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Attitude towards Jordanian Arabic Dialects: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

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Abstract

This study investigates the unequal attitude people have toward the main spoken dialects in Jordan. Eight stereotypical features were considered: intelligibility and clarity, prestige, elegance, education, social status, accent thickness, courage, and generosity. It examines how the distribution of attitude differs in different contexts, how it can affect employability chances, and how responses can be argued for within the social identity theory. An evaluative/matched guise test with eight recordings of the dialects by male and female speakers was answered by 234 respondents of different ages, genders and dialects. Responses were collected from three non-native speakers of any of the Jordanian Arabic dialects (Egyptian, Iraqi and Druze). Results demonstrated that the urban dialect has the most positive attitudes regarding intelligibility, prestige, elegance, education, and social status, but the least positive attitudes regarding courage, generosity, and accent thickness, in which the Bedouin dialect scored the most positive attitudes. Attitude may change when changing the context of judgment. Such attitudes were found to affect employability chances especially for jobs that require speaking skills. Evaluation also may be affected if the speaker is from a group which is different or similar to that of the respondent. These reports may be taken as substantial evidence of the power of language ideologies and social psychology in speech communities with which individuals can align themselves.
Keywords: Language Attitude; Dialect; Jordanian Arabic; Social Image.

1. Introduction

Language is a powerful social force that conveys more than referential information (Cargile and Giles 1998). Some factors in the language predispose a person to certain feelings and reactions in response to certain situations, persons or objects (Dalton-Puffer et al. 1997). These feelings and reactions are known as language attitude (LA) and have a rich history as a core of study across several decades and social science disciplines (Cargile et al. 1994). Given that language is a social practice, hearers use speech cues to react to linguistic and paralinguistic variation in a language and infer the personal and social characteristics of the speaker. These speech cues, as Podberesky et al. (1990) state, are "sometimes used by listeners to make inferences regarding an individual's personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, intelligence), social group membership (e.g., regional, ethnic, occupational), and psychological state (e.g., need for social approval, anxiety, depression)" (pp. 53-54). Thus, an attitude is an evaluative orientation

to a social object such as a language or a variation by which we can trigger beliefs about speakers and their group membership, resulting in stereotypical assumptions about shared features of group members (Garrett 2010; Guba et al. 2021). This paper investigates the LA that people have toward the four dialects of Jordan.

LA plays a vital role in our perception and production of language (Garrett 2010). It relates to socio-cultural norms which together form an essential part of our communicative competence (Hymes 1971). Thus, as we communicate in our everyday speech, LA influences our reactions toward others' language and helps us to expect their responses to our language, which in turn will influence our language choices. Furthermore, LA studies can highlight the differences within and across communities. The attitude we perceive relates to social group membership and shapes a specific image of it. Hence, attitudes may vary according to different social, ethnic and regional groups. Language varieties are not just characteristics of a community but also define what is distinctive in that community. For details, see Garrett (2010).

Attitude toward a language plays a vital role in language restoration, preservation, decay or death (Baker 1992). Also, the thoughts and beliefs, preferences and desires of a current community can be indicated through surveys of LA, measuring the language's status, value and importance. Furthermore, it has a role in educational policies as no system could succeed without taking into account the attitude of those who are likely to be affected in that language. Thus, LA has centrality in many disciplines especially social psychology and sociolinguistics (cf 2.1.1). For sociolinguists, one important goal has been to construct a "record of overt attitudes towards language, linguistic features and linguistic stereotypes" (Labov 1984, p. 33).

Not only languages but also varieties of languages are subject to the study of LA as they carry social meanings and so can stimulate different attitudinal reactions or social advantages or disadvantages (Garrett 2010). An individual's dialect reflects his or her identity, as how a person feels about him or herself, how he is treated, and how he treats other people, is dependent on his or her dialect (Chaika l982). Throughout the world, all accents, dialects, and languages are subject to evaluations from others. People hold attitudes to language at all its levels including spelling and punctuation, words, grammar, accent and pronunciation, and dialects.

However, there is a clear problem in the way we perceive the speech of others. People use speech cues to react to others' way of speaking and thus create stereotypical dimensions of them. This paper focuses on eight stereotypical dimensions that have a connection with the Jordanian community in particular. Intelligibility means that the dialect is clear and can be understood. A prestigious dialect has a level of regard and esteem related to those who are high-class members of society. Elegance indicates how the dialect is smooth, soft, classy and pleasant to hear. These are the features that concern the dialect itself. The other features are related to the speakers of each dialect. Education means the speaker's is literate and knows how to talk, choosing his/her words carefully. Social status is the relative rank of an individual, with attendant rights, duties, and lifestyle in a social hierarchy. Courage is the ability to do something difficult even when it is risky; courageous people do and say what they think is right despite opposition. Speakers who use thick accent speak with a heavy, strong, regional, and usually uneducated

pronunciation. The last feature is generosity, which equals unselfishness. Generous people are happy to give time, money, food, or kindness to people in need.

The attitude of a certain variety reflects the social identity of people who belong to that variety. The effect of the attitude one has toward a variety may expand and affect certain fields, particularly employment. Depending on these hypotheses, the current paper examines the following questions: what perceptions and attitude do people have toward the four varieties in Jordan regarding the eight stereotypical features already outlined, how does the native dialect of the respondents affect their judgment, how does attitude differ in different contexts, and how does the way people speak affect their employment opportunities? To answer these questions, this research investigates the attitude toward the four spoken varieties in Jordan: urban, Bedouin, rural Jordanian (RJ), and rural Palestinian (RP) (cf. 2.2). These dialects differ from one another in several aspects, and researchers show that they do not enjoy the same value (Abdel-Jawad 1981, 1986, 1987; Al-Khatib 1988, 1995; Hussein 1980, among others). Hence, studying the attitude people perceive from these dialects will explain the social categorization and stereotyping of the Jordanian community.

