Najdi participants openly expressed overt status-based stereotypes:

(8) My evaluation of all Jizani speakers is that they need to be more educated, have annoying voices, and are seemingly unintelligent. I mean, when you hear their speech, it is the same as the speech of the girls from the villages back in the old days who did not receive any education or schooling.

Shima, a Najdi interviewer, evaluated the Jizani speakers negatively. When asking her about her questionnaire responses, it became evident that she had a particular perception of the Jizani people, considering them uneducated, unintelligent, and with annoying voices. This status-based stereotyping equates speech patterns with low competence or a lower-class background. Thus, the accent is considered shorthand for a lack of schooling and rural backwardness, illustrating how linguistic forms become proxies for broader social hierarchies.

Other comments associated the accent directly with class marginality:

(9) When I heard Jizanis' speech, I would place them in the working class. They are similar to those who work in schools; perhaps our older mothers who returned to work as janitors. When I heard any Jizani voice, it reminded me of them because I have

studied in schools where Jizani janitors worked, and even now, I attend school multiple times with my kids and hear them speak in the same manner

Salma explicitly expressed her bias towards the Jizani accent, showing how it is considered inferior. She generalised her opinion on all Jizani speakers by portraying them as ‘janitors’. By equating Jizani speech with janitorial work, the respondent directly linked dialect to occupational and class identities, reinforcing a narrow image of where Jizani people ‘belong’ in the social order. Similarly, AlHakami (2023) found that the Jizani dialect is often associated with rurality, limited education, and lower social status in public perception, reflecting broader regional hierarchies within Saudi Arabia.

This prejudice closely mirrors the status dimension in the MGT results (Chapter 5), where Jizani speech received lower ratings for education and intelligence. The interviews confirm that negative beliefs are not abstract; they are rooted in everyday assumptions about class, modernity, and refinement.

The negative evaluations linking Jizani speech to lower education or rural background support the hypothesis: awareness of prestige and stigma clearly influences speakers’ linguistic choices in Najdi-dominant contexts, motivating some participants to shift features toward Najdi.

6.2.2.2 Linguistic Discrimination

Beyond prejudice, the participants also described explicit forms of discrimination in education, employment, and public interactions. These experiences went beyond negative opinions and involved exclusion or unequal treatment. Faten was removed from a school theatre production because the teachers disliked her accent:

(10) We moved to Riyadh when I was 14 years old. I started studying in the intermediate school and showed my desire to participate in a theatre production. I worked hard to perfect my role through training and practising at home and in my free time at school. However, during one of the training sessions, one of the teachers seemed uncomfortable with how I spoke, as she kept correcting some of my words. Later, they decided to replace me with another student from Najd, and they told me we might need you in future productions. Still, I knew that was because I am Jizani, especially when the girls repeated Jizani words after me.

This incident suggests that the school environment can implicitly treat non-Najdi speech as inappropriate for public performance, restricting Jizani speakers’ visibility in valued roles. Another Jizani participant, Nadia, recalled being taken off reading duties at work, illustrating how accent discrimination can restrict participation and contribute to linguistic insecurity:

(11) When I read a report to the students about attending school and absenteeism rules, I pronounced these words in my Jizani accent. When I finished reading, the school principal transferred this duty to my colleague, and she said the students would not understand my speech on these critical issues. That was unpleasant and made me feel I did not belong in this community.

In this quotation, Nadia pronounced the words /ʔmɣjab/ (امغياب) ('absenteeism') and /ʔmħudʕu:r/ (امحضور) ('attendance') using Jizani phonological patterns instead of the Najdi forms /ʔɣjab/ (الغياب) and /ʔħudʕu:r/ (الحضور). This example illustrates how accent-based discrimination is often justified through 'clarity' or 'intelligibility', despite the social and ideological nature of such judgements. It also emphasises the importance of recognising linguistic diversity and addressing biases towards regional varieties, particularly in educational settings. Her account shows how appeals for 'clarity' can function as a socially acceptable means to sideline regional varieties, even when communication is possible.

6.2.2.3 Personal Discrimination Experiences

The Jizani participants also described discrimination in everyday social life, including naming practices, workplace relations, and marriage. Hanan recounted how her son's name was mocked as 'too Jizani':

(12) We were talking about our children's names, and when I mentioned my son's name was Hassan, my colleague said, 'What is that name? It is not pleasant. It is a Jizani name!'

This quotation shows that the Najdi people avoid using names associated with the Jizani identity to avoid being classified as Jizani. Amal described unequal treatment at work by her Najdi supervisor:

(13) I have a Najdi colleague at work. She used to give my Jizani colleagues and me more responsibilities at work. If someone is absent, she would ask me to take on their workload, and she does not care how many patients I have to deal with. I tried to be formal with her to get fair treatment.

A particularly painful experience involved the rejection of a marriage proposal:

(14) I remember three years ago when my brother told me that he wanted me to suggest a girl for marriage. I thought about my close Najdi friend; we were like sisters, so it would be nice if she and my brother got married. When I talked to her about that, she was shocked and said it was impossible to marry a Jizani, and she continued that it had never happened in her family or even her tribe when they married a male or female

Jizani. When I felt terrible about what she said, she commented that was because of the different habits and traditions between people from Najd and Jizan. I believe it is because of the image of the Jizani people she held in her mind.

In this quotation, Nadia described personal discrimination from her close Najdi friend. She stated that the marriage refusal was motivated by the negative stereotypes of Jizani people held by this friend. Consequently, regional identity, as indexed by accent, regulates intimate social relations, such as marriage, rather than only casual interactions.

These examples show how linguistic differences are connected to moral judgement, social exclusion, and regional boundaries. Many of the respondents described these experiences as hurtful and unfair, indicating a high level of awareness that their accents are treated as social problems rather than neutral differences. As outlined in Chapter 3, such practices align with broader accounts of linguistic discrimination and inequality, where speakers of non-prestigious varieties face restricted access to symbolic and material resources.

Such accounts show how dialect-based discrimination intersects with broader social hierarchies in Najd, aligning with the global literature on linguistic injustice (Drożdżowicz & Peled, 2024). These forms of prejudice and discrimination illustrate how linguistic ideologies influence both explicit attitudes and lived experiences. The next section explores the factors that support or challenge these attitudes, including family influence, linguistic salience, and media representations.

6.2.3 Factors Shaping Attitudes Towards the Jizani Variety

The third theme examines the underlying factors shaping Jizani speakers' attitudes towards their dialect (summarised in Figure 6-1). Three interconnected elements emerge: family and peer influence, linguistic factors, and media exposure. Collectively, they demonstrate how language attitudes are socially learned, negotiated, and reinforced in everyday contexts. The interviews, therefore, highlight that attitudes are not fixed individual preferences but are continually shaped by the social environments in which speakers grow up, work, and consume media.

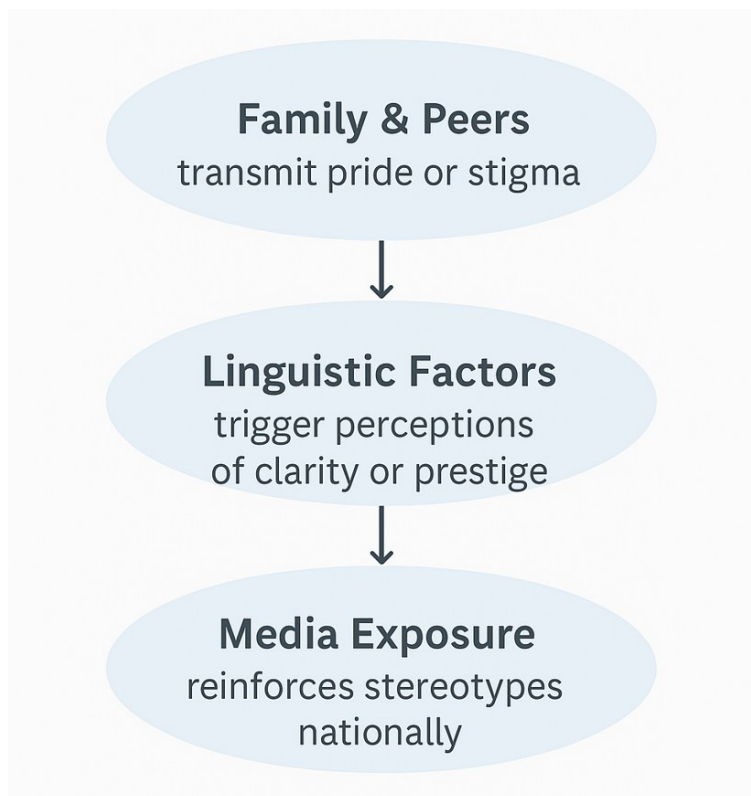


Figure 6-1 Factors shaping the attitudes towards Jizani Arabic (Created by the author)

6.2.3.1 Effects of Family and Peers on Using the Jizani Accent

Hypothesis: Family will function as a key site for the formation and negotiation of language attitudes, contributing to the maintenance or re-evaluation of Jizani features despite dominant Najdi norms.

Family emerged as a central domain shaping and transmitting language attitudes. The participants who grew up in households where their parents discouraged Jizani speech or frequently used Najdi often developed negative perceptions of their heritage dialect. One participant explained:

(15) My mother speaks the Jizan dialect. As for my father, he does not speak his original dialect because of his work. He speaks the Najd dialect. My mother also does not like us to talk in Jizani, so we would be in the same environment we lived in, especially with our neighbours, who are all from Najd. Even at home, our variety is nearly identical to that of my parents' Najdi dialect. We do not speak Jizani because we were not raised there.

Salma demonstrates internalised attitudes shaped by parental influence and social surroundings. Her parents' preference for Najdi speech has led her to devalue the Jizani accent, associating it with limited exposure and a lack of propriety. Her account shows how parents'

choices about the variety to use at home can implicitly teach children that some accents are more appropriate or 'correct'. Another participant described a similar process:

(16) It is normal. We lived here in Al-Kharj for a long time. I was born here, and my parents and I speak the same way. So, my dialect is more Najdi than the Southern dialect. My Najdi accent has stayed the same. On the contrary, now I feel it has changed more and become more Southern because we grew up and started socialising with people from the southern region. Unlike before, they influenced our speech; at an early age, we had no understanding of it, nor did we use Jizani words.

Amal also stated that they used the Najdi variety with their family and others. However, she mentioned that while growing up, she felt that the Jizani accent characterised her speech more, owing to her contact with Jizani people. Her experience highlights the role of social contact in shaping linguistic identity. While her family adopted Najdi speech, increased interaction with her southern peers reactivated her Jizani features.

Another Jizani respondent, Zeina, described a similar pattern when asked about the variety used by her parents and the array she used as a child. She replied:

(17) My father speaks the dialect of Najd; he lived among the people of Najd for a long time. My mother speaks a little Jizani, but Najdi is dominant. Sometimes we speak the same dialect as my mum in Jizani, but at school, I remember all my friends were Najdi, and I spoke to them in the same dialect.

The description here illustrates how early schooling reinforced Najdi norms and restricted the intergenerational transmission of Jizani. Similarly, family–peer networks impacted the next generation:

(18) My children do not speak the Jizani dialect at all. They have never talked in Jizani. They almost speak the same dialect as me, their father, and the children in school. Living in Najd means engaging with Najdi people, especially here in Al-Kharj; you feel you must speak like the people there, so my children acquired the Najdi accent. They play and meet with our neighbours, and all of them are Najdi. There are some Jizanis around, but we do not meet regularly.

Again, Zeina emphasised the role of peers and family in language use. Her children acquired the same attitudes she held and believed in. These comments suggest that children internalise not only the sounds of the dominant dialect but also the idea that aligning with Najdi speech and their peer is socially safer and more practical in Najd. This aligns with Dünkel et al. (2025), which

highlighted how friendships impact language practices. In contrast, the participants whose families preserved Jizani speech expressed a strong attachment to it. Faten stated:

(19) Even though my parents have lived in Al-Kharj for a long time, perhaps more than 50 years, they speak Jizani. Their speech has remained consistent with how people speak here in Al-Kharj. They still speak Jizani. I speak Jizani. I feel that Jizani speech is evident in my conversations. I cannot imagine myself speaking in Najdi. It would be obvious that I am a southern Jizani. I am not Najdi. Therefore, I used to speak Jizani with my friends as well. They liked my speech and always said it was friendly and straightforward.

Faten emphasised a strong connection to the Jizani dialect. She explained that she speaks the Jizani dialect. Such comments show how positive family modelling sustains dialect loyalty. The participant also added that her husband's use of Jizani reinforced this continuity in their household: 'My husband is from Jizan and always speaks Jizani. My children have picked up the Jizan accent from us'. Her comment shows that parents can impact the way their children speak.

Where both parents maintain Jizani in the home, children are exposed to more consistent models of dialect pride, which appear to support greater resilience to external stigma (Melo-Pfeifer, 2015; Ferguson, 2013). Another Jizani participant, Hanan, described how she encouraged her daughter to remain confident despite peer mockery:

(20) No, not for me, but I can tell you about my daughter. She speaks Jizani and uses some Jizani words that Najdi people may need help understanding. When she moved to a new school, she faced situations like that. Some girls did not understand her speech, and she felt terrible. She told me what happened to her in the school and how the girls criticised the way she spoke. I tried to reassure her, saying it was okay and not to worry or care about them. She mentioned that they were engaging in bullying against her, but I did not try to exaggerate this matter, and I asked her to ignore them. After discussing this matter with her, we agreed that the best solution was to continue talking as she was. She understood that even if they could not understand her speech, sometimes she could not understand some of their words. I told her that if you make them feel that you are embarrassed, they will increase the pressure on you. However, ignoring them and casually telling them that even their words are not understandable is fine.

Hanan responded to my question about a situation where her Jizani accent had annoyed her. Her comment shows how parental support can turn a potentially stigmatising experience into

one of resilience and self-affirmation. Here, the family becomes a site where linguistic bullying is named, discussed, and resisted, suggesting that parental support can mitigate the negative effects of peer discrimination.

These narratives show how family and peer networks act as powerful agents of linguistic socialisation. Families that suppress Jizani forms tend to transmit linguistic insecurity and adopt Najdi norms for social mobility. Conversely, families who maintain Jizani use transmit a sense of pride and linguistic resilience to stigma, reinforcing dialect loyalty even in Najdi-dominant environments. This mirrors how the ‘status–solidarity’ dimensions described in Chapter 5 reappear through lived experiences. These narratives show that families can either reproduce existing prestige hierarchies by favouring Najdi or subtly challenge them by legitimising Jizani speech and reassuring younger speakers of its value.

The interview data support this hypothesis. Participants’ accounts show that families can either reinforce Najdi norms, leading to devaluation of Jizani features (e.g., Salma’s experience), or sustain Jizani speech, fostering pride and resilience against external stigma (e.g., Faten and Hanan). These examples demonstrate that family influence is a crucial factor in shaping, maintaining, or re-evaluating linguistic behaviour in Najdi-dominant contexts.

6.2.3.2 Linguistic Factors

Several of the participants attributed social judgements to linguistic features, including pronunciation, speed, and lexical distinctiveness. Both the Jizani and Najdi respondents often perceived the Jizani accent as ‘fast’ or ‘unclear’, linking it to lower education or intelligence. Salma described another woman speaking ‘Jizani’ in a hospital:

(21) She looks like she thinks of herself in Jizan. She spoke in a distinctive Jizani accent and spoke loudly, expressing herself freely. The way she spoke is Jizani, but it is considered a flaw here in Najd. No one would understand what she was saying, the words, the speech style, or how loud her voice was. I am sure she is from a rural area.

Salma evaluated the speaker’s speech from a prestige perspective, linking Najdi pronunciation with appropriateness and refinement. She continued her evaluation of the speaker:

(22) She used a Jizani word that I could not understand, let alone the receptionist. If she is intelligent, she should use proper speech with him. After all, she is in Najd, not Jizan.

Salma suggested modifying speech when communicating with Najdi people. Lamia, a Najdi respondent, added:

(23) She needs to talk better. Her speech could be more easily understood. Her way of speaking makes you feel she needs to be more intelligent. If I am sitting with her, I can barely grasp her words.

Lamia commented on the speech she heard during the MGT. She judged the speaker's speech as bad, describing the speaker as lacking intelligence. Similarly, other comments reinforced this bias, describing the Jizani speaker as annoying and uneducated:

(24) Their voice indicates they are annoying, rushing through their words. They seem to be trying to wrap up the conversation quickly, which makes you feel annoyed and as if the person is being bothersome. You do not feel comfortable with them.

(25) I had difficulty understanding her. The things she mentioned were unfamiliar to me, or I could not grasp them. This might lead me to judge her as uneducated.

(26) I remember we had a guard; his speech was difficult, meaning he used some words I needed help understanding. So, if he asked about something, I sometimes needed help understanding.

These evaluations show that the listeners often treated phonological and lexical distinctiveness as signs of social deficiency rather than simple variation, reinforcing a deficit view of non-central accents. Simultaneously, the fact that some Jizani speakers echo these judgements shows how prestige ideologies can be deeply internalised in the stigmatised communities themselves.

6.2.3.3 Media Influence

Media representation emerged as another significant factor shaping attitudes towards the Jizani dialect. The participants highlighted how television and online platforms often caricature Jizani characters, reinforcing ignorance or simplicity stereotypes. Salma stated:

(27) You know the character Kofta? He is a character in the Shabab al Bomb series. They always portray him as neglected, constantly criticising and making fun of him. I am trying to understand how they have continued doing that for several years.

Other respondents also shared the same belief that the media has a significant role in creating a trivial, unserious, and marginalised image for Jizani people:

(28) TV programmes, in particular, have played a significant role in continuing stereotypes about the people of Jizan. They portray him as someone who strictly follows the rules or as a funny person in how he speaks, behaves, or even dresses.

A third participant observed:

(29) Believe me, TV series contribute to portraying Jizani people as lower class and not very kind. Most Najdis may not have direct relations with Jizanis and may never have met one before, but when asked about Jizanis, they often have the same negative perception of them because of the media.

Media representations are a powerful reinforcer of linguistic hierarchy. By repeatedly portraying Jizani characters as comic, naïve, or subordinate, television and social media reproduce linguistic prejudice at a national scale, normalising negative evaluations, even among those with no direct experience of Jizani speakers.

The participants' comments, therefore, position the media as a powerful agent in circulating and amplifying linguistic stereotypes, particularly for audiences whose only contact with Jizani people is via televised caricatures. This pattern is consistent with the literature on how mediated representations can naturalise linguistic hierarchies and legitimise everyday acts of accent-based discrimination (see Chapter 3).

Overall, these findings show that language attitudes are socially constructed and contextually reinforced. Family norms, peer networks, linguistic salience, and media portrayals interact to determine whether Jizani speakers internalise stigma or develop pride in their linguistic identity. This interplay reflects the broader sociolinguistic hierarchies shaping dialect prestige and marginalisation in Saudi society.

6.2.4 Jizani Peoples' Use of the Najdi Variety

The final theme explores the motivations behind Jizani speakers' use of the Najdi variety in Najd. While attitudes towards JA varied based on individual beliefs and experiences, the participants consistently showed positive attitudes towards the Najdi variety, considering it a socially advantageous and pragmatically beneficial speech form. Three interconnected motivations emerged: ease of communication, desire for social acceptance, and linguistic insecurity influenced by prevailing prestige hierarchies (see Figure 6-2).

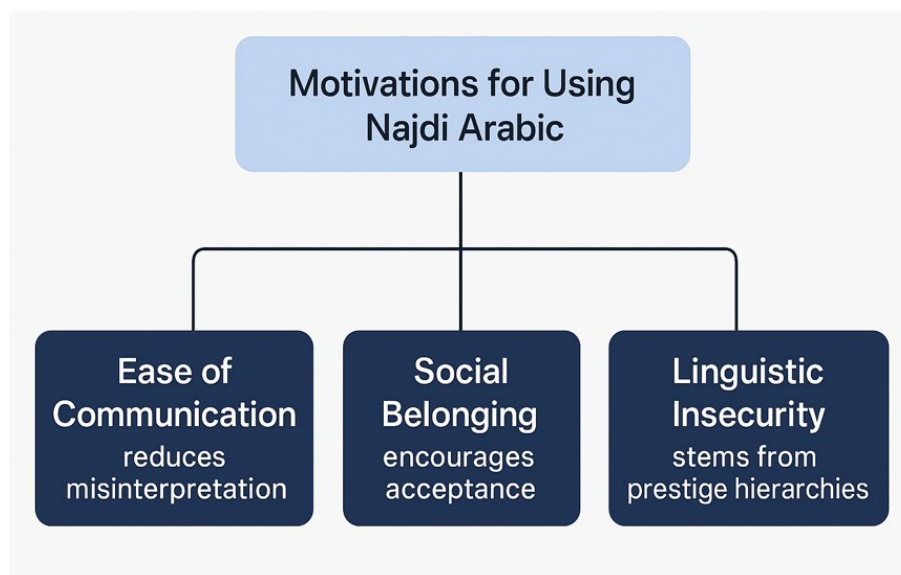


Figure 6-2 Motivations for using Najdi Arabic (Created by the author)

A primary reason for adopting NA was to enable easier communication. Many of the participants described Najdi as a linguistic bridge that reduces misunderstanding in everyday interactions.

Amal commented:

(30) Speaking in the Najdi accent makes it easier for us to communicate. Some of our words may not be familiar to Najdi people, and they may have difficulty understanding what we are saying. Therefore, speaking Najdi will enhance communication between them and us.

Several of the participants reiterated this view, connecting Najdi use to mutual understanding and social comfort. Samia explained:

(31) I have noticed that when I speak Najdi with Najdi speakers, they comment, ‘Your speech is clear and understandable. It is not like Samaher’s speech’. It seems that speaking their variety removes barriers and helps us understand each other better.

Similarly, Salma reflected on the practical benefit of using Najdi:

(32) Speaking Najdi simplifies things. The accent helps the Jizani people be understood in Najdi communications, prevents unnecessary misunderstandings, and helps for smoother interactions.

Such accounts suggest that for many speakers, shifting to Najdi is primarily framed as a practical response to anticipated comprehension difficulties rather than an explicit attempt to abandon Jizani identity.

