

The (Socio)Pragmatic and Syntactic Analysis of Discourse Markers in Twitter  
Communications Among Najdi Arabic Speakers

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation thoroughly explores two of the most common Najdi Arabic discourse markers among *Twitter* Najdi Arabic users, namely *elzibda* ‘lit. the gist’ and *min jid* ‘lit. for real.’ *Qualitatively*, the dissertation scrutinizes the various *pragmatic, textual, interpersonal, and cognitive* functions of NA (Najdi Arabic) discourse markers and the sociolinguistic factors that appear to have an effect on the use of NA discourse markers. *Quantitatively*, the dissertation examines the syntactic positions NA discourse markers occupy, the items NA discourse markers collocate with across various contexts, as well as the frequency of occurrence of NA discourse markers. The results show that NA discourse markers have numerous pragmatic functions, including *textual, interpersonal, and cognitive*. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* is more productive than *min jid* since it shows almost double the number of pragmatic functions. The NA discourse markers share a number of *textual and interpersonal* functions. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* only exhibits cognitive functions. Interestingly, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows more textual functions than *min jid* whereas *min jid* shows more interpersonal functions than *elzibda*. The NA discourse markers collocate with various syntactic categories across different positions. *Syntactically*, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and *min jid* occur predominately in the initial position. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and *min jid* occupy *medial, final, and alone positions*. The NA discourse marker *min jid* considers the alone position as one of the landing sites while this position is quite rare for *elzibda*. *Sociolinguistically*, the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and *min jid* is highly associated with NA *Twitter* users with a B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) Degree. Female and male NA *Twitter* users employ the

NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* in varying degrees of frequencies. For instance, female NA *Twitter* users employ the NA discourse marker *min jid* almost twice the times of male NA *Twitter* users. Female and male NA *Twitter* users also show different pragmatic functions in certain instances. For instance, female NA *Twitter* users employ the NA discourse marker *elzibda for realization* while male NA *Twitter* users employ *elzibda as a clarification device*.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1	1 <sup>st</sup> Person
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
ACC	Accusative
CL	Classical Arabic
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communications
CMD	Computer-Mediated Discourse
DET	Determiner
DM	Discourse Marker
FEM	Feminine
FUT	Future
MASC	Masculine
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
NEG	Negation
NOM	Nominative
OBJ	Object
PASS	Passive
PAST	Past
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive
PROG	Progressive
SG	Singular

Arabic letter	IPA Symbol	Arabic letter	IPA Symbol
ا	ʔ/æ/ə	ق	q/g*/dz*
ب	b	ك	k/ t <sup>s*</sup>
ت	t	ل	l
ث	θ	م	m
ج	dʒ	ن	n
ح	ħ	ه	h
خ	χ	و	w/u/u:
د	d	ي	j/i/i:
ذ	ð		
ر	r		
ز	z		
س	s		
ش	ʃ		
ص	s <sup>ʔ</sup>		
ض	d <sup>ʔ</sup>		
ط	t <sup>ʔ</sup>		
ظ	ð <sup>ʔ</sup>		
ع	ʕ		
غ	ɣ		
ف	f		

\* Sounds only found in Najdi Arabic

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

During the past five decades, the unique linguistic behavior of Discourse Markers (DMs) has greatly attracted the attention of modern-day grammarians, pragmatists, as well as discourse analysts to investigate their functions across numerous contexts. Since the late 1980s, a number of discourse markers have been thoroughly scrutinized and approached by linguistic scholars from various analytical angles that ranged from *pragmatics, syntax, phonology* to *sociolinguistics*. Scholars have approached the fascinating topic of discourse markers by adopting a number of interesting approaches, such as *Translation Approach* (Aijmer, Foolen, & Simon-Vandenberg, 2006; Aijmer, 2008), *Historical Approach* (Brinton, 1996; 2017; D’Arcy, 2017) *Corpus Approach* (Barbieri, 2005; Owens & Rockwood, 2008; Schweinberger, 2015; Tagliamonte & D’Arcy, 2004; Tagliamonte, 2005; Tottie, 2011), and *Sociolinguistic Approach* (Al-Harashseh & Kanakri, 2013; Baron; 2010; Bidaoui, 2016; Croucher, 2004; Tagliamonte & D’Arcy, 2004; Tagliamonte, 2005; Tottie, 2011). The literature shows that discourse markers have several intriguing functions, including *pragmatic, discourse, textual, conversational, attitudinal*, as well as *interpersonal functions* (see Brinton, 1996, 2017; Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987, Schourup 1999; Tottie, 2011, 2019; Walshe, 2017).

