

## The Effect of Social Factors on Sound Change in Najdi Arabic: The Case of [dʒ] in the Qaṣīmī Dialect

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**Abstract.** The present study examines the pattern of dialectical variation in the use of the two variants of Old Arabic qāf /q/—the affricated nonstandard [dʒ], and the regional standard [g]—in the natural spontaneous speech of speakers of the Qaṣīmī dialect, a variety of Najdi Arabic. The findings indicate that a change in progress is occurring in the Qaṣīmī dialect, with younger speakers showing an incremental increase in the use of the standard regional variant [g] instead of the nonstandard variant [dʒ] and older and middle-aged speakers—especially males—tending to be conservative by retaining the standard regional variant. Moreover, this change correlates significantly with gender in that women use the standard variant [g] more frequently than men. To explain this changeshift, the socioeconomic changes that Saudi Arabia has undergone in the last 50 years—particularly the processes of urbanization and modernization—were examined as factors prompting and accelerating changes in the linguistic patterns of speakers of the Qaṣīmī dialect. In particular, the regional standard variant [g] has become more associated with urbanity and modernity.

### Introduction

In Arabic dialects spoken in Najd and north-central Arabia, the voiceless uvular stop /q/ (Old Arabic qāf) is phonetically realized as the voiced velar stop variant [g], the regional standard variant. However, in certain phonological environments, /q/ is further fronted and affricated as the voiced alveolar affricate variant [dʒ]. In their treatment of Arabic dialects in the Arabian Peninsula, Arabic researchers (cf. Johnstone, 1963: p. 210; Holes, 1991: p. 665) associate the affricated reflex [dʒ] for /q/ with the affricated reflex [tʃ] for /k/ as two variants used by the same speech communities in central Arabia. These two variants occur as a result of a larger process of affrication that involves not only these variants, but also two additional ones: [č] and [ǧ] for /k/ and /q/, respectively. While [dʒ] and [tʃ] are primarily used in Najdi Arabic, [tʃ] and [dʒ] are used in Gulf Arabic ([tʃ] is also used in Yemeni Arabic and Bedouin dialects in Jordan, Palestine, and Syria.

The use of the affricated reflexes [tʃ] for /k/ and [dʒ] for /q/ in Gulf Arabic has received a good deal of attention recently from descriptive, historical, and sociolinguistic perspectives from both modern Arabic

scholars (cf. Watson, 1992; Holes, 1983; Johnstone, 1967) and some European Orientalists (see Johnstone, 1963: pp. 211-213, for a review). However, very few sociolinguistic studies have investigated language use in Peninsular Arabic, in general, and Najdi Arabic specifically. The majority of previous studies on Najdi Arabic focused on describing the phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, and semantic peculiarities of the language (Al-Obodi, 1990; Al-Ayid, 1997; Al-Sweel, 1987, 1990; Ingham, 1994; Fouad, 1964; Lehn, 1967; Prochazka, 1988). In fact, the author could find no previous study that examined language variation and change in Najdi Arabic.

### Background

#### Linguistic background

The use of the affricated reflexes [tʃ] and [dʒ] was first reported in certain Najdi dialects more than 150 years ago by the German Orientalist Wallin in his 1855 study (cited in Johnstone, 1963: p. 210). Cantineau's (1936, 1937, cited in Johnstone, 1963) studies were the first successful attempts to analyze the usage of the affricated variants according to when, where, and by whom they were used.



Like other places in Saudi Arabia, the Qaṣīm<sup>(1)</sup> province has witnessed dramatic changes that have rapidly reshaped its social, demographic, and economic structure. Within the last few decades, a great number of people have migrated from their small towns and settlements to live in larger cities. The population of Qaṣīm province jumped from 317,000 in 1974 to more than one million in 2004 (Saudi Census, 2004). The largest city in Qaṣīm is Būraydah, the province's administrative capital, with a population of more than half a million (Saudi Census, 2004). Traditionally, Qaṣīm has been a farming region; however, the majority of people now work in industrial, business, educational, and service sectors.