The desire for social belonging was another dominant motive. Many of the participants viewed speaking Najdi as a pathway to acceptance in Najdi-majority communities. Amal said:

(33) You cannot imagine how I feel speaking in Najdi. It makes me feel accepted. I feel accepted, especially at my kids' school, the bank, and the beauty salon. It is like a passport to belonging to the Najdi society.

Another Jizani participant, Zeina, expressed a similar view, seeing Najdi use as a sign of social integration and respectability:

(34) Speaking the Najdi accent is more than a dialectal choice. It is essential to gain acceptance and fit into the Najdi social circles where the Najdi accent is respected.

Salma described the pragmatic pressures of her working environment:

(35) I do not have relations with the Jizani people here. I speak Najdi at work and work in a shopping centre, where I spend half my day dealing with Najdi. I need to speak Najdi to sound like them and feel like a member.

Other responses concerned the same theme of acceptance and belonging: 'When I speak Najdi, interactions with Najdi people feel seamless, like I am one of them', and 'I feel I have to speak Najdi with my Najdi friends to feel more accepted and not to look different'. These reflections show that the speakers are acutely aware of how their accent affects their reception in institutional and service environments, and they use Najdi strategically to avoid being misidentified or excluded. They also show that the participants can articulate, in their own terms, how prestige varieties are linked to feelings of legitimacy and ease in public spaces. The study findings echo Sadiq's (2016) findings that Minya speakers converge towards Cairene Arabic to reduce linguistic differences, facilitate communication, reduce social distance and align with socially valued identities.

These comments also highlight how prestige and social mobility are connected to Najdi speech. The participants considered it the 'correct' or 'legitimate' Arabic form for professional and social progress, while the Jizani variety was viewed as local, intimate, and sometimes socially restricting. For many, adopting Najdi was a strategy to avoid stigma, gain recognition, and conform to the dominant norms. Simultaneously, the participants' continued attachment to Jizani in intimate or informal domains shows that adopting Najdi does not necessarily involve the rejection of their heritage dialect. Ultimately, these findings show how linguistic insecurity coexists alongside esteem for prestige forms. Najdi Arabic operates as a symbol of authority and correctness, while JA represents authenticity and warmth.

Participants' strategic use of Najdi features in certain contexts confirms the hypothesis, showing that social evaluation and perceived prestige influence feature selection even among speakers who value their Jizani identity.

6.2.5 Correlation Between Implicit and Explicit Attitudes

To examine whether the participants' implicit evaluations of status and solidarity (from the MGT) aligned with their explicit attitudes (from the interviews), a series of Spearman's rank-order correlations was conducted (De Winter et, al (2016), as shown in Table 6-1. This analysis provides a quantitative bridge between the findings described in Chapter 5 and the semi-structured interviews presented in this chapter.

Table 6-1 Spearman's rank-order correlations between implicit (Δ status) and explicit attitudes

Implicit–Explicit Attitude Relationship	ρ (Spearman)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Δ Status \leftrightarrow Interview attitude code	-0.655*	.021	14
Δ Solidarity \leftrightarrow Interview attitude code	-0.611*	.035	14

*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results show a significant negative correlation between implicit status evaluations and explicit attitudes ($\rho = -.655$, sig = .021), indicating that the participants who implicitly associated higher status with the Najdi guise tended to express less favourable explicit attitudes towards JA. A similar pattern was seen for the solidarity traits ($\rho = -.611$, sig = .035), suggesting that the participants who implicitly related greater warmth or friendliness with NA were inclined to have less favourable explicit attitudes towards JA. In other words, the participants who implicitly positioned Najdi as higher in status and warmth were more likely to voice critical or distancing views towards Jizani in the interviews, suggesting a degree of internal consistency across the two types of measures.

While the hypothesis is largely supported, some participants' pride in Jizani demonstrates that awareness of prestige does not always result in full feature adoption. Solidarity and identity factors mediate the influence of social evaluation, indicating that linguistic behaviour is shaped by both prestige awareness and personal or cultural identity.

These results provide an empirical connection between the implicit and explicit attitude measures and provide the foundation for examining how attitudes relate to actual linguistic behaviour (Chapter 7).

6.3 Summary

The interview data uncovered a complex attitudinal landscape shaped by warmth, bias, ambivalence, identity, and prestige. Positive evaluations of Jizani's speech emphasised authenticity, simplicity, and cultural pride. Simultaneously, negative attitudes applied stereotypes of rurality, a lack of education, and low social status. Family influence, linguistic prominence, and media representation collectively shaped how the speakers valued or devalued their dialect.

The perceived prestige of the Najdi accent also motivated many Jizani speakers to adapt their language to gain greater acceptance and avoid marginalisation. These explicit narratives highlight how attitudes are embedded in broader social hierarchies and cultural ideologies in Najd. A correlation analysis of the implicit attitudes (from the MGT) and explicit attitudes revealed a significant negative relationship, indicating that a stronger implicit preference for Najdi was associated with less favourable explicit evaluations of Jizani. These findings highlight that attitudes are embedded in broader social hierarchies and cultural ideologies in Najd.

These findings also show that the speakers were often highly self-aware of how their speech is judged, and can explicitly describe how stereotypes, family practices, and media images shape both their feelings and linguistic choices. These insights connect directly to the literature on linguistic prejudice, linguistic (in)justice, and family language practices (see Chapter 3); however, here they are grounded in the lived experiences of Jizani-origin women in Najd. Interpretation of these results in relation to language ideology, dialect contact, and linguistic inequality is developed in Chapter 8, where findings from all data sources are discussed.

Chapter 7 presents the analysis of natural conversational data and the triggers that influence Jizani speakers' use of Najdi and Jizani features. It also explores how both implicit and explicit attitudes are reflected in actual linguistic behaviours.

Chapter 7 Participant Observation Results

7.1 Results

This section summarises the distributions of all four variables across the corpus, highlighting the overall frequency of each variant and the token spread across speakers, styles, settings, interlocutor groups, and phonological environments. These descriptive statistics provide the empirical foundation for the GLMMs reported in later sections and demonstrate that the dataset is sufficiently balanced and robust for investigating the social and interactional triggers of linguistic behaviour.

In doing so, this section directly engages with H3, which predicts that the use of Jizani and Najdi features will vary according to interactional and social context, including audience, setting, topic, education, class, style, interlocutor group, and participant group. Because the conversational data were collected in informal gatherings centred on everyday topics, the patterns observed reflect low-monitoring interactional contexts rather than institutional speech styles. Accordingly, this chapter addresses the following research question:

What social, interactional, and linguistic factors shape the use of Jizani and Najdi features in natural interaction?

7.1.1 Descriptive Overview of the Dataset

A total of 2,046 tokens were analysed for the definite article variable (Variable 1) (/ʔaʎ/, /ʔam/, and assimilated /l/). The /ʔaʎ/ form was the most frequent variant, representing 60.2% of occurrences, while /ʔam/ appeared in 14.6% of the tokens and the assimilated /l/ in 25.2%. This distribution reflects the dominance of the standard article in the dataset but also provides sufficient representation of the Jizani and assimilated variants for modelling. The tokens were widely distributed across the speakers, styles, settings, topics, and phonological environments, ensuring robust conditions for the subsequent GLMM analysis.

For the third-person feminine pronoun (Variable 2; n = 368), the Najdi variant /t/ represented 53.3% of the tokens, while the Jizani variant /n/ accounted for 46.7%. The near-balanced distribution indicates substantial variation and the active presence of both forms across the conversational contexts. Most of the tokens were produced in conversational style and in private settings, reflecting the data's naturalistic nature. This balanced frequency pattern is well-suited for exploring the social and interactional triggers of pronoun choice.

The second-person feminine suffix (Variable 3; n = 294) displayed a wide distribution across the four variants. The Najdi form /i/ was the most frequent, representing 46.3% of all occurrences, followed by /i:/ at 38.7%. The Jizani forms were less common: /inn/ appeared in 18.4% of the data, and /in/ occurred only rarely (0.7%). While the distribution is more uneven than for the previous variables, each variant occurred enough to support a reliable GLMM analysis of the linguistic and social factors shaping suffix selection.

Lastly, for the future-marker particle (Variable 4; n = 232), the Jizani variant /f/ represented 55.2% of cases, while the Najdi variant /b/ appeared in 44.8%. This relatively even split suggests that both variants are actively used by the speakers and that future-marking behaviour may be sensitive to interactional factors. The majority of tokens came from the conversational speech and interviews in private settings, again indicating rich naturalistic data suitable for modelling.

The variant frequencies for each linguistic variable provide a robust basis for the GLMM analysis reported in the following sections (see Figure 7-1).

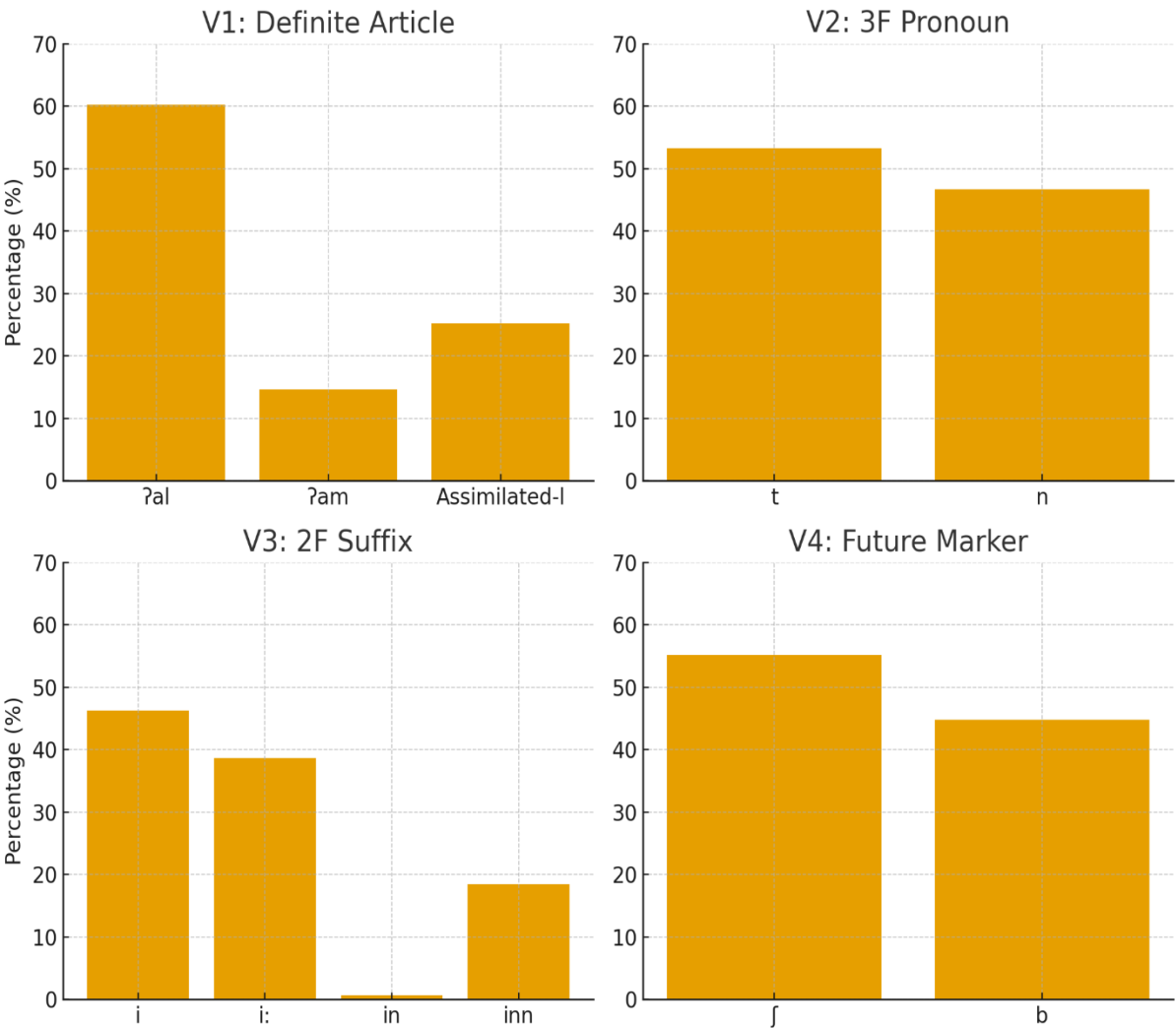


Figure 7-1 Distribution of the four linguistic variables across all tokens

7.1.2 Generalised Linear Mixed Model Results: Triggers of Linguistic Variation

This section presents the GLMM results conducted for the four linguistic variables. This analysis identifies the social, interactional, and linguistic triggers that influenced the speakers' selection of the Najdi variants. For each variable, the fixed effects results are first reported, followed by a brief interpretation of the relevant fixed coefficients. The four linguistic variables investigated are:

1. Variable 1: Definite article realisation and its variants /ʔaʌ/, /ʔam/, and assimilated /ʌ/.
2. Variable 2: Word-final consonant alternation and its variants /t/ and /n/.
3. Variable 3: Nominal suffixation variants /i/ and /i:/ and /inn/ and /n/.
4. Variable 4: Future particle variants /b-/ and /j-/.

7.1.2.1 Variable 1: Definite Article Realisation /ʔaʌ/, /ʔam/, and assimilated /ʌ/

Of the 2,046 tokens, 2,042 (99.8%) were included in the model, representing an almost complete dataset. A multinomial GLMM with a generalised logit link was fitted to model the three variants (/ʔaʌ/, /ʔam/, and assimilated /ʌ/), and the information criteria ($-2LL = 21,263.66$; $AICc = 21,271.69$; $BIC = 21,294.04$) indicate an acceptable model fit.

The model achieved an overall correct classification rate of 71.4%, with very high accuracy for /ʔaʌ/ (92.4%), moderate accuracy for /ʔam/ (47.6%), and lower accuracy for the assimilated /ʌ/ form (34.6%). Despite the weaker performance on assimilation, the overall classification supports the model's adequacy for analysing the triggers for Variable 1. The fixed effects result for (/ʔaʌ/) is shown in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1 Fixed effects results for Variable 1 (/ʔa/)

Source	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Corrected model	16.369	26	1986	0.000
Sub_Div	0.124	4	1986	0.974
Interlocutor	0.007	2	205	0.993
G_ID	10.677	4	1986	0.000
St_ID	3.613	2	1986	0.027
Edu_ID	0.427	6	1986	0.861
Class_ID	0.121	1	1986	0.727
Set_ID	6.796	2	1986	0.001
Topic_ID	9.670	16	1986	0.000
Interlocutor's group	8.377	4	1886	0.001
FS_ID	18.325	16	1986	0.000

The fixed effects analysis showed that group, style, setting, topic, and following sound significantly predicted the choice of /ʔa/ or /ʔam/. Group ($F = 2.518$, $p = 0.040$) had a modest social effect. The JMS group ($G_ID = 1$) displayed a small negative coefficient ($B = -0.167$), indicating a slight preference for the assimilated Jizani variant /ʔam/ relative to the JLHS group (reference category). The NOS ($G_ID = 2$) also showed a negative coefficient; however, this estimate was statistically unstable owing to a significant standard error. Overall, the group effect indicates the JMS use of /ʔam/ more frequently and the NOS and JLHA use of /ʔa/ more frequently.

Style was also a significant predictor ($F = 6.117$, $p = 0.002$). The conversational style ($St_ID = 1$) had a positive coefficient ($B = 0.622$, $p = 0.006$), indicating that the speakers produced more /ʔa/ in the informal conversations than in the interviews. The interview style (reference) was therefore associated with higher use of /ʔam/.

Setting also significantly influenced the realisation of Variable1 ($F = 3.369$, $p = 0.035$). While the coefficient magnitudes were modest, the overall effect suggests subtle differences between public cafés and private homes, indicating that the interactional space influenced whether the speakers used /ʔa/ or /ʔam/.

Topic exerted a strong linguistic effect ($F = 11.212, p < 0.001$). Topic 6 (language practices and metalinguistic awareness) had a significant positive coefficient, indicating greater use of /ʔa/. In contrast, Topic 4 (schools) and Topic 7 (language use across contexts) showed significant negative coefficients, favouring /ʔam/.

The strongest predictor was the following sound ($F = 32.524, p < 0.001$). Multiple phonological environments – particularly nasal stops, fricatives, emphatic fricatives, stops, and taps/flaps – had large negative coefficients, indicating a strong preference for /ʔam/ in these contexts. This aligns with known assimilation processes in JA. In contrast, vowels, laterals, affricates, and approximants did not significantly affect variant choice. Other predictors, including subdivision, interlocutor, education, social class, and preceding sound, were non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Figure 7-2 summarises the independent variables that triggered the use of Variable 1.

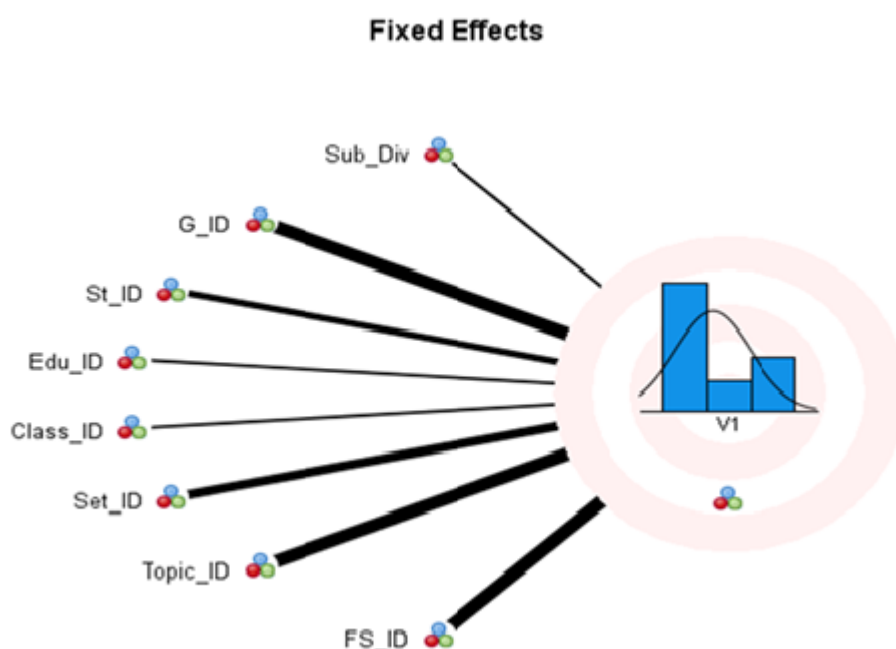


Figure 7-2 Relationships between the dependent variable (Variable 1) and the predictor variables

7.1.2.2 Variable 2: Third Person Feminine /t/ and /n/

Out of the 368 tokens coded for this variable, 358 (97%) were included in the model, demonstrating high data completeness. A binomial GLMM with a logit link provided an adequate fit for the data ($AICc = 4,219; BIC = 4,227$). The model showed strong predictive accuracy, correctly classifying 92% of tokens (90% of /t/ tokens and 94% of /n/ tokens), confirming that it effectively captured the main factors influencing the alternation. The fixed effects results for Variable 2 are shown in Table 7-2.

Table 7-2 Fixed effects results for Variable 2 (/t/)

Source	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Corrected model	1.408	35	320	0.069
Sub_Div	0.897	3	320	0.443
Interlocutor	0.047	2	320	0.955
G_ID	9.992	2	320	0.000
St_ID	7.830	1	320	0.005
Edu_ID	2.192	3	320	0.089
Class_ID	0.000	1	320	0.998
Set_ID	0.000	1	320	0.996
Topic_ID	1.858	8	320	0.066
FS_ID	0.255	8	320	0.979

The fixed effects results show that only group and style significantly predicted the choice of /t/ or /n/, while all of the other factors were non-significant. Group ($F = 9.992$, $p < 0.001$) was the strongest social predictor. The JMS group ($G_ID = 1$) had a markedly negative coefficient ($B = -3.466$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a clear preference for the Jizani-associated variant /n/ relative to the reference group (JLHS). The NOS group ($G_ID = 2$) also showed a negative coefficient; however, this estimate was statistically unreliable owing to a large standard error. These results indicate that only the JMS group displayed a statistically robust shift towards the /n/ variant, while the JLHS and NOS groups produced comparatively more /t/.

Style also significantly influenced Variable 2 realisation ($F = 7.830$, $p = 0.005$). The informal conversational style ($St_ID = 1$) had a positive coefficient ($B = 2.624$, $p = 0.005$), indicating a greater production of /t/ in informal conversation relative to the formal interview style (reference). The formal style was therefore associated with the increased use of /n/. This pattern suggests that Variable 2 is shaped by interactional context, with conversational informality promoting the clearer /t/ form, and formal interviews producing relatively more /n/.

All of the other predictors, including subdivision, interlocutor, education, social class, setting, topic, preceding sound, and following sound, did not achieve statistical significance ($p > .05$), suggesting that these demographic, contextual, and phonological variables did not meaningfully influence variation in Variable 2.

While topic did not achieve significance overall, two individual topic categories (topics 6 and 8) showed strong positive coefficients, with Topic 6 (language learning and metalinguistic awareness) increasing the likelihood of /t/ ($\beta = 5.258, p = 0.003$), and Topic 8 (cultural awareness and identity) also favouring /t/ ($\beta = 4.817, p = 0.015$). This pattern suggests that when the speakers discussed language, culture, or identity, they may have oriented more strongly towards the Najdi-associated variant, reflecting heightened awareness or sensitivity to linguistic presentation. However, because the topic did not reach significance at the fixed effects level, these effects should be interpreted cautiously. Figure 7-3 summarises the independent variables that trigger the use of Variable 2.

