languages

MDPI

*Article*

# Power Dynamics and Discourse Technologies in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic Allophonic Consonant Variations

**Bassel Alzboun *, Raed Al Ramahi and Nisreen Abu Hanak**

Department of English and French, The University of Jordan, Aqaba 11942, Jordan; r.ramahi@ju.edu.jo (R.A.R.); n.abuhanak@ju.edu.jo (N.A.H.)

* Correspondence: b.zboun@ju.edu.jo

**Abstract**

Most academic papers on Jordanian colloquial Arabic allophonic consonant variants have primarily examined their influence on the social status of speakers and their role in shaping linguistic prestige. However, there is a significant lack of research exploring the potential for manipulation and establishment of power through the deliberate use of consonantal variants by Jordanian speakers in Arabic. Using a variety of allophonic consonantal variants, this study investigates how speakers of Jordanian colloquial Arabic attempt to construct their discourse of power. The targeted phonemes in the current study were /q/, /θ/, /ð/, and /k/. Focus groups were used to gather data, which were then examined within the framework of Fairclough's technologized discourse and thematic approaches. Twenty persons, 10 women and 10 men, ranging in age from 18 to 45 years, comprised each of the two groups. The duration of each focus group session was 50 min. Analysis of the data indicates that the presence of [q], [θ], [ð], and [k] allophones in Standard Arabic is restricted to particular social circumstances, such as official and scientific environments. This usage is a common trait among those who have received formal education and privileged social standing. The findings also reveal that participants strategically utilize the allophonic variants [g], [ʔ], [k], [t̪], [d̪], and [tʃ] to exert influence over interlocutors by demonstrating authority related to social identity, gender, and emotional state. This study intends to advance discussions on allophonic consonant variants in Jordanian colloquial Arabic by providing insights into their manipulative functions.

**Keywords:** Jordanian colloquial Arabic; power dynamics; social identity; discourse technologies; critical studies

check for updates

Academic Editor: Elena Babatsouli

Received: 5 March 2025
Revised: 17 July 2025
Accepted: 29 July 2025
Published: 5 August 2025

**Citation:** Alzboun, B., Al Ramahi, R., & Hanak, N. A. (2025). Power Dynamics and Discourse Technologies in Jordanian Colloquial Arabic Allophonic Consonant Variations. *Languages*, *10*(8), 190. https://doi.org/10.3390/languages10080190

**Copyright:** © 2025 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

## 1. Introduction

This study explores the connection between critical discourse studies and phonological variants, focusing on the important aspect of the relationship between language and power, more specifically, the projection of authority and the perceived socioeconomic status of speakers. Through the examination of the connection, we reflect on the concept of 'allophonic potency' or 'speech impact'—the ability to influence and shape the thoughts of others (the interlocuter) to provoke an emotional and motivational response (see Nygaard, 2005), thereby affecting their mindset (see Yokoyama & Daibo, 2012; Callais, 2020). Linguistic variations can indeed be influenced by several factors. These variations facilitate linguistic evolution over time as specific linguistic variants attain prestige within a speech community (Trudgill, 2000; Labov, 2001). Education significantly influences variant selection, as individuals with elevated educational attainment frequently use standard

or prestigious language forms (Trudgill, 1979). Moreover, social class significantly affects linguistic variation, as various classes demonstrate unique speech patterns (Milroy, 1982; Labov, 2006, 2022). Furthermore, gender influences the selection of linguistic variants, with research indicating that women are more likely than men to adopt prestigious forms (Eckert, 2000; Holmes, 2016). Our study investigates how power may affect linguistic variation by privileging specific allophonic variants over others.

Language is not detached from reality, as it can impact it through cognition. Through verbal communication, we have the capacity to evoke a particular perception of the world in the mind of the person with whom we are conversing. We can control their awareness. Therefore, speech serves as a tool for shaping awareness and, under specific conditions, as a means of guiding attitudes and affecting worldviews, which can contribute to persuasion or social alignment (see Guéguen, 2011; Akopova, 2013; Gasparyan & Harutyunyan, 2021; Kakisina et al., 2022). Since speech serves as a medium for expressing thoughts and ideas, it is feasible to manipulate and impact an individual's thoughts and ideas by strategically employing language. In verbal communication, employing specific allophones can be crucial for showing social status or power (see Porras-Chaverri & Pocasangre-Fonseca, 2021; Benítez Fernández, 2023). Power and prestige are distinct but linked social concepts. Power is the ability to influence others through authority, coercion, or resources (Weber, 1947). Prestige, on the other hand, is respect, admiration, and social endorsement given to people or groups based on their perceived achievements, social status, or reputation (Gould, 2002). Fairclough (1989, 2001a) describes manipulation as a cunning method of exerting influence over others, whereas Van Dijk (2006, p. 359) characterizes it as the 'illegitimate' exercise of power by a dominant group to uphold social inequalities. Smirnova's (2011) work is particularly relevant, as it provides a nuanced account of how discourse practices contribute to the (re)production of power in everyday interactions—particularly through implicit, ideologically charged language choices. Her contribution aligns with the present study's focus on how subtle phonological variation can participate in the technologization of discourse and the social construction of power.

By incorporating the notion of 'power' into the examination of allophonic variants of Arabic consonants, a fresh viewpoint arises, acknowledging that free allophonic variants play a role in the creation of speaker authority (see Pavel, 2023). In addition to conventional factors, such as age, gender, and origin (see Labov, 2001), which affect how individuals' language use is connected to their social standing (Eckert, 1989; Eckert, 2000; Zhang & Liang, 2024; Al-Omyan, 2024), the incorporation of power as a variable clarifies why the same speaker may use consonantal variants in various social situations. This study argues that power dynamics and persuasive factors significantly influence Jordanian speakers' choices of alternative expressions, regardless of whether they are in comparable or different situations. The act of producing consonantal variants that are comparable to those of the recipients can be deduced to result in the manipulation of their emotions, thereby strengthening speakers' power to affect them. Akopova (2013) asserts that manipulative language enables speakers to exert control over others in quotidian dialogues. Our study indicates that females' use of the allophone [g] enables them to exert power. An additional illustration of the connection between allophonic variation and power is the perception that substituting [θ] with [t] signifies weakness or linguistic insecurity. This aligns with Labov's (1963) findings that provided a novel insight into the dynamics of linguistic change. Language is an important factor in group identification, solidarity, and the signaling of differences.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of these allophonic variants reflects not only regional background or speaker intention, but also the interplay of sociolects—linguistic registers that correspond to the speaker's social class, education, and community. As

Badawi (1973) demonstrated in his typology Mustawayāt al-ʿArabīyah al-muʿāṣirah fī Miṣr, Arabic use in Egypt (and by extension the Arab world) is better described as a continuum of five linguistic levels rather than a rigid binary diglossia. In his model, the realization of certain phonemes—such as [q], [ʔ], or [g]—serves as an index of socioeconomic status and educational attainment. These realizations help construct authority in speech by signaling belonging or aspiration to a particular social group.

In addition, the frequent code-switching between dialectal variants and more formal registers, observed in Jordanian speakers' strategic shifts between forms such as [q] and [g], or [ð] and [z], can be understood as pragmatic adaptations used to align with or distance oneself from specific interlocutor groups. These phenomena can also be interpreted through the lens of dialectology and isogloss mapping, especially considering that such phonemic boundaries often correspond to geographical and socio-historical divides. This reinforces the idea that the choice of allophonic variant is not merely linguistic, but discursively motivated and socially indexical.

Therefore, by applying sociolinguistic tools such as the concepts of sociolect, code-switching, isogloss, and dialectology, the present study seeks to uncover how linguistic variation functions as a mechanism of persuasion, alignment, and, ultimately, power construction in everyday Jordanian interactions.