2 Theoretical Background

This section provides a theoretical review of attitude in the domain of sociolinguistics and the role of social identity theory in determining LA. Various factors that play a role in LA such as 'intelligibility' and 'context', especially the effect of the context of employability on LA, are then discussed. A brief reference to Jordanian dialectology concludes with the stereotypical dimensions that have been reported in previous studies on LA.

2.1 Attitude in the domain of social psychology and sociolinguistics

LA has been primarily explored within the fields of social psychology and sociolinguistics. Allport (1935) claims that attitude is the most indispensable concept in social psychology, and it has long been a core concept in sociolinguistics. Social psychology provides a deeper understanding of the mental processes involved in interpersonal behavior of various sorts and in evaluative reactions and other social behaviors. Social psychologists study LA as they have a particular interest in language or aspects of language, while sociolinguists focus on the structure of language and its relationship to social constructs and processes. They explore the evaluative aspects of specific forms of variation and other socially meaningful aspects of language (Campbell-Kibler 2005). Thus, bridging the work of psychology and linguistics in this regard will be beneficial in refining our knowledge of how speech aspects elicit specific types of evaluative reactions (Edwards 1999). However, this paper focuses on LA within the domain of sociolinguistics, which perceives an accent as a badge of social identity, and examines it in view of variations at all levels of language, phonetic, lexical and grammatical, in the context of diverse social settings (Said 2006).

2.2 Social identity theory

Members of any group share a special in-group social identity (Bresnahan et al. 2002). Many theorists (notably Tajfel 1959; Tajfel and Turner 1986) state that in-group identity is compelling to the extent that people from different groups are likely to think in terms of their most salient in-group identification from which self-worth and esteem derive, even when they are interacting as individuals apart from their group. Bresnahan et al. (2002) state that when categorization is prominent, an individual will tend to differentiate between in-group and out-group in as many dimensions as possible, resulting in a negative attitude for the out-group and a favorable one for the in-group. Numerous studies demonstrate that people prefer, and evaluate more favorably, members of their own social in-groups, compared to out-group members (e.g., Rabbie and Wilkens 1971).

2.3 Factors affecting attitudinal judgment

Besides the effect of social identity and how being an in-group or out-group member affect attitude (cf. 2.1.2), the literature indicates two more factors: intelligibility and context.

2.3.1 Intelligibility

Intelligibility is a hearer-based attribute; thus, what is considered intelligible to one listener might not be intelligible to another (Fayer and Krasinski 1987). An accent may be familiar to one listener but not intelligible; this will result in a negative attitude toward the speaker (Eisenstein and Verdi 1985). So, the more intelligible the dialect is, the more positive will be the attitude towards it.

Bresnahan et al. (2002) evaluated attitudinal and affective responses toward accented English based on variation in role identity and intelligibility. Where American English is preferred, intelligible foreign accents nevertheless result in more positive attitude and affective response compared to a foreign accent that is unintelligible. The more intelligible foreign accents are, the more attractive and dynamic they are compared to less intelligible foreign accents. These results confirm that intelligibility is connected to positive attitudes regarding different stereotypical dimensions.

2.3.2 Context

Judgments are affected by the social contexts in which the language occurs (Garrett 2010). A particular language variety or way of speaking can, for example, result in advantageous attitudes in some specific contexts but disadvantageous ones in others. Thus, attitude toward speakers may change with different contexts of judgment. Someone may not perceive others' speech in a classroom context in the same way he or she would perceive their speech in everyday life in home. Cargile (1997) provides data on attitudes toward Mandarin Chinese-accented English by examining both Anglo and Asian Americans' responses to a male speaker. In the first context (of an employment interview), the results report no difference in the treatment between a speaker of Chinese-accented English and a speaker of a standard American-accented English. Asian American listeners were found to be less evaluatively generous when it came to estimations of the speaker's attractiveness than their Anglo-American counterparts. On the other hand, in the context of a college classroom, results differ and the Chinese-accented English speaker

was found less attractive. This confirms how context plays a role in changing the attitude toward a variety.

2.4 LA and Employability

It has been found that LA could affect employment opportunities. The fact that a speaker's accent or dialect may elicit positive or negative reactions in the listener is applicable in the field of employment. For example, it is reported that an Indian-born customer advisor from the UK, who was employed to train staff at a communications firm's office in New Delhi, was dismissed for his Indian accent; that is, his accent was not perceived as 'English enough' to work with these people in New Delhi (O'Mara 2007). Kalin and Rayko (1978) found that applicants with 'foreign' accents (i.e., Italian, Greek, Portuguese, West African, and Slovak) were rated most suitable for lower status jobs by Canadian-English speaking judges.

Carlson and McHenry (2006) investigate how ethnicity, the amount of perceived accent or dialect, and comprehensibility affect a speaker's employability. Sixty human resource specialists judged three female applicants who represented speakers of Spanish-influenced English, Asian-influenced English, and African American Vernacular English respectively. Results reveal that when the speaker's perceived accent or dialect was minimal, perceived ethnicity did not affect employability. However, all speakers with maximally perceived accents or dialects achieved lower employability ratings.

2.5 Jordan dialectology

Arabic is a diglossic language in the sense that it involves both a high variety (i.e., Standard Arabic: the standardized literary form of Arabic which is associated with more formal situations), and a low variety (i.e., Arabic dialects or vernaculars, which are usually the mother tongues of their speakers and which are associated with informal situations and are always used for everyday conversation). In Jordan, then, Arabic is characterized by diglossia: modern standard Arabic is the official language used throughout the country, while daily conversations use local colloquial varieties, i.e., urban, rural, and Bedouin dialects (Mashaqba et al 2020)

Dialects in Jordan can be divided on the basis of social and cultural background into three major groups: urban, rural and Bedouin. The urban variety is spoken in the major cities, largely in the northern and middle parts of the country; it is known as the/bəʾūl/ group. Bedouin groups are scattered all over the country especially in the middle, eastern and southern regions, and they are known as the /jəgūl/ groups. The rural variety can also be divided in terms of socio-cultural background into two main sub-groups: those who came from the West Bank (i.e. the central part of Palestine); the RPs who are known as the/bəkūl/ group and those who came from the neighboring areas on the East Bank (e.g. Horaan plain); and the RJ who are known as the / bəgūl/ group (Cleveland 1963; Huneety et al. 2021). It is worth pointing out that each of these groups can be regarded, at present, as Jordanian citizens. Those who reside in the northern and middle regions of the country are a minority in the southern region (Mashaqba 2015; Huneety et al. 2021). These three varieties do not enjoy the same degree of prestige (Abdel-Jawad 1981; Al-Khatib1988, among others). There seems to be a great deal of disagreement among the speech

community members over the perception of 'local prestige'. This calls for investigation of how these varieties are typologized sociolinguistically.