### Previous Related Sociolinguistic Studies

Earlier sociolinguistic studies on gender-based language variation in Arabic-speaking communities (cf. Abd-el-Jawad, 1981; Kojak, 1983; Schmidt, 1986; Bakir, 1986) in Jordan, Syria, and Egypt found that men tend to use prestigious forms more frequently than women. Such findings have led researchers to conclude that the gender-based linguistic pattern in Arabic-speaking communities is contrary to the widely common sociolinguistic pattern observed in other languages, according to which women tend to consistently use prestigious forms that approximate the standard variety more often than men.

However, Ibrahim (1986) argued that researchers in these earlier studies misinterpreted their findings by equating the terms *standard* and *prestige*. Drawing from various studies in a number of Arabic-speaking communities, Ibrahim demonstrated that certain locally prestigious linguistic features are highly valued and not necessarily in agreement with the standard variety. Arab women in these studies used the locally prestigious features more than men; consequently, their linguistic pattern agreed with the gender-based linguistic differences found in other languages.

Ibrahim's argument was supported by a number of subsequent studies. For example, Bakir (1986) examined the linguistic situation in Basrah, Iraq, and found that women used a variety of Arabic features, thereby approximating the socially prestigious Baghdadi dialect. Abd-el-Jawad's (1987) findings from his study on language use in Nablus, Palestine, differed from his earlier study (1981). He found that

women in Nablus, more so than men, tended to favor the use of a prestigious variety of Arabic that did not follow standard Arabic. In a series of studies in Bahrain, Holes (1980, 1981, 1983, 1986) found a locally prestigious variety associated with the Sunni sect, the socially dominant group in Bahrain. Holes noted that despite the fact that the prestigious variety deviates from the norms of the standard variety (i.e., Modern Standard Arabic, MSA), in certain contexts the Shi'is—whose speech is less prestigious and contains linguistic features that are in agreement with the standard variety—tend to switch from standard phonological variants to non-standard but locally prestigious ones often used by the Sunnis. Abu-Haider (1989) reached a similar conclusion, finding that women in Baghdad tend to favor the use of a prestige variety more than men; moreover, that variety is in the direction of the standard variety. In conclusion, women in Arabic-speaking communities tend to favor locally prestigious forms that may or may not be in the direction of the standard variety.

### The Present Study

The present study aims to explore two issues related to the affrication of /g/ in the Qaṣīmī dialect, a variety of Najdi Arabic. The first of these issues is to determine whether quantitative, apparent-time evidence exists to support a change in progress in the use of the /g/ variants: the non-standard [dʒ] and the regional standard [g]. Second, the study seeks to determine whether speakers' variation is correlated with the social variables investigated in the present study—namely, age and gender.

### Variables

#### Linguistic variable

The present study examined one linguistic variable as the dependent variable: the use of the affricated non-standard variant [dʒ] as a replacement of the regional standard variant [g]. This variable was selected as it has two variants: (1) [g], which represents the normal and standard pronunciation of the "inter-regional" dialect (Ibrahim, 1986: p. 120) in the Najdi dialect, which is mostly associated with the dialect of the Saudi capital city, Riyadh, and (2) [dʒ], which represents the local non-standard norm in the Qaṣīmī dialect.

#### Social variables

Two social variables were investigated as independent variables. The first is age. As shown in Table 1, participants were divided into three age groups roughly corresponding to three generations:

<sup>(1)</sup> The name of this province is spelled differently in a number of forms, including *Al-Qassim*, *Al-Gassim*, *Qasim*, *Al-Qasseem*, *Qasim*, and *Gassim*. This study uses the ALA-LC (1997) transliteration system of Arabic. Thus, *Qaṣīm* will be used. The adjective is Qaṣīmī.

young (below 25), middle-aged (30 to 45), and older (over 55). The second social variable is gender. Participants were divided equally into two groups: males and females. The division of participants into age and gender groups was based on Būraydah's (2004) census as well as a study by Abd al-Mun'im *et al.* (2002), which provided an estimation of the age-distribution of people in Būraydah.