The current study suggests that power dynamics are crucial to the pragmatic role of free variants. These variations help Jordanian speakers gain power by making it easier for them to blend in with and influence their interlocutors' language communities. Research in this area has not yet extensively investigated the phenomena where speakers heavily utilize various free variations of specific consonants, such as [q], [ð], and [θ], to affect their interlocutors in social interactions. Alshehri et al. (2024) clarified the/r/phoneme's manifestation in diverse contexts and geographical locations and emphasized its phonetic variability. The study by Al Abdely and Ali (2023) demonstrated notable disparities in vowel formants attributable to gender. Female speakers typically articulate vowels at elevated frequencies, whereas male speakers generally produce vowels in more anterior positions. Al-Hamzi (2023) revealed that rural working-class participants utilize the sound [ṣ] with greater frequency, possibly serving as an indicator of community identification, and that age affects variation, whereas social class does not exhibit substantial differences.

Prior research on Jordanian dialects has predominantly focused on the urban/rural dialect differential (e.g., Bellem, 2017; Al-Wer, 2020; Na'eem et al., 2020; Salah, 2021), although some studies have investigated the Bedouin/urban contrast (e.g., Ingham, 2009; Holes, 2016; Zibin, 2019). In certain regions of the Arab world, including Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt (Al-Wer, 2007a, 2007b; Wilmsen & Woidich, 2007), a distinction is evident among urban, rural, and Bedouin populations. Studies on consonant variations in Jordanian colloquial Arabic have mostly concentrated on their social implications, such as how they affect speakers' status (e.g., Abdel-Jawad, 1986; Omari & Van Herk, 2016; Abu Nahel, 2021; Mashaqba et al., 2023). Several scholarly inquiries (e.g., Al-Wer, 1999; Al-Tamimi, 2001; Al-Masaeed, 2012; Gattelli, 2014; Bani Amer, 2019) have scrutinized their classification as regional dialectal variants. Na'eem et al. (2020) focused on medial tri-consonantal clusters in urban Jordanian Arabic. Numerous studies (e.g., Jaber, 2001; Zuraiq & Zhang, 2006; A. I. Al Huneety et al., 2023) have examined the phonological assimilation of consonant clusters in urban Jordanian Arabic. Moreover, research on Jordanian dialects indicates that several studies (e.g., Sakarna, 2002; Mashaqba, 2015; A. Al Huneety et al., 2021; Herin et al., 2022) have concentrated on the phonological features of Jordanian Bedouin dialects, particularly consonant variations. These studies focused on the distinctive characteristics that differentiate Bedouin dialects from other Jordanian Arabic dialects. El Salman (2016) argued that Bedouins, regardless of their geographical location, share cer-

tain linguistic characteristics, particularly those related to consonants, due to their shared culture. El Salman (2016) asserts that Bedouins consistently employ the [g] version or the /ʤ/ of the [k] variable.

The significance of our study lies in its capacity to clarify how the allophonic variations of /q/, /θ/, /ð/, and /k/ in Jordanian colloquial Arabic influence power dynamics among Jordanian speakers.

This observation resonates with Watson's (2007) comprehensive account of Arabic phonological variation, where she emphasizes how dialectal differences manifest in the realization of specific phonemes. Watson demonstrates that variation across Arabic dialects—including the treatment of emphatic consonants, the realization of interdentals, and the presence or absence of uvulars—is not merely regional but sociolinguistically loaded. Such phonetic differences often signal identity, affiliation, and social intent.

By incorporating such phonological nuance into our analysis, this study employs Fairclough's (2006) framework of critical discourse analysis, namely, the technologization of discourse, to better understand power dynamics among Jordanian speakers. Through this research, we seek to answer the following question:

How do the technologized allophonic variants of /q/, /θ/, /ð/, and /k/ employed by Jordanian speakers during social interactions contribute to the projection of social authority, the signalling of socioeconomic status, and the alignment or distancing from particular social groups?

By offering a detailed examination of how allophones affect power dynamics in social interactions, the present study provides a fresh perspective on allophonic consonant variants used by speakers in conversation. By addressing the research question mentioned earlier, this work is expected to go beyond the usual analyses of language variations and explore the communicative strategies that may lead to the manipulation and construction of power among Jordanian speakers. Sociolinguistics benefits greatly from these findings. As such, they shed light on both theoretical and practical attempts to show how allophonic differences affect social interactions and the construction of power.

*The Analyzed Phonemes and Their Variations*

In this study, we focused on four phonemes in Jordanian spoken Arabic that are known for their significant phonetic variation and their potential connection to power dynamics, identity, or social positioning. For each phoneme, we present its canonical form along with its major regional or social variants, accompanied by concrete examples from the Jordanian dialect.

1. The phoneme /q/

The consonant /q/, as a voiceless uvular stop, can take two distinct forms: either as [g], a voiced velar stop, or as [ʔ], a glottal stop. For example, the word [qa:l] meaning "he said" can be pronounced as [qa:l], which tends to appear in more formal or religious registers, [ga:l], commonly heard in rural or Bedouin speech, or [ʔa:l], typical of urban centers such as Amman (Al-Wer, 2007a).

2. The phoneme /θ/

The consonant /θ/, typically realized as a voiceless interdental fricative, is frequently substituted by the [t̪], voiceless apico-dental stop in spoken Jordanian Arabic. This phonological alternation is exemplified by the word [θala:θa] "three", which may be articulated as either [θala:θa] or [t̪ala:t̪a]. Similarly, the word [θawb] "traditional robe" can be pronounced as [θawb] in more formal registers or Qur'anic recitation, while [t̪o:b] is the more common variant in everyday colloquial usage. This substitution is generally unmarked

socially and widely accepted in casual speech, although the use of [θ] may occasionally index a higher level of formality or religious affiliation (see Bani Amer, 2019).

3. The phoneme /ð/

The phoneme /ð/, typically realized as a voiced interdental fricative, is frequently substituted by the [d̪], voiced apico-dental stop in Jordanian Arabic, particularly in informal registers. This alternation is exemplified by the word [ðahab] "he went", which may be articulated as either [ðahab] or [d̪ahab], with the latter being predominant in colloquial speech. As with /θ/, the choice between [ð] and [d̪] may occasionally index stylistic awareness or educational background; however, the [d̪] variant remains widely used across various social strata and is generally unmarked in everyday communication (Al-Tamimi, 2001; Al-Masaeed, 2012).

4. The phoneme/k/

The consonant /k/, voiceless velar stop, is frequently realized as [t͡ʃ], voiceless palatal affricate—phonetically similar to the English "ch" in church—in certain sociolinguistic contexts within Jordanian Arabic. This affrication is particularly common in informal registers, often observed among younger speakers or in urban environments, and may carry stylistic or expressive connotations. For instance, the word [ke:f] "how" can be pronounced as either [kif] or [t͡ʃif], with the latter variant indexing features such as emotional intensity, urban affiliation, or youth identity.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its analytical lens. The CDA's principal concern is to analyze discourses produced by powerful social actors who can shape power in discourse. The primary goal of critical discourse analysis is to provide power analysis (Agger, 1991; Van Dijk, 2006); it seeks to identify latent ideologies and power relations. Fairclough's technologization of discourse served as the primary theoretical framework for analyzing the data in this study. Fairclough (2006) created the technologization of discourse in response to Foucault's ideas on power construction (Mills, 2003). Fairclough (2013) defined the technologization of discourse as the process of establishing a new hegemony through interventions in discourse practices. The technologization of discourse maintains a strong relationship between linguistic knowledge, discourse, and power (Fairclough, 1996b). According to Fairclough (2010), discourse technology has become a prominent characteristic of contemporary institutional discursive practices because of the introduction and dissemination of what Fairclough refers to as discourse technologies. In addition, technologization is defined by Smirnova (2011, p. 38) as the act of influencing and controlling people's lives and views through specific language tools. The technologization of discourse is primarily reliant on the power of the social perspective assumed by the discourse technologist while addressing the audience (Kaplunenko, 2007). In an analogous sense, linguistic skills established inside a technologized discourse are critical for manipulating text receivers and thus contribute to the construction of the discourse of power.

The analysis in this study was heavily influenced by "expert technological syntax" (Smirnova, 2011, p. 40), which is defined as speakers (expert technologists) purposefully selecting distinct allophonic consonant variants during social interactions. The speakers' meticulous choice of these variations enables them to closely align linguistically with the speech community, facilitating their active engagement in social interactions within a heterogeneous speech group. When speakers assimilate phonologically into a speech community, it does not mean that they are subject to the phonological rules and norms of that community. Conversely, the process of phonological assimilation, as described

by Smirnova (2011, p. 40) as being carried out by a technology professional, can help speakers create a strong impact on the audience, resulting in new and intense emotions and experiences, as stated by Faimau and Behrens (2016, p. 72).