2.6 Stereotypical features

Language attitudes are likely to be shaped by the functions arising from stereotyping in relations between social groups (Garrett 2010). A stereotype is a cluster of beliefs and perceptions usually regarding the members of some group. Beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of certain groups shape an overall image of that group (Hilton and Hippel 1996). By examining the literature of LA, we find that many studies investigate stereotypical dimensions that shape attitude toward: standard and non-standard varieties, and different degrees of accents in some varieties or native versus non-native varieties. The most frequent features are: status (prestige, professionalism), attractiveness (friendliness, warmth, charm), competence (intelligence, confidence), solidarity (kindness, goodness, trustworthiness) and personal integrity (generosity, honesty). Although these features overlap in some studies, overall the results regarding the stereotypical dimensions that form attitude are systematic.

Generally speaking, standard varieties result in positive attitude and non-standard ones in negative attitude. Chaika (1982) states that "using nonstandard forms [of dialect] can have consequences that strike right at the heart of middle class privilege" (p. 139). Likewise, Ryan, Hewstone, and Giles (1984) reported that standard accented speakers are evaluated more favorably on traits related to competence, intelligence, and social status than non-standard speakers. It is also found that speakers who use a standard dialect, speak quickly and fluently, and use minimal hesitations, are perceived as more competent, dominant, and dynamic. On the other hand, non-standard varieties have been associated with greater integrity and attractiveness. For example, the three native accents of English in Austria (RP, near-RP and General American) were reported as mostly attracting a more positive attitude and higher status than non-native accents (Dalton-Puffer et al. 1997).

The present study aims to fill a gap in the literature by investigating the four non-standard dialects in Jordan; this includes both the general stereotypical features other studies have investigated, and the specific ones related to Jordanian society in particular which may not have been examined before.

3 Methodology

Given that the present study concentrates on how the four dialects are evaluated according to certain stereotypical features and to a certain context, a quantitative approach is applied.

3.1 Data collection

Eight recordings were prepared as a sample for this study: two of each dialect, one by a male speaker and the other by a female speaker. These participants were mono-dialectical, speaking only in their native dialect. Their ages ranged between 40 and 60. Ten recordings were made for each variety from ten participants, and the clearest and most authentic ones were chosen (two for each variety). Participants were assured that the recordings would be used only for research purposes and could be destroyed after

completion of the research. The speakers were asked a general question about their life during the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown, and their answers were recorded. Each recording lasted from 45 seconds to 1 minute.

3.2 Instrument

A matched guise test of spoken-language samples was used. A well-structured online questionnaire was used to collect the data, consisting of nine sections. The first was a general section eliciting demographic information about respondents' age, gender, native dialect, and level of education. The following eight sections were about the eight recordings; each recording was followed by questions about it. These questions were divided into three sections. The first contained eight semantic differential scale questions, measured on a five-point rating scale that had two bi-polar adjectives at each end. The second had five dichotomous questions, and the third was an open-ended question asking respondents about any other attitudes regarding each recording. To see the test sample, click on the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1zvhwmfpuPb2wdRmwtCON3C5f1OfxJcAR2tnNc50R5xA/edit?usp=dr
   ivesdk

3.3 Respondents

234 people were involved in the test: 128 females and 106 males. Their ages ranged between 20 and 60: 134 were in the group 20-30, 48 were 31-40, 46 were 41-50, and 6 were 51-60. Respondents were from the four dialect groups: 25.6% were urban, 25.2% RP, 24.8% RJ and 24.4% Bedouin. In order to avoid bias from the participants' native dialect, three female students aged between 20 and 30 who had been studying in Jordan for a year first answered the test: one Egyptian, one Druze (from Syria) and one Iraqi.

3.4 Procedure

Given the unprecedented pandemic (Covid-19), the test was prepared on Google Forms and sent via e-mail first to three professors of sociolinguistics at the Hashemite University to confirm its validity. The link was then distributed electronically to the participants, with a brief summary of the content of the test, types of question and time to take the test. The answers were reported by email to the first author and then underwent statistical analysis. The researchers analyzed the charts and linked the results of the eight records together using descriptive tables for each section of the questionnaire, using MANOVA and post hoc tests.

4. Results

4.1 Dialects attitude regarding the stereotypical features

The first section of the test examines how respondents evaluate the dialects of the eight speakers according to the eight stereotypical features: intelligibility and clarity, prestige, elegance, education, social status, courage, accent thickness, and generosity. The responses of the participants for each variable were scored using the 5-point Likert scale: extremely = 5, very = 4, moderately = 3, slightly = 2,

and not at all = 1. We calculated the mean of the scores, and the scale average based on the mean of each variable. Appendix 1, Tables 1 through 9, provide the details of all responses. Table 1 below summarizes the mean of the scores (M) and the scale average (SA) scored by the participants for the eight recordings.