**Table 1. Social variables**

	Women	Men	Total
Younger	6	6	12
Middle-aged	5	5	10
Older	5	5	10
<b>Total</b>	16	16	32

The age group variable is considered the primary correlate of language change in variationist research (Chambers, 2002: p. 349). Labov (as cited in Guy, 2002: p. 313) argued that comparing the linguistic differences among different generations (apparent-time differences) would reflect actual diachronic developments in the language (real-time linguistic changes). Thus, the age variable in the present study enabled us to determine and track the linguistic changes and progress in the use of /q/ as used by three generations of speakers. Similarly, the gender variable is an essential and primary factor in variationist research, especially in studies that involve patterns of change. As stated by Cheshire (2002: p. 439), many researchers consider sex and gender to be the primary social factors driving variation and change.

Of course, there are other variables that could have an effect on the variation and change in the Qaṣīmī dialect, such as level of education and social status. However, due to sericultural and religious reasons, it was extremely difficult to find speakers, particularly women, who met the criteria of inclusion of this study. Furthermore, detailed socioeconomic information for the Qaṣīm province was not available at the time of the study. Thus, only two variables were examined, namely: age and gender.

## Method

### Participants

The participants in the current study consisted of 32 speakers. All participants met two criteria for inclusion in this study: (1) they were born, raised, and resided at the time of the study in Būraydah, Qaṣīm, and (2) they belonged to urban speech communities (not rural or Bedouin). The participants ranged in age from 18 to 80.

### Data collection

Data were collected over a six-month period using sociolinguistic interviews. All interviews were conducted by the researcher, a native speaker of the Qaṣīmī dialect, with the hope being to encourage participants to talk freely and spontaneously as they normally would in their everyday conversations. All interviews were tape-recorded using a Sony Digital Voice Recorder. The majority of interviews were held at the participants' homes and lasted for about 45 minutes to one hour. Nearly 26 hours of interviews were collected. All participants were aware of the purpose of the present study before conducting the interviews.

A number of topics were discussed in interviews, including business, habits, school days, travel, narration of an experience that the participants remembered, and local news. Topics, questions, and follow-up questions were selected based on a number of lists of words with [dʒ], gathered in advance (see the analysis section for details) based on the author's observations of the usage of [dʒ] in the Qaṣīmī dialect over a three-month period. Elicitation techniques were also employed in certain cases and with words that are used in specific contexts.

### Analysis

For the purposes of the present study, the database was analyzed quantitatively. First, all occurrences of every lexical item with [dʒ] or [g] were recorded and coded according to the speaker's age and gender group. Each occurrence with the actual realization of every item was recorded so that any type of variation could be defined. Lexical items were only recorded once unless their usage indicated any type of variation.

As stated by Holes (1983: p. 440), "Defining the environments in which variation occurs is usually the first stage in correlational sociolinguistic analyses." Thus, in the present study, it was important to first examine the following issues:

1. Specifying which lexical items with [dʒ] to include or exclude before making any comparisons between social groups.
2. Identifying the phonological environments in which [dʒ] is realized by looking at preceding and subsequent segments as well as the position of [dʒ] in the word.

The first important step before measuring variations among the speakers was to decide which words to include or exclude in the database. This

process required a careful selection of words based on a clear set of criteria. Therefore, a number of measures were employed from Holes' (1983) study in order to provide speakers with equal opportunities to use the linguistic variables under study. Thus, words that did not show any variation have been excluded. For example, in a number of words, /q/ was verbalized as [dʒ] in every usage, such as /dʒat/ for "forage", and /sʰi dʒ/ for "really". Another group of words that was excluded includes those exclusively used by one specific social group but not others. For example, a number of words were used primarily by older speakers and rarely or never by younger ones, and vice versa.

Having collected all tokens with the nonstandard variant for each speaker, the differences between social groups—age group (older, middle-aged, and younger) and gender (men and women)—were analyzed by multivariate ANOVA. Bonferroni post-hoc tests were also used to determine the differences between the levels of age, gender, and age x gender.

The examination of all gathered words demonstrated that realization of [dʒ] occurs in most cases when it is preceded or followed by a front vowel, mainly /i/. In some cases, however, [dʒ] is realized when it is followed by a stressed consonant at initial or medial position (e.g., /dzərɪb/ for "come forward", and /adzəllɪb/ for "turn over").