The deliberate selection of consonant variants by speakers enables them to exert a significant influence on the speech community and effectively regulate their emotions and imaginations. Fairclough's theoretical framework on the technologization of discourse (see Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard, 2023) offers valuable insights into how the use of different technologized allophones influences the power dynamics of speakers. Influencing recipients is invariably dependent on the linguistic tools employed in technologized discourse. In this study, the technologization of discourse was widely employed to show the manipulative sense of the discourse of power. By demonstrating how expert syntax technology (see Smirnova, 2011) alters the use of allophonic variations in speech and how this alters the functioning of power in various social contexts, Fairclough's approach helped answer the research question.

To emphasize that such technolinguistic choices are not exclusive to Arabic, it is important to consider how linguistic variation serves similar power-related functions across world languages. For instance, in British English, Received Pronunciation (RP) has long indexed education, authority, and upper-class status, while regional northern accents have often been perceived as less prestigious (Trudgill, 2000). In American English, speakers frequently alternate between African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Standard American English as a way to negotiate identity, solidarity, and social legitimacy (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Similarly, Japanese uses the honorific system keigo to maintain hierarchies and express social deference (Ide, 1989), while in French, choices such as tu vs. vous or regional vs. standard accents signal relative power, intimacy, or formality (Brown & Gilman, 1960). These examples show that phonological, lexical, and rhetorical variation often play a crucial role in signaling and negotiating power dynamics in everyday interactions. This suggests that the Arabic case explored in the present study aligns with a broader and likely universal linguistic phenomenon.

## 3. Method

### *3.1. Data Collection*

#### 3.1.1. Participants

We used Facebook to recruit participants. We interacted with Facebook to find volunteers who were willing to participate in this research. First, 45 participants were contacted. Then, we recruited only 20 participants. We excluded 25 participants for three reasons. The first reason is that seven of them were from the same area, which we thought could have affected the findings, and the second reason is that thirteen were outside Jordan, which made them unable to attend the focus groups. Third, we could not obtain consent from five participants, so they were excluded. Participants were selected based on the objectives of the study, which tested the notion of power in free variants of consonants in Jordanian Arabic. Their selection aimed to reflect reality and explore the greatest possible diversity of testimonies to mix opinions and bring out all points of view on the subject. Therefore, all the participants were strangers to the interviewers, who are the researchers themselves. They are from different areas in Jordan, and their ages ranged from 18 to 45 years at the time of the interview. All of them were educated to the tertiary level. The interviews were conducted indoors. To protect their privacy and identity, they were assigned pseudonyms—female and male—from 1 to 20. The interviews were conducted in Arabic and were translated into English. The data for this study were generated using focus groups. Data were gathered from the focus group discussions and semi-structured face-to-face interviews. We recorded the interviews.

#### 3.1.2. Procedure

Focus groups were the main source of data in this study. According to Stewart (2018), a focus group can be broadly defined as a type of group discussion on a topic under the guidance of a trained group moderator. Agar and MacDonald (1995) suggest that a focus group lies somewhere between a meeting (reflecting the fact that it is specifically organized in advance and has a structure) and a conversation (reflecting the fact that the discussion nonetheless has a degree of spontaneity, with individuals picking up on one another's contributions). Focus groups yield significant insights into linguistic production by elucidating the functioning of language within social contexts. When meticulously designed, they provide a robust instrument for examining spoken discourse, identity formation, and sociolinguistic tendencies. Through the discourse of language-related subjects, participants disclose implicit biases, assumptions, and subjective assessments (see Garrett, 2010; Al Ghazali, 2014). A prior study (Prior, 2018) examined qualitative research methodologies, exploring the philosophical and methodological foundations of employing interviews and focus groups.

Focus group discussions helped us gain an in-depth understanding of the power relations among the participants. Two focus groups were formed. Each group consisted of 10 participants (10 women and 10 men) led through open discussion by us. While moderating the open discussion for each group, we attempted to generate various ideas and opinions. Each focus group lasted for 50 min. However, at the same time, we had to carry out these tasks while keeping in mind that we had to remain neutral and attentive, without taking the place of the participants or revealing our opinion on the issue at hand. The interviews were semi-structured, based on open questions developed in an interview guide. The main question was this: What are the reasons and feelings that lead you to use the variants of the four consonants in your usual discussions? During the response to the questions, participants expressed their strategic allophonic consonant choices, shaped by social functions and their ability to assert social, regional, and personal power. We recorded their responses and conducted a comparative analysis later.

### *3.2. Data Analysis*

The data were collected in the form of audio recording and transcribed in full without correction or reformulation of the participants' comments (verbatim transcription) to ensure the validity and richness of the findings. The audios of the interviews were transcribed. Before making a full transcription, we listened to the recordings to appropriate the content. After the listening phase, the data were coded and categorized, and themes were generated. After generating themes, the data were further examined through Fairclough's (2013) perspective, specifically, the technologization of discourse. We also actively worked to evaluate the data resulting from focus group discussions, relying heavily on Smirnova's (2011) study, which addresses the levels of technologization in discourse. Smirnova's level of technological syntax was used in the data analysis. Although Smirnova's expert technology of syntax includes alliteration, rhythm, reiteration, and rhyme, our research endeavors to explore allophonic variations as part of the syntax technology that contributes to the construction of manipulation.

### *3.3. Research Ethics*

Study participants received comprehensive information regarding the study's objectives, results, and confidentiality of their identities. To safeguard the confidentiality of the individuals involved, all participants were assigned pseudonyms ranging from female 1 to female 10, as well as male 1 to male 10.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

Previous research on Jordanian colloquial Arabic has extensively documented the regional and social variation in the phonological realization of certain segments, particularly /q/, /θ/, /ð/, and /k/, emphasizing their role in indexing speaker identity, geographic origin, and social affiliation (Al-Wer, 2003; Habib, 2009; Alshehri et al., 2024). For instance, the realization of /q/ as [g] is commonly associated with rural and Bedouin speech communities and is frequently favored by male speakers, while the glottal variant [ʔ] tends to be more prevalent in urban environments and among female speakers (Al-Wer, 2007b). These phonetic variants thus function not merely as linguistic features but also as socio-indexical resources that may signal authority, in-group solidarity, or social prestige (Bassiouney, 2009a).

However, while these studies have mapped the sociolinguistic distribution of such variants, comparatively less attention has been paid to their strategic and performative use—that is, how speakers deliberately manipulate these allophonic choices to construct power, influence their audiences, and negotiate social positioning in interaction. This study addresses this gap by investigating the pragmatic deployment of /q/, /θ/, /ð/, and /k/ variants in Jordanian Arabic, focusing on how such usage contributes to the enactment of power relations. The subsequent sections explore the communicative functions of these variants and the broader sociolinguistic patterns through which power, identity, and agency are negotiated in contextually marked discourse.

### *4.1. Pragmatic Functions of Allophonic Variations*

In this section, we examine how the participants demonstrate their comprehension of allophonic variations in connection with their pragmatic roles, specifically in the context of power dynamics. We found that participants had different degrees of agreement regarding the connection between allophonic variants and power construction. The following conclusions were drawn from the data analysis.

#### 4.1.1. Allophones [q], [θ], [ð], and [k] in Standard Arabic

All participants highlighted the recurrent use of the allophonic variants [q] as [maqlab] "prank", [θ] as [kaθi:r] "a lot", [ð] as [maðhab] "doctrine", and [k] as [kalb] "dog", which are characteristic of Standard Arabic, in high-level institutional contexts such as academic discourse, media communication, religious sermons, and legal proceedings. The faithful realization of these phonemes according to the norms of Modern Standard Arabic is widely perceived as a marker of social distinction, reflecting a high level of education, advanced linguistic competence, and affiliation with a prestigious sociolect. Educated speakers, for instance, tend to favor forms such as [ʔiqra:r] "acknowledgment" with [q], in line with the standard, rather than colloquial variants like [g] or [ʔ]. Similarly, the use of [θ] and [ð] in words such as [mumaθθil] "actor" or [ðahab] "gold" signals an orientation toward a formal and elevated linguistic register.