Table 1: Mean and scale average of the eight stereotypical features

	Intelligibility		Prestige		Elegance		Education		Social Status		Courage		Accent thickness		Generosity	
	M	SA	M	SA	M	SA	M	SA	M	SA	M	SA	M	SA	M	SA
male RP	4.45	**5**	3.07	3	3.26	3	3.34	3	3.29	3	4.04	4	3.74	4	4.08	4
female RP	4.25	**5**	2.96	3	3.06	3	3.19	3	3.35	3	3.76	4	3.24	3	3.83	4
male RJ	4.59	**5**	3.69	4	3.74	4	4.07	4	3.92	4	4.11	4	3.86	4	4.07	4
female RJ	4.35	**5**	3.15	3	3.12	3	3.35	3	3.38	3	3.55	4	3.26	3	3.72	4
male Bedouin	3.43	**4**	2.58	2	2.66	3	2.6	2	3.04	3	4.05	5	4.11	4	4.17	4
female Bedouin	3.71	**4**	2.48	2	2.61	3	2.73	3	3.03	3	3.71	4	3.55	4	3.9	4
male urban	4.68	**5**	4.3	5	4.3	5	4.26	5	4	4	3.46	4	2.56	2	3.49	4
female urban	4.81	**5**	4.46	5	4.46	5	4.32	5	4.13	4	3.38	3	1.88	2	3.46	4

In terms of intelligibility, the highest percentages are for the female and male urban speakers with 4.81 and 4.68 means respectively. The male RJ and RP, followed by their female counterparts, are next with a mean that varies between 4.59 and 4.25). The least intelligible dialect is the Bedouin with 3.71 mean for the female and 3.43 for the male speaker. All dialects are considered intelligible as the averages of the scale are between 4 and 5.

A noticeable difference exists between the percentages in reference to prestige. Respondents perceive the urban dialect as the most prestigious one for both female and male speakers; this is the only dialect which scored 5 on the average scale. The male and female RJ and RP come next respectively with averages of 2.96 to 3.96. The average scales for the two former dialects are 3 and 4. The Bedouin dialect is perceived as the least prestigious one as it has the lowest mean: 2.58 for the male speaker and 2.48 for the female one, with the lowest average scale of 2.

Urban speakers are seen as the most elegant ones with a high difference over the others. They have an average scale of 5. Then the male RJ and RP come next with 3.74 and 3.26 average respectively. While the former has an average scale of 4, the latter has 3. Moreover, their female counterparts come next respectively with an average scale of 3. Bedouin speakers are evaluated the least elegant, as the means of evaluation are the lowest.

The results regarding elegance and education are so close. The mean differs slightly but the preferred dialects' order is nearly the same. Respondents perceive the Bedouin speakers as the least educated ones. The male speaker has the lowest mean of all speakers, 2.6. However, the urban dialect is at the forefront of all dialects regarding education with an average scale of 5 for both speakers. The other dialects are in between in the same order as prestige. Their average scale is 3 except for the male RJ whose average scale is 4.

The mean scores indicate that the two urban speakers and the male RJ speaker have the highest evaluation for social class/status, with an average scale of 4. There is a big difference with the former

speakers, the female RJ and both the female and male RP come next with means close to each other ranging, from 3.29 to 3.38. Respondents consider the Bedouin speakers as from the lowest social class as the means are the lowest of all speakers.

For courage, the scales tip in favor of the male RJ, male Bedouin and male RP, respectively with similar means. The female Bedouin, RP and RJ come next respectively. The scale average for all of the former speakers is 4. The speakers who are perceived as the least courageous are the male and female urban speakers.

Respondents consider the male Bedouin the most thick-accent speaker as he has the highest mean (4.11). Both the male RJ and RP come next with means of 3.86 and 3.74 respectively. For females, the Bedouin speaker is perceived as the most thick-accent speaker followed by the RP and RJ, as the majority of participants evaluate them with means ranging from 3.24 to 3.55. However, the urban dialect has the fewest votes for both the male and female speakers, with the lowest average scale, 2.

The male Bedouin speaker is reported as the most generous with an evaluation mean of 4.17. The male RP and male RJ come second and third respectively. For females, the Bedouin speaker is the most generous, again followed by RP and RJ respectively. The male and female urban speakers are the least generous with evaluation means of 3.49 and 3.46 respectively.

4.2 The effect of the respondents' native dialect on the evaluation of the speakers

This section examines if the native dialect of the respondents has an effect on the evaluation, whether they evaluate speakers who belong to their speech group more positively than the others. To achieve this, an extension of the univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) test (MANOVA) is applied. The multivariate analysis of variance test is the best to assess patterns between multiple dependent variables. The test reveals that there are statistically significant differences. To determine exactly where the differences are, a post hoc test is applied.

Table 2: MANOVA Test of the effect of respondents' origin on the evaluation of the speakers

	Dependent Variable	sum of squares	df	average of squares	F	Sig.
dialect	Male RP	322,520	3	107,507	3,592	,014
	Female RP	256,942	3	85,647	2,457	,064
	Male RJ	192,801	3	64,267	2,272	,081
	Female RJ	263,579	3	87,860	2,404	,068
	Male Bedouin	344,852	3	114,951	2,796	,041
	Female Bedouin	270,783	3	90,261	2,192	,090
	Male urban	461,173	3	153,724	6,096	,001
	Female urban	193,701	3	64,567	3,366	,019

Table 2 indicates statistically significant differences between the averages of the following: the male RP, the male Bedouin, the male urban and the female urban. The significant differences appear when the indication level (Sig.) is lower than 0.05%. The test for the other speakers indicates no significant differences in their averages, so their native dialect has no effect on their evaluation. However, the effect is significant with the first four speakers. To know exactly where the effect is reported, a post hoc test is applied, with results as in Table 3.