The present finding adds further support to the conclusion reached by Cantineau (1936, 1937) and Johnstone (1963) that the use of [dʒ] is mainly limited to the environment of front vowels. In addition, it indicates that, since Johnstone's study approximately 40 years ago, the use of [dʒ] has not been developed or generalized to many new words in which [dʒ] does not occur in the environment of front vowels. However, it should be mentioned that in very rare examples, [dʒ] is realized in environments other than front vowels, such as /dʒbal/ for "in front of", /fir dʒ/ for "group", /ir dʒ/ for "vein", and /hʌm dʒ/ for "angry".

As Table 2 shows, the [dʒ] in the present study occurred at all positions, with no marked differences between them. The highest frequency of occurrence was at the medial position, followed by the initial and final positions, respectively.

**Table 2. Frequency of the positions of [dʒ]**

Position	n	%
Initial	15	30
Medial	22	44
Final	13	26
Total	50	100

## Results

The results are presented and discussed separately for each social variable. A summary of the results, comprising mean percentages, is provided in Table 3. The percentages of the use of the nonstandard variant [dʒ] for age and gender groups are plotted in Fig. 2.

### Age

As presented in Table 4, the analysis showed that the age group variable was significant ( $F(2) = 173.288, p < 0.016$ ). The examination of the means, as shown in Table 3, clearly indicates that age groups showed gradual declines in the use of the nonstandard variant [dʒ] at the expense of the standard variant [q]. Whereas older speakers maintained the use of the non-standard variant 94% of the time, middle-aged speakers decreased their use of the nonstandard variant to just over half of all instances (51%). Younger speakers were the least frequent users of the nonstandard variant (35% of the time). A Bonferroni post-hoc test of the three levels of age groups revealed that the difference between older and both middle-aged and younger speakers was significant ( $p < 0.005-0.008$ ); however, the difference between middle-aged and younger speakers was not significant ( $p > 05$ ), due to a lack of difference between middle-aged and younger female speakers ( $p > 0.05$ ). This finding is not surprising given that the average age of middle-aged females was close to the average age of younger females (36 versus 24).

In addition, further examination of the usage of the middle-aged group indicates that older speakers of both genders, and particularly those above 40 years of age, were to some extent closer to the older group than to the rest of their group. For instance, two male speakers over the age of 40 used [dʒ] 80% and 78% of the time, respectively, whereas the rest of their age group did not go beyond an average of 65%. Likewise, a female speaker over the age of 40 was also observed to have a higher rate of [dʒ] usage than most of her age group.

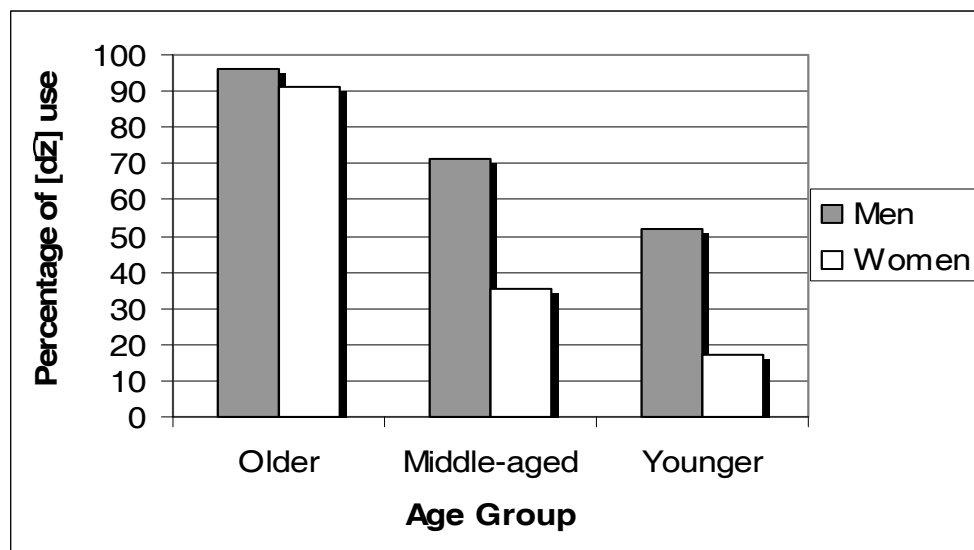
Moreover, the results revealed a strong correlation between the percentage of use of the nonstandard variant [dʒ] and the age group ( $R^2 = 0.920$ ), suggesting that a change is in progress is occurring in the use of [dʒ]. Based on the year of birth of the participants and their overall use of [dʒ], it is reasonable to estimate that this change probably started to develop 40 to 50 years ago.