This tendency is consistent with the sociolinguistic frameworks previously discussed, which suggest that the use of standardized forms functions as a sociolectal indicator of social status, the degree of formality, and the social roles that speakers aim to adopt. These phonological choices are not merely the result of internalized linguistic mechanisms but are embedded in performative dynamics wherein language operates as a tool for identity construction, social legitimation, and the enactment of authority. As several participants noted, such pronunciation choices are not simply automatic, but rather deliberate discursive strategies aimed at projecting prestige, credibility, and expertise in contexts where these values are particularly salient.

Male 1: "Yes, especially in official discourse, where the use of forms closer to Standard Arabic lends a certain credibility to speech."

Female 1: "I use them in official and scientific discourse, where it imparts an official character and a higher social level in terms of formality."

Female 8: "I use them in official discourse to leave an impression of the power of language."

Female 9: "Especially in an academic context, where I feel that the person speaking to me takes me seriously."

The participants' selection of the [q], [θ], [ð], and [k] allophones in Standard Arabic, particularly Female 1, 8, and 9, as well as Male 1, in formal contexts enabled them to exert a strong influence on the audience by demonstrating their high level of education and social status. This amplifies their credibility and effectiveness in their perception of the audience.

This finding is consistent with Fairclough's (1996a, 1996b) concept of the technologization of discourse, which suggests that we may construct good communication skills, typically in professional settings or seminars. Using allophonic variants in Standard Arabic to include technology in the official discourse enhances audience persuasion. Identifying the four distinct speech sounds in traditional Arabic in formal contexts, such as academic settings, aligns with the notion of "enhanced language reflexivity" (Fairclough, 2001b, p. 232).

This concept highlights participants' heightened metalinguistic awareness, particularly their ability to consciously reflect on and manipulate specific phonological features within institutional discourse. The deliberate use of Standard Arabic allophones—[q], [θ], [ð], and [k]—demonstrates not only a strong command of linguistic norms, but also a nuanced understanding of the social meanings these forms convey. Such awareness aligns with previous research in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, which shows that speakers—especially in multilingual or diglossic contexts—strategically adjust their linguistic practices in response to identity concerns, prestige dynamics, or communicative goals (Bassiouney, 2009a; Meyerhoff, 2011). In the Arabic context, Bassiouney (2006) observes that speakers often display metalinguistic sensitivity when navigating between colloquial and standard forms, particularly in formal or symbolically charged situations. Similarly, Fairclough (2010) emphasizes that discursive practices both shape and are shaped by institutional power structures. In this study, the use of these marked phonological variants is not merely habitual; rather, it reflects a conscious alignment with the sociolinguistic expectations of formal discourse, intended to project authority, credibility, and competence.

#### 4.1.2. Realization of the Phoneme /θ/ to the [t̪] Form

The data analysis showed that four individuals (three males and one female) consistently avoided switching between [θ] and its variants [t] or [s]. Their reluctance to switch was driven by multiple sociolinguistic factors.

One key motivation is linked to the concept of denial of origin. For these speakers, maintaining the [θ] pronunciation—as in [θama:nja] "eight" or [θaqa:fa] "culture"—is perceived as a marker of Bedouin or rural identity. Conversely, shifting to [t̪]—as in [t̪ama:nja] "eight" or [t̪aqa:fa] "culture"—is interpreted as a rejection of their heritage.

Another prominent factor is associated with social vulnerability. The substitution of [θ] with [t] was often perceived as a sign of weakness or linguistic insecurity. For example, one participant expressed concern that saying taqāfa instead of thaqāfa might be interpreted by others as an attempt to "fit in" or avoid stigma, suggesting linguistic insecurity.

Moreover, several participants linked the [θ] sound to masculinity. Three male respondents emphasized that pronouncing words such as [θo:b] "robe" or [kaθi:f] "heavy" with

[θ] reinforces a strong, authentic masculine identity, while switching to [t̪] or [s] weakens this perception.

It is also worth noting that, in some dialectal variants, the phoneme /θ/ may be realized as [s] rather than [t̪], depending on both the lexical item and the regional background. For instance, the Modern Standard Arabic preposition [miθl] "like" is frequently pronounced as [mit̪l] or even [misl] in colloquial speech, depending on the speaker's background. Similarly, [maθalan] "for example" may appear as [masalan] in everyday discourse, reflecting the variant [s] realization of /θ/.

In contrast, four other male participants often switched back and forth between the variants. They used [t̪] or [s] informally—for example, in friendly banter or humorous situations—but retained [θ] in formal or serious contexts. They proposed that the [θ] allophone is deemed more plausible in social circumstances, whereas the [t̪] variant is perceived as somewhat feminine.

The findings are consistent with Swales' (1990) notion of a 'discourse community,' which refers to a socio-rhetorical network that emerges to pursue shared objectives, generates distinct texts, and has its own specialized language. Membership in this community is restricted to individuals who possess the requisite language proficiency. Within this specialized society, the technologically advanced language structure, specifically the chosen variation in speech sounds, influences listeners. The alternating use of [θ] and [t̪] in this technological context conveys notions of masculinity, heritage, and camaraderie.

However, the findings indicate that one male and six females consistently engage in phonological code-switching between sounds [θ] and [t̪] in different situations. This phonological code-switching typically occurs in a familial setting or during social interactions with friends. In women's speech, replacing the sound [t̪] with [θ] is perceived as adding feminine nuances to their language. Conversely, six women reported that they tended to use the [θ] form when interacting with unfamiliar males, colleagues at work, during moments of anger or uncertainty, or when outside the city. This alternation is rationalized as a way of asserting femininity or reacting to overwhelming emotions. This finding is consistent with Al Abdely and Ali (2023), who revealed that female speakers typically articulate vowels at elevated frequencies to assert femininity. Moreover, this finding aligns with Nygaard (2005), who suggested that allophonic variants can affect speech perception, subsequently influencing emotional and motivational responses.

> Female 5: "[t̪] all the time, sometimes [θ] with older people out of respect if they use [θ]."

> Female 9: "[t̪] with family, close ones, and friends because I picked it up from them. However, when I'm annoyed, I'll use [θ]."

Additionally, another finding revealed that three females and two males indicated their inclination toward using the sound [t̪] in most situations, except in formal and scientific settings. They described this predilection as habitual behavior and the incorporation of this variation into their daily speech, which they had acquired during their upbringing. The finding that these individuals utilize the allophone [t̪] in their everyday interactions highlights the dynamic nature of phonological code-switching. Although the [t̪] allophone is sometimes perceived as feeble and feminine, male speakers can use it strategically to build rapport within social circles and exert influence in specific social situations.

Finsen (2016) argues that powerful actors can use language to impose their influence, and our data support this view. When speakers use different forms of language to affect another person's desires or opinions, they engage in linguistic manipulation (see Goodin, 1980; Akopova, 2013; Gasparyan & Harutyunyan, 2021). Furthermore, the findings also showed that someone who has casually used this variation may employ it in formal

settings without hesitation. This observation aligns with findings in Arabic sociolinguistics, where the realization of /q/ as [g] is commonly associated with identity marking, especially in tribal or rural contexts, while [ʔ] tends to signal urban prestige or female speech patterns in some regions (see Al-Wer, 2007b; Bassiouney, 2009b). Such variation is a key feature of Arabic sociolects and serves as a symbolic resource for expressing social alignment and negotiating status.

Male 3: "I learned to speak like this; it's our way of speaking."