Table 3: Post Hoc Test
Scheffe

Dependent Variable	(I)dialect	(J)dialect	(I-J)mean difference	Sig.
Male RP	RJ	RJ	1.57	.519
		Urban	.36	.983
		Bedouin	3.31*	.029
	RJ	RP	-1.57	.519
		Urban	-1.21	.708
		Bedouin	1.74	.561
	Urban	RP	-.36	.983
		RJ	1.21	.708
		Bedouin	2.95	.061
	Bedouin	RP	-3.31*	.029
		RJ	-1.74	.561
		Urban	-2.95	.061
Male Bedouin	RP	RJ	-.44	.988
		Urban	1.15	.747
		Bedouin	-2.48	.294
	RJ	RP	.44	.988
		Urban	1.59	.630
		Bedouin	-2.04	.559
	Urban	RP	-1.15	.747
		RJ	-1.59	.630
		Bedouin	-3.63*	.044
	Bedouin	RP	2.48	.294
		RJ	2.04	.559
		Urban	3.63*	.044
Male urban	RP	RJ	1.63	.411
		Urban	.16	.998
		Bedouin	3.88*	.002
	RJ	RP	-1.63	.411
		Urban	-1.47	.490
		Bedouin	2.25	.255
	Urban	RP	-.16	.998
		RJ	1.47	.490
		Bedouin	3.72*	.003
	Bedouin	RP	-3.88*	.002
		RJ	-2.25	.255
		Urban	-3.72*	.003
Female urban	RP	RJ	1.65	.277
		Urban	.72	.794
		Bedouin	2.59*	.035
	RJ	RP	-1.65	.277
		Urban	-.93	.738
		Bedouin	.94	.814
	Urban	RP	-.72	.794
		RJ	.93	.738
		Bedouin	1.87	.200
	Bedouin	RP	-2.59*	.035
		RJ	-.94	.814
		Urban	-1.87	.200

The post hoc test shows that the P value is below 0.05, and thus significant differences are confirmed with the following dialects: the RP dialect for the male speaker, the Bedouin dialect for the male speaker, and the urban dialect for the male and female speakers.

a. The RP dialect for the male speaker:

For the male RP speaker, the significant differences are between respondents whose native dialect is RP or Bedouin. The formers' average is 34.23 and the latters' 30.92. The highest value is for the RP, meaning that those whose native dialect is RP have evaluated the male RP speaker more positively than the other speakers. That is, they have a positive bias toward the speaker who is from their speech group. On the other hand, those whose native dialect is Bedouin evaluated the male RP less positively than the other speakers. There are no significant differences for the respondents from the other dialects. Hence, they have no positive or negative bias regarding the male RP speaker.

b. The Bedouin dialect for the male speaker:

For the male Bedouin speaker, some significant differences are found between the respondents whose native dialect is urban (28.68 average) and those whose native dialect is Bedouin (32.32 average). The highest value is for the Bedouin respondents, indicating that respondents whose native dialect is Bedouin have evaluated the male Bedouin speaker more positively than the other speakers. They have a positive bias toward the speaker who is from their own speech group. However, the analysis reveals that respondents whose native dialect is urban evaluate the male Bedouin speaker less positively than all the other speakers. The differences with the RP and RJ respondents are not significant so they have no positive or negative bias toward the male Bedouin speaker.

c. The urban dialect for the male and female speakers:

The bias toward evaluating the male urban speaker more positively than all the other speakers appears in two cases. The first is between the urban respondents and the Bedouin respondents; the former have a higher average (36.06) than the latter (32.34). This significant difference indicates that the urban respondents evaluate the male urban speaker who is from their speech group more positively than all the other speakers. On the other hand, the Bedouin respondents evaluate the male urban speaker less positively than all the others.

The second case shows that significant differences exist between the RP respondents (average 36.22) and the Bedouin respondents regarding both the female and male urban speakers. The Bedouin respondents evaluate the male and female urban less positively than all the other speakers, as in the first case. However, results show that the RP speakers evaluate the male and female urban more positively than the other speakers. Surprisingly, they have bias toward speakers who are considered out-group members. The RJ respondents have neither positive nor negative bias toward the male urban speaker.

4.3 Respondents' preference for listening to the JA dialects

Respondents were asked whether they liked listening to each dialect. The results are shown in Table4.

Table 4: Respondents' preference for listening to the four JA dialects

Dialect	Score
female Urban	94.9%
male RJ	89.7%
male Urban	84.6%
male RP	84.2%
female RP	79.1%
female RJ	76.5%
male Bedouin	69.7%
female Bedouin	66.7%

JA-speaking respondents vary in their preferences for listening to the four dialects. For female dialects, the urban is the most preferred. The RP and RJ follow with a slight difference between them. The Bedouin is the least preferred. For male dialects, the RJ is the most preferred, followed by the urban and RP which are close together. The Bedouin is again the less preferred one.

4.4 The impact of social status on attitudes of respondents regarding appropriateness of a particular dialect

The second section of the test examines the attitude of respondents in a different context, supposing that the eight speakers are their teachers, professors or the heads of their company. Respondents were asked whether they found it acceptable for these persons to speak with a dialect, and whether their previous attitude to speakers as ordinary individuals would change in that context. Table 5 shows the results:

Table 5: The impact of social status on the attitudes of respondents regarding the appropriateness of a particular dialect

Dialect	first half			second half		
	yes%	no%	maybe%	yes%	no%	maybe%
male RP	51.7	20.9	27.4	12.8	65.4	21.8
female RP	56.8	21.8	21.4	24.4	50	25.6
male RJ	84.6	6.8	8.5	33.8	49.6	16.7
female RJ	63.7	21.4	15	23.1	55.6	21.4
male Bedouin	36.3	37.6	26.1	20.1	51.3	28.6
female Bedouin	40.2	35	24.8	20.9	51.7	27.4
male Urban	82.1	9.8	8.1	37.2	52.1	10.7
female Urban	93.2	3	3.8	41	47.9	11.1

The first half of the table shows whether respondents accepted a person of superior status speaking the dialect. The female urban speaker has 93.2% of votes which means that it is the most preferred dialect in this context, followed by the male RJ and the male urban with 84.6% and 82.1% respectively. The female RJ is the fourth preferred of the eight speakers and the second for the female ones. The RP and Bedouin are the least preferred dialects in this context. It should be noticed that for each dialect the female speaker is accepted over the male one, except for RJ in which male speakers are preferred.

Respondents were asked if they had changed their attitude to speakers in this context. According to the results in the second half of the table, a majority voted 'no' (47.9% to 65.4%). The rest of votes vary between 'yes' and 'maybe'. Most respondents changed their attitude with the new context when the speaker was female urban while the male RP had the highest vote for unchanged attitude, 65.4%.