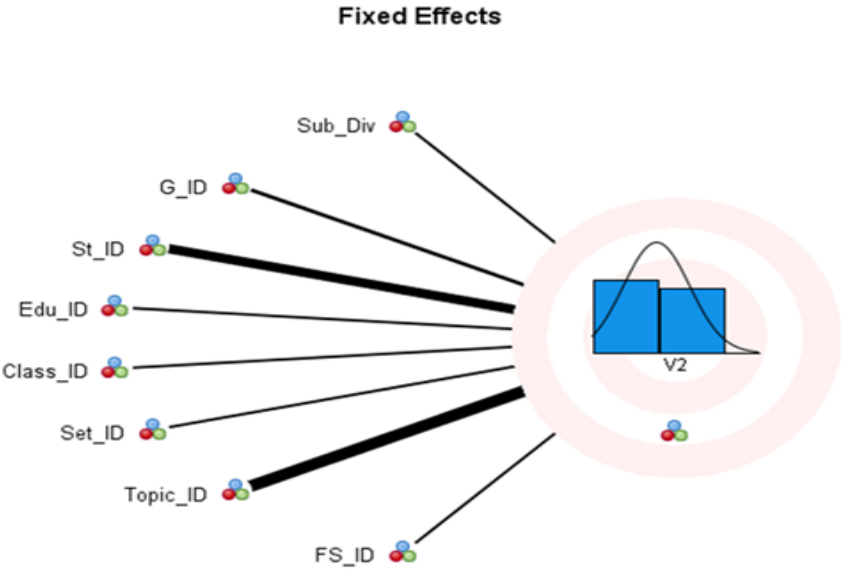


Figure 7-3 Relationship between the dependent variable (Variable 2) and the predictor variables

7.1.2.3 Variable 3: Second Person Feminine-Suffix Variants /i/ and /i:/ and /inn/ and /n/

This section presents the results for the third linguistic variable, which captures variation among five vowel-suffix variants (/i/ and /i:/ and /inn/ and /n/). The model was a multinomial GLMM with a generalised logit link. A total of 294 tokens were available, of which 291 (99.0%) were included in the analysis, indicating a very high level of data completeness. The overall classification accuracy was 63.9%, showing that the model achieved moderate success in predicting variant choice, with higher performance for frequent categories, such as /i/ and /inn/, and lower performance for the rarer forms. The fixed effects results for Variable 3, the alternation between /i/ and /i:/, are shown in Table 7-3.

Table 7-3 Fixed effects results for Variable 3 (/i/ and /i:/)

Source	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Corrected model	0.600	108	179	0.998
Sub_Div	0.834	12	179	0.615
Interlocutor	0.047	2	179	0.955
G_ID	0.862	8	179	0.550
St_ID	1.921	4	179	0.109
Edu_ID	1.062	12	179	0.395
Class_ID	0.016	4	179	0.999
Set_ID	0.840	4	179	0.502
Topic_ID	0.572	32	179	0.969
FS_ID	1.110	32	179	0.325

The fixed effects test showed that the model did not identify any statistically significant social, interactional, or linguistic triggers for the distribution of Variable 3. The corrected model was not significant ($F(108, 179) = 0.600, p = 0.998$), and none of the individual predictors – subdivision, interlocutor, group, speech style, education level, social class, setting, topic, and following sound – reached significance ($p > 0.05$). In other words, neither demographic characteristics, interactional context, nor local phonological environment systematically conditioned the choice among the five vowel-suffix variants.

Inspection of the fixed coefficients confirmed this pattern. The coefficients for all of the predictors were small relative to their standard errors, with very wide confidence intervals that routinely crossed zero, and no stable direction of effect emerged for any of the factors. This suggests that the apparent differences across the groups, styles, topics, or phonological environments were weak, inconsistent, and statistically unreliable in the current dataset.

The GLMM results for Variable 3 indicate that alternation among the vowel-suffix variants was not organised by the social or interactional triggers that shaped the other variables in this study. Rather, the distribution of these forms appears to be comparatively unsystematic, possibly reflecting idiosyncratic speaker preferences, lexical or grammatical conditioning not captured in the model, or stochastic variation. Unlike the definite article and the /t/~n/ alternation, Variable 3 does not show clear evidence of socially or contextually structured patterning. Figure 7-4 summarises the independent variables that trigger the use of Variable 3.

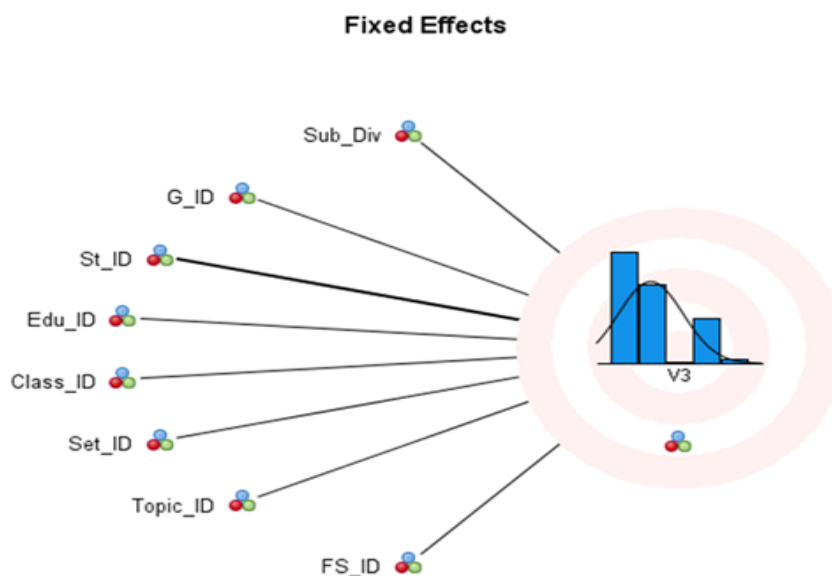


Figure 7-4 Relationship between the dependent variable (Variable 3) and the predictor variables

7.1.2.4 Variable 4: Future Marker /b/and /j/

All 232 tokens (100%) were included in the analysis, indicating a complete dataset with no missing cases. The variants /j/ and /b/ ('will') were modelled using a binomial GLMM with a logit link function. The information criteria (AICc = 2,287.63; BIC = 2,294.21; -2LL = 2,283.57) showed that the model provided an adequate and stable statistical fit for the data. The model demonstrated strong predictive performance, correctly classifying 91.4% of /j/ tokens and 91.3% of /b/ tokens. This high overall accuracy indicates that the model effectively captured the key patterns underlying the alternation between the two future markers. The fixed effects results for Variable4 are shown in Table 7-4.

Table 7-4 Fixed effects results for Variable 4 (/b/ and /j/)

Source	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Corrected model	0.825	26	205	0.712
Sub_Div	0.418	2	205	0.659
Interlocutor	0.200	2	205	0.848
G_ID	0.090	2	205	0.914
St_ID	8.736	1	205	0.003
Edu_ID	0.646	3	205	0.587
Class_ID	0.016	4	205	0.999
Set_ID	0.000	1	205	0.994
Topic_ID	1.094	7	205	0.368
FS_ID	1.098	9	205	0.365

The fixed effects results show that speech style (St_ID) was the only significant predictor of variation in the use of /j/ and /b/ ($F = 8.736$, $p = 0.003$). All of the other variables – subdivision, interlocutor, group, education, setting, topic, and following sound – did not achieve significance ($p > 0.05$). These results indicate that demographic and phonological factors did not meaningfully condition the alternation between the two variants. Rather, the choice between /j/ and /b/ was primarily shaped by the interactional context.

The fixed coefficients were examined to understand the direction of this effect. Speech style exerted a significant and negative influence on the use of /b/, with interview style decreasing its likelihood relative to conversation ($\beta = -3.891$, $p = 0.003$, $\text{Exp}(\beta) = 0.020$). This means that the participants were far more likely to produce the Najdi-associated /b/ in conversational contexts, while the interview style strongly favoured the use of /j/. Figure 7-5 summarises the independent variables that triggered the use of Variable 4.

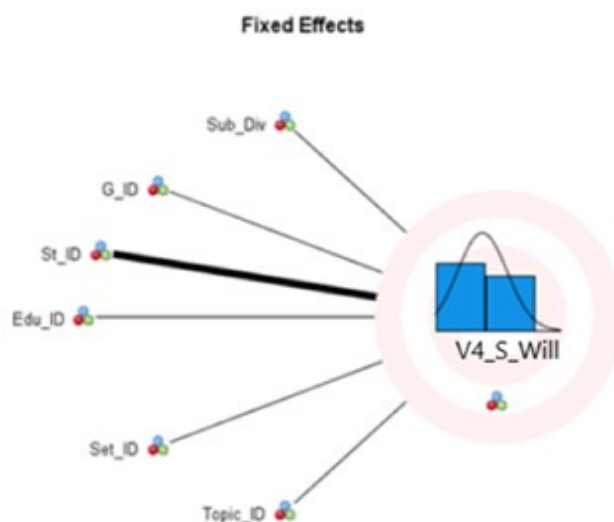


Figure 7-5 Relationship between the dependent variable (Variable 4) and the predictor variables

Across the variables, style and topic emerged as the most consistent triggers of Najdi-oriented behaviour, with conversational style and language/identity-related topics favouring Najdi features (/ʔaʎ/, /t/, and /b/). Simultaneously, demographic factors (education, class, and subdivision) were largely non-significant. In contrast, the variables /i/ and /i:/ showed no systematic conditioning, suggesting that they are less salient as a resource for identity negotiation. While the GLMM results identify the contexts in which the Najdi variants were favoured, they do not reveal how these patterns were distributed across the participants. Therefore, the following section examines speaker-level behaviours to identify broader tendencies and potential leaders of linguistic change.

7.1.3 Patterns of Najdi Use and Emerging Leaders

While Section 7.1.1 presents the overall frequency distribution of the four variables, this section examines how these patterns are distributed across the participants. This shift from aggregate frequencies to speaker-level behaviours enables the identification of broader trends in Najdi use and the speakers who appear to lead or resist these shifts.

Across the four variables, the descriptive statistics show a clear tendency towards Najdi-oriented behaviour, although with substantial differences in how much each feature is shifted. For the definite article (Variable 1), the Najdi form /ʔaʎ/ accounted for approximately 60% of all tokens ($n = 1,232$ of 2,046), indicating that it was the unmarked default, while the Jizani /ʔam/ and the assimilated /ʎ/ remained in active use. The third-person feminine pronoun (Variable 2) also showed a slight Najdi bias, with /t/ occurring in 53% of cases ($n = 196$ of 368). In contrast, the second-person feminine suffixes (Variable 3) displayed a strong Najdi orientation: the Najdi-like forms (/i/ and /i:/) together constituted over four-fifths of all tokens, while the Jizani variants

/inn/ and /in/ were comparatively rare. The future-marker particle (Variable 4) was the most conservative variable, with the Jizani /j/ slightly more frequent than the Najdi /b/, suggesting that not all features have shifted at the same rate.

These tendencies were not evenly distributed across the speakers, and the speaker's group had a meaningful role. As shown in Figure 7-6, the speakers with the strongest and most consistent preference for Najdi variants, particularly Zinah, Samia, and Amal, were all JLHS participants. These women were raised in Najd by Jizani parents and had acquired JA through family transmission; however, their everyday linguistic environment had always been Najdi-dominant. Their high rates of /ʔal/, /t/, Najdi-like suffixes, and /b/ suggest that they may be leading the shift towards Najdi features in the Jizani-origin community.

In contrast, the participants who maintained higher proportions of Jizani forms – Marwa, Hanan, Nadia, and Huda – were all from the JMS group. These women were born and raised in Jizan, had moved to Najd as adults, and continued to maintain close ties with their home region. Their speech showed a stronger presence of heritage forms, such as /ʔam/, /n/, /inn/, and /j/, even when they also used Najdi variants in some contexts. This indicates a more conservative orientation and greater retention of the Jizani dialect.

Together, these patterns reveal a socially meaningful gradient in the Jizani-origin community: The JLHS participants raised in Najd are at the forefront of linguistic shift, while the JMS participants have maintained Jizani features more robustly. This uneven diffusion suggests that Najdi variants spread through socialisation in Najdi-dominant contexts rather than through demographic factors such as education or class, supporting the interactional triggers identified in the GLMM analysis.

While the speaker-level patterns reveal those who lead or resist the shift towards Najdi features, it is also important to consider whether these behavioural tendencies correspond to the participants' attitudes. Therefore, the following section examines the relationship between the speakers' attitudinal orientations and their actual use of the Najdi variants.

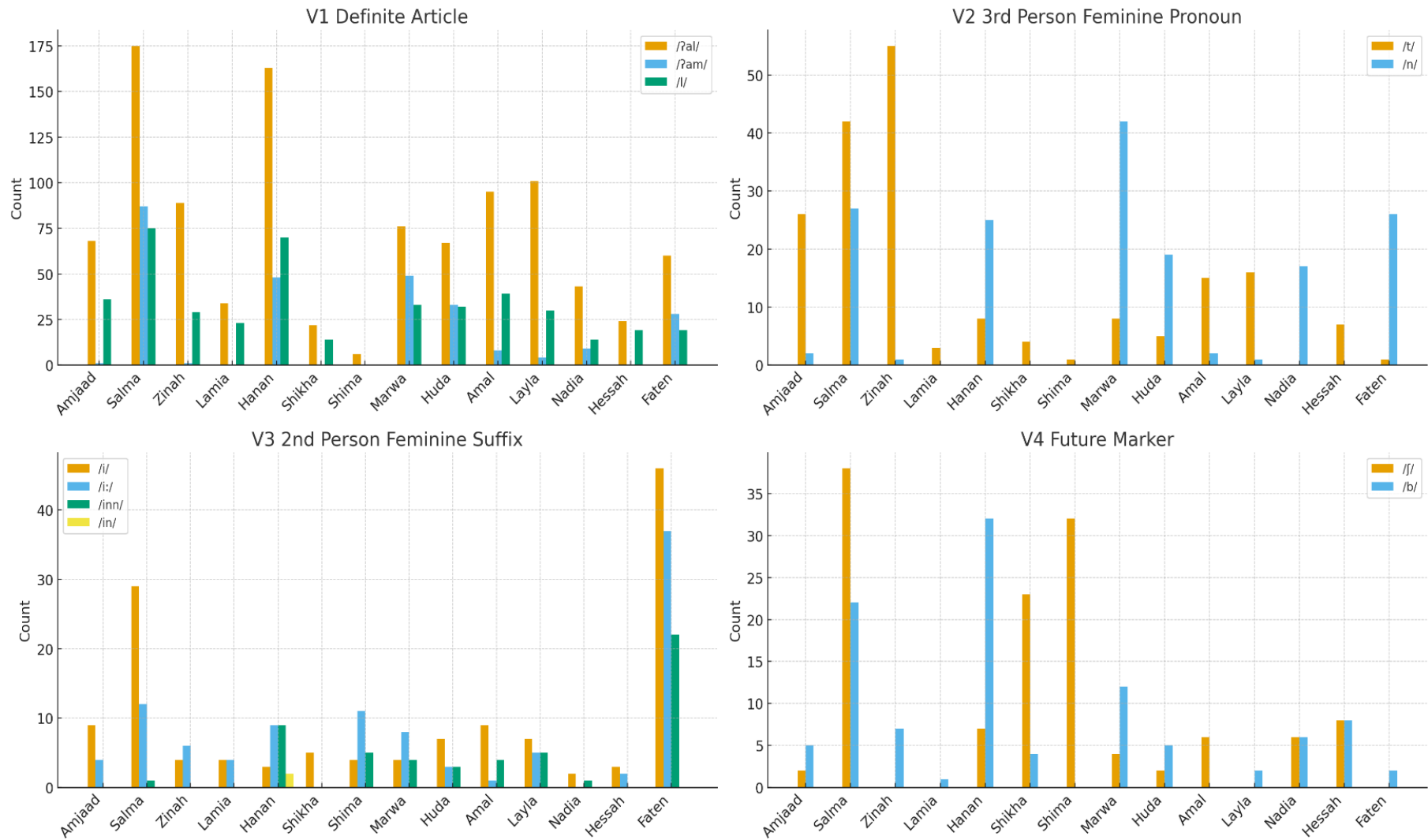


Figure 7-6 Distribution of the Jizani and Najdi variants among the participants for the four linguistic variables

7.1.4 Correlation Between Attitudes and Linguistic Behaviours

To examine whether participants' attitudinal orientations corresponded with their linguistic practices, Spearman's rank-order correlations were conducted between participants' attitude measures (implicit and explicit) and their proportion of Najdi features in natural conversation (% Najdi use). Table 7-6 summarises the results.

Table 7-5 Spearman's rank-order correlations between % Najdi use and attitude measures

Relationship	ρ (Spearman)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
% Najdi use \leftrightarrow Interview attitude code	0.416	0.179	14
% Najdi use \leftrightarrow Δ status (Najdi–Jizani)	0.325	0.303	14

While the correlations did not achieve statistical significance ($p > 0.05$), both coefficients are positive. This indicates a general tendency for the participants with more favourable attitudes towards Najdi speech – either explicitly in the interviews or implicitly in the status evaluations – to use more Najdi variants in spontaneous interactions.

The qualitative evidence from the interviews supports this trend, as several of the Jizani participants reported adjusting their speech to 'sound similar' to their Najdi interlocutors in mixed-group settings. Together, these findings suggest a subtle alignment between attitudes and linguistic behaviours, even if the small sample size limits the statistical strength of this relationship.

These correlation patterns, while modest, reinforce the overall view emerging from the quantitative and qualitative analyses. The following section returns to the conversational data to illustrate how such attitudinal orientations surfaced in real-time linguistic choices.

7.1.5 Qualitative Illustrative Extracts from the Natural Conversations and Interviews

To complement the quantitative results, this section presents three illustrative extracts that demonstrate how the speakers selected Jizani or Najdi variants across the different interactional contexts. Each extract has a specific analytical function and highlights linguistic behaviour that cannot be captured through statistical modelling alone, particularly in relation to narrative stance, monitoring, and the persistence of heritage forms.

Extract 1: Consistent Najdi realisation in an emotionally serious narrative

وأخذ البيالات أدخلها المطبخ وأكنس الصالة ... عشان بكرة الجمعة

/wa-ʔaħð al-biyālat ʔadxilha al-maṭbaħ wa ʔaknis aš-šāla ... ʕaʃān bukra al-jumʕa/

I took the cups into the kitchen, swept the living room ... because tomorrow was Friday.

This JLHS participant described a highly emotional event, which occurred before her sister's death, to both her Najdi and Jizani interlocutors. While emotionally charged speech often reduces monitoring and favours heritage forms, the participant consistently used Najdi realisations: /al-biyālat/, /al-maṭbaħ/, /aš-šāla/, and /al-jumʕa/. The form /aš-šāla/ exhibits expected sun-letter assimilation. This extract aligns with the GLMM results, showing the dominance of /ʔa/ and the strong phonological conditioning of assimilation.

Extract 2: Jizani suffix /-inn/ in informal intra-Jizani interactions

مرة ثانية إذا تحلقينه دقي عليه أنا

/marra: θa:nija ʔiða: taħlig'innuh duqqi: ʕa'le:h ʔana:/'

Next time you have him shaved, call me.

In this extract, the same JLHS participant engaged in a relaxed, intimate conversation with another JLHS participant. The verb **تحلقينه** appears as /taħlig-inn-uh/, containing the Jizani feminine suffix /-inn/ instead of the Najdi /-i:n/ in /taħlig-i:n-uh/. This shows that Jizani morphology resurfaces in friendly, low-monitoring contexts, complementing the GLMM findings for Variable 3, which attested to multiple suffixal forms despite the lack of strong statistical conditioning.

Extract 3: Stable Jizani verbal morphology in interview speech

شاقولك كيف في جوازته وفي من أهل الرياض ... وجارتي زارن جيزان

/ʃa:gu:lik ke:f fi: dʒawa:zn-ah w fi: min ʔahl ar-riyāḍ ... w dʒa:rt-i za:ran dʒizān/

What can I tell you ... There are people from Jizan and from Riyadh ... and my neighbour visited Jizan.

Produced by a JMS participant, this extract demonstrates the Jizani feminine perfect marker **-/n/** in /zāran/ ('she visited') instead of the Najdi form /t/ in /zārat/. Also, it includes the Jizani lexical form /ʃāgūlik/, while Najdi would typically use /b-agūlak/. These forms exhibit a strong retention of Jizani morphology in more self-reflective interview speech, supporting the quantitative finding that both Jizani and Najdi variants appear across the dataset.

These extracts provide interactional evidence that complements the quantitative patterns revealed by the GLMMs, showing how the speakers draw on Jizani and Najdi resources depending on the narrative stance, emotional intensity, and local participation framework. The

quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrate that variant choice is shaped by a combination of linguistic, stylistic, and interactional triggers, and that the speakers orientate towards different forms in context-sensitive and socially meaningful ways. These behavioural patterns also highlight how underlying attitudes towards prestige, identity, and belonging may surface in spontaneous speech. Therefore, the broader sociolinguistic tendencies identified in this chapter provide the empirical foundation for the subsequent integrated interpretation.

The findings of Chapter 7 provide partial support for H3. The use of Jizani and Najdi features varied systematically according to interactional context, particularly speech style, topic, and participant group. Conversational contexts and language-identity-related topics significantly favoured Najdi variants in several variables, while speaker group membership shaped the retention or shift towards Jizani forms.

However, not all predicted factors conditioned variation. Education, social class, and interlocutor effects were largely non-significant, and the nominal suffix variable did not exhibit systematic contextual conditioning. These findings suggest that while linguistic behaviour is clearly context-sensitive, variation is primarily structured by interactional and stylistic factors rather than broad demographic characteristics.

Overall, H3 is therefore partially supported: feature selection varies across interactional contexts, but the strength and scope of contextual effects differ across variables.

7.2 Summary

This chapter presented the behavioural component of the study by analysing the natural conversations among the Jizani and Najdi women in Najd. Building on the implicit and explicit attitude findings described in chapters 5 and 6, the analysis examined how these attitudes surface in spontaneous linguistic practice. Using a mixed-methods framework combining transcription, detailed coding, and GLMM modelling, the chapter explored four linguistic variables to identify the social, interactional, and phonological triggers that shape the speakers' choice of the Jizani and Najdi forms.

The results demonstrate that linguistic behaviour is patterned and context-sensitive rather than random. For example, for the definite article (Variable 1), significant predictors included the speaker's group, style, topic, and phonological environment. Style emerged as a powerful trigger across the variables, with conversational contexts promoting Najdi features (/ʔa/, /t/, and /b/) more than during interview speech. The future-marker (Variable 4) exhibited a similar stylistic pattern, while the nominal suffixes (Variable 3) showed no systematic conditioning, suggesting lower social salience.

The qualitative extracts illustrated the speakers' use of Jizani or Najdi variants, providing interactional insights that complement the statistical patterns. The correlation analyses showed modest, positive – although not statistically significant – associations between favourable attitudes towards NA and increased use of the Najdi variants in natural speech, indicating a subtle alignment between perceptions and behaviour. Interpretation of these results in relation to language ideology, dialect contact, and linguistic inequality is developed in Chapter 8, where findings from all data sources are discussed.