**Table 3. Means of the use of the non-standard variant [d̤z]**

		Age Group				
			Older (n = 10)	Middle-aged (n = 12)	Younger (n = 10)	Total (n = 32)
			%	%	%	%
Gender	Men	n = 16	96.4	71	52	71
	Women	n = 16	91	35.2	17	45
Total		n = 32	94	51	35	53.5

**Table 4. ANOVA results for the use of the non-standard variant [d̤z]**

Source of Variance	DF	F	p <
Age Group	2	173.288	0.016
Gender	1	98.207	0.010
Age x Gender	2	18.994	0.006

**Fig. 2. Percentages of the use of the non-standard variant [d̤z] by age and gender groups.**

### Gender

As for the age group variable, gender was found to be a significant factor ( $F(1) = 98.207$ ,  $p < 0.010$ ). The analysis of the effect of gender revealed that males tended to use the [d̤z] more than females.

As presented in Table 3, males used the non-standard variant [d̤z] more frequently than females with a differential of 26 percentage points. A Bonferroni post-hoc test also indicated that the difference between males and females in the use of the nonstandard variant was significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

The current results appear to agree with the widely held findings reported in sociolinguistic literature (cf. Wolfram, 1969; Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1983, to name a few)—namely, that women use nonstandard variants less frequently than men of the same social group.

### Discussion

The results of the present study clearly demonstrate that the use of the non-standard variant [d̤z] in the Qaṣīmī dialect appears to be on the decline, with the change led by the youngest speakers—particularly females. Furthermore, social factors (age, gender, and age x gender) were found to have significant influence on variation in the use of [d̤z].

The present findings lead to the following questions: How do we explain age correlation and gender-based variation? How do we connect the developmental stages identified by Chambers (2002: pp. 361-362) with the current use of [d̤z]? Previous accounts on linguistic changes in progress occurring in Arabic-speaking communities indicate that linguistic changes have historically accompanied socioeconomic changes that took place in most countries in the Middle East in the last 40 to 50 years. For example, Holes (1995) has shown that in the capitals of three Arab

countries—Manama, Bahrain; Amman, Jordan; and Baghdad, Iraq—socioeconomic changes, particularly the process of urbanization, have been the main forces prompting and driving linguistic changes in the local dialects of these three cities. Moreover, within the dialects of these cities, some features associated with the political importance of its users are gaining prestige and emerging as the national standard dialect, even if they are not in agreement with the rules of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

In Saudi Arabia, Al-Jehani (1994) reported similar findings to those observed by Holes. In females' speech in the Mekkah dialect, Al-Jehani noted that a change in progress is taking place in the expression of courtesy, whereby younger female speakers have become much less elaborate than older ones. He attributed this change to the enormous socioeconomic changes that Saudi Arabia has experienced in the last few decades. However, he did not correlate this change with the speech of groups with upper social and political status.

Thus, the patterns of variation observed in the present study can be explained in the same manner used in previous studies on Arabic-speaking communities. Saudi Arabia has experienced tremendous political and socioeconomic changes in the last 50 to 60 years. The first changes were political in nature, accompanying the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 and the selection of the city of Riyadh as its capital. Socioeconomic changes came later with the discovery of huge oil fields in the late 1930s. During the subsequent decades an accelerating but gradual process of urbanization has changed the face of Saudi Arabia and transformed the lifestyle of most of its people. Consequently, ordinary people's everyday communication patterns have been affected in a number of ways, especially by dialect contact, as a result of the growth of population in urban centers as many families have migrated from their small towns and Bedouin settlements to live in larger cities for better opportunities for work and education. These changes have contributed to bringing people with different dialects into closer contact in a variety of contexts.