4.5 Dialects and Employability

Regarding employability, participants were asked two similar questions about each dialect, except that one variable changed: "Suppose that you are the head of a company, would you employ this person in a job that does not require speech skills?" and "Suppose you are the head of a company, would you employ this person in a job that DOES require speech skills?". The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Dialects and employability

Dialect	requiring speech skills			not requiring speech skills		
	yes %	no%	maybe%	yes %	no%	maybe%
male RP	76.9	19.1	15	29.5	32.9	37.6
female RP	62.8	12.4	24.8	26.9	39.7	33.3
male RJ	79.1	4.7	16.2	62.8	12.4	24.8
female RJ	63.7	17.1	19.2	38.5	30.3	31.2
male Bedouin	46.2	25.6	28.2	21.1	47.4	30.8
female Bedouin	49.1	23.5	27.4	22.6	47.4	29.9
male Urban	82.5	3.4	14.1	78.6	3.4	17.9
female Urban	85.9	2.1	12	85	1.7	13.2

The first half of the table shows respondents' responses if the job does not require speech skills. Answers vary between yes, no and maybe. For each dialect, the majority of respondents would hire a person who speaks the dialect. The female urban speaker has 85.9 % of votes, the highest percentage, followed by the male urban speaker with 82.5%. The two male speakers of RJ and RP are next, with 79.1 % and 76.9% respectively. The female speakers for these two dialects come next followed, and finally the Bedouin female and male speakers with 49.1% and 46.2% respectively.

The second half of the table shows respondents' answers if the job requires speaking skills. The urban dialect has maintained its number one position for female and male speakers, followed by the male RJ with a slight difference from the vote for the first question. The differences between the percentage of 'yes' for the two questions for the rest of the dialects are striking. The female RJ is fourth with 38.5%, followed by the male and female RP and the female and male Bedouin with close figures ranging between 21.8% and 29.5%.

This noticeable difference indicates how the type of job influences the employability opportunities for each dialect. The urban dialect is preferred for all jobs, with little difference between the two sections for both female and male, 0.9% and 3.9% respectively. Although the difference for the male RJ is 16.3%, the chance of employability is still high as he receives 76.9% of votes for a job that does not require speech skills. While the votes of male and female RP and the female RJ are high for a job that does not require speech skills, they are not preferred for a job that does require speech skills, as the votes have decreased significantly. The Bedouin dialect is the least preferred one for all kinds of jobs, with the fewest votes in both sections.

4.6 Respondents' other attitudes for each dialect

At the end of each section, the test has an open-ended question asking the respondents to write their other attitudes about the speaker and his/her dialect.

1- The RP speakers

Respondents perceive the male RP speaker as a simple, kind, modest and wise man who speaks naturally without pretending. He is a genuine person who has pride in his dialect. However, 10% of them see that the dialect is thick-accented and old fashioned and the speaker is uneducated. On the other hand, the female speaker is perceived as a kind, good-hearted, simple and brave person. Some see her as uneducated, tough, and from the middle class. As a female, some think that the dialect is so rough that she should speak a less thick-accent dialect.

2- The RJ speakers

The male speaker is seen as a clear, genuine, wise and strong person but kind. Some think that he is tough and stubborn, and from the middle class. The dialect is the best one for men as it reflects the speaker as manly, educated and a leader. Respondents portray the female speaker as a kind, simple, modest and brave person. Despite the fact that the dialect is understood and clear, they think that it is too thick accent for a female.

3-The Bedouin speakers

Respondents believe that the Bedouin dialect is the closest one to standard Arabic due to its rhetoric. They see the male speaker as a simple, strong, spontaneous and genuine person who is very proud of his dialect and origin. 29% think that the dialect is out of date and old fashioned and not understood. The female speaker is a kind, good-hearted, simple but tough person. However, many think that the dialect is old fashioned and does not fit a female.

4- The Urban speakers

Both speakers are perceived as kind, elegant and gentle. This dialect is the most common between females due to the fact that it is the modern-day dialect, a symbol of elegance, prestige and softness. However, more than half of the respondents think that it is not suitable for men as men should use thick/heavy accent, manly and strong, and that men speaking this dialect look like women. Other respondents' comments show their attachment to their native dialect as they consider it their identity and legacy from which they cannot switch.

4.7 Evaluation of the four dialects by non-native speakers of JA dialects

A female Egyptian (a native speaker of Cairene Arabic), a female Iraqi (a native speaker of Baghdad Arabic) and a female Druze (a native speaker of Druze Arabic) answered the test. Their evaluation is totally neutral as JA dialects are not their native tongue. Table 7 indicates how each respondent evaluates each dialect on the same 5-point Likert scale.

Table 7: The evaluation of the eight dialects by Egyptian, Iraqi and Druze respondents

	Intelligibility			Prestige			Elegance			Education			Social Status			Courage			Accent thickness			Generosity		
	E	I	D	E	I	D	E	I	D	E	I	D	E	I	D	E	I	D	E	I	D	E	I	D
male RP	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	5	3	3	4	4	3	5
female RP	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	5	3	4	4	4	4	4
male RJ	5	4	5	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	5	3	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
female RJ	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
male Bedouin	2	5	2	2	5	2	1	4	2	3	4	3	2	5	2	3	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
female Bedouin	2	5	2	2	5	2	2	5	2	3	4	1	3	4	3	3	5	5	3	5	3	4	5	3
male Urban	5	3	5	4	1	5	4	2	5	4	3	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	4	3	4
female Urban	5	3	5	4	2	5	4	3	5	4	3	5	4	2	4	3	3	3	1	2	1	4	3	3

Key: E = Egyptian, I = Iraqi, D = Druze

It is clear that the urban dialect for both the female and male respondents has the most positive evaluations for the eight features. The Egyptian respondent finds the Bedouin and RP the least intelligible, prestigious and elegant while the other dialects are in-between. For generosity, courage and education, the eight dialects are evaluated with high ranks ranging between 3 and 5. The urban dialect is the least thick-accented and the others more so. The respondent would hire any speaker for a job that does not require speech skills, but for jobs that do require speech skills, only the urban would be hired.