Chapter 8 Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises the findings from the study's three empirical components – the MGT (Chapter 5), the semi-structured interviews (Chapter 6), and the analysis of natural conversations (Chapter 7) – to answer the research questions and situate the results in the wider sociolinguistic scholarship. The chapter explains the ideological, social, and interactional forces shaping how Jizani women speak, how they evaluate these forces, and how they navigate dialect hierarchies in Najdi-majority environments. Integrating these components reveals not only what the research participants believe about these dialects but also how these beliefs inform their explicit orientations and become enacted in real, moment-to-moment interactions.

This chapter develops a comprehensive account of dialect attitudes, linguistic inequality, and identity negotiation. Drawing on language ideology theory, FLP, linguistic injustice, and dialect-contact research, it shows how Jizani and Najdi speakers respond to stigma, discrimination, and shifting prestige norms associated with regional varieties in Saudi Arabia.

The discussion comprises four parts. Section 8.2 considers the first research question by examining how the Jizani and Najdi participants evaluated both varieties along status and solidarity dimensions and revealing broader attitudinal hierarchies that reflect regional power structures. Section 8.3 addresses the second research question by analysing how Jizani women interpret their own linguistic practices and highlighting the roles of family, peers, media representations, and social stereotyping in shaping explicit attitudes and language ideologies. Section 8.4 focuses on the third research question by identifying the social and interactional triggers that influence the shifting use of Najdi and Jizani variants in natural conversation and linking speakers' behavioural patterns to their attitudinal orientations. Lastly, Section 8.5 draws these three strands together to assess their implications for dialect contact, linguistic inequality, and identity in Saudi Arabia.

The evidence shows that JA occupies an ambivalent ideological position: it is viewed as warm, intimate, and culturally authentic, and yet, also perceived as rural, informal, and of lower status. In contrast, NA is considered the more socially advantageous and valued variety. These contrasts – circulated through families, schools, media, and everyday interactions – provide the context for how Jizani women negotiate their belonging, modify their speech, and construct their linguistic identities in a Najdi-dominant sociolinguistic landscape.

This chapter provides an original contribution by presenting the first integrated account of how implicit attitudes, explicit ideologies, and natural linguistic practices converge to produce patterned dialect behaviour in intra-Saudi contact settings. This triangulated analysis is unprecedented in Saudi sociolinguistic research: no previous study has combined these three aspects to show how dialect hierarchies are reproduced, negotiated, and resisted in everyday lives.

8.2 Key Results: Attitudinal Hierarchies of Jizani and Najdi Arabic

This section directly addresses the first research question by examining how the Jizani and Najdi speakers evaluated the two varieties along status and solidarity dimensions, and how these evaluations differed between the two groups. The combined MGT results and open-ended comments appear to reveal a consistent attitudinal hierarchy: NA is considered higher status, while JA is more strongly associated with solidarity and affective warmth. Notwithstanding these hierarchical evaluations, both participant groups expressed considerable interpersonal openness towards speakers of both varieties, suggesting that everyday social relations are more nuanced than simply status or social class assessments alone. These attitudes show that evaluations of JA and NA are structurally patterned, revealing a stable attitudinal hierarchy between the two varieties.

8.2.1 Status and Solidarity: Converging and Diverging Evaluations

For both the Jizani and Najdi participants, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that NA consistently received higher ratings for status-related traits, such as education and intelligence. In contrast, JA scored higher for solidarity-related traits, including timidity, casualness, and pleasantness (Tables 5-3 and 5-6). These findings align with classical sociolinguistic distinctions between status and solidarity, first described by Lambert et al. (1960) and Giles (1970), where varieties associated with socioeconomic power are rated highly for competence, while regional or minority varieties are linked to social attractiveness (Garrett, 2010).

This status–solidarity distinction is particularly pronounced among the Najdi participants. They rated the Jizani guise significantly lower for education (status) but higher for timidity and casualness (solidarity) traits. The Jizani participants also acknowledged NA’s status advantage, although the difference was less pronounced. This pattern mirrors findings from English, French, and Scandinavian contexts, where standard or urban varieties are linked to prestige and competence, while local accents index warmth, friendliness, and authenticity (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Kristiansen et al., 2005; Labov, 1966; Milroy & Milroy, 1999).

These studies show that the social implications of accents and dialects are nuanced and correspond to broader societal attitudes towards identity and communication. The stronger status differentiation among the Najdi participants likely reflects their deeper commitment to existing regional hierarchies. Najd has historically been – and remains today – Saudi Arabia’s political and administrative hub, and the prominence of Najdi speakers in national authority structures reinforces the symbolic boundary between high- and low-status Arabic varieties.

Research across the Arab world has also identified centralised varieties as status markers. In Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt, the dominant languages or dialects (e.g. French and Cairene Arabic) index modernity, education, and urbanity, while local varieties are valued for their solidarity and cultural authenticity (Bentahila, 1983; Chakrani, 2013; Gabsi, 2022; Serreli, 2017). The present study mirrors this pattern: NA provides status owing to its historical and institutional dominance, while JA reflects strong local identity and kinship networks. Unlike North African contexts, which are shaped by colonial legacies, these Saudi Arabian hierarchies have emerged internally, highlighting domestic regional stratification. Thus, these findings extend sociolinguistic theory by revealing how status–solidarity splits operate in a non-colonial, internally stratified Arabic context, showing that status hierarchies can be created endogenously through domestic political centralisation rather than external linguistic forces.

Mashaqba et al. (2023) noted that dialect groups in Jordan sharply differentiate between status traits (education and prestige) and solidarity traits (generosity and courage), supporting the use of multidimensional attitudinal measures – as adopted in the present study. Similarly, Ruthan (2020) and Alrumaih (2002) reported that NA speakers rank Southern dialects – particularly JA – as low-status and rural while reserving positive labels for other Saudi dialects. These studies support the present study’s findings that NA functions as the high-status norm and JA is a low-prestige variety, despite its strong solidarity ties.

Thus, NA’s status derives from its association with administrative power, economic centrality, and national authority, while JA’s solidarity reflects its embeddedness in kinship networks and local identity. Status and solidarity are not mutually exclusive but coexist in context-dependent ways. By empirically documenting and analysing these dual ideological forces – status versus solidarity – in an intra-Saudi setting, the present study contributes new evidence that prestige hierarchies are produced internally in the Gulf region rather than through colonial linguistic histories.

8.2.2 Social Class Perceptions

Social class perceptions further highlight how the participants mapped linguistic differences onto social hierarchies (Ladegaard, 1998). Most of the participants in both groups classified the

two guises as middle-class, with only a minority placing them in either the working or upper classes (Tables 5.8 and 5.9), despite public discourse often linking Jizani speech to rurality or lower socioeconomic status.

Understanding the Vision 2030 context is essential here. This national initiative aims to enhance access to higher education, promote public-sector employment, and increase social mobility for citizens in various Saudi regions, including Jizan. As more Jizani speakers enter middle-class professions, these socioeconomic changes may be influencing how dialect and social class are perceived, both within Najdi-speaking communities and in wider Saudi society. This may reflect a broader shift in societal attitudes as the economic landscape evolves and JA is increasingly viewed more positively in the context of emerging middle-class identities. This study provides preliminary evidence that the changing socioeconomic conditions associated with Vision 2030 may be weakening older ideological links between JA and working-class identities, as reflected in the participants' predominantly middle-class classifications of both dialects.

Interviews indicate that class-based stereotypes remain prevalent in societal perceptions. For example, references to 'janitors', terms such as 'village girls', and descriptors labelling speakers as 'uneducated', highlight enduring stigmas towards the Jizani accent, which is often equated with lower social status and prestige. This phenomenon illustrates a broader issue: the observed egalitarian nature of quantitative ratings – suggesting a level of acceptance or neutrality – contrasts markedly with the persistent use of discriminatory and derogatory qualitative descriptions. This contradiction is a model example of implicit versus explicit attitudes, where underlying biases manifest subtly despite overt claims of impartiality or equality. These findings mirror those of Ladegaard (1998), who showed that indirect measures often reveal class hierarchies suppressed in direct responses. By combining the MGT results and qualitative comments, the present study reveals an ideological contradiction in Saudi attitudes: explicit egalitarian class claims coexist with implicit derogatory stereotypes of Southern varieties – a contradiction not previously recorded in Saudi research.

This divergence between overt egalitarian evaluations and implicitly negative associations reflects a well-documented sociolinguistic pattern in which speakers align their explicit responses with socially desirable norms while implicit attitudes continue to reproduce entrenched hierarchies (Garrett, 2010; Preston, 2010). Such discrepancies are often shaped by awareness of normative expectations discouraging overt prejudice, particularly in contexts where national discourse emphasises unity and social cohesion. Nevertheless, underlying linguistic ideologies linking regional speech to social inferiority may persist and surface indirectly through humour, stereotyping, or evaluative commentary (Woolard, 2020). In the Saudi context, where public discourse promotes equality among citizens while regional

hierarchies remain socially salient, this tension reveals how prestige ideologies can be simultaneously contested and reproduced in everyday interaction. This finding provides new evidence that linguistic inequality in Saudi Arabia operates not only through overt evaluation but also through subtle ideological processes that shape how regional speech is publicly discussed and privately judged.

8.2.3 Openness to Contact

Both participant groups displayed overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards engaging with speakers of the other dialect, with more than 90% of participants expressing friendliness towards the other group. This suggests that hierarchical attitudes do not necessarily lead to social avoidance or a reluctance to interact.

These findings should not be interpreted as evidence that prestige hierarchies are absent. Accent evaluation research consistently demonstrates the persistence of prestige-based hierarchies (Coupland & Bishop, 2007). What emerges here is that such hierarchies do not automatically produce social distance.

Cultural norms associated with hospitality and a shared sense of moral responsibility appear to mitigate the behavioural outcomes typically associated with hierarchical evaluations. These norms encourage people to engage positively with one another, regardless of any underlying social hierarchies. Moreover, the high frequency of interactions between the groups provides an enriching context for potential dialect shift. Specifically, Jizani speakers may adopt Najdi linguistic features to enhance communication and facilitate their smoother social acceptance within the wider community as reflected by the participants in Chapter 6.

This study makes a significant contribution by showing that the willingness to engage in contact does not erase existing prestige hierarchies; rather, these interactions can create opportunities for linguistic shifts driven by prestige considerations. This dynamic may produce substantial, long-term changes in the dialects spoken by these communities as people adapt their language in response to social hierarchies and their desire for integration.

8.2.4 Summary of Findings

A clear attitudinal hierarchy exists between JA and NA. Across both the implicit evaluations (MGT) and explicit views (interviews and open-ended responses), NA is the high-status variety associated with education and prestige. In contrast, JA is valued for its warmth, friendliness, and solidarity, yet is also associated with lower status, informality, and regional stereotypes. The Najdi participants expressed stronger negative evaluations of JA, particularly for status

traits. In contrast, the Jizani participants sometimes internalised these hierarchies, showing ambivalence that blends pride in their heritage with awareness of the dominant perceptions. Importantly, these findings reflect the perceptions of female voices of a similar age; the attitudes of other female age groups and male speakers may differ and warrant further investigation.

This attitudinal hierarchy provides a foundation for interpreting the narratives explored through the second research question. If JA is widely perceived as low-status and NA as high-status, then Jizani women must navigate these evaluations in their everyday interactions. The second research question, therefore, moves from public evaluations of these dialects to private interpretations and lived experiences, examining how these ideological forces shape identity, discrimination, family decisions, peer relationships, and media influence. The first research question establishes the ideological landscape; the second now investigates how speakers inhabit, negotiate, and sometimes resist this landscape.

8.3 Ideological Interpretations of Linguistic Behaviour Negotiation

This section synthesises the interview findings (Chapter 6) and examines how Jizani women interpret their linguistic practices within wider ideological frameworks. It brings together implicit attitudes (Chapter 5) and explicit beliefs (Chapter 6) to show how the research participants navigate stereotypes, stigma, discrimination, family expectations, peer socialisation, intergenerational transmission, and media representations in Najdi-dominant environments. The analysis draws on theories of language ideology, linguistic injustice, FLP and indexicality to reveal how speakers negotiate prestige pressures, belonging, and identity under unequal linguistic conditions.

8.3.1 Social Stereotypes and Linguistic Prejudice

Perceptions of Jizani speakers are often influenced by deeply rooted stereotypes associated with rural living, limited access to education, and a lack of social status (Lowry, 2020). These stereotypes closely align with the implicit status evaluations highlighted by the MGT model. For example, several of the participants expressed sentiments suggesting a belief that education directly correlates with social worth, such as, ‘My evaluation of all Jizani speakers is that they need to be more educated’. Another respondent remarked that ‘Their speech is like the speech of village girls who did not receive schooling back in the old days’, signifying a connection between language and social class that produces an image of a less refined and less educated demographic. In addition, one respondent stated that ‘When I hear Jizani speech, I place them in the working class’, further illustrating how linguistic features are used to categorise people

into a specific socioeconomic stratum. These statements encapsulate the concept of language ideologies, in which shared cultural beliefs about and attitudes towards linguistic variation help to justify and perpetuate existing social hierarchies (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994).

These perceptions can be understood through processes described in language ideology research. Irvine and Gal (2000) describe *iconisation* as the tendency to interpret linguistic features as direct reflections of social or personal qualities. In this context, particular Jizani forms become linked with traits such as timidity, simplicity, or rurality, as though these characteristics were inherent to the speech itself rather than socially produced.

Some participants demonstrated a profound level of self-awareness about the ideological forces shaping their perceptions of JA. For example, several participants explicitly acknowledged that the negative evaluations of their dialect were based on social prejudices rather than inherent linguistic deficiencies. This recognition demonstrates a critical understanding of the social dynamics influencing language perception. Conversely, other participants, despite expressing their pride in their heritage dialect, unwittingly perpetuated the stereotypes they sought to reject (Section 6.2.2).

This complex duality highlights the compelling struggle speakers face as they navigate the competing pressures of their environments. While they value their dialect as an important symbol of their cultural identity, deeply intertwined with their sense of belonging and personal history (Section 6.2.1), they also contend with internalised societal judgments that evaluate their dialect as inferior to or less sophisticated than more dominant language forms. This negotiation between pride and stigma reflects a broader societal discourse on language and identity, as people attempt to reconcile their appreciation for their linguistic heritage with the oppressive narratives that seek to undermine it.

These stereotypes operate through indexicality, where linguistic forms signal meanings such as 'rural', 'uneducated', or 'village girl', even to people with little direct contact with a dialect (Section 6.2.2.1). This helps explain why many of the participants referenced media representations rather than lived experiences when describing Jizani speech. A related ideological process involves the selective visibility of social types. Educated, urban, or linguistically flexible Jizani speakers are often overlooked because they do not align with the widely circulating image of low prestige. This selective recognition helps explain the persistence of negative evaluations, even when contradicted by participants' own experiences. These patterns resonate with the findings from other contexts where non-standard or regional varieties are similarly associated with rural or low-prestige identities (Bentahila, 1983; Chakrani, 2013; Mashaqba et al., 2023; Serreli, 2017). This alignment with cross-linguistic research shows that

the link between centralised power, standard language ideology, and linguistic prestige extends beyond Saudi Arabia.

In showing how Jizani women negotiate, resist, or internalise these ideologies, this study provides an empirically-grounded account of how Southern Saudi dialect stereotypes are interpreted by the speakers themselves – an aspect largely absent from existing Saudi sociolinguistic research. Together, these patterns show that Jizani women navigate a sociolinguistic environment in which negative ideological associations remain powerful, even as they actively reinterpret or resist them.

8.3.2 Linguistic Discrimination as a Social Practice

The participants described numerous experiences of exclusion, such as being removed from school performances, corrected publicly, denied reading roles, or mocked for sounding ‘different’ (Section 6.2.2.2). As one participant recalled, ‘They decided to replace me with another student from Najd ... she said the students would not understand my speech’. These experiences exemplify linguistic discrimination, which occurs when linguistic prejudice produces material consequences in social life (O’Neil & Massini-Cagliari, 2019).

These accounts align with linguistic injustice theories that conceptualise linguistic inequality as structural rather than simply interpersonal (Bourdieu, 1991; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), with discrimination produced by institutional norms that treat certain varieties as inherently more legitimate. The participants’ descriptions of feeling ‘not understood’, ‘not professional’, or ‘not suitable’ following repeated correction (Section 6.2.3.2) illustrate Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of linguistic capital: NA has institutional value, while JA is devalued, exposing its speakers to symbolic domination.

Indexical stereotypes have a significant role in shaping social interactions by influencing how people perceive and interpret linguistic cues. These cues often signal attributes such as competence, intelligence, and a sense of belonging in a community. Consequently, people associated with certain linguistic varieties may experience exclusion or reduced opportunities owing to biases towards their speech. Research conducted in Western contexts has revealed similar patterns, showing that the speakers of stigmatised linguistic varieties often adjust their speech to mitigate the risk of discrimination. For example, studies by Lippi-Green (2012) and Bucholtz (2003) show how people strive to conform to social expectations and avoid the negative stereotypes associated with their dialects or accents.

In the case of the Jizani women in this study, their shift to NA is a personal and social strategy to avoid negative judgments associated with their original speech patterns. This adjustment may

reveal a desire to avoid negative perceptions (e.g. unclear, unprofessional, uneducated), reflecting broader societal mechanisms that compel people to navigate linguistic landscapes to align with accepted norms and reduce the likelihood of discrimination. These adaptations not only highlight the impact of linguistic stereotypes on personal identity but also underscore the complex interplay between language, social status, and professional opportunities.

Some of the women expressed reflexive awareness of how discrimination has shaped their beliefs and self-perceptions. They shared personal experiences, noting that they had unknowingly internalised negative stereotypes towards and assumptions about their own dialects, a realisation that did not fully surface until adulthood (Section 6.2.2.2). This highlights not only the pervasive nature of linguistic discrimination but also how it can become ingrained in a person's identity and worldview. Consequently, their accounts reveal the broader implications of linguistic injustice, shaping people's self-esteem, communication styles, and social interactions throughout their lives. This reflexive awareness aligns with findings by Riverin-Coutlée et al. (2024), who demonstrate that socially shared evaluative hierarchies shape perceptions of dialect features. While their study focuses on listeners' evaluations, the present findings reveal how such hierarchies may be internalised over time, influencing speakers' self-perceptions and linguistic behaviour.

These accounts show that discrimination is a social practice embedded in education, employment, and other everyday interactions (Van Parijs, 2011). Their consistency suggests patterned ideological pressures rather than isolated incidents. While previous Saudi studies have described negative attitudes towards Southern varieties (Alrumaih, 2003; Ruthan, 2020), they have not shown how these attitudes manifest in discriminatory practices across social domains. By documenting these patterned experiences, this study provides the first evidence of how linguistic inequality operates as a social practice in intra-national dialect contact settings.

8.3.3 Family Language Policy, Peer Socialisation, and Intergenerational Transmission

The interviews demonstrate the importance of FLP and intergenerational transmission in shaping Jizani women's linguistic identities. Many of the JLHS participants explained that their parents deliberately spoke Najdi at home to promote social integration and mobility (Section 6.2.3.1). For example, one participant noted that 'Even at home, our variety is nearly identical to my parents' Najdi dialect', while another stated, 'We lived in Al-Kharj for a long time ... my dialect is more Najdi than the Southern dialect'. This mirrors other FLP findings that show that parents often prioritise majority or high-status varieties for instrumental reasons (Curdts-Christiansen, 2009; King & Fogle, 2006). This ideological-practice tension reflects a known gap in FLP: parents may value heritage languages symbolically but promote the majority dialect for

practical purposes (Pauwels, 2016). In Saudi Arabia, this dynamic occurs at the intra-dialect level, with NA functioning ideologically like a dominant language in bidialectal contexts.

The participants who grew up in Najdi-speaking households frequently internalised the belief that JA is ‘not clear’ or ‘not proper’, demonstrating how family ideologies can reinforce wider societal hierarchies (see quotation 18 in Chapter 6). Conversely, the participants from homes where JA was being actively maintained had greater linguistic confidence and loyalty. As one participant recalled, ‘Even though my parents have lived in Al-Kharj for more than 50 years, they speak Jizani ... I speak Jizani too’. This aligns with an FLP finding that the home is a crucial site for intergenerational dialect transmission, shaping linguistic continuity and identity formation (Fang & Yao, 2025; Ferguson, 2013; Lanza, 2007). Peer networks reinforce these dynamics. Children who used JA in school were sometimes mocked or misunderstood, prompting their parents to either normalise its continued use (see quotation 20 in Chapter 6) or encourage a quiet shift towards NA. These findings align with research showing that peer interaction often impacts the use of language in contact settings (Kohn et al, 2020).

Together, FLP, intergenerational transmission, and peer dynamics clarify why adult Jizani speakers express both pride and insecurity: their linguistic identities were shaped in households negotiating between heritage loyalty and NA prestige. This study extends FLP scholarship by showing that dialect-level prestige hierarchies in a monolingual national context operate in ways similar to bilingual majority–minority language dynamics. To my knowledge, this is the first Saudi sociolinguistic study to empirically document how families negotiate intra-Arabic dialect shift using both ideological and managerial practices that shape speakers’ early awareness of prestige, stigma, and the social consequences of language choice.

8.3.4 Media Representations and Stereotype Circulation

The media emerged as a powerful ideological force shaping perceptions of JA. The participants repeatedly cited Jizani caricatures in television comedy programmes – particularly the widely recognised ‘Kofta’ figure – as influential in shaping negative public perceptions (Section 6.2.3.3). These portrayals mirror global patterns in which media representations of non-standard varieties reinforce stigma and naturalise linguistic prejudice (Dragojevic et al., 2021).

Notably, even the participants with little direct experience of Jizani speakers adopted negative assumptions based on media portrayals. Some of the women acknowledged that they had formed opinions about JA before meeting Jizani speakers, highlighting the reach of mediated ideologies. Other researchers have similarly shown that media caricatures strongly shape public perceptions of dialects (AlHakami, 2023; Alhazmi & Alfalig, 2022; Cavanaugh, 2005).