Part of the explanation for the pattern of variation found in the present study stems from the fact that the city of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital, has become a center for cultural, social, and linguistic change in the last few decades in Saudi Arabia, in general, and Najd specifically. Moreover, the dialect of Riyadh has become the regional spoken standard, similar to other Arab urban centers, such as Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, and Amman. Thus, the use of the Riyadh dialect has become associated with prestige not only for families who have recently moved to Riyadh, but

also for neighboring towns and provinces. The Qaṣīm province, located nearly 330 kilometers north of Riyadh, has been affected by Riyadh and its dialect, especially as Būraydah, the administrative capital of the Qaṣīm province, is the second largest city in Najd and many families from Qaṣīm have migrated to Riyadh in the past decades. Consequently, certain local linguistic features in the Qaṣīmī dialect have gradually become stigmatized and more associated with rurality and the speech of older speakers.

This explanation appears more convincing when we compare the stages of development of the use of [d̤z̤] found in the present study with the stages of social and economic changes that Saudi Arabia has undergone in the past 50 years. It is interesting to note that the starting point of the linguistic changes in the use of [d̤z̤] observed in the speakers who were 40 to 50 years old coincided with the first years of socioeconomic changes that accompanied the process of urbanization and modernization that took place at that time. According to Chambers (2002: pp. 361-362), three stages are usually identified in sociolinguistic studies involving linguistic changes in progress: initial stasis, rapid rise, and tailing off. The present study seems to have caught the first two of these. According to the results, the use of [d̤z̤] was stable among the oldest age groups of both sexes. This situation was then distributed by middle-aged speakers, particularly those 45 to 50 years old, who apparently were the first to replace [d̤z̤] with [g]. Such a change might mark the starting-point stage. Among speakers below that age a sudden and gradual rise in the use of [g] instead of [d̤z̤] was observed, indicating the trajectory of the change as manifested in the speech of middle-aged as well as younger speakers. The present change apparently has not reached the tailing-off period yet as its progressive change is still taking place; indeed, some speakers still maintain a considerable amount of [d̤z̤], particularly male speakers. This situation indicates that this change might be in the middle or even in the beginning of the rapid-rise stage, especially considering the conservative attitude that male speakers have toward this change. In addition, some methodological measures taken in the present study might not present the actual realization of [d̤z̤] as a few words with [d̤z̤] have been eliminated on the basis that speakers did not have any type of variation as speakers from all age and gender groups used them with [d̤z̤] in all contexts.

Accordingly, the results of the present study suggest that the use of [d̤z̤] might tend to linger for some time in the future until it reaches a stable state.

Chambers (2002) argues that the tailing-off period does not begin until the change attains some kind of critical mass by affecting a large number of community members.

As previously stated, the pattern of gender-based variation observed in the present findings was also consistent with the conclusion frequently reported in many sociolinguistic studies, summarized in Labov's (1990: p. 210) study as Principle I—namely, that men use a higher frequency of nonstandard forms than women in stable sociolinguistic stratification. Moreover, the explanation herein of the present gender-pattern variation seems to agree with the corollary of Labov's Principle I (1990: p. 213), Principle Ia: women favor the incoming prestige forms more than men in cases where change comes from above. However, we should be cautious in generalizing these findings to other Arabic speech communities and to other linguistic forms since the “standard” and “prestige” forms in diglossic Arabic speech communities vary, as stated by a number of researchers in Arabic sociolinguistics (cf. Ibrahim, 1986; Abd-el-Jawad, 1987; Haeri, 1994), should not be treated as if they are identical since it was found that local or regional varieties sometimes act as local spoken standards competing with the standard variety, MSA, in informal settings (Abd-el-Jawad, 1987: p. 359). In short, prestige in Arabic sociolinguistics seems to maintain a fundamental role in the use of the nonstandard affricated variant [dʒ] for the standard variant [g] in informal spoken speech in the Qaṣīmī dialect, a variety of Najdi Arabic. The statistical analysis of the results demonstrated that both age group and gender had a significant effect on speakers' variation. Moreover, the present results indicate that a change is in progress in the direction of the standard variant [dʒ] → [g], whereby older male speakers were conservative and resistant in adopting the standard variant while younger female speakers were progressive and adaptive. The results also concur with “the sociolinguistic gender pattern” (Fasold, 1990: p. 92) widely reported in sociolinguistics studies in that women tend to use standard forms more than men. The huge socioeconomic changes that Saudi Arabia has undergone in the last 50 years likely contributed the most to this change. As a result of these changes, the local linguistic feature [dʒ], which appears to be disappearing due to urbanization, dialect contact, and, more importantly, the influence of the Riyadh dialect as an emerging prestigious variety, especially among the youngest generation.