The urban dialect has the least positive evaluations except for education and generosity, for which all dialects have close evaluations ranging between 3 and 5. In contrast, the Iraqi respondent gives Bedouin the most positive evaluations of all the dialects for all features. This respondent loves listening to all the dialects, and would not mind have a superior speaking any of the eight dialects except the urban. She would also hire any of the speakers in all jobs, except the two urban ones.

The Druze respondent gives the urban dialect the most positive evaluations regarding intelligibility, prestige, education and social status, but the lowest for courage, accent thickness and generosity. The Bedouin receives high evaluations for courage, accent thickness and generosity but low ones for the other five features. This respondent likes listening to all speakers except the RP and Bedouin ones. She would hire all the speakers in jobs that do not require speech skills, but only the urban speakers for jobs that do require speech skills.

5. Discussion

The perceptions and attitudes toward the four varieties of Jordanian Arabic regarding the eight stereotypical features are interesting. The urban dialect by both the male and female speakers scores the most positive attitude regarding most of the features: intelligibility, prestige, elegance, education, social status and accent thickness. On the other hand, it has the least positive attitudes regarding courage and generosity, for which the Bedouin dialect has the most positive attitudes. The other dialects come in between (cf. 4.1).

Those features could represent Jordanian society; nonetheless, when respondents were given the opportunity to say more about their attitude regarding each speaker, they offered wider perspectives.

Accent thickness, courage and even generosity are linked to manhood. Respondents give the most positive attitude regarding manhood to Bedouins. Although the male urban speaker gets the highest scores regarding prestige, elegance, education and social status, many respondents think that this dialect is too soft for men, who should be strong and speaks a thick-accent. It is a stereotypical feature of Jordanian society that men should speak a thick accent and of course courageous, and that is absent from the urban dialect spoken by men in this test.

Interestingly, some male speakers attract more positive attitudes than their female counterparts, as in the case of RP and RJ. This may be interpreted in the light of the other attitudes respondents have for these speakers. The female urban has higher scores than her male counterpart and the other speakers, while the other male speakers have more positive attitudes than their female counterparts. Many respondents think that the rural and Bedouin females should use more prestigious language. It is typical for men to speak with a thick accent but not for women, especially within the younger generations who consider that urban is the most feminine dialect for women. 23 female respondents do not speak in their native dialect but in the urban, specifically in the youngest age group, 20-30 age. Thus, age is a vital factor in LA should be investigated in depth in future research.

Most respondents' comments on the speakers were regarding the intelligibility of the dialect. Many of them do not find Bedouin intelligible, and it has the fewest votes for intelligibility. This result agrees with Bresnahan et al. (2002) who confirm that the more intelligible the dialect, the more positive is the attitude towards it (cf. 2.1.3.1). Some respondents' comments show their attachment to their native dialect, believing that it is a matter of legacy and heritage. They consider speaking in their native dialect a matter of pride, and shifting to another dialect a matter of shame. This is due to the concept of tribalism that is common in Jordanian society. Furthermore, in examining each response alone it appears that these thoughts affect respondents' evaluations of speakers who do not speak the same dialect of themselves. Some respondents tend to evaluate same-dialect speakers more positively than others. According to the results, when examining the effect of respondents' native dialect on the evaluation, the RP respondents evaluate the male RP more positively than all the other speakers while the Bedouin respondents evaluate the male Bedouin speaker more positively than the others. Similarly, the male urban speaker is evaluated by urban respondents more positively than the other speakers. That is, all these respondents are biased toward the speakers of their own speech group. This can be explained by the social identity theory, which states that people prefer, and evaluate more favorably, members of their own social in-groups, compared to out-group members (Cargile and Giles 1998) (cf. 2.1.2).

Evaluations reported by the three non-Jordanian respondents show slight differences among themselves. The urban variety is preferred by the Egyptian respondent while the Bedouin and RP are the favorite ones for the Iraqi female. This may be explained by each respondent choosing the closest variety to her native dialect and evaluating it more positively than the other ones. These results are again supported by social identity theory. The Cairene dialect and urban JA (sedentary-type) share many typological linguistic features. Their development is basically directed towards more analytical structures. Among the shared features are: the realization of the uvular stop /q/ as the glottal stop /ʔ/, the realization of interdental fricatives as post-dental stops, no indefinite marker -*in*, no gender distinction in finite verbs

and personal pronouns, and absence of internal passives (Palva 2006). Sociolinguistically, the dialects of the urban centers (Cairo and Amman) are thought of as model regional standards and more prestigious dialects (Palva 2006). The Iraqi (who speaks Baghdad Arabic/gələt-type) respondent enjoys the Bedouin JA the most. Bedouin Shammar tribes in Iraq, and Syro-Mesopotamian dialects in the north of Jordan belong to the same dialectal group which retain many typological linguistic features such as maintaining interdental fricatives, affricated reflexes of *k*, retaining gender distinction in plurals, productive use of internal/apophonic passives, and less frequent use of analytic structures (Palva 2006; Abu-Haidar 2006; Mashaqba 2015). This may explain why the Egyptian respondent prefers the urban variety but the Iraqi prefers Bedouin. The Druze have a distinct Arabic dialect, where their speech is characterized by the retention of the Standard Arabic /q/ instead of /g/ and the realization of light emphasis. The Druze, who emigrated from Lebanon from the 17th century onward, belong to Syrian sedentary-type dialects (Behnstedt 2009). Although the Druze dialect is not so close to JA dialects, the respondent's bias towards the urban speakers in her evaluation could be attributed to the notion that both vitiates belong to the sedentary-type dialects, and to the realization that urban dialect is the most intelligible, clearest and most prestigious one in Jordan.