While this study did not include a direct analysis of media texts, its findings reflect the participants' interpretations of how televised caricatures and mediated representations have shaped their linguistic self-perceptions. By foregrounding the speakers' accounts of media-driven stigma, the study shows how television comedy and mediated stereotypes are powerful ideological forces influencing dialect stigma, linguistic insecurity, and interdialectal relations. This extends media–language scholarship by directly linking mediated indexicality to the lived experiences of intra-national linguistic marginalisation.

8.3.5 Identity, Belonging, and Navigating Prestige Pressures

The participants' interpretations of their linguistic behaviours reveal complex identity negotiations. Many participants framed their shift towards NA as a social mobility and acceptance strategy – for example, 'Speaking in the Najdi accent makes communication easier', 'When I speak Najdi with Najdis, they say my speech is clear', and 'Speaking the Najdi accent is essential to gain acceptance' (Section 6.2.4). These statements reflect a strong orientation towards prestige ideologies (Aldossaree, 2016; Alrumaih, 2003). Simultaneously, some of the participants expressed pride in JA and used it selectively with family members, close friends, or in emotionally intimate contexts – although this pattern was less common. Jizani was associated with authenticity and familial closeness, while Najdi was considered necessary for public legitimacy. The participants thus used both varieties to construct social personae – signalling pride, resistance, alignment, or insecurity depending on the context.

Compared with other Arabic dialect-contact settings, the prestige pressures experienced by Jizani speakers appear particularly strong (Bassiouney, 2009; Eltouhamy, 2016; Hussein & El-Ali, 1989). For example, speakers in Tlemcen (Algeria) have maintained their urban heritage variety in intimate settings despite external pressures (Hammoudi, 2021). In contrast, many of the JA speakers in this study have shifted towards NA even in the family domain, suggesting that stigma towards JA is sufficiently strong to reshape linguistic behaviour at the core of identity and belonging. Broader sociopolitical changes have further intensified these pressures. Vision 2030 has accelerated migration to Riyadh and the Najd region, reinforcing the symbolic dominance of central varieties and elevating expectations concerning nationally valued speech. Several participants indirectly referenced these pressures through their aspirations for social mobility and a perceived need to use more widely accepted varieties. This suggests that contemporary linguistic ideologies are being shaped by urbanisation and shifting national identity discourses.

Educational institutions and media representations appear to play a particularly important role in reinforcing prestige hierarchies and shaping linguistic behaviour. Participants described schools and institutional settings as environments in which NA was often treated as more

intelligible, appropriate, or socially acceptable than JA, creating pressures toward linguistic accommodation and change. Similarly, television comedy and mediated caricatures frequently portrayed Jizani speech as humorous, rural, or socially marginal, contributing to the wider circulation of negative linguistic stereotypes at the national level. At the same time, however, participants also described how contemporary social media platforms have increasingly created spaces for the visibility and positive re-evaluation of Jizani culture, dialect, and regional identity. These findings therefore point to an ongoing tension between centralising pressures favouring nationally dominant linguistic norms and the continuing maintenance, negotiation, and revalorisation of locally meaningful identities.

Simultaneously, the interviews revealed positive evaluations of Jizani culture, including among the Najdi participants, who expressed enthusiasm for visiting Jizan or admiration for its hospitality. These sentiments may reflect the growing emphasis in Vision 2030 on regional heritage and cultural diversity. Consequently, warmth and appreciation coexist with older stereotypes and prestige hierarchies. The ambivalent attitudes recorded mirror broader dynamics in contemporary Saudi society and in Vision 2030: one force promotes social mobility tied to centralised, urban norms, while another encourages pride in regional distinctiveness.

This study advances sociolinguistic theory by showing how national development agendas, urban prestige norms, and intimate emotional ties to heritage dialects simultaneously shape identity negotiation in dialect-contact settings. The study contributes to emerging discussions on how Vision 2030's sociopolitical transformations may intersect with dialect ideologies and prestige pressures in everyday linguistic practice.

8.3.6 Summary of Findings

A complex interplay of stereotypes, discrimination, family influence, peer dynamics, and media representations is shaping how Jizani women interpret their linguistic behaviours. These forces structure how JA speakers evaluate their dialect's social value, when they feel pressure to adopt Najdi forms, and how they negotiate belonging in Najdi-majority environments. While many of the participants exhibited a strong attachment to JA as an emblem of identity, they also demonstrated an awareness – sometimes critical, sometimes internalised – of the ideologies that frame their dialect as having lower prestige. This tension between pride and stigma is central to understanding how women interpret their linguistic choices and the meanings they convey. The next section examines how these ideological orientations manifest in linguistic behaviour during natural conversations.

8.4 Triggers, Repertoires, and the Social Meaning of Variant Choice

The third research question concerns the factors that trigger Jizani-origin women's use of Najdi or Jizani features during interaction. This section interprets variant choice as a form of repertoire management in contexts shaped by prestige hierarchies, where speakers draw on Najdi and Jizani resources to index status, solidarity, and belonging in Najdi-dominant environments (Blommaert, 2010; Eckert, 2008; Silverstein, 2003). Using insights from code-switching and interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982; Auer, 1998), the study examines how factors such as style, setting, speaker group, attitudes, interlocutor, phonological and morphological constraints, and social trajectories shape dialect maintenance and shift within speakers' repertoires.

8.4.1 Variable-Specific Triggers and Indexical Meanings

The GLMM results show that linguistic behaviour is structured rather than random. For the definite article /ʔal/, group, style, topic, and following sound significantly shape the alternation between /ʔal/ and /ʔam/. Across the dataset, /ʔal/ is the unmarked, institutionally valued form, while /ʔam/ persists in specific phonological environments and in more familiar, everyday narratives. Ideologically, /ʔal/ indexes 'correctness' and social neutrality, while /ʔam/ carries a residual Jizani indexicality linked to informality, illustrating how linguistic variants acquire layered social meanings (Silverstein, 2003; Eckert, 2008). (see detailed statistical results in Section 7.1.2.1, in which all four predictors emerge as significant).

The third-person feminine alternation /t/ and the future marker /s/ are particularly style sensitive. Conversational contexts promote the Najdi /t/ for the third-person feminine and /b-/ for the future marker, while more reflective interview speech includes greater use of Jizani forms, such as /n/ and /ja-/ instead of the Najdi variants /t/ and /b-/, respectively. This is consistent with the finding that style is the only significant predictor for /s/: speakers are much more likely to use /b-/ in informal conversation, while /ja-/ is favoured in interviews. These patterns suggest that the women use Najdi forms in general interactional contexts but shift – code-switching – towards Jizani forms when the discourse foregrounds identity, origin, or culturally anchored topics. Such style-sensitive variation has been widely documented in sociolinguistic research (Labov, 1972; Bell, 1984). Thus, the variables function as indexical resources – Najdi realisations align with metropolitan norms and institutionally valued speech, while Jizani realisations foreground regional belonging and intimacy with style, a significant predictor for both (Silverstein, 2003; Eckert, 2008) (Sections 7.1.2.2 and 7.1.2.4).

Unlike the other variables, the /i/ and /i:/ suffixes are primarily shaped by lexical and morphophonological constraints – specific word forms and stem structures that favour one suffix over another – rather than social or stylistic factors. While this finding may be due to the small number of participants, the token dataset is sufficiently large and well-distributed, enabling robust statistical modelling despite the limited participant representation. Section 7.1.2.3 shows that none of the predictors reached significance, and the corrected model was not significant. This explains why these variables do not exhibit the systematic sociolinguistic conditioning observed with /ʔa/, /t/, and /s/.

8.4.2 Social Trajectories, Socialisation, and Speaker Repertoires

The speaker-level distributions in Figure 7-6 show that these triggers operate differently across the speaker groups. The JLHS women raised in Najd consistently produced higher proportions of Najdi variants across all four variables. For example, Zinah, Layla, and Amal exhibited the strongest overall preference for Najdi forms, including high rates of /ʔa/, /t/, Najdi-like suffixes, and /b/ (Section 7.1.3), with Najdi-oriented behaviour most pronounced among the speakers whose linguistic socialisation occurred in Najdi-dominant schools, workplaces, and peer networks. For these participants, NA functions as the socially dominant, unmarked code in their everyday environments. While Jizani features remain available, they primarily surface in intimate or playful contexts.

In contrast, the JMS participants maintained much higher proportions of heritage variants. These speakers frequently used /ʔam/, /n/, /inn/, and /j/, even when incorporating Najdi forms in some contexts. Their repertoires exhibit a more balanced coexistence of heritage and local variants, reflecting their later migration to Najd and their ongoing ties to Jizan. This aligns with sociolinguistic research showing that adult migrants tend to retain minority or stigmatised features to preserve ties with relatives and wider social networks (Hammoudi, 2021; Moustauoui Srhir, 2020; Mohamed et al., 2019; AlWer, 2014; Sacks et al., 1978).

Together, these divergent patterns highlight a significant social gradient in the community. The JLHS participants appear to be at the forefront of the linguistic shift towards Najdi variants, while the JMS participants are custodians of more traditional linguistic forms from their heritage. This uneven linguistic diffusion not only supports the GLMM findings but also underscores the critical role of style, topic, and group membership as the main triggers influencing linguistic variation. Furthermore, this suggests that dialect shift is rooted more in cumulative socialisation experiences than in demographic factors such as socioeconomic class or education level, reflecting the role of early socialisation and peer networks in shaping linguistic practice (Eckert, 2000).

8.4.3 Interactional Context and the Role of Attitudes

The conversational extracts support this repertoire-based interpretation. When describing emotional events in mixed-group settings (Section 7.1.5), the participants often maintained stable Najdi forms, signalling careful self-presentation and their orientation towards high-status norms (Bell, 1984). In informal intra-Jizani speech, Jizani forms resurfaced, indexing intimacy or shared background. The interview contexts, in which the participants were invited to discuss their identity and origin, sometimes encouraged the use of Jizani features as a way of ‘performing’ regional belonging (Eckert, 2008) as illustrated in the conversational extracts presented in Chapter 7.

These shifts can be interpreted as instances of stance-taking, whereby speakers’ use of Najdi and Jizani variants aligns with the social meaning of the interaction (Du Bois, 2007). Although speakers’ internal motivations cannot be directly determined, recurrent contextual patterns — such as increased use of Najdi forms in public or mixed interactions and the retention of Jizani features in intimate settings — indicate that variant choice is socially meaningful, shaped by linguistic attitudes, and linked to broader ideological pressures and identity positioning (Eckert, 2008; Silverstein, 2003).

The conversational extracts presented in Chapter 7 provide interactional evidence of these patterns, illustrating how emotional stance, intimacy, and identity-focused discourse shape the selection of Najdi and Jizani variants.

8.4.4 Summary of Findings

Patterns of variant choice among Jizani-origin women are systematic rather than random and reflect repertoire management shaped by prestige hierarchies and interactional context. Linguistic variation is conditioned by style, topic, interlocutor, phonological environment, and speakers’ social trajectories, with Najdi forms functioning as the unmarked, institutionally valued norm in mixed or public contexts, while Jizani features surface more readily in intimate settings or when regional identity is foregrounded.

Differences between speakers socialised in Najdi environments and those who migrated later illustrate how cumulative socialisation experiences shape repertoire use, with the former showing greater alignment with Najdi norms and the latter maintaining stronger heritage features.

These patterns indicate that variant selection is a socially meaningful practice through which speakers index status, solidarity, and belonging. In this way, linguistic behaviour reflects the interaction of ideological pressures and situational demands, demonstrating how speakers

strategically draw on their repertoires to navigate identity and legitimacy in Najdi-dominant settings.

8.4.5 Synthesis: Integrating Attitudes, Ideologies, and Behaviours

The combined findings from the study's three empirical strands provide a cohesive view of how Jizani women living in Najd navigate the social meanings of linguistic variation and how these meanings shape their everyday linguistic practices. Three interrelated themes emerge across the matched-guise evaluations, interview accounts, and naturalistic speech data: (1) the coexistence of prestige hierarchies and solidarity-based values influencing perceptions of the Jizani and Najdi varieties; (2) the influence of social stereotyping, discrimination, and family and media socialisation on the explicit attitudes of Jizani women; and (3) context-sensitive triggers shaping real-time choices between Jizani and Najdi features. These themes reflect the dynamic relationship between ideology and behaviour and show that linguistic practice is embedded in broader social structures and lived experiences.

First, the evaluation data indicate that the participants were simultaneously oriented towards two ideological dimensions: prestige and warmth. Najdi Arabic is widely associated with prestige, urban modernity, and social mobility, mirroring patterns observed in other Arabic-speaking and international contexts where central or urban varieties have symbolic authority (Almhairat, 2015; AlWer, 2014; Bassiouney, 2009; Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Dragojevic et al., 2017). In contrast, JA is linked to warmth, authenticity, and interpersonal closeness, which is a pattern consistent with the solidarity dimension reported in research on regional and minority accents elsewhere. These dual evaluations produce an ideological landscape in which speakers interpret their own speech and that of others.

Second, the interview findings show how these ideologies are experienced, reproduced, and contested in everyday life. The participants described linguistic stereotyping and discrimination, showing how pronunciation, lexical choices, and intonation are socially charged cues that index assumptions about education, intelligence, and class. These experiences were painful and consequential for many of the participants, shaping their sense of belonging, self-worth, and linguistic confidence. Simultaneously, several of the participants expressed pride in their Jizani speech, emphasising its authenticity, emotional expressiveness, and familial significance. These attitudes were shaped not only by personal experience but also by powerful social institutions – including family, peer groups, and the media – that normalise certain forms and marginalise others. The findings, therefore, emphasise that linguistic attitudes are socially produced and negotiated rather than simply individual preferences.

Third, the behavioural data show that the participants' linguistic choices during natural conversations were not random but were systematically conditioned by style, topic, phonological environment, and the participant's background. Conversational contexts favour Najdi features across several variables, reflecting NA's normative force as the socially unmarked form in Najdi-dominant settings. Yet, Jizani features persist, particularly among the participants who migrated from Jizan as adults or when interacting with familiar interlocutors in low-monitoring situations. The coexistence of both varieties in the participants' repertoires shows that linguistic behaviour reflects both socialisation into Najdi norms and an ongoing attachment to heritage forms.

These findings highlight the multilayering of linguistic variation in regional mobility and social stratification contexts. The linguistic practices of Jizani women in Najd are not straightforward cases of dialect replacement, nor uniform acts of identity maintenance, but are flexible, context-sensitive choices shaped by ideological pressures, interactional demands, and personal histories. The study shows that linguistic change and stability can coexist in the same person and even in the same interactional moment, reflecting the competing social meanings attached to each variety.

By integrating attitudes, ideologies, and behaviours, the study shows that dialect contact in Saudi Arabia involves both macro-level social structures – including regional hierarchies, media discourses, and family language socialisation – and micro-level interactional processes that shape moment-by-moment linguistic decisions. These findings contribute to broader sociolinguistic research by revealing how regional varieties in the Arabian Peninsula are evaluated, negotiated, and transformed in a context of rapid social change, increased mobility, and evolving notions of national identity. It thus provides a nuanced account of how speakers navigate linguistic diversity, revealing the complex and often contradictory forces shaping the relationship between what people believe about language and how they use it.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Overview of the Study

This thesis provides an in-depth examination of how Jizani women residing in the Najd region interpret, assess, and engage with linguistic variation in a sociolinguistic landscape significantly shaped by regional hierarchies, rapid social transformations, and prevailing language ideologies. Employing a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, the study explores the complex interplay between language attitudes, ideological stances, and linguistic behaviours observed in everyday interactions.

To achieve a nuanced understanding, the research integrates a variety of methodologies, including matched-guise evaluations, semi-structured interviews, and the collection of natural conversational data. This multifaceted approach is designed to provide a holistic account of how speakers navigate and negotiate the competing social meanings of the Jizani dialect, particularly in contexts where the Najdi dialect predominates. Through this investigation, the study aims to uncover the underlying social dynamics and the personal experiences of Jizani women as they navigate their linguistic environment, illuminating the rich tapestry of identity and ideology at play in their daily lives.

This study aims to address a notable gap within the field of Arabic sociolinguistics: the scarcity of comprehensive documentation concerning the dialects spoken in southern Saudi Arabia, with a particular focus on Jizani Arabic. More importantly, there has been a marked lack of research exploring how attitudes, ideologies, and interpersonal interactions intersect within a cohesive framework. To fill this gap, the research is structured around three central questions:

1. How do Jizani and Najdi women evaluate JA and NA across dimensions of status and solidarity?
2. How do Jizani women understand, evaluate, and explain their linguistic behaviour in Najdi-dominant contexts?
3. What social, interactional, and linguistic factors shape the use of Jizani and Najdi features in natural interaction?

By investigating these aspects, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the social and linguistic dynamics that characterise JA, contributing valuable insights into the broader landscape of Arabic dialectology.

9.2 Summary of the Key Findings

Across both the implicit (MGT) and explicit (interviews and conversations) measures, the study identified a significant prestige hierarchy in language attitudes among the NA and JA speakers. Specifically, NA was consistently associated with positive connotations of intelligence and education, indicating a perception of sophistication and higher social status among its speakers. In contrast, JA exhibited distinct characteristics tied to solidarity, encompassing traits including warmth, friendliness, and authenticity. However, despite the positive social bonds it fosters, JA was also associated with lower social status, rurality, and a degree of informality. This duality reflects the complex nature of language perception in the community, revealing how different dialects can carry both favourable and unfavourable connotations.

These patterns mirror recognised status–solidarity splits in both global and Arabic contexts (Albirini, 2016; Cargile et al., 2006; Chakrani, 2013; Garrett, 2010; Shalaby, 2018, 2020), but they emerge here entirely in a national setting, without international or colonial dynamics. A significant finding is the inconsistency between the participants’ social-class attributions (both guises were read as middle-class) and their stereotypes of Jizani speech as rural or uneducated. This discrepancy reveals an implicit–explicit conflict, highlighting the complexity of dialect prejudice and the societal pressures to conform to what is considered socially acceptable behaviour. The participants may feel compelled to express viewpoints that align with middle-class norms while internally grappling with negative stereotypes that contradict their self-image, ultimately illustrating the nuanced dynamics of language perception and bias in their social contexts.

The interviews showed that linguistic attitudes are not abstract beliefs but lived experiences shaped by discrimination, family practices, peer socialisation, and media representations. The participants shared a range of experiences that illustrate how these influences manifest in their everyday lives. They revealed that speaking with Jizani features was synonymous with a lack of education. The participants noted that this stereotype created an ongoing pressure to conform to more dominant Najdi linguistic norms. There was significant pressure on the participants to adopt a Najdi accent in both educational and professional settings. This expectation often stemmed from the belief that sounding Najdi would lead to greater acceptance, creating a linguistic hierarchy favouring the Najdi dialect.

The participants discussed the emotional burden of constantly navigating and counteracting stereotypes associated with their speech. This included a persistent awareness of being judged not only for their linguistic choices but also for the implications of those choices for their social

identity. They expressed concern about sounding ‘wrong’ or not fitting in, which often affected their confidence and willingness to engage in conversations in their preferred dialect.

A notable factor that emerged from the discussions was the role of FLP: parents exhibit contrasting approaches to language use. Some families actively seek to preserve their heritage language and are supportive of the Jizani dialect as a means of cultural identity. In contrast, other families encourage alignment with the Najdi dialect, viewing this as essential for social mobility and acceptance.

The impact of the media was also significant. The participants referenced caricatures and representations in the popular media, such as the ‘Kofta’ character, which amplify and distort public perceptions. These media portrayals not only perpetuated stereotypes but also solidified indexical connections between Jizani linguistic traits and derogatory social characteristics.

Overall, the participants’ narratives show how entrenched regional ideologies contribute to a form of linguistic injustice. This is intricately woven into broader social inequalities, highlighting the complex relationships between language, identity, and societal power dynamics.

Furthermore, the behavioural analysis of the Jizani and Najdi dialects shows that language variation is socially meaningful rather than random. The choice between /ʔa/ and /ʔam/ is influenced by the speaker’s group, communication style, topic, and phonological environment, highlighting how context shapes linguistic use. The alternation between /t/ and /n/ is conditioned by the speaker’s group and the conversation style. The use of forms such as /b/ and /j/ is driven solely by the style of interaction, suggesting that speakers choose them based on the situation’s formality. The suffix variations /i/ and /i:/ show no strong social conditioning, which may be due to the small number of participants.

For the JLHS participants raised in Najd, Najdi forms are the default owing to educational and social networks, while Jizani features appear in intimate contexts. In contrast, the JMS participants maintain a more balanced repertoire, with a robust use of heritage forms. These findings show how speakers navigate between Najdi and Jizani features as resources for expressing identity and belonging, reflecting broader patterns of language contact and social dynamics.

The findings show that linguistic behaviour in Najd cannot be understood independently of the ideological environment in which it occurs. The attitudinal evaluations established the social meanings attached to Najdi and Jizani varieties; the interview narratives revealed how speakers internalise, negotiate, or resist these meanings; and the behavioural data showed how such orientations materialise in patterned linguistic choices.

Crucially, the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is not deterministic. While prestige ideologies strongly influence the frequency of Najdi forms, Jizani features persist as meaningful resources in the speakers' repertoires. Rather than disappearing under social dominance, heritage forms are selectively mobilised to index intimacy, emotional closeness, and regional identity. These findings suggest that dialect shift is not strictly linear and instead support a repertoire-based view of dialect contact, in which multiple varieties coexist and are differentially activated across contexts.

9.3 Contributions to Knowledge

This thesis contributes to knowledge through its application of established sociolinguistic theories, concepts, and methods to the study of dialect contact, language ideologies, and linguistic behaviours in the Saudi context. While grounded in Saudi Arabic dialect contact, the study also contributes to broader sociolinguistic discussions concerning prestige, stigma, mobility, and social change.

First, the study provides an integrated empirical account of Jizani–Najdi dialect contact by linking implicit and explicit language attitudes, ideological interpretations, and linguistic behaviour within a single analytical framework. Previous Arabic sociolinguistic research has often examined dialect evaluation (AlHakami, 2023; Alhazmi, 2018; Gabsi, 2022; Mashaqba et al., 2023; Ruthan, 2020) or linguistic variation (Alghamdi, 2021; Hammoudi, 2021) separately. By examining how these dimensions intersect in speakers' everyday practices, the study contributes to understanding dialect contact as shaped by social meaning, lived experience, and interactional context.