Despite the significant differences among the genders and age groups observed in the present

study, in prompting linguistic change, and it may or may not coincide with the standards of MSA. In the present study, the linguistic change appears in the direction of MSA.

### Conclusion

This study analyzed the effects of social factors, namely, age and gender, on the current results have limitations that pinpoint directions for future research. First and foremost, this study did not include the speakers' level of education and social status, which could be principal causes for the variation and change found in the current data. Thus, it would be interesting to examine the effect of education and social status not only on the speakers' use of these two variants, but also on other phonological features associated with the Qaṣīmī dialect, such as the affricated variant [tʃ] for /k/. Such research would add further support to the suggested explanation for the change observed in the present study. A second potential question for future research concerns the influence of the dialect of Riyadh, an emerging regional and urban center, on the surrounding local dialects, such as the dialects of Ḥa'il and Zūlfī. In sum, much work is needed to study the effect of social factors on linguistic variation and change in local and regional dialects throughout Saudi Arabia, as well as how dialects have been influenced by the drastic changes that Saudi Arabia has undergone in the last half century.

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## تأثير العوامل الاجتماعية على التغير الصوتي في اللهجة النجدية: الصوت (دز) في اللهجة القصيمية نموذجاً

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**ملخص البحث.** يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة تأثير العوامل الاجتماعية - العمر والجنس - على أنماط التفاوت اللهجي عند استخدام متغيرات (variants) الصوت قاف عند متحدثي اللهجة القصيمية - إحدى فروع اللهجة النجدية - في حديثهم الطبيعي العفوي. وتشمل متغيرات الصوت قاف ما يلي: المتغير المعياري الإقليمي (الجيم المصرية) كما هو شائع في اللهجة النجدية بشكل عام، والمتغير غير المعياري المحلي على نحو (دز). تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى وجود تغير في اللهجة القصيمية بحيث إنه في الوقت الذي نجد فيه الصغار (٢٥ سنة فما دون) يظهرون زيادة متدرجة ومضطردة نحو استعمال الصوت المعياري الإقليمي بدلاً عن المتغير غير المعياري المحلي، ونجد أن كبار السن (فوق ٥٥ سنة) ومتوسطي العمر (٣٠-٤٥ سنة) خصوصاً الرجال منهم يظهرون تحفظاً نحو هذا التغير وذلك بالمحافظة على استعمال الصوت غير المعياري المحلي. وتشير النتائج كذلك إلى وجود علاقة قوية بين هذا التغير وجنس المتحدث بحيث نجد أن النساء أكثر استعمالاً للمتغير المعياري من الرجال. ويمكن تفسير هذا التغير في استعمالات اللهجة لهذا الصوت كنتيجة للتغيرات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية التي مرت بها المملكة العربية السعودية قبل ٥٠-٦٠ سنة، وتحديدًا عمليات التمدن والتطور والتي ساهمت في دفع التغير وتسريعه في الأنماط اللغوية للهجة القصيمية بحيث أصبح المتغير المعياري الإقليمي أكثر ارتباطاً بالمدينة والتطور فيما ارتبط المتغير غير المعياري المحلي (دز) بالمجتمع الزراعي غير المتمدن ولهجة كبار السن.