Surprisingly, the RP respondents have a bias toward the urban speakers who do not belong to their speech group, which disagrees with the theory. Moreover, there are respondents who have negative bias toward those speakers. In other words, they evaluate them the least positively of all the speakers in a noticeable way. Bedouin respondents have a negative bias toward both the male RP speaker and the urban speakers, while urban respondents have a negative bias toward the male Bedouin speaker. The urban and Bedouin dialects reflect the most and least positive features reciprocally. This may be the reason why they have negative bias toward each other as they reflect the dialects furthest from each other.

When changing the context from evaluating the speakers as ordinary people to evaluating them in a context where the speaker is of superior status, the evaluation percentages differ slightly. Although the majority of votes state that respondents will not change their attitude to the speakers in that context, some may do. Moreover, in this case we can also see how the urban dialect has much higher percentages than the other dialects. Thus, context may affect attitude towards the same person. Cargile (1997) reveals that context affects attitude, and states that Chinese-accented speakers attracted different attitudes in two different contexts (cf. 2.1.3.2).

Context also plays a role in the field of employment. The results of Carlson and McHenry (2006) reveal that when the speaker's perceived accent or dialect is minimal, perceived ethnicity does not affect employability. However, all speakers with maximally perceived accents or dialects gain lower employability ratings (cf 2.2). In the current study, it is clear that the speaker's dialect affects his/her job chances especially for jobs that need speech skills. The two urban and the male Jordanian have the highest votes for jobs that require speech skills while the other speakers have fewer votes, with big differences. However, there is little difference when it comes to jobs that do not require speech skills. Hence, LA affects not only the stereotypical features about the speaker but also real situations like employability opportunities.

6. Conclusion

This study investigates the attitude people have toward four spoken varieties of Jordanian Arabic. The results indicate how each dialect is evaluated according to features that reflect the dialect itself and to ones that reflect a social image of the speakers of that dialect. This aids in grouping communities on the basis of their intergroup affinities. The paper also shows how different factors affect the respondents' attitudinal judgment, such as age, context, intelligibility and bias toward others in the same dialect group. It shows how attitudinal studies are important in identifying how people from one in-group view the personal character and social status of speakers of another group, and how they form associations about them.

The study confirms that employment opportunities are affected by the attitude people have toward the dialects of the speakers. This could be measured in future research where the respondents are from human resources and the instrument is an actual job interview. It would give broader outcomes regarding the relationship between attitudes to dialect and employment. Studies are also necessary to show how the learning process is affected by the attitude students have toward their teachers' dialects. With this in mind, future research on the relationship between attitude and learning in the Jordanian community would enhance the effectiveness and performance of the learning process. Among the features examined in our study, intelligibility should be given special attention. This paper shows whether respondents find a dialect intelligible, but it does not define the effect of intelligibility on the evaluation process regarding the other features. Some respondents' comments show that they find the dialect unclear and so they judge it less positively. This calls for a deeper analysis of the effect of intelligibility on judgment.

In sum, studies on attitudes towards language variation significantly contribute to the domain of sociolinguistics as they raise awareness of the fact that when dealing with someone who speaks in a certain variety, they are dealing with more than a set of formal features; they are dealing with feelings, stereotypes, expectations and prejudices. To understand the stereotypical features that characterize Jordanian society and the social image of its language varieties, researchers need to examine people's attitudes towards them. Furthermore, the whole existence of these dialects is justified by the multiplicity of reactions towards issues of linguistic identity, power and status. This study has added to the body of literature by describing an evaluative profile that is especially important because the four dialects shape the Jordanian community and its social images.

Attitude towards Jordanian Arabic Dialects: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

الموقف من اللهجات العربيّة الأردنيّة من منظور علم اللغة الاجتماعي

باسل مشاقبة، أنس الحنيطي، صهيب العبد الحق، ياسمين درداس
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الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في الموقف غير المتكافئ للناس تجاه اللهجات المحكيّة الرئيسيّة في الأردن. وللتحقق من ذلك، فقد تم فحص ثماني سمات نمطية: سهولة الفهم والوضوح، والمكانة، والكياسة، والتعليم، والمكانة الاجتماعية، والتلطيف، والشجاعة، والكرم. وقد نظر البحث في آلية اختلاف توزيع المواقف في سياقات مختلفة، وكيف يمكن أن يؤثر ذلك على فرص التوظيف، وكيف يمكن مناقشة الاستجابات داخل نظرية الهوية الاجتماعيّة. في ضوء ذلك، أُجري اختبار تقييمي / متطابق لثماني تسجيلات للهجات (بواقع تسجيلين لكل لهجة) من قبل 234 مستجيباً من مختلف الأعمار والأجناس واللهجات. كما جُمِعَتْ الردود من ثلاثة من غير الناطقين بأي من اللهجات العربيّة الأردنيّة (المصريّة والعراقيّة والدرزيّة). وبناء على الاختبار، أظهرت النتائج أن اللهجة المدنيّة لديها الموقف الأكثر إيجابيّة فيما يتعلق بسهولة الفهم/ الإدراك والمكانة والكياسة والتعليم والوضع الاجتماعي والتطليف، ولكن أقل المواقف إيجابيّة فيما يتعلق بالشجاعة والكرم؛ إذ سجلت اللهجة البدويّة أكثر المواقف إيجابيّة في هذا الجانب. كما تبيّن أنه قد يتغير الموقف عند تغيير سياق التقييم. وتبيّن أن هذه المواقف تؤثر في فرص التوظيف وبخاصة بالنسبة للوظائف التي تتطلب مهارات التحدث. وأظهرت النتائج أن التقييم يتأثر أيضًا إذا كان المتحدث من مجموعة لغويّة مختلفة أو مشابهة لتلك الخاصة بالمستجيب. وفي المحصّلة، تشكل نتائج هذه الدراسة دليلاً جوهرياً على قوة أيديولوجيات اللغة وعلم النفس الاجتماعي في المجتمعات اللغويّة التي يمكن للأفراد الانضمام إليها.

الكلمات المفتاحيّة: الموقف اللغوي، لهجة، اللغة العربيّة الأردنيّة، الصورة الاجتماعيّة.

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