The variation of the phoneme /θ/—as realized through forms such as [θ], [t̪], and [s]—is summarized in the following table, which highlights the relevant social groups, usage contexts, and the indexical meanings associated with each variant (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Realizations of the Phoneme /θ/.

| Phoneme | Variants | Social Groups | Contexts of Use | Indexical Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /θ/ | [θ], [t̪], [s] | Males, females, young urban speakers | Family and informal settings, anger, formality, gendered discourse, respectful interactions | Masculinity, emotional expressiveness, insecurity, politeness, feminine nuance |

4.1.3. Realization of the Phoneme /q/ to [g], [ʔ], [k], and [t͡ʃ] Forms

The phoneme /q/, which is a voiceless plosive, is occasionally pronounced as a glottal stop [ʔ]. For instance, the term [ga:l] denoting "he said" can be articulated as [ʔa:l] "he said". The interviewed individuals were classified into three distinct groups. The initial cohort appeared to advocate [g] pronunciation. Out of all the respondents, 30% of them, which is equivalent to four men, stated that they never use the [ʔ] sound and instead prefer to use [g] in all situations. They defended their decisions by citing the practical function of the allophonic variant [g] in strengthening social cohesion. They believe that utilizing [g] enhances their connection with a social group that is regarded as more significant and influential. Within the communal consciousness of their society, [g] is linked to affluence and urbanity and viewed as a symbol of privilege. Through the utilization of [g], individuals assert their existence within a social framework. This finding aligns with Al-Hamzi (2023), who showed that rural working-class participants utilize the emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative [ṣ] with greater frequency, possibly serving as an indicator of community identification. They explained: "It's the girls, the rich people, and the city dwellers who use it. This realization means that I am a Bedouin. If I use [ʔ], the other members of my tribe won't respect me, and I don't want to deny my Bedouin origins." Moreover, for them, [g] is linked to masculinity. They stated the following:

"This realization expresses my identity and personality as a man."

"I use it all the time because it reflects my strength as a man."

This observation aligns with findings in Arabic sociolinguistics, where the realization of /q/ as [g] is commonly associated with identity marking, especially in tribal or rural contexts, while [ʔ] tends to signal urban prestige or female speech patterns in some regions (see Al-Wer, 2007b; Bassiouney, 2009a). Such variation is a key feature of Arabic sociolects and serves as a symbolic resource for expressing social alignment and negotiating status.

However, the remaining group members advocated the utilization of both the [g] and [ʔ] realizations of the phoneme /q/. Three men and three women indicated that they alternated between the two realizations based on the context of their discourse. The [g] realization is commonly employed to assimilate with the interlocutor's group, enabling the speaker to experience a greater sense of ease.

Male 5: "I constantly use the [g] pronunciation with Bedouins, meaning people who always think in terms of tribe."

Female 7: "I use the [g] with older people who speak Bedouin."

Realization of [g] was employed to assert one's own authority. This revelation epitomizes the fortitude of collective consciousness.

Female 8: "When I want to appear strong and display my masculinity."

Female 9: "[g] expresses a certain firmness and power, which can give others the impression that I am more serious and stricter in my speech."

The realization of [g] is employed while engaging with someone of the opposite gender. The three females (7, 8, and 9) emphasized the importance of using this specific speech sound while interacting with male colleagues, especially when there was no existing familiarity. As a result, females' use of the allophone [g] allows them to generate power. In this case, females as expert technologists select the variant that enables them to influence others. This is consistent with Smirnova (2011) observations of the frequent usage of specific language forms to safeguard and reinforce text producers.

Female 7: "When I use the [g] sound, my voice becomes more dominant, especially in conversations with the opposite sex."

Female 6: "If I tend to give them the impression that I have power and I am not a weak person."

This finding also reflects a broader sociolinguistic phenomenon observable in other languages, where women may alter certain linguistic features to project authority or command respect. For instance, in English, women might adopt a deeper voice register or more assertive speech styles (see Podesva, 2007; Eckert, 2012). Carroll's (2021) study shows that young American women actively modulate their speech depending on context, lowering their average pitch and adapting their use of uptalk or vocal fry to sound more competent during interviews or professional interactions. These shifts, however, come with trade-offs: while authority might be gained, perceptions of attractiveness or politeness may suffer. Similarly, Sorokowski et al. (2019) found that both male and female professionals—scientists speaking in expert vs. casual contexts—lowered their vocal pitch and formant frequencies to signal authority, with women lowering their pitch significantly more than men. Their findings confirm that nonverbal vocal modulation plays a key role in shaping social judgments of competence and power, especially in professional environments.

What distinguishes the Jordanian Arabic case is the phonological granularity of power projection through the choice of the [g] variant. Rather than modifying suprasegmental features such as pitch or intonation, as observed in English, Jordanian female technologists engage in micro-level phonemic modulation, selecting the socially salient [g] allophone instead of [ʔ] to index authority when speaking to unfamiliar male colleagues. This segmental strategy functions as a socio-indexical resource, enabling speakers to assert expertise and negotiate power within their linguistic community. It highlights how language users, across different linguistic and cultural contexts, fine-tune their expressive repertoire to align with shifting social expectations and identity performances.

The realization of [g] is associated with their psychological state when they feel threatened, angry, or frustrated. In contrast, the use of the [ʔ] realization is associated with specific situations, including socialization with family and friends.

Female 8: "All the time, when I'm with friends, family, or people I already know."

In contexts where they seek to express their femininity, all female respondents mentioned using the [ʔ] realization to feel more feminine.

Female 3: "With other women, as it reinforces my femininity."

Female 5: "When I want to present a feminine and gentle image of myself."

In the context of integration within the interlocutor's group, they also prefer the [ʔ] variant.

Female 7: "With prestigious women [i.e., those from the affluent social class] because it's a common variant among us, showing that I am affluent."

In addition, two males and seven females expressed a preference for the [ʔ] variation due to its association with their family and close acquaintances. They observed that this understanding reinforces their connection to the social group they perceive as urban, whereas [g] variation is linked to peasants and Bedouins residing in rural areas and deserts. It is worth noting that several of these participants were themselves raised in urban settings, which helps explain their inclination to use the urban-associated [ʔ] variant when interacting with loved ones, aligning with the dialect they grew up speaking.

Male 5: "It's the sound I learned from childhood. I use it with people of the same social and cultural level."

Female 2: "I use it all the time because it's a sound that expresses my identity, personality, and femininity."

One male participant reported that he typically uses the [g] variant but occasionally shifts to the [k] variant when visiting Palestine, in order to avoid being ridiculed by speakers who associate more closely with that accent. While his Jordanian national identity aligns him with the [g] pronunciation, adopting the [k] variant allows him to feel a greater sense of belonging within his extended family. For instance, the word [qabl] "before" is commonly pronounced as [gabl] or [ʔabl] in Jordan, whereas in certain Palestinian dialects, it is realized as [kabel]. This phonological adjustment illustrates how the expert technologist strategically selects linguistic variants to construct an influential social identity—specifically, that of a relative whose speech aligns with the local norm. This shift across an isogloss—a phonological boundary marking regional variation—illustrates how speakers adjust their speech to navigate social belonging and identity.

Table 2 synthesizes the phonological variations of the phoneme /q/ observed among the participants, highlighting the interplay between social identity, usage contexts, and the indexical meanings attached to each variant.

**Table 2.** Realizations of the phoneme /q/.

| Phoneme | Variants | Social Groups | Contexts of Use | Indexical Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /q/ | [g] | Men (especially Bedouins), some women | Tribal contexts, masculine assertion, unfamiliar male interlocutors | Strength, masculinity, tribal identity, authority |
| /q/ | [ʔ] | Women (urban, affluent), youth, mixed speakers | With family, friends, female peers, prestigious interlocutors | Femininity, intimacy, urbanity, gentleness |
| /q/ | [k] | Jordanians of Palestinian origin | In Palestinian environments or with Palestinian relatives | Social adaptation, regional belonging |

#### 4.1.4. Realization of the Phoneme /ð/ to the [d̪] Form

The phoneme /ð/, a voiced interdental fricative typical of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), is frequently realized as [d̪], a voiced apio-dental stop, in various Jordanian dialects. For example, the MSA word [haːðaˈ] "this" may be pronounced as [haːd̪a] in

dialectal speech. During the interviews, three males and one female confirmed their adherence to pronunciation [ð]. Their rationale for this decision was based on two primary factors: strengthening their social membership and preserving a connection with their masculinity—a purpose like that identified for the allophone [g]. Nevertheless, four males and two females elucidated their tendency to alternate between the two realizations depending on the contextual cues in their speech, employing a similar rationale as the [g] allophone. In conclusion, three male and seven female participants demonstrated a consistent preference for the [d̪] pronunciation, citing reasons similar to those given for the use of the [g] variant—namely, projecting authority, aligning with local norms of masculinity or strength, and establishing credibility in professional or mixed-gender interactions. The alternation between [d̪] and [ð] variations can be viewed as a technique for generating power by influencing interlocutors, aligning with Van Eemeren's (2005) perspective on manipulation, which involves deceiving others by using communicative devices that do not align with reasonable standards.