Second, the research contributes to discussions of prestige and affective value in dialect hierarchies. The findings show that NA is widely associated with institutional authority, correctness, and social mobility, while JA retains symbolic value as a marker of intimacy, authenticity, and regional belonging. The study demonstrates that these meanings are not necessarily mutually exclusive, as speakers may simultaneously orient towards prestige norms and attachments to heritage varieties. This contributes to sociolinguistic discussions of how stigma and pride may coexist within minoritised varieties.

Third, while previous Saudi studies have examined linguistic variation within individual dialects (Alajmi, 2019; Ruthan, 2020), this study brings together attitudinal, behavioural, and interactional analyses of Jizani–Najdi dialect contact in Saudi Arabia. It identifies several salient linguistic variables associated with JA, including the use of the definite article, the third-person singular feminine ending, the second-person singular feminine suffixes, and markers of the future tense, examining how these features are socially evaluated and variably maintained or

accommodated in Najdi-dominant contexts. In doing so, the study contributes additional empirical material to Arabic sociolinguistic research on regional dialect variation beyond the major urban centres most commonly represented in the literature.

Fourth, the thesis contributes to understanding the role of socialisation and mobility in dialect contact by distinguishing between participants raised in Najdi-dominant environments and those who migrated from Jizan later in life. The findings suggest a social gradient in which speakers socialised in Najd show greater orientation towards Najdi forms, while adult migrants more frequently retain heritage features. These findings contribute to existing sociolinguistic research on mobility, urbanisation, and life-course influences on linguistic behaviour.

The study also contributes to Family Language Policy (FLP) research by examining how family language ideologies may shape dialectal repertoires within a shared-language context. While FLP scholarship has largely focused on bilingual and multilingual family settings (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018; Ferguson, 2013; Pauwels, 2016; Said, 2021; Yousef, 2022), the present study highlights how similar processes may also operate in intra-language dialect contact situations. The findings indicate that parental orientations towards NA as socially prestigious and institutionally valued influence the linguistic socialisation of younger speakers raised in Najd, while JA is maintained in some contexts as a marker of intimacy and regional identity.

The thesis also offers insights into how Vision 2030 may intersect with language expectations and identity practices. The findings suggest that national discourses surrounding modernity, professionalism, and mobility form part of the ideological backdrop against which linguistic choices are evaluated. By situating Jizani–Najdi dialect contact within broader social transformation in Saudi Arabia, the study contributes to emerging sociolinguistic discussions of language, identity, and social change in the Gulf region.

Lastly, the study contributes to discussions of linguistic inequality and regional marginalisation by foregrounding the experiences of Jizani women living in Najdi-dominant environments. The findings show how linguistic hierarchies may be reproduced through institutional expectations, media representations, family socialisation, and everyday interaction, while also illustrating speakers' agency in negotiating these pressures. In this way, the thesis contributes to research on dialect stigma, regional identity, and linguistic inequality within a shared national and linguistic context.

The study also contributes methodologically by demonstrating the value of combining matched-guise evaluations, semi-structured interviews, and naturalistic conversational data in the investigation of dialect attitudes and linguistic behaviour. This mixed-methods approach allows for comparison between explicit attitudes, implicit evaluations, and observable linguistic practices across contexts. In addition, the variable-based analysis highlights how different

linguistic features may respond differently to social and interactional pressures, illustrating the importance of feature-specific analysis in Arabic sociolinguistic research.

Together, these contributions provide additional empirical and theoretical insight into dialect contact, language ideologies, and linguistic behaviour in Saudi Arabia, while also offering perspectives relevant to broader sociolinguistic discussions of regional variation, prestige, and social inequality.

9.4 Limitations

While this study provides a detailed account of dialect attitudes and linguistic practices among Jizani women living in Najdi-dominant environments, several contextual constraints should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings.

First, the naturalistic observations were conducted primarily in informal social gatherings. Such settings provided access to spontaneous, low-monitoring interaction and therefore enhanced ecological validity. However, linguistic practices may vary in more formal institutional contexts such as workplaces or educational settings. The present findings should therefore be understood as reflecting interactional behaviour within intimate and private domains. This limitation was mitigated through triangulation with interview data, which captured speakers' orientations across broader social contexts.

Second, the conversational topics observed often centred on everyday routines and shared social experiences. While this contributed to natural interaction, topic repetition may have constrained the range of linguistic forms produced. To address this, conversational data were complemented by interviews, which elicited narratives across diverse themes, and by the matched-guise test, which examined evaluative perceptions independently of conversational content.

Third, the study focuses exclusively on female participants. This decision reflects the gender-segregated structure of social interaction in Saudi society and enabled access to naturalistic women's speech networks that would otherwise be inaccessible. While male speakers may exhibit different linguistic practices and attitudes, the present research prioritises depth of insight within female social networks rather than gender comparison.

Fourth, the participant group represents socially integrated and educationally mobile Jizani women rather than the full socioeconomic spectrum of Jizani migrants. This focus is analytically significant, as speakers embedded in institutional and professional networks are likely to experience heightened exposure to prestige norms. The findings, therefore, illuminate linguistic

behaviour within socially mobile segments of the population rather than representing all Jizani migrants.

Finally, recruiting participants for recorded conversations posed challenges due to cultural sensitivities surrounding the recording of women's voices. Despite these constraints, the corpus yielded a substantial number of linguistic tokens, enabling robust quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Rather than limiting the study's value, these contextual constraints define its analytical scope. By combining naturalistic interaction, interviews, and attitudinal measures, the study provides a contextually grounded and triangulated account of dialect attitudes and repertoire use in intra-Saudi dialect contact.

9.5 Recommendations and Future Research Directions

The study's findings open several important directions for future research on dialect contact, language ideologies, and linguistic behaviour in Saudi Arabia and the wider Arabic-speaking world. While the thesis offers a detailed, attitudinal study of Jizani women and their linguistic practices in Najd, it also highlights the need for further work that extends the temporal, social, and methodological scope of this research agenda.

First, longitudinal research would be particularly valuable for tracing dialect shifts over time and across generations. The current study provides a cross-sectional snapshot of the linguistic behaviour of women at different stages of socialisation, revealing contrasts between the speakers raised in Najdi-dominant environments and those who migrated from Jizan as adults. Future studies could follow families or communities across generations to examine how Najdi and Jizani features are transmitted, maintained, or reconfigured over time, and how changing social conditions – such as education, urbanisation, and mobility – shape evolving repertoires. Such work would enable researchers to move beyond identifying patterns of variation to explicitly modelling linguistic change processes.

Second, future research should extend the analysis to male speakers and mixed-gender interactional settings. Owing to cultural and ethical considerations, this study focused on female-only interactions, providing an in-depth account of women's linguistic attitudes and practices in socially appropriate contexts. However, gender remains a crucial dimension in Saudi sociolinguistics, particularly given the differential access to public space, employment, and institutional authority. Investigating male communities and mixed-gender interactions would provide important comparative insights into whether similar ideological pressures and

repertoire strategies operate across genders, or whether different norms and expectations shape linguistic behaviours.

Third, digital spaces are a promising and underexplored site for examining contemporary dialect ideologies and linguistic practices. Platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram – particularly their comedy sketches, influencer content, and regional parodies – have become powerful arenas for circulating, stylising, and re-evaluating regional varieties. Digital ethnographic research could examine how Jizani, Najdi, and other regional dialects are represented, exaggerated, reclaimed, or contested online, and how these representations feed into offline attitudes and linguistic behaviours. Such work would be particularly valuable for understanding how the media shapes prestige, stigma, and linguistic awareness among younger generations.

Fourth, comparative research involving other regional varieties – such as Asiri, Najrani, and Hijazi Arabic – would help to situate the Jizani–Najdi contact situation in broader regional and national frameworks. While this study focused on one regional pairing, similar hierarchies and patterns of mobility exist across Saudi Arabia. Comparative studies could identify shared ideological structures and region-specific dynamics, contributing to a more comprehensive sociolinguistic map of dialect contact and evaluation in the kingdom.

Future research could also extend the interactional scope of this study by examining dialect use across a broader range of social settings. While the current analysis focuses on informal, single-gender gatherings to capture spontaneous, low-monitoring speech, future work could explore how Jizani and Najdi repertoires are mobilised in workplaces, institutional contexts, and mixed-gender interactions. These settings may introduce different forms of evaluative pressure, role-based expectations, and linguistic appropriateness norms, potentially shaping variant choice in distinct ways. Combining naturalistic recordings from such environments with participants' metalinguistic reflections would enable a more fine-grained comparison of how dialect behaviour is reconfigured across public, professional, and private social spaces. It would also further illuminate the relationship between language ideologies and situated linguistic practice.

Also, future work could build on the current findings through experimental perception studies to examine how social meaning is processed in real time. While the MGT captured implicit evaluations, experimental designs – such as eye-tracking – could explore how listeners associate specific phonological or morphosyntactic features with social traits under controlled conditions. Such approaches would complement naturalistic and attitudinal data by offering fine-grained insights into the cognitive salience of dialect features and the mechanisms that activate prestige and stigma.

Future research could further investigate the historical influences shaping JA, particularly its similarities with Southern Arabic and other Arabic varieties such as Yemeni, Egyptian, and Levantine Arabic, and their possible relationship to contemporary prestige dialects.

Future studies on Family Language Policy (FLP) could explore the role of children's agency, alongside parental influence, in shaping language choices within the family.

Further research could also examine the influence of media exposure, including whether regional media in Jizan promotes JA or whether nationally broadcast media predominantly reinforces NA across Saudi Arabia.

These directions highlight the potential for future research to deepen and extend this study's contributions. By combining longitudinal, comparative, digital, and experimental approaches, future work can continue to advance our understanding of how regional varieties are evaluated, negotiated, and transformed in contexts of social change, mobility, and evolving national identities.

9.6 Final Reflections

This thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of the interactions between the Jizani and Najdi dialects, emphasising that this relationship is not a direct path towards one dialect dominating the other. Instead, it reveals a complex and socially sensitive negotiation shaped by the interplay of identity formation, ideological perspectives, and socioeconomic inequalities.

Speakers of these dialects strategically navigate their linguistic resources, skilfully balancing the demands of linguistic correctness, social acceptance, and regional pride. This deliberate use of language reflects not only their personal identities but also broader social dynamics.

By considering various factors, such as social attitudes, dominant ideologies, and observable naturalistic behaviours, the study broadens our understanding of linguistic variation in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it contributes to broader discussions on the intersections of language, social inequality, and social change in contemporary multilingual settings. The findings encourage deeper reflection on how dialect interaction can mirror and shape societal structures and cultural identities in Saudi Arabia.

The findings of this thesis demonstrate that linguistic inequality does not require colonial, transnational, or externally imposed hierarchies to emerge and persist. Even within a shared national, cultural, and linguistic framework, powerful ideologies of prestige and legitimacy can develop, shaping how speakers evaluate one another and themselves. In this context, Najdi and Jizani varieties are not merely alternative ways of speaking but socially charged resources that

index belonging, mobility, intimacy, and exclusion. The persistence of Jizani features alongside dominant Najdi norms shows that speakers are not passive recipients of linguistic hierarchies; rather, they actively navigate, negotiate, and at times resist them through selective repertoire use. By foregrounding the interaction between attitudes, lived experience, and patterned linguistic behaviour, this study highlights how language functions as a key site where broader social inequalities are reproduced, contested, and made meaningful in everyday life. More broadly, it underscores the need to take intra-national linguistic diversity seriously as a locus of power, revealing how inequality can be sustained not only across borders, but within them.

Appendix A Detailed Linguistic Description of Jizani Arabic and Najdi Arabic

This appendix provides detailed phonological and morphological descriptions of Jizani Arabic (JA) and Najdi Arabic (NA) referred to in Chapter 2. The material is included to support the sociolinguistic analysis presented in the thesis while avoiding excessive descriptive detail in the main discussion. The descriptions are based on published sources and the researcher's observations of naturally occurring speech.

Appendix A.1 Jizani Arabic

A.1.1 Phonemic Inventory of Jizani Arabic

The linguistic description of Jizani Arabic (JA) presented in this appendix is based on published research (e.g. Hamdi, 2015; Ruthan, 2020), participant observation, recorded conversations, and interviews. Owing to the limited descriptive literature available on JA, the discussion combines published descriptions with observations from naturally occurring speech.

JA shares many phonological features with Classical Arabic (CA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), although several phonemes exhibit different realisations. For example, /q/ is commonly realised as /g/ in JA, while the emphatic voiced plosive /d^ɣ/ is frequently realised as /ð^ɣ/. Similar phonological patterns have also been reported in other Gulf Arabic varieties (Al-Raba'a, 2016). The consonantal inventory of JA is presented in Table A.1.

Table A.1 Inventory of Jizani Arabic consonants

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	B			t d t ^ç d ^ç			k ɡ			ʔ
Nasal	M			N						
Fricative		F	θ ð ð ^ç	s z s ^ç	ʃ			χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h
Affricative					dʒ					
Approximant	W			l		j				
Glide										
Trill				R						

The following sections describe selected phonological and morphological features associated with JA.

A.1.2 Phonological Features of Jizani Arabic

A.1.2.1 Deletion of the Glottal Stop /ʔ/

The glottal stop /ʔ/ in JA may be deleted in word-initial and word-final positions under specific phonological conditions (Hamdi, 2015). Word-initial deletion commonly occurs when /ʔ/ is followed by a vowel and two consonants. In other phonological environments, the glottal stop is generally retained.

Examples of glottal stop deletion in JA are presented in Table A.2.

Table A.2 Examples of glottal stop deletion in JA

MSA	JA	Gloss
[ʔaʃrab]	[ʃrab]	‘Drink’
[ʔaktub]	[ktub]	‘Write’
[ʔaxd ^ʕ ar]	[xd ^ʕ ar]	‘Green’
[suʔal]	[suʔal]	‘Question’
[dawaʔ]	[dawa]	‘Medicine’
[ma:ʔ]	[ma:]	‘Water’
[ʔami:r]	[ʔami:r]	‘Prince’
[ʔaða]	[ʔaða]	‘Harm’

A.1.2.2 /m/ Neutralisation

In JA, the bilabial nasal /m/ in suffixes such as (-kum), (-tum), and (-hum) may be realised as [n] (Hamdi, 2015). Unlike some other Arabic varieties in which this alternation is associated primarily with feminine forms, the alternation in JA occurs across both masculine and feminine contexts. Examples are shown in Table A.3.

Table A.3 Examples of /m/ neutralisation in JA

MSA	JA	Gloss
[kutubkum]	[kutubkun]	‘Your books’
[s ^ʕ warkum]	[s ^ʕ warkun]	‘Your photos’
[bjthum]	[bjthun]	‘Their house’
[mafati:ħum]	[mafati:ħun]	‘Their keys’
[leʕebtum]	[leʕebtun]	‘You play’
[dʒalastum]	[dʒalastun]	‘You sat’

A.1.2.3 The Definite Article /ʔm/

In JA, the definite article /ʔm/ is used in place of /ʔl/, which is commonly used in MSA and NA. This feature has been associated with southern Arabian dialects and linked to older Himyaritic forms (Hazeem, 2015).

Examples are presented in Table A.4.

Table A.4 Examples of the definite article /ʔm/ in JA

MSA and NA	JA	Gloss
[ʔlkibi:r]	[ʔmkibi:r]	‘older’
[ʔlfadʒer]	[ʔmfadʒer]	‘The dawn’
[ʔlbaqalah]	[ʔmbaqalah]	‘The market’
[ʔrru:h]	[ʔmru:h]	‘The soul’
[ʔθθjab]	[ʔmθjab]	‘The clothes’

A.1.2.4 Verbs Ending in /-n/

In JA, the second-person feminine singular past-tense suffix /-ti/ and the third-person feminine singular suffix /-at/ may be realised as /-in/ and /-an/, respectively. Similar forms have also been reported in some Yemeni dialects (Behnstedt, 2007). Examples are shown in Table A.5.

Table A.5 Examples of feminine past-tense verb endings in JA

NA	JA	Gloss
[fataħat]	[fataħan]	‘She opened’
[fataħti]	[fataħtin]	‘You have opened’
[jarabat]	[jaraban]	‘She drank’
[jarabti]	[jarabtin]	‘You have drunk’
[rasamat]	[rasaman]	‘She drew’
[rasamti]	[rasamtin]	‘You have drawn’
[galat]	[galan]	‘She said’
[gilti]	[giltin]	‘You have said’

A.1.2.5 Gemination in /-nn/

JA exhibits geminated /-nn/ forms in some second-person feminine singular verb constructions. This feature differs from the corresponding forms typically found in NA.

Examples are presented in Table A.6.

Table A.6 Examples of geminated /-nn/ forms in JA

NA	JA	Gloss
[gataʕati:ha]	[gataʕatinnha]	'You cut it'
[ramjti:h]	[ramjtinnuh]	'You threw it'
[saʒalati:hum]	[saʒaltinnuhm]	'You registered them'

A.1.2.6 /j/ as a Future Marker in JA

In JA, the particle /j/ is used as a future marker preceding present-tense verbs. This differs from NA, where futurity is commonly marked by the prefix /b-/. Examples are presented in Table A.7.

Table A.7 Examples of future tense marking in JA and NA

NA	JA	Gloss
[batkallam]	[ʃatkallam]	'I will talk'
[baru:h̄]	[ʃaru:h̄]	'I will go'
[Baktub]	[ʃaktub]	'I will write'
[batʕlaʕ]	[ʃatʕlaʕ]	'I will go'

Different Arabic dialects employ different future markers, including /h-/ in Egyptian Arabic and /ra:h/ in Levantine Arabic (Omar, 1976; Persson, 2008). JA therefore reflects broader variation in futurity marking across Arabic dialects.

A.1.2.7 Apocope Before a Pause

JA exhibits deletion of some final consonants before a pause, resulting in forms ending in short vowels such as /a/, /i/, and /u/. Examples are shown in Table A.8.

Table A.8 Examples of apocope in JA before a pause

MSA	JA	Gloss
[ʔakalti]	[ʔakalti]	‘Did you eat’
[tʕaliʕ]	[tʕali]	‘Is out’
[ʔalkabi:r]	[ʔamkabi:]	‘The big’
[ʃarbat]	[ʃirba]	‘She drank’
[ʔalbasʕal]	[ʔlbasʕa]	‘The onion’
[ʔalqalam]	[ʔalgala]	‘The pen’
[muʃtʕ]	[muʃu]	‘Comb’

A.1.2.8 Non-Emphatic /l/

In JA, /l/ is generally realised as non-emphatic, whereas NA often exhibits a velarised or emphatic /lʕ/ in comparable lexical items. Examples are provided in Table A.9.

Table A.9 Examples of non-emphatic /l/ in JA

MSA	NA	JA	Gloss
[qalb]	[galʕb]	[galb]	‘Heart’
[qalam]	[galʕam]	[galam]	‘Pen’

A.1.2.9 Vowels

JA has a vowel system consisting of three long vowels (/i:/, a:/, u:/) and three short vowels (/i, a, u/), corresponding broadly to the vowel system of MSA (Al Ameri, 2009).

JA also exhibits monophthongisation of the CA diphthongs /aj/ and /aw/, which are commonly realised as /e/ and /o/. For example, *zajt* (‘oil’) and *nawm* (‘sleep’) may surface as [zet] and [nom], respectively. Similar patterns have been reported in other Arabic dialects, including Cairene Arabic (Youssef, 2010).

A.1.2.9.1 The Use of /u/ and /u:/ in JA

In JA, first-person singular past-tense verbs commonly end in the vowel /u/. When object pronouns are attached, this vowel may lengthen to /u:/.

Examples are shown in Table A.10.

Table A.10 Examples of short /u/ in JA past-tense verbs

MSA	JA	Gloss
[rakibtu assajarah]	[rakabtu assajarah]	'I got in the car'
[ʔχaðtu alqalam]	[ʔχaðtu alqalam]	'I took the pen'

Vowel lengthening before object pronouns (/u:/)

Examples are presented in Table A.11.

Table A.11 Examples of vowel lengthening /u:/ in MSA and JA

MSA	JA	Gloss
[rakibtuha]	[rakabtu:ha]	'I got in the car' (fem.)
[ʔχaðtuha]	[ʔχaðtu:ha]	'I took the pen' (fem.)
[samaʕtuh]	[samaʕtu:h]	'I heard him' (masc.)

NA differs from JA in these contexts, as Najdi forms commonly omit final vowels, producing consonant-final structures instead.

Examples are shown in Table A.12.

Table A.12 Examples of vowel realisation in NA and JA

NA	JA	Gloss
[rakabt assajarah]	[rakabtu: assajarah]	'I got in the car' (fem.)
[rakabtha]	[rakabtu:ha]	'I got in it' (fem.)
[samaʕtah]	[samaʕtu:h]	'I heard him' (masc.)

A.1.3 Morphology

A.1.3.1 Independent Personal Pronouns

Table A.13 presents examples of independent personal pronouns in JA, MSA, and NA.

Table A.13 Independent personal pronouns in JA, MSA, and NA

Person	MSA	JA	NA
1st Dual & Plural	ʔana	ħinna	ʔħinna
2nd Dual & Plural	ʔanta (SGM): singular masculine;/ʔanti (SGF): singular feminine	ʔantun	ʔantu:
3rd Dual & Plural	hwa (SGM)/heja (SGF)	hu: (SGM)/hi: (SGF)	ʔuhu: (SGM)/ ʔehi: (SGF)

JA simplifies several distinctions found in MSA, particularly in dual and plural forms.

Table A.14 Simplification of dual and plural pronouns in MSA, JA, and NA

Person	MSA	JA	NA
1st Dual & Plural	naħnu	ħinna	ħinna
2nd Dual & Plural	ʔantumā (DU) / ʔantum (PLM) / ʔantunna (PLF)	ʔintun	ʔantū
3rd Dual & Plural	humā (DU) (masc.) / hum (PLM) / hunna (PLF)	Hun	hum

Both JA and NA reduce gender distinctions in plural pronouns compared with MSA

A.1.3.2 Possessive and Object Suffixes

Table A.15 presents possessive and object suffixes in JA.