While some participants consciously link their phonological choices to social positioning, other variations appear as habitual or emotionally driven responses. In contexts like anger or irritation, certain variants may emerge automatically, suggesting a continuum between strategic intent and linguistic habitus.

Table 3 summarizes how the phoneme /ð/ is realized, highlighting the contexts and social meanings tied to each variant.

**Table 3.** Realizations of the phoneme /q/.

| Phoneme | Variants | Social Groups | Contexts of Use | Indexical Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /ð/ | [ð] | Some men and one woman | Formal or MSA-influenced contexts, assertion of linguistic conservatism | Masculinity, authenticity, educated or conservative identity |
| /ð/ | [d̪] | Most women and men across urban/rural settings | Informal settings, daily conversation, professional or mixed-gender interaction | Authority, strength, masculinity, strategic influence |
| /ð/ | [ð]/[d̪] (alternating) | Mixed speakers (4 males, 2 females) | Depends on emotional state (e.g., anger), formality, audience | Strategic adaptability, emotional expression, linguistic habitus |

#### 4.1.5. Realization of the Phoneme /k/ to the [t͡ʃ] Form

Of the 20 individuals interviewed, only three reported switching from [k] to [t͡ʃ] in specific contexts, particularly when they wished to emphasize their Bedouin or rural heritage. For instance, the /k/ in words such as [baħik] "I love you" or [ke:f] "how" may be realized as [t͡ʃ], yielding forms like [baħit͡ʃ] and [ke:f]. This phonological shift functions as an indexical marker of tribal solidarity and masculine strength. These participants believed that such pronunciation reflects group unity and reinforces gender identity. This finding aligns with Fairclough's (2006) framework on the technologization of discourse, illustrating how linguistic forms can embody institutionalized power structures linked to gender and tribal affiliation.

In contrast, 17 participants stated they deliberately avoided this variant due to its association with rurality and perceived linguistic conservatism. They favored the [k] realization, which, in their view, aligns with urban speech norms and conveys modernity and social prestige. For these speakers, adhering to [k] helps project an identity associated with urban sophistication and authority. This contrast underscores how phonological variation is shaped by speakers' perceptions of power, social status, and the rural–urban divide within the Arabic dialect continuum.

Table 4 summarizes the variation in the realization of the phoneme /k/ among the interviewed individuals, highlighting the social groups involved, the contexts in which each variant is used, and the indexical meanings attributed to these phonological choices.

**Table 4.** Realizations of the Phoneme /k/.

| Phoneme | Variants | Social Groups | Contexts of Use | Indexical Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /k/ | [k] | Majority (17 participants) were Urban, Modern, Educated speakers | Formal and informal speech; professional and social interactions | Urban sophistication, modernity, social prestige, authority |
| /k/ | [t͡ʃ] | Minority (3 participants) Bedouin, Rural speakers | Emphasis on Bedouin/rural heritage, tribal solidarity, gendered contexts | Tribal identity, masculine strength, group unity, rural affiliation |

## 5. Emerging Themes Related to Power Construction and Allophonic Consonant Variation

In the Jordanian context, participants' reflections suggest that the use of allophonic variation is not arbitrary but often carries a strategic dimension. Speakers reported adjusting their pronunciation in subtle ways that, while not overtly marked, appeared to serve interpersonal or persuasive functions. Rather than observable manipulation in spontaneous speech, it is through their own discourse about language that these intentions become visible. The analysis of these accounts brought to light several recurring themes, particularly concerning the role of phonetic variation in the negotiation of social influence and power. The following subsections elaborate on these themes.

### *5.1. Power and Social Identity*

Through data analysis, it was found that Jordanian speakers actively sought to align themselves with particular social groups by employing specific allophonic consonant variations. This allows them to assert dominance over others who are not part of these groups. Consequently, it is possible to manipulate individuals who are not part of the speaker's social or cultural group. Participants indicated that males refrain from using [ʔ] during visits to relatives in rural areas due to concerns about being criticized, as [ʔ] is linked to urban prestige or female speech patterns. Instead, they use [g], often associated with identity signaling and power, especially in tribal or rural environments. This finding corresponds with Fiske and Taylor (2013), who contended that individuals may exhibit heightened vulnerability to manipulation when the manipulator exploits disparities in cultural norms, cognitive biases, or power dynamics. This identity is evident in four clearly defined categories. Adherents of the rural variant: They self-identify as Bedouins and peasants, and use distinct allophonic variations to differentiate themselves from other groups. This identity is evident in four clearly defined categories.

- Urban variant adherents: This pronunciation is associated with urban and affluent social classes.
- The floating group consisted of individuals who used both variations, enabling them to indicate their connections with the group of their conversation partners.
- The common group refers to the entire population and follows the Standard Arabic variant.

The deliberate use of different pronunciations of consonant sounds highlights the complex relationship between social identity and power dynamics in Jordanian society. Utilizing any of these different allophonic consonant variations has a pragmatic function,

typically establishing a specific social status from which to communicate with the audience and requiring a specific understanding of how to engage recipients (Kaplunenko, 2007). Therefore, by utilizing any of these variants, an expert technologist (speaker) can apply technologies to the discourse on power, which in turn influences and controls others (Fairclough, 2013). According to Fairclough's (2010) ideas on discursive practices and discourse technologies, urban, rural, and common allophonic consonant variations can help discursively generate power in various social contexts.

This study thus reveals that allophonic variation in Jordanian Arabic is both a medium for authentic social alignment and a strategic tool for negotiating power—two functions that often coexist within a single act of speech, depending on speaker intention and interactional context.

### *5.2. Power and Gender*

Jordanian speakers attribute the distinct connotations of masculinity and femininity to the many allophonic consonant variants they employ, enabling them to differentiate between masculine and feminine variants. According to the participants in this study, the Bedouin and peasant versions are generally perceived as symbols of male power in their imaginations. By contrast, the urban allophonic variant represents femininity for female responders, particularly when interacting with individuals of the same sex. Accordingly, most male participants in the focus groups expressed their desire to stick to the Bedouin and peasant versions, particularly while socializing with same-sex individuals. Utilizing Smirnova's (2011) expert technological syntax, creating a sequence of allophonic consonant variants associated with Bedouin and peasant dialects enhances male speakers' persuasive abilities by projecting a masculine and authoritative image while interacting with others of the same or different sex. Additionally, data analysis revealed that some females exhibited a desire to use Bedouin and peasant versions to manipulate speakers, particularly when communicating with males.

### *5.3. Power and Emotional State*

The data analysis revealed that the use of certain consonantal variants—such as [g], [ð], and [θ]—can index emotional states such as anxiety, insecurity, impatience, or anger, particularly when speakers alternate between these and other forms. Specifically, the realization of [ð], which may appear in words such as [ħaðir] "caring " or [ðanb] "fault, sin", was associated with moments of emotional tension or confrontation. Several participants reported using [ð] instead of the more colloquial variants [z], as in [ʔiza] "if", or [d̪], as in [ʔid̪ a], in these contexts to convey seriousness or emotional intensity.

By contrast, the use of [ʔ], [d̪], and [t̪] was generally linked to calmness and emotional stability. These allophonic shifts appear to function as strategies for expressing both affective stance and social authority. In some cases, female participants noted that they deliberately adopted the more "feminine" variants [d̪] or [t̪] in private or intimate settings—particularly with family members or close friends—as a means of expressing tenderness and emotional closeness.

## 6. Conclusions

Scholars are becoming interested in investigating consonant variations in colloquial Jordanian Arabic. Previous scholarly investigations have found a scarcity of research on consonant variations in colloquial Jordanian Arabic. This study examined allophonic consonant variations in colloquial Jordanian Arabic from a new perspective. This study identified a wide range of discursive practices in the allophonic variants. This study shows how the discursive practices of allophonic consonant variants influence power

relations between people of different regions and genders. The investigation revealed that language serves more than just a method of communication, but rather as an intricate realm in which power dynamics are at play. Speakers purposefully utilize their allophonic consonant variations to impose social, cultural, and emotional influences, demonstrating the significant effect of language on Jordanian society and emphasizing the inherent potency of sounds. Fairclough's technologization of discourse approach was used to explore the power dynamics that influence the selection of allophonic consonant variation. This research is expected to provide novel insights into the present body of knowledge on the allophonic variants of colloquial Jordanian Arabic.

However, it is crucial to recognize that this study has specific constraints. This study employed a small sample size, consisting of only four consonant phonemes. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, our focus was to extensively analyze the allophonic variants associated with the selected consonant phonemes, rather than prioritizing the amount of data. Another constraint was the inclusion of only 20 participants in the focus groups. The reason for selecting this specific number of participants for interviews was that it was the typical number of individuals engaging in focus group discussions. Due to the limitations of this study, the findings may lack broad generalizability.

This study aims to prompt a reassessment of the social, cultural, and emotional importance given to numerous variants of consonant sounds in Jordanian colloquial Arabic. Future research should investigate other pragmatic roles of allophonic variations, thereby adding to the current body of research on this topic. Possible avenues for future investigation involve analyzing additional consonant or vowel phonemes within the framework of this discourse. This work primarily examines the construction of power relations through an examination of allophonic consonant variations. Additionally, future studies may explore how similar allophonic and phonemic variations function in other Arabic dialects, allowing for comparative analyses across regional varieties. Such cross-dialectal comparisons could further illuminate the role of phonological variation in constructing social meaning.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, B.A.; formal analysis: B.A.; investigation, R.A.R. and N.A.H.; data curation, B.A., R.A.R. and N.A.H.; writing—original draft preparation, B.A., R.A.R. and N.A.H.; writing—review and editing, B.A., R.A.R. and N.A.H.; supervision, B.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement:** All participants provided informed consent after being fully briefed on the study's aims.

**Data Availability Statement:** The material is available upon request to interested researchers.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

## References

Abdel-Jawad, H. R. (1986). The emergence of an urban dialect in the Jordanian urban centers. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, *61*, 53–63. [CrossRef]

Abu Nahel, S. (2021). *[k], [g] and [ʔ] in Amman: Social associations and identity perception in young rural [Fallahin] Palestinian speech* [Ph.D. dissertation, West Virginia University]. Available online: https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/8114 (accessed on 5 April 2023).

Agar, M., & MacDonald, J. (1995). Focus groups and ethnography. *Human Organization*, *54*(1), 78–86. [CrossRef]

Agger, B. (1991). Critical theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism: Their sociological relevance. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *17*, 105–131. [CrossRef]

Akopova, A. (2013). Linguistic manipulation: Definition and types. *International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education (IJCRSEE)*, *1*(2), 78–82.

Al Abdely, A. A., & Ali, M. J. (2023). Acoustic analysis of Iraqi Arabic simple vowels. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, *50*(5), 421–436. [CrossRef]

Al Ghazali, F. (2014). A critical overview of designing and conducting focus group interviews in applied linguistics research. *American Journal of Educational Research*, *2*(1), 6–12. [CrossRef]

Al-Hamzi, A. M. S. (2023). Phonological variation of [s] in Almahweet Yemeni Arabic: A sociolinguistic investigation of the rural-urban dichotomy. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, *10*(1), 1–12. [CrossRef]

Al Huneety, A., Mashaqba, B., Abu Hula, R., & Thnaibat, B. K. (2021). Phonological aspects of al-Issa Arabic, a Bedouin dialect in the north of Jordan. *Heliyon*, *7*(7), e07405. [CrossRef]

Al Huneety, A. I., Mashaqba, B. M., Al-Shdifat, K. G., Khasawneh, E. A., & Thnaibat, B. (2023). Multisyllabic word production by Jordanian Arabic speaking children. *Speech, Language and Hearing*, *26*(4), 249–265. [CrossRef]

Al-Masaeed, N. R. (2012). The variant of "Ech" to "Ek" among residents of Irbid governorate in light of gender and age. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *2*(5), 60–64. [CrossRef]

Al-Omyan, N. (2024). A variationist approach to complementizer agreement in Jordanian Arabic. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, *51*(2), 281–295. [CrossRef]

Alshehri, A., Al Saadoon, G., Al-Aqeel, L., Aldakhil, L., & Alorainy, N. (2024). Phonological variation of /r/ in selected Arabic dialects. *Journal of Research in Language & Translation*, *1*(4), 1–19.

Al-Tamimi, F. A. (2001). *Phonetic and phonological variation in the speech of rural migrants in a Jordanian city* [Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leeds].

Al-Wer, E. (1999). Why do different variables behave differently? Data from Arabic. In Y. Suleiman (Ed.), *Language and society in the Middle East and North Africa* (pp. 38–56). Curzon.

Al-Wer, E. (2003). Gender and language change: Perspectives from the Arabic-Speaking World. In J. Holmes, & M. Meyerhoff (Eds.), *The handbook of language and gender* (pp. 419–436). Blackwell.

Al-Wer, E. (2007a). Jordanian Arabic (Amman). In K. Versteegh, M. Woidich, M. Eid, A. Elgibali, & Z. Andrzej (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and linguistics* (pp. 505–517). Brill.

Al-Wer, E. (2007b). The formation of the dialect of Amman: From chaos to order. In C. Miller, E. Al-Wer, D. Caubet, & J. Watson (Eds.), *Arabic in the city: Issues in dialect contact and language variation* (pp. 55–76). Routledge.

Al-Wer, E. (2020). New-dialect formation: The Amman dialect. In C. Lucas, & S. Manfredi (Eds.), *Arabic and contact-induced change* (pp. 551–566). Language Science Press.

Badawi, S. (1973). *Mustawayāt al-ʿArabīyah al-muʿāṣirah fī Miṣr* [Levels of Contemporary Arabic in Egypt]. Dār al-Maʿārif.

Bani Amer, M. (2019). Linguistic nuances of Arabic spoken in the North of Jordan, Irbid region. *International Journal of Linguistics*, *11*(5), 77–93. [CrossRef]

Bassiouney, R. (2006). *Functions of code-switching in Egypt*. Brill.

Bassiouney, R. (2009a). *Arabic sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh University Press.

Bassiouney, R. (2009b). Arabic sociolinguistics. In *The Routledge handbook of language and identity* (pp. 334–348). Routledge.

Bellem, A. (2017). Disappearing lifestyles? Dialects and traditions of the rural north, centre and south of Jordan. *Bulletin of the Council for British Research in the Levant*, *12*(1), 34–36. [CrossRef]

Benítez Fernández, M. (2023). Linguistic variation, social meaning and covert prestige in a Northern Moroccan Arabic variety. *Languages*, *8*(1), 89. [CrossRef]

Brown, R., & Gilman, A. (1960). The pronouns of power and solidarity. In T. A. Sebeok (Ed.), *Style in language* (pp. 253–276). MIT Press.

Caldas-Coulthard, C. R., & Coulthard, M. (Eds.). (2023). *Texts and practices revisited: Essential readings in critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed.). Routledge. [CrossRef]

Callais, V. (2020). Reclaiming conversation: The power of talk in a digital age. *Journal of College Orientation, Transition, and Retention*, *27*(2), 1–4. [CrossRef]

Carroll, B. A. (2021). *Just a little respect: Authority and competency in women's speech* [Master's thesis, Texas A&M University].

Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and Burnouts: Social categories and identity in the high school*. Teachers College Press.

Eckert, P. (2000). *Linguistic variation as social practice*. Blackwell.