Table A.15 Possessive and object suffixes in JA

Person	Singular (SGM/SGF)	Dual (DU)	Plural (PLM/PLF)
1st	-i: (ي)	-na: (نا)	-na: (نا)
2nd	-k (ك)	-kun (كن)	-kun (كن)
3rd	-h (ه) / -ha (ها)	-hun (هن)	-hun (هن)

JA does not maintain gender distinctions in dual and plural possessive/object suffixes. Similar forms have also been reported in Levantine Arabic (Omar, 1976).

Table A.16 Gender distinctions in possessive pronouns in MSA, JA, and NA

JA (Masc.)	JA (Fem.)	MSA	NA	Gloss
kitabuh (كتابه)	kitabaha (كتابها)	kitābuh (masc.)/ kitābuha (fem.)	kitabah (masc.)/ kitabha (fem.)	'His book/Her book'
kitabi (كتابي)				'My book'
kitabak (كتابك) (SGM)	kitabik (SGF)	kitābuka (SGM)/ kitābuki (SGF)	kitabak (SGM)/ kitabik (SGF)	'Your book'
kitabana (كتابنا)		kitābunā	Kitabna	'Our book'
kitabakun (masc./fem.) (كتابكن)		kitābukum (masc.) kitābukunna (fem.)	kitabkum (masc./fem.)	'Your book'
Kitabhun (masc./fem.) (كتابهم)		kitābuhum (masc.) kitābuhunna (fem.)	kitabahum (masc./fem.)	'Their book'

A.1.3.3 Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns in JA vary according to gender, number, and deixis.

Table A.17 Demonstrative pronouns in JA, MSA, and NA

Deixis	JA (SGM)	JA (SGF)	JA (PLM/PLF)	MSA	NA
Near ('this')	haða / ða	haði / ði:	ðella	hāðā (SGM) hāðihi (SGF) hāʔulāʔi (PL)	ðā (SGM) ði (SGF) haðu:l (PLM/PLF)
Far ('that')	ða:k	ði:k	ðilla:k	ðālika (SGM) tilka (SGF) ʔulāʔika (PLM/PLF)	haðāk (SGM) haði:k (SGF) haðu:li:k (PLM/PLF)

Table A.18 Demonstrative pronouns in Levantine and Egyptian Arabic

Levantine Arabic	Egyptian Arabic	Gloss
ha:da/ hajda	da (masc)	'This'
ha:di/ hajdi	di (fem)	'This'
hadool/ hawdi, hajdool	dool	'These' (PLM/PLF)
hada:k/ hajda:k	da (masc)	'That'

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hadi:k / hajdi:k	di (fem)	‘That’
hadula:k/ hajduli:k	dool	‘Those’

JA uses the relative pronoun *jelli* universally across gender and number categories, unlike MSA, which maintains distinct forms.

Table A.19 Relative pronouns in MSA, JA, and other Arabic dialects

Dialect	Singular (Masc.)	Singular (Fem.)	Plural (Masc. and Fem.)
MSA	ʔllaḏī (الَّذِي)	ʔllatī (الَّتِي)	ʔllaḏīna (الَّذِينَ) (PLM)/ ʔlla:tī (اللَّاتِي) (PLF)
JA	<i>jelli</i> (بِالْي)		
NA, Levantine Arabic, and Egyptian Arabic	<i>illi</i> (الَّذِي)		

A.1.3.4 Interrogative Words

WH-question forms in JA differ from those found in MSA, NA, Levantine Arabic, and Egyptian Arabic.

Table A.20 Interrogatives in JA and other Arabic varieties

MSA	JA	NA	Levantine	Egyptian	Gloss	JA Example	Gloss
maḏa ma	mahu ma	wiʃ wiʃu	ʃu:	e:h	‘What?’	mahu: tugu:li:n?/ ma smak?	‘What do you say?’/ ‘What is your name?’
lemaḏa	Lamah	wiʃulah warah	li:ʃ/laʃu	li:h	‘Why?’	lamah ittaˁsalta?	‘Why did you call?’
kam	ka:m	kam	kam	ka:m	‘How many?’	ka:m kitab?	‘How many books?’
bikam	baka:m	bikam	ʔdde:ʃ Bikam	ʔdde:h bikam	‘How much?’	baka:m ḏa?	‘How much is this?’
man	min/ mi:n minhu	man manhu	mi:n	mi:n	‘Who?’	min ʔʒa?	‘Who came?’

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ʔajna	fija:n	we:n	we:n	fe:n	‘Where?’	fi-ja:ni:k?	‘Where are you?’
min ʔajna	mijan	min we:n	min we:n	min fe:n	‘From where?’	mijan jarajtuh?	‘From where did you buy it?’

These examples illustrate both the distinctiveness of JA and its overlap with other Arabic dialects in certain interrogative forms.

A.2 Phonology of Najdi Arabic

This section summarises selected phonological features of NA based primarily on Ingham (1994) and Alajmi (2019).

One notable feature of NA is the affrication of /g/ and /k/ in front-vowel environments, producing forms such as /dz/ and /ts/. Examples include dzidir (‘pot’) and t^ʕiri:dz (‘road’). The affrication of /k/ to /ts/ is associated with the kaskasah phenomenon described in earlier Arabic dialectological research (Johnstone, 1967).

Examples of phonological correspondences between MSA, NA, and JA are shown in Table A.21.

Table A.21 Examples of phonological correspondences in MSA, NA, and JA

MSA	NA	JA	Gloss
[Jahfir]	[jJhafir]	[jehfir]	‘Dig’
[qahwa]	[ghawa]	[gahwa]	‘Coffee’
[qidr]	[dzidir]	[gidir]	‘Pot’
[t ^ʕ ari:q]	[t ^ʕ iri:dz]	[t ^ʕ iri:g]	‘Road’
[kalb]	[tsalb]	[kalb]	‘Dog’
[ke:f]	[tsef]	[kef]	‘How’
[qari:b]	[dzri:b]	[gri:b]	‘Near’
[dʒari:d]	[dzari:da]	[dʒari:da]	‘Newspaper’

A.2.1 Consonants of NA

Table A.22 presents the consonant inventory of NA adapted from Ingham (1994).

Table A.22 Consonant inventory of NA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	B			t d tʳ			k g	(q)		ʔ
Nasal	M			N						
Fricative emphatic		F	θ ð ðʳ	s z sʳ	ʃ			χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h
Affricates					dʒ					
Glide	W					J				
Lateral				L						
Trill				R						

Note: adapted from Ingham (1994).

A.2.2 Bedouin and Sedentary Dialects of Najd

NA includes both Bedouin and Sedentary dialect varieties. Bedouin varieties are generally described as more conservative, whereas Sedentary varieties show greater influence from urban contact and dialect mixing (Versteegh, 2001; Alajmi, 2019).

A.2.2.1 The 3SM Objective/Possessive Suffix (-ih / -ah)

One difference between Bedouin and Sedentary Najdi dialects involves the third-person singular masculine possessive/object suffix. Bedouin varieties commonly realise the suffix as -ih, whereas Sedentary varieties use -ah (Alajmi, 2019).

Examples include:

Bedouin: miftaḥih ('his key')

Sedentary: miftaḥah ('his key')

A.2.2.2 Imperfect Verb Prefixes

Variation also occurs in imperfect verb prefixes. Bedouin dialects tend to use /a/ in imperfect prefixes, whereas Sedentary dialects favour /i/ (Ingham, 1994; Alajmi, 2019).

Examples include:

Table A.23 Imperfect verb prefixes in Bedouin and Sedentary Najdi dialects

Bedouin	Sedentary	Gloss
ya-ktib	yi-ktib	'He writes'
ta-ktib	ti-ktib	'She writes'
na-ktib	ni-ktib	'We write'

A.2.2.3 Lowering of /e:/ and /o:/'

In NA, the CA diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/ are commonly monophthongised to /e:/ and /o:/. Some Bedouin varieties further lower these vowels when followed by short /a/ (Alajmi, 2019).

Examples include:

Table A.24 Lowering of /e:/ and /o:/' in Bedouin Najdi dialects

Expected Form	Lowered Bedouin Form	Gloss
be:ð ^ʕ a	bɛ:ð ^ʕ a	'White'
ze:nah	zɛ:nah	'Beautiful'
so:da	sa:da	'Black'
no:s ^ʕ al	na:s ^ʕ al	'We arrive'

Alajmi (2019) also notes that some of these Bedouin pronunciations may carry social stigma among Sedentary speakers.

A.3 Shared Features Between JA and NA

JA and NA share several phonological features that distinguish them from MSA and other Arabic dialect varieties.

One shared feature is the merger of the pharyngealised voiced plosive /d^ʕ/ and the pharyngealised voiced fricative /ð^ʕ/, both of which are commonly realised as /ð^ʕ/. For example, forms such as d^ʕa'ru:ri ('necessary') and ð^ʕala:m ('darkness') are realised with /ð^ʕ/ in both JA and NA.

Another shared feature involves variation between /u/ and /i/ in lexical items such as kull/kill ('all') and xuḏ/xiḏ ('take') (Ingham, 1994). JA generally retains the /u/ forms, as in kull and xuḏ.

Both JA and NA also exhibit loss of the medial glottal stop in some lexical items, with compensatory vowel lengthening. For example, faʔs ('axe') and biʔr ('well') may surface as fa:s and bi:r.

Additionally, both varieties commonly realise qāf /q/ as the velar plosive /g/. This feature is widespread across Gulf Arabic dialects and appears in forms such as galam ('pen'), jabga ('stay'), and gasʕi:r ('short').

A.4 Mutual Intelligibility and Dialect Contact Between JA and NA

Despite phonological and lexical differences, JA and NA remain largely mutually intelligible owing to their shared morphosyntactic structure and substantial lexical overlap. However, some phonetic and lexical features are socially salient and may occasionally affect comprehension.

Table A.25 Examples of phonological differences between JA and NA

JA	NA	Gloss
[ʃatʕbuχ]	[batʕbuχ]	'I will cook'
[gidir]	[dzidir]	'Pot'

Lexical variation is also evident between the two varieties.

Table A.26 Lexical items associated with JA and their NA equivalents

Table 9-1 Examples of lexical items unique to JA and their counterparts in NA and other Saudi dialects

JA	NA and other Saudi dialects	Gloss
[ḏʕami]	[ʕatʕjan]	'Thirsty'
[Hitar]	[Malabes]	'Clothes'
[biʃbiʃan]	[ʕankabu:t]	'Spider'

Table A.27 Lexical items associated with NA and their JA equivalents

NA	JA and other Saudi dialects	Gloss
[mezdi fi:k]	/tistahl/	'You deserve what happened'

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[mɛ:r]	Bas	'But'
[ju'wa:.jiq]	[jenað ^ɕ er]	'To look intently at something'

Morphosyntactic differences are also present.

Table A.28 Examples of morphosyntactic variation between JA and NA

Morphosyntactic variation	JA	NA	Gloss
Negation structure	[maʃa jiruḥ]	[ma jibi jiruḥ]	'Does not want to go'
Past tense verb forms	[naman]	[namat]	'She sleeps'

Although some linguistic differences may create occasional comprehension difficulties, exposure through migration, education, media, and everyday interaction generally facilitates communication between speakers of the two varieties.

Appendix B Attitudinal questionnaire-Matched-guise test (English version)

Attitudinal Questionnaire

PROJECT TITLE: A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia

INVESTIGATOR: Samah Alsufyani

ERGO number: 20277 University of Southampton

Instructions

On the next page, there is some information about my project and the consent form.

If you agree to participate in my project, please choose "Yes", and you'll be directed to the survey. If you wish not to proceed with participating in this project, please choose "No", and you'll be directed to the final page.

If you agree to participate in this project, please click on the link above each survey to listen to the recordings.

After you listen to the recording, fill out the rest of the questionnaire according to what you heard.

Remember, if you wish not to continue the survey, you may exit the page at any time.

Consent Form – Attitudinal Survey

- I have read and understood the information sheet (March 2022 version no.1) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.
- I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw (at any time) for any reason without my participation rights being affected.
- I understand if I decide to voluntarily participate in the online questionnaire, the researcher may contact me for interview purposes.
- I understand that I may be quoted directly in reports of the research but that I will not be directly identified (e.g. that my name will not be used).

INFORMED CONSENT: By clicking on the button below, you voluntarily agree to participate in this online survey.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Appendix B

PURPOSE: You will be asked to participate in a study of the Jizani variety spoken in Riyadh. From this study, the investigator hopes to learn more about people's attitudes toward the speech features of the Jizani people. Your participation in this study will take about 15-20 minutes.

PROCEDURES: If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will do the following things:

You'll be asked to write personal information such as your age, birthplace, city of origin, current city of residence, and length of residence in Jizan and Riyadh.

You'll receive a URL consisting of audio recordings and an online survey to be answered accordingly.

BENEFITS: You will not get for your participation in this study.

POTENTIAL RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The data for this project will be kept confidential. Only the investigator will have access to your data. Information about you will be kept confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous.

FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW: Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to ask questions, not answer specific questions and withdraw participation at any time without penalty.

COMPENSATION: You will not be compensated for participation in this study.

CONTACT: If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact:

Samah Alsufyani

asmm1n19@soton.ac.uk

+447455730234

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the University of Southampton Research Integrity via e-mail: rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk

Biographical Questionnaire

Please make sure you do not provide any identification information such as your name, address, occupation, and birth date

You are allowed to participate in this questionnaire if you are aged between 18 and 45

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Gender

Age

Birthplace

City of Origin (your family origin)

Length of residence in Jizan

Length of residence in Riyadh

Current residency

Attitude survey**Speaker 1**

Please click on the link below and listen to the recording. After you listen to the recording, please answer the questions accordingly.

1. The speaker sounds timid

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

2. The speaker sounds casual

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

3. The speaker sounds educated

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

4. The speaker sounds pleasant

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

5. The speaker sounds intelligent

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

Adjective checklist

1. Choose adjectives that best describe the speaker

<input type="checkbox"/>	Lazy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respectful
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kind
<input type="checkbox"/>	Humble
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrogant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confident
<input type="checkbox"/>	Generous
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neat

2. The speaker sounded he came from:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Working class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Upper class

Please answer the following questions:

1. What general impressions do you have about the speaker?

2. In case you got into contact with the speaker in the recording, would you be friendly with her? Why?

You have completed All survey

Thanks a lot for your participation in my study

Appendix C Attitudinal Questionnaire: Matched-Guise Test

بحث في تواصل وتكيف بنات المنطقة الجنوبية مع بنات المنطقة الوسطى و دور ذلك في تشكيل الهوية

الباحثة: سماح السفياياني

جامعة ساوثهامبتون – 20277 (ERGO)

التعليمات

في الصفحة التالية، ستجدين معلومات عن البحث. ونموذج الموافقة إذا وافقت. على المشاركة في هذا المشروع، يُرجى اختيار «نعم»، وسيتم توجيهك إلى الاستبيان إذا رغبت. في عدم المشاركة، يُرجى اختيار «لا»، وسيتم توجيهك إلى الصفحة النهائية

في حال موافقتك على المشاركة، يُرجى الضغط على الرابط الموجود أعلى كل صفحة للاستماع إلى التسجيلات الصوتية.

بعد الاستماع إلى التسجيل، يُرجى تعبئة بقية الاستبيان بناءً على ما سمعته.

– نموذج الموافقة

- لقد قرأتُ وفهمتُ ورقة المعلومات الخاصة بالدراسة نسخة مارس 2022 -
- أوافق على المشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي واستخدام بياناتي لأغراض البحث -
- أفهم أن مشاركتي طوعية ويمكنني الانسحاب في أي وقت دون أي تبعات -
- أفهم أنه قد يتم التواصل معي لاحقًا لإجراء مقابلة -
- أفهم أن أي اقتباس من إجاباتي سيكون دون ذكر اسمي أو هويتي -

الموافقة

بالضغط على الزر أدناه، فإنك توافقين على المشاركة في هذا الاستبيان

نعم

لا

هدف الدراسة

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم اتجاهات الأفراد نحو بعضهم البعض. في مدينة الرياض تستغرق المشاركة في هذه الدراسة حوالي 15-20 دقيقة

إجراءات الدراسة

.تعبئة بعض المعلومات الديموغرافية -
الاستماع إلى تسجيلات صوتية ثم الإجابة على استبيان إلكتروني -

الفوائد

.لا توجد فوائد مباشرة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة

المخاطر المحتملة

.لا توجد مخاطر متوقعة من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة

السرية

.ستُحفظ جميع البيانات بسرية تامة، ولن يطلع عليها سوى الباحثة
قد تُنشر نتائج الدراسة دون الكشف عن هوية المشاركين

حرية الانسحاب

.المشاركة طوعية بالكامل، ويحق لك الانسحاب في أي وقت دون أي عقوبة

التعويض

.لا يوجد تعويض مقابل المشاركة في هذه الدراسة

معلومات التواصل

سماح السفياياني

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الهاتف: +447455730234

:للاستفسارات المتعلقة بحقوق المشاركين، يمكن التواصل مع جامعة ساوثهامبتون

rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk

الجزء الأول

أسمك الثلاثي

.....

الجنس

.....

العمر

.....

مكان الميلاد

.....

المدينة (الأصل : أي مدينة في جيزان؟ جيزان, صبيا بيش, العارضة, صامطة.....الخ

أي مدينة في الرياض؟ الرياض, المجمع, الخرج, الدلم, ...الخ)

.....

عدد السنوات التي قضيتها في جيزان (في حال لا توجد إجابة الرجاء وضع الرقم صفر)

.....

عدد السنوات التي قضيتها في منطقة الرياض (في حال لا توجد إجابة الرجاء وضع الرقم صفر)

.....

مكان الإقامة الحالي

.....

المتحدثة الأولى

الرجاء الضغط على المقطع الصوتي أدناه والاستماع إلى المتحدثة . بعد الاستماع ، يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة وفقاً
لما تم سماعه

1. تبدو المتحدثة خجولة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

2. تبدو المتحدثة عفوية

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

3. تبدو المتحدثة متعلمة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

4. تبدو المتحدثة لطيفة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

5. تبدو المتحدثة ذكية

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

الجزء الثالث

1. اختاري من الصفات أدناه مايتناسب مع المتحدثة

كسولة

محترمة

طيبة

متواضعة

مغرورة

واثقة

كريمة

أنيقة

2. يبدو من صوت المتحدثة أنها من

الطبقة العاملة

الطبقة المتوسطة

الطبقة العليا

الجزء الرابع

1. ماهو انطباعك العام حول المتحدثة؟

2. في حال أنيحت لك الفرصة بالتواصل مع المتحدثة, هل ستكونين ودودة معها؟

المتحدثة الثانية

الرجاء الضغط على المقطع الصوتي أدناه والاستماع إلى المتحدثة . بعد الاستماع ، يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة وفقاً لما تم سماعه

6. تبدو المتحدثة خجولة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

7. تبدو المتحدثة عفوية

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

8. تبدو المتحدثة متعلمة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

9. تبدو المتحدثة لطيفة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

10. تبدو المتحدثة ذكية

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

الجزء الثالث

3. اختاري من الصفات أدناه مايتناسب مع المتحدثة

كسولة

محترمة

طيبة

متواضعة

مغرورة

واثقة

كريمة

أنيقة

4. يبدو من صوت المتحدثة أنها من

الطبقة العاملة

الطبقة المتوسطة

الطبقة العليا

الجزء الرابع

3. ماهو انطباعك العام حول المتحدثة؟

4. في حال أنيحت لك الفرصة بالتواصل مع المتحدثة, هل ستكونين ودودة معها؟

المتحدثة الثالثة

الرجاء الضغط على المقطع الصوتي أدناه والاستماع إلى المتحدثة . بعد الاستماع ، يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة وفقاً لما تم سماعه

11. تبدو المتحدثة خجولة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

12. تبدو المتحدثة عفوية

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

13. تبدو المتحدثة متعلمة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

14. تبدو المتحدثة لطيفة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

15. تبدو المتحدثة ذكية

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

الجزء الثالث

5. اختاري من الصفات أدناه مايتناسب مع المتحدثة

كسولة

محترمة

طيبة

متواضعة

مغرورة

واثقة

كريمة

أنيقة

6. يبدو من صوت المتحدثة أنها من

الطبقة العاملة

الطبقة المتوسطة

الطبقة العليا

الجزء الرابع

5. ماهو انطباعك العام حول المتحدثة؟

6. في حال أنيحت لك الفرصة بالتواصل مع المتحدثة, هل ستكونين ودودة معها؟

المتحدثة الرابعة

الرجاء الضغط على المقطع الصوتي أدناه والاستماع إلى المتحدثة . بعد الاستماع ، يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة وفقاً لما تم سماعه

16. تبدو المتحدثة خجولة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

17. تبدو المتحدثة عفوية

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

18. تبدو المتحدثة متعلمة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

19. تبدو المتحدثة لطيفة

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

20. تبدو المتحدثة ذكية

أوافق بشدة (5)	أوافق (4)	محايد (3)	لا أوافق (2)	لا أوافق بشدة (1)

الجزء الثالث

7. اختاري من الصفات أدناه مايتناسب مع المتحدثة

كسولة

محترمة

طيبة

متواضعة

مغرورة

واثقة

كريمة

أنيقة

8. يبدو من صوت المتحدثة أنها من

الطبقة العاملة

الطبقة المتوسطة

الطبقة العليا

الجزء الرابع

7. ماهو انطباعك العام حول المتحدثة؟

8. في حال أنيحت لك الفرصة بالتواصل مع المتحدثة, هل ستكونين ودودة معها؟

نهاية الاستبيان

شكرا لمشاركتك,,

Appendix D Script for audio stimuli

IPA phonetic transcription

hal tarayna kayfa al-zaww?

ʔinnahu ḥārr ziddan.

ʔiðā qarrara aʔ-ʔaxṣ ʔan jaṭlaʔ, sawfa jaḥtariq minaʔ-ʔams,

wa ʔiðā zalas-ti fī al-bayt fa-hunāka malal.

minaʔ-ḍarūrī ʔan jusāfira aʔ-ʔaxṣ wa jastamtiʔa bil-zaww al-laṭīf.

ʔabhā madīnatun mumṭiratun dāʔiman. wa ʔiðā ðahabtī ʔilayhā wa raʔaytī al-maṭar

fa-lan tuṣaddiqīna ʔannaki fī as-saʔūdiyyah

Arabic Script (Original Text)

The Arabic script represents the orthographic form of the audio stimuli used in the matched-guise task.