Eckert, P. (2012). Three waves of variation study: The emergence of meaning in the study of sociolinguistic variation. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *41*, 87–100. [CrossRef]

El Salman, M. (2016). The linguistic and social aspects of the Bedouin dialect. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *7*(4), 20. [CrossRef]

Faimau, G., & Behrens, C. (2016). Facebooking religion and the technologization of the religious discourse—A case study of a Botswana-based prophetic church. *Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, *11*, 66–92. [CrossRef]

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1996a). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Longman.
Fairclough, N. (1996b). Technologization of discourse. In C. R. Caldas-Coulthard, & M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis* (pp. 71–83). Routledge.
Fairclough, N. (2001a). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
Fairclough, N. (2001b). The discourse of new labour: Critical discourse analysis. In M. Wetherell (Ed.), *Discourse as data: A guide for analysis* (pp. 229–266). Sage and the Open University.
Fairclough, N. (2006). *Language and globalization*. Routledge.
Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Longman.
Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Pearson.
Finsen, S. (2016). *The power of language. Language policies of international institutions*. Reykjavík.
Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (2013). *Social cognition: From brains to culture*. Sage.
Garrett, P. (2010). *Attitudes to language*. Cambridge University Press.
Gasparyan, S., & Harutyunyan, R. (2021). Manipulative speech: A theoretical overview. *Armenian Folia Anglistika*, *17*(2), 11–26. [CrossRef]
Gattelli, F. (2014). The Ḥwēṭāt tribe dialect from Wādi Ramm—Linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of a Bedouin dialect in Jordan. *RiCOGNIZIONI. Rivista Di Lingue E Letterature Straniere E Culture Moderne*, *1*(2), 41–51. [CrossRef]
Goodin, R. E. (1980). *Manipulatory politics*. Yale University Press.
Gould, R. V. (2002). The origins of status hierarchies: A formal theory and empirical test. *American Journal of Sociology*, *107*(5), 1143–1178. [CrossRef]
Guéguen, N. (2011). *Psychologie de la manipulation et de la soumission*. Dunod.
Habib, R. (2009). The Sociolinguistic distribution of (q) in rural Syrian Arabic: A quantitative study. *SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics*, *6*(2), 1–24.
Herin, B., Younes, I., Al-Wer, E., & Al-Sirour, Y. (2022). The classification of Bedouin Arabic: Insights from northern Jordan. *Languages*, *7*(1), 1. [CrossRef]
Holes, C. (2016). *Dialect, culture and society in Eastern Arabia. Volume III: Phonology, morphology, syntax, style*. Brill. [CrossRef]
Holmes, J. (2016). *Introduction to sociolinguistics*. Addison Wesley Longman Publishing.
Ide, S. (1989). Formal forms and discernment: Two neglected aspects of universals of linguistic politeness. *Multilingua*, *8*(2–3), 223–248. [CrossRef]
Ingham, B. (2009). Saudi Arabia. In K. Versteegh, M. Woidich, M. Eid, A. Elgibali, & Z. Andrzej (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and linguistics* (pp. 123–130). Brill.
Jaber, A. S. (2001). *Syllable structure in Jordanian Arabic as spoken in Irbid* [Master's thesis, Yarmouk University].
Kakisina, P. A., Indhiarti, T. R., & Al Fajri, M. S. (2022). Discursive strategies of manipulation in COVID-19 political discourse: The case of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro. *Sage Open*, *12*(1), 1–9. [CrossRef]
Kaplunenko, A. (2007). *Концепт—понятие—термин: Эволюция знаковых сущностей в контексте дискурсивной практики [Concept—Notion—Term: The evolution of semiotic entities in the context of discursive practice]*. ISLU.
Labov, W. (1963). The social motivation of a sound change. *WORD*, *19*(3), 273–309. [CrossRef]
Labov, W. (2001). *Principles of linguistic change: Social factors*. Blackwell.
Labov, W. (2006). *The social stratification of English in New York city*. Center for Applied Linguistics.
Labov, W. (2022). *Sociolinguistics patterns*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
Mashaqba, B. (2015). *The phonology and morphology of Wadi Ramm Arabic* [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Salford].
Mashaqba, B., Huneety, A., Al-Abed Al-Haq, S., & Dardas, Y. (2023). Attitude towards Jordanian Arabic dialects: A sociolinguistic perspective. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*, *15*(3), 959–980. [CrossRef]
Meyerhoff, M. (2011). *Introducing sociolinguistics* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
Mills, S. (2003). *Michel foucault*. Psychology Press.
Milroy, L. (1982). *Language and social networks*. Blackwell.
Na'eem, H., Abudalbuh, M., & Jaber, A. (2020). Medial tri-consonantal clusters in urban Jordanian Arabic. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*, *12*(1), 45–56. [CrossRef]
Nygaard, L. C. (2005). Perceptual integration of linguistic and non-linguistic properties of speech. In D. Pisoni, & R. Remez (Eds.), *Handbook of speech perception* (pp. 390–419). Blackwell.
Omari, O., & Van Herk, G. (2016). A socio phonetic study of inter-dental variation in spoken Jordanian Arabic. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literature*, *8*(2), 117–137.
Pavel, E. (2023). The Language of manipulation and control: Operational methods of the securitate in A. Belc's film *Metronom*. *Humanities*, *12*(6), 137. [CrossRef]
Podesva, R. J. (2007). Phonation type as a stylistic variable: The use of falsetto in constructing a persona. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *11*(4), 478–504. [CrossRef]

Porras-Chaverri, M. A., & Pocasangre-Fonseca, R. (2021). Perception of social variables related to allophones of taps and trills: A preliminary study with costa rican middle class speakers. *Cadernos De Linguística*, *2*(1), e593. [CrossRef]

Prior, M. T. (2018). Interviews and focus groups. In K. Phakiti, P. De Costa, L. Plonky, & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of applied linguistics research methodology* (pp. 225–248). Palgrave Macmillan.

Rickford, J. R., & Rickford, R. J. (2000). *Spoken soul: The story of black English*. Wiley.

Sakarna, A. K. (2002). The Bedouin dialect of Al-Zawaida tribe, Southern Jordan. *Al-'Arabiyya*, *35*, 61–86.

Salah, R. (2021). Jordanian university students' use of English: Urban-rural dichotomy and university location. *Advances in Literary Study*, *9*, 105–113. [CrossRef]

Smirnova, Y. (2011). The linguistic characteristics of the technologization of discourse. *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences*, *1*(4), 37–49.

Sorokowski, P., Puts, D., Johnson, J. A., Debowska, A., Zdybek, P., & Pisanski, K. (2019). Voice of authority: Professionals lower their vocal frequencies when giving expert advice. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, *43*(2), 257–269. [CrossRef]

Stewart, W. (2018). Focus groups. In B. Frey (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopaedia of educational research, measurement, and evaluation* (pp. 687–692). Sage Publications.

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge University Press.

Trudgill, P. (1979). *The social differentiation of English in Norwich*. Cambridge University Press.

Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An introduction to language and society* (4th ed.). Penguin Books.

Van Dijk, T. (2006). Discourse and manipulation. *Discourse & Society*, *17*(3), 359–383. [CrossRef]

Van Eemeren, F. (2005). Foreword. Preview by review. In L. de Saussure, & P. J. Schulz (Eds.), *Manipulation and ideologies in the twentieth century: Discourse, language, mind* (pp. X–XV). John Benjamins Publishing Company. [CrossRef]

Watson, J. C. E. (2007). *The phonology and morphology of Arabic*. Oxford University Press.

Weber, M. (1947). *The theory of social and economic organizations*. Free Press.

Wilmsen, D., & Woidich, M. (2007). Egypt. In K. Versteegh, M. Woidich, M. Eid, A. Elgibali, & Z. Andrzej (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and linguistics* (Vol. 2, pp. 1–12). Brill.

Yokoyama, H., & Daibo, I. (2012). Effects of gaze and speech rate on receivers' Evaluations of persuasive speech. *Psychological Reports*, *110*(2), 663–676. [CrossRef]

Zhang, Y., & Liang, Y. (2024). Different language variants and social class. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, *16*(2), 416–418. [CrossRef]

Zibin, A. (2019). A phonological analysis of English loanwords inflected with Arabic morphemes in urban Jordanian spoken Arabic. *SAGE Open*, *9*(2). [CrossRef]

Zuraiq, W., & Zhang, J. (2006). Phonological assimilation in urban Jordanian Arabic. *Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics*, *28*, 33–64. [CrossRef]

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.