هل ترين كيف الجو؟

إنه حار جدًا.

إذا قرر الشخص أن يطلع، سيحترق من الشمس، وإذا جلست في البيت فهناك ملل.

من الضروري أن يسافر الشخص ويستمتع بالجو اللطيف.

أبها مدينة ممطرة دائمًا، وإذا ذهبت إليها ورأيت المطر، فلن تصدقي أنك في السعودية.

Script Translation

Do you see what the weather is like? It is very hot. If a person decides to go outside, she will burn in the sun, and if she stays at home, it becomes boring. It is necessary for a person to travel and enjoy pleasant weather. Abha is always rainy—if you go there and see it, you would not believe you are in Saudi Arabia.

Appendix E Questionnaire-open-ended questions

Perception towards Jizani Speakers					
Linguistic features	Affective positive	Effective negative	Cultural associations	Cultured	Uncultured
<p>Good speaker</p> <p>She speaks so fast</p> <p>Difficult to understand</p> <p>Jizani</p> <p>Not Jizani</p> <p>Spontaneous</p> <p>Jizani</p> <p>She talks so fast</p>	she is funny	Out-going	Jasmine	Fluent	Not fluent
	quiet	Trivial,	She reminds	fluent	Un-educated
	timid	superficial	me of the		Lack
	humble	Nervous	Saudi series	fluent	confidence
	confident	I dislike her	'Shabab		Un-educated
	lovely	Outgoing	albomb' and		Lack
	beautiful	I feel she is	'Kufta'		confidence
	good	from the	character		I tried to
	pleasant	working			understand
	normal	class who			what she is
	spontaneous	hardly can			saying
	simple	manage their			I could not
	timid	life			recognise her
	nice	Nervous			accent and
	على النية	I feel she is			speech
	I like her sound	from the			She speaks
Talking to her will	working			too fast	
be comforting	class who				
timid	hardly can				
	manage their				
	life				
	Impulsive				

Appendix E

<p>I tried to understand what she is saying</p> <p>I could not recognise her accent and speech</p> <p>She speaks too fast</p>	<p>pleasant</p> <p>Good</p> <p>Normal</p> <p>Good impression</p> <p>Lovely</p> <p>Nice</p> <p>simple</p> <p>Very beautiful</p> <p>Kind</p> <p>Kind heart</p> <p>Great</p> <p>Good</p> <p>natural person</p> <p>very beautiful</p> <p>amazing</p> <p>excellent</p> <p>Funny</p> <p>Elegant</p> <p>Good</p> <p>Beautiful</p> <p>excellent</p> <p>Spontaneous</p> <p>confident</p> <p>and pleasant</p>				
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Appendix E

	<p>her sound is comforting</p> <p>Respectful</p> <p>Kind</p> <p>Nice</p> <p>Smart</p> <p>a good speaker</p> <p>elegant</p> <p>cool</p> <p>Simple</p> <p>Respectful</p> <p>normal</p> <p>spontaneous person</p> <p>kind</p> <p>Her sound is comforting</p> <p>pleasant</p> <p>nice</p> <p>confident</p> <p>social</p> <p>humble</p> <p>Funny</p> <p>Cool</p>				
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Appendix E

	Good				
	timid				
	beautiful				
	impression, lovely				
	spontaneous				
	person nice				
	excellent				
	pleasant				
	normal				
	humble				
	kind				
	respectful				
	her sound is				
	comforting				
	strong				
	wonderful				
	confident				

Appendix F Interview protocol (Jizani' participants' version)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me. I appreciate your time. This interview will take about 30 minutes, but you may stop it at any time. The purpose of this conversation is to talk about your experiences as a Jizani speaker who has the chance to be in contact with Najdi speakers. This interview is part of a study titled 'A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia'. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your experiences with them and the questionnaire you filled out last week. Is that okay? I'd like to remind you that this conversation will be audio-recorded. This will help me to give you my full attention now and return to our conversation later. The interview is confidential, and only the research team and I will have access to this recording, which we will transcribe. If you want me to stop anytime, just let me know. Is this okay with you?

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Please state your name and your city.

Part one

Jizani speakers will be asked to complete the questionnaire a week before the interview. After the matched guise, Jizani speakers will participate in follow-up interviews regarding their survey responses. These interviews will help elicit participants' attitudes more directly, complementing the "indirect" nature of the matched guise technique while still guiding participants towards specific topics through natural conversation.

1. How did you feel about the recordings you listened to while filling out the questionnaire?
2. How many speakers did you believe you were evaluating while listening to the recordings?
3. Is there anything else you would like to add for the recordings or the ratings?

I will ask my Jizani participants questions related to ratings of the recordings they heard while filling the questionnaire (i.e., "I see that when rating the speakers, you rated speaker one as being less educated. Is there a reason for that, or?").

Part two

The interviewee's linguistic experiences as a child

1. What language variety did your parents speak?
2. What language variety did you use at home as a kid?
3. What language variety did you speak in school?
4. When did you first come to Riyadh?
5. What was the reason for coming to live here?
6. Are you considering returning to Jizan, or are you settled here?
7. From which area of Jizan did you come?

The interviewee's current linguistic practices

1. What language variety do you use at home now? (with family) and with your relatives?
2. What about your neighbours, your friends? What language variety do you use with them?
And your co-worker?
3. If you are married, where is your husband come from? Which variety does he speak at home?
4. If you have children, what language variety do they speak?
5. How often do you visit Jizan? And how long do you stay there?
6. Do you have frequent visits from Jizan?
7. Do you talk on the phone with your family and other relatives/ friends in Jizan?
8. Which variety do you use with them

The interviewee's perspectives and beliefs regarding the language variety they encounter.

1. What do you think about Jizani Arabic being used in Riyadh?
2. How well can you speak Najdi Arabic?
3. How often do you use NA?
4. In your opinion, which language variety is essential for making friends while being in Riyadh? Why?
5. in your opinion, which language variety is essential for the feeling of being accepted while in Riyadh? Why?
6. Which language variety will you use in talking with relatives and neighbours living in Riyadh? Why?
7. Does Jizani Arabic have anything to do with your identity?
8. How would you describe yourself in terms of your cultural or ethnic background?
9. How do you describe Jizani Arabic?
10. How do you describe Najdi Arabic?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix G Interview questions (Jizani participants- Arabic version)

المقابلة مع بنات منطقة جيزان

شكرا لموافقتك على التحدث معي. وأنا أقدر وقتك. ستستغرق هذه المقابلة حوالي 30 دقيقة ، لكن يمكنك إيقاف المقابلة في أي وقت. الغرض من هذه المحادثة هو التحدث عن تجاربك كمتحدثة جيزانية لديها فرصة للتواصل مع المتحدثات النجديات. هذه المقابلة جزء من دراسة بموضوع (دراسة في علم اللغة الاجتماعي للهجة الجيزانية في منطقة نجد: الاتجاهات والممارسات اللغوية في المملكة العربية السعودية). أود أن أطرح عليك بعض الأسئلة حول تجاربك معهم والاستبيان الذي ملأته الأسبوع الماضي. هل هذا مقبول؟ أود أن أذكرك أنه سيتم تسجيل هذه المحادثة صوتياً. سيساعدني هذا في منحك اهتمامي الكامل الآن والعودة إلى حديثنا لاحقاً. المقابلة سرية ، وسيمكنني أنا وفريق البحث فقط الوصول إلى هذا التسجيل ، والذي سنقوم بنسخه. إذا كنت تريدني أن أتوقف في أي وقت ، فقط أخبريني. هل هذا مناسب لك؟

هل لديك أي أسئلة قبل أن نبدأ؟

يرجى ذكر اسمك ومدينتك.

الجزء الأول

سيطلب من المشاركات الجيزانيات إكمال الاستبيان قبل أسبوع من المقابلة. ستعقد مقابلات مع المشاركات إجاباتهم في الاستبيان. ستساعد هذه المقابلات في استنباط مواقف المشاركين بشكل أكثر مباشرة ، واستكمال الطبيعة "غير المباشرة" لتقنية المظهر المتطابق ، مع الاستمرار في محاولة قيادة المشاركات نحو مواضيع محددة من خلال المحادثة.

1. ما هو شعورك حيال التسجيلات التي استمعت إليها أثناء ملء الاستبيان؟

2. كم عدد المتحدثين الذين تعتقد أنك كنت تقيمهم أثناء الاستماع إلى التسجيلات؟

3. هل هناك أي شيء آخر ترغب في إضافته للتسجيلات أو التصنيفات؟

سأطرح أسئلة على المشاركين في Jizani والمتعلقة بتقييمات التسجيلات التي سمعوا أثناء ملء الاستبيان ، (على سبيل المثال ، "أرى أنه عند تصنيف المتحدثين ، قمت بتصنيف المتحدث 1 على أنه أقل تعليماً. هل هناك سبب لذلك ، أو؟").

الجزء الثاني

الخبرات اللغوية للشخص الذي تمت مقابله في الطفولة

1. ما هي اللهجة التي يتحدث بها والداك؟

2. ما هي اللهجة التي استخدمتها في المنزل عندما كنت طفلة؟

3. ما هي اللهجة التي تحدثت بها في المدرسة؟

4. متى أتيت لأول مرة إلى الرياض؟

5. ما هو سبب المجيء للعيش هنا؟

Appendix G

6. هل تفكرين في العودة إلى جازان أم أنك مستقرة هنا؟

7. من أي منطقة في جيزان أتيت؟

الممارسات اللغوية الحالية للمقابلة

1. ما هي اللهجة التي تتكلمينها في المنزل الآن؟ (مع العائلة) ومع أقاربك؟

2. ماذا عن جيرانك وأصدقائك؟ ما هي اللهجة التي تستخدمها معهم؟ وزميلاتك في العمل؟

3. إذا كنت متزوجة فمن أين مدينة زوجك؟ ما هي اللهجة التي يتحدث بها في المنزل؟

4. إذا كان لديك أطفال ، ما هو اللهجة التي يتحدثون به؟

5. كم مرة تزورين جيزان؟ وكم من الوقت تبقىين هناك؟

6. هل تقومين بزيارات متكررة لجيزان؟

7. هل تتحدثين عبر الهاتف مع عائلتك وأقاربك / أصدقائك الآخرين في جيزان؟

8. ما هي اللهجة التي تستخدمها معهم؟

وجهات نظر ومعتقدات الشخص الذي تمت مقابلاته بخصوص التنوع اللغوي الذي استمع إليه

1. ما رأيك في استخدام اللهجة الجيزانية في الرياض؟

2. إلى أي مدى يمكنك التحدث باللهجة النجدية؟

3. اش هو استخدامك للهجة النجدية

4. برأيك ، ما هي اللهجة الضرورية لتكوين صداقات أثناء التواجد في الرياض؟ لماذا؟

5. ما هي برأيك اللهجة ضرورية للشعور بالقبول في الرياض؟ لماذا؟

6. ما هي اللهجة التي ستستخدمها في التحدث مع الأقارب والجيران الذين يعيشون في الرياض؟ لماذا؟

7. هل تحدثك بالجيزانية له علاقة بهويتك؟

8. كيف تصف نفسك من حيث خلفيتك الثقافية أو العرقية؟

9. كيف تصف اللهجة الجيزانية؟

10. كيف تصفين اللهجة النجدية؟

Appendix H Interview protocol (Najdi participants' version)

Interview Protocol (Najdi speakers' version)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me. I appreciate your time. This interview will take about 30 minutes, but you may stop the interview at any point. The purpose of this conversation is to talk about your experiences as a Najdi speaker who has the chance to be in contact with Jizani speakers. This interview is part of a study titled 'A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia'. I want to ask you a few questions about your experiences with them and the questionnaire you filled out last week. Is that okay? I'd like to remind you that this conversation will be audio-recorded. This will help me to give you my full attention now and return to our conversation later. The interview is confidential; only the research team and I will have access to this recording, which we will transcribe. If you want me to stop anytime, just let me know. Is this okay with you?

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Please state your name and your city.

Part one

Najdi speakers will be asked to complete the questionnaire a week before the interview. After the matched guise, Najdi speakers will participate in follow-up interviews regarding their survey answers. These interviews will help elicit participants' attitudes more directly, complementing the "indirect" nature of the matched guise technique while still guiding participants towards specific topics through natural conversation.

4. How did you feel about the recordings you listened to while filling out the questionnaire?
5. How many speakers did you believe you were evaluating while listening to the recordings?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add for the recordings or the ratings?

I will ask my Najdi participants questions related to ratings of the recordings they heard while filling the questionnaire (i.e., "I see that when rating the speakers, you rated speaker one as being less educated. Is there a reason for that, or?").

Part two

The perspective of Najdi speakers regarding /Jizanis

Have you ever considered living in Jizan? why or why not?

Prompts:

1. Can you think of a situation in which you met a Jizani speaker here in Riyadh/Alkharj?
2. Do you have Jizani friends? (if No ask Why)
3. What do you think of this kind of relationship?
4. Do you have family members who have close relations with Jizanis by marriage for example?
5. If yes, what is your opinion regarding this kind of relationship?
6. What would have made a difference in your friendship with Jizani from the Najdi?

Najdi speakers' Experiences with Jizanis

What is it like to be a Najdi speaker?

Prompts:

1. How would you describe Jizani speakers living here?
2. Are there any Jizanis that make you or have made you feel like communicating with someone from a different continent? If yes, what happened to make you feel that way?
3. Are there any Jizanis who promote you to feel better when being in contact with her? If yes, how so?
4. What, if any, are the most challenging aspects of communicating with Jizani speaker here?

Appendix I Interview questions (Najdi participants- Arabic version)

المقابلة مع بنات منطقة نجد

شكرا لموافقتك على التحدث معي. وأنا أقدر وقتك. ستستغرق هذه المقابلة حوالي 30 دقيقة ، لكن يمكنك إيقاف المقابلة في أي وقت. الغرض من هذه المحادثة هو التحدث عن تجاربك كمتحدثة جيزانية لديها فرصة للتواصل مع المتحدثات النجديات. هذه المقابلة جزء من دراسة حول (دراسة في علم اللغة الاجتماعي للهجة الجيزانية في منطقة نجد: الاتجاهات والممارسات اللغوية في المملكة العربية السعودية). أود أن أطرح عليك بعض الأسئلة حول تجاربك معهم والاستبيان الذي ملأته الأسبوع الماضي. هل هذا مقبول؟ أود أن أذكرك أنه سيتم تسجيل هذه المحادثة صوتياً. سيساعدني هذا في منحك اهتمامي الكامل الآن والعودة إلى حديثنا لاحقاً. المقابلة سرية ، وسيمكنني أنا وفريق البحث فقط الوصول إلى هذا التسجيل ، والذي سنقوم بنسخه. إذا كنت تريدني أن أتوقف في أي وقت ، فقط أخبريني. هل هذا مناسب لك؟

هل لديك أي أسئلة قبل أن نبدأ؟

يرجى ذكر اسمك ومدينتك الأصل.

الجزء الأول

سيطلب من المشاركات الجيزانيات إكمال الاستبيان قبل أسبوع من المقابلة. ستعقد مقابلات مع المشاركات إجاباتهم في الاستبيان. ستساعد هذه المقابلات في استنباط مواقف المشاركين بشكل أكثر مباشرة ، واستكمال الطبيعة "غير المباشرة" لتقنية المظهر المتطابق ، مع الاستمرار في محاولة قيادة المشاركات نحو مواضيع محددة من خلال المحادثة.

1. ما هو شعورك حيال التسجيلات التي استمعت إليها أثناء ملء الاستبيان؟

2. كم عدد المتحدثين الذين تعتقد أنك كنت تقيمهم أثناء الاستماع إلى التسجيلات؟

3. هل هناك أي شيء آخر ترغب في إضافته للتسجيلات أو التصنيفات؟

سأطرح أسئلة على المشاركين في Jizani والمتعلقة بتقييمات التسجيلات التي سمعوا أثناء ملء الاستبيان ، (على سبيل المثال ، "أرى أنه عند تصنيف المتحدثين ، قمت بتصنيف المتحدث 1 على أنه أقل تعليماً. هل هناك سبب لذلك ، أو؟").

الجزء الثاني

وجهة نظر المشاركات النجديات بخصوص المتحدثات الجيزانيات

هل فكرت يوماً في السفر أو العيش في جيزان؟ لما و لما لا؟

حث:

1. هل يمكنك التفكير في موقف التقيت فيه بفتاة جيزانية هنا في الرياض / الخرج؟

2. هل لديك صديقات جيزانيات؟ (إذا كانت الإجابة لا ، اسأل لماذا)

3. ما رأيك في هذا النوع من العلاقة؟

Appendix I

4. هل لديك أفراد من العائلة تربطهم علاقات وثيقة بالزواج على سبيل المثال باشخاص من منطقة جيزان؟

5. إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، فما هو رأيك في هذا النوع من العلاقات؟

6. ما الذي كان سيحدث فرقاً في صداقتك مع الجيزانية من النجدية؟

تجارب المتحدثين النجديين مع الجيزانيين

كيف شعورك كونك متحدثة نجدية؟

حث:

1. كيف تصفين المتحدثات الجيزانيات الذين يعيشون هنا؟

2. هل هناك جيزانيات يجعلونك أو تجعلك تشعرين بالرغبة في التواصل مع شخص من قارة مختلفة؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، فما الذي جعلك تشعر بهذه الطريقة؟

3. هل هناك جيزانيات يشعرونك بالتحسن عندما تكونين على اتصال بها؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم ، فكيف يتم ذلك؟

4. ما هي الجوانب الأكثر تحدياً للتواصل مع متحدث جيزاني هنا ، إن وجدت؟

Appendix J Consent form for the semi-structured interview

CONSENT FORM (Interview)

Study title: A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia

Researcher name: Samah Alsufyani

ERGO number: 70277

Participant Identification Number (if applicable): 29053749

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

1	I have read and understood the information sheet (March 2022 version no. 1) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
2	I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
3	I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw (at any time) for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	
4	I understand if I decide to voluntarily participate in interviews and/observation, these will be audio-recorded, transcribed and anonymised for the analysis and the recordings will then be destroyed.	
5	I understand the researcher will record of our neighbourhood interactions for the purpose of transcribing and analyse this kind of interactions. <i>(If you would not like your interactions to be analysed, please leave this box blank.)</i>	
6	I understand that I may be quoted directly in reports of the research, but that I will not be directly identified (e.g. that my name will not be used).	

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Name of researcher (print name).....

Signature of researcher

Date.....

Appendix K Consent form for the participant's observation

CONSENT FORM (Observation)

Study title: A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia

Researcher name: Samah Alsufyani

ERGO number: 70277

Participant Identification Number (if applicable): 29053749

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

1	I have read and understood the information sheet (March 2022 version no. 1) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
2	I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
3	I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw (at any time) for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	
4	I understand if I decide to voluntarily participate in interviews and/observation, these will be audio-recorded, transcribed and anonymised for the analysis and the recordings will then be destroyed.	
5	I understand the researcher will record of our neighbourhood interactions for the purpose to transcribe and analyse this kind of interactions. <i>(If you would not like your interactions to be analysed please leave this box blank)</i>	
6	I understand that I may be quoted directly in reports of the research but that I will not be directly identified (e.g. that my name will not be used).	

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Name of researcher (print name).....

Signature of researcher

Date.....

Appendix L Debriefing form

Debriefing – Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Study Title: A Sociolinguistic Study of Jizani Arabic in Najdi-Dominant Contexts: Language Attitudes and Dialect Practices in Saudi Arabia

Researcher Name: Samah Alsufyani

Ethics Number: 70277

Thank you so much for participating in this study, it was extremely valuable. I recognise that you are very busy and so I am very appreciative of the time you devoted to participating. There was some information about the study that could not be discussed with you before the study, because doing so probably would have impacted your actions and thus skewed the study results. This form explains these things to you now.

What is the research about?

My research is interested in whether Jizani speakers living in Riyadh accommodate to the speech forms of their interlocutors, how they do this and the reasons for doing it. In particular, I am interested in speech forms and how the accents and dialects we employ at different times may demonstrate our allegiances to and identification with different groups of people. A similar study carried out in Saudi Arabia by Alghamdi in 2021 examined the speech of Ghamdi migrants who moved from Al-Baha (south-western Saudi Arabia) to Mecca (western Saudi Arabia) to secure a better lifestyle and financial situation. He found that younger female participants tended to adopt accentual and dialectal traits of the Mecca variety and that they did this to appear friendly and cooperative to Mecca speakers. By contrast, Alghamdi also found that his male Ghamdi participants retained their heritage dialects and accents and that they did this as a form of allegiance to their variety, which they considered a part of the standard Saudi dialect.

My study investigates the ways in which you as participants communicate with Najdi people and your experiences while living there. Your participation will foster a better understanding of how we use language to show identity and allegiance, an area of sociolinguistic yet to be fully explored in the Saudi context.

Use of active deception or misleading participants.

The reason behind using deception in this study was to allow me, as a researcher, to obtain information in a natural way. Valuable insight can be obtained in this way into factors which would never be discovered if all factors and aspects of the study were obvious to the participants

We hope this clarifies the purpose of the research, and the reason why we could not tell you all of the details about the study prior to your participation. If you would like more information about the research, you may be interested in the following:

Dragojevic, M., Gasiorek, J., & Giles, H. (2015). Communication accommodation theory. *The international encyclopedia of interpersonal communication*, 1-21.

Alghamdi, N. (2021). Variation and Change in a Contact Setting in Mecca. *US-China Education Review*, 11(1), 40-47.

Al-Essa, A. (2009). When Najd meets Hijaz: Dialect contact in Jeddah. In E. Al-Wer & R. de Jong (Eds.), *Arabic Dialectology: In Honour of Clive Holes on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday* (pp. 203-222). Leiden: Brill.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me:

Samah Alsufyani

E.mail: asmma1n19@soton.ac.uk

Whats app: 00966508311871

It is very important that you do not discuss this study with anyone else until the study is complete. Our efforts will be greatly compromised if participants come into this study knowing what is about and how the ideas are being tested. Once again results of this study will not include your name or any other identifying characteristics.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel that you have been placed at risk, you may contact the research support officer (risethic@soton.ac.uk) or Head of Research Governance, Research Governance Office, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ. Phone: 02380 595058, Email: rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information and for taking part in the research.

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