Since the late 80s, there has been a plethora of empirical DMs studies that ranged from *scholarly articles* (Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999, 2010, 2015; Jucker, 1993; Redeker, 1990, 1991; Schourup 1999, 2011; Tottie, 2011, 2019), *book chapters* (Blakemore, 2008; Fraser, 1997, 2009; Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Redeker, 2006; Schiffrin & Maschler, 2015), *dissertations* (Adams, 2012) to *full-blown books* (Blakemore, 1987, 2002; Brinton, 1996,



2017; D'Arcy, 2017; Lansari, 2019; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1985). There have been unfortunately few pragmatic studies that explore the various interesting pragmatic, discourse, and interpersonal functions of discourse markers in Arabic these that have appeared in the early 1990s. The vast majority of Arabic DMs studies focus on spoken conversations and overlook other interesting forms of communication, such as Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). There has been no (socio)pragmatic study ever conducted on Najdi Arabic discourse markers in CMC. Najdi Arabic variety unfortunately received little attention from Arabic scholars since it was considered as the low variety of the Arabic language. On the other hand, the classical and Modern Standard Arabic were thoroughly explored by scholars since these varieties are more prestigious having religious significance. Computer-mediated communication is a new emerging medium of communication that have not entirely yet investigated by pragmatists, sociolinguists, as well as syntacticians. Computer-mediated communication gives scholars the opportunity to build a relatively large-scale corpus of written discourse, have unlimited and free of charge access to online data, as well as collect sociolinguistic information needed to conduct various linguistic analyses, including *pragmatic*, *syntactic*, and *sociolinguistic*. Therefore, there is currently a great need for thorough linguistics research to better capture the (socio)pragmatic and syntactic functions of Najdi Arabic DMs in the *Twitter* social media platform. The dissertation's primary purpose is to observe the (socio)pragmatic and syntactic functions of three of the most commonly used Najdi Arabic DMs, namely *elzibda*, *min jid*, and *maʕ nafsak*, in CMC. The dissertation wishes to uncover the sociolinguistic factors that appear to have an effect on the use of Najdi Arabic DMs on *Twitter*, such as *gender* and *socio-economic status*, the frequency

of occurrence of Najdi Arabic DMs, and the syntactic slots they tend to occupy within the tweets. This dissertation also wishes to contribute to the DM literature by providing scholars with the current (socio)pragmatic and syntactic behavior of Najdi DMs in *Twitter*, adding to the already existing literature on DM in general and on Arabic in particular, and drawing the attention of scholars to the long-neglected research area of CMC. The dissertation will discuss thoroughly the significance of studying the aforementioned variety in chapter 2.

### **The Significance of the Study**

Over the last five decades, there has been a surge of empirical discourse and conversation analysis studies on DMs exploring their interesting discourse and pragmatic functions within written and spoken texts. There has been a growing interest among linguistic scholars and discourse analysts in the study of DMs since the late 1970s. In 1977, Labov and Fanshel were among the first scholars to recognize the significance of discourse markers in utterance planning after dissecting the various roles of the discourse marker *well*. Following the footsteps of Labov and Fanshel (1977), Levinson (1983) also noticed the important roles DMs play within the utterances. In the following years, the number of linguistic studies on DMs skyrocketed resulting in various proposed definitions, characteristics, as well as frameworks. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the early studies thoroughly investigated DMs pragmatic, discourse, as well as attitudinal functions in American English (such as Blakemore, 2008; D'Arcy, 2017; Fraser, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2009, 2010, 2015; Giora, 1997; Jucker, 1993; Redeker, 1990, 1991, 2006; Schiffrin; 1987; Schourup 1985, 1999, 2011), neglecting their pragmatic and discourse functions across other languages.

For this aforementioned reason, there has been a noticeable gap in the contemporary literature on discourse markers given the fact that other languages' DMs remained not fully explored. Unfortunately, there has been a dearth of studies exploring Arabic DMs pragmatic and syntactic functions. Since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been a noticeable increase of Arabic DMs studies with Arab grammarians, Arab linguists, as well as other Arabic scholars recently showing tremendous interest in their discourse, textual, interpersonal, attitudinal, and pragmatic functions. The early discourse and pragmatic studies explored the functions of DMs in *Modern Standard Arabic* (MSA) (Al-Batal, 1990; Zaki, 2011) and other Arabic varieties, including *Saudi Arabic* (Al Rousan, 2015), *Jordanian Arabic* (Al-Harashseh & Kanakri, 2013), and *Iraqi Arabic* (Alazzawie, 2015). There have been also Arabic cross-dialectal studies, such as *Kuwaiti, Emirati, and Jeddawi 'Hijazi Arabic* (Owens & Rockwood, 2008) and *Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt Arabic* (Bidaoui, 2016).

These Arabic pragmatic studies on DMs were predominantly conducted on oral conversations leaving Computer-Mediated Communication slightly untouched. None has ever dissected the syntactic and (socio)pragmatic functions of Najdi Arabic DMs in CMC communications. The literature clearly shows there have been a few numbers of pragmatic empirical studies on Arabic DMs in general and Najdi Arabic DMs in particular since Arab linguists were not significantly interested in this research area until the early 1990s. Arab linguists along with other scholars interested in the Arabic language have serious work to thoroughly and deeply dissect the various (socio)pragmatic, discourse, textual, and attitudinal functions of Arabic DMs. Therefore,

this dissertation aims to getting a sense of the various functions of Najdi Arabic DMs in CMC which have not been yet examined in this particular context.

The study of NA discourse markers in CMC has several important implications for linguists and other scholars interested in CMC research. CMC offers researchers an opportunity to have unlimited access to publicly available data. The current study gives scholars in-depth details on how to collect and gather data from the *Twitter* social media platform following a few crucial steps for building a relatively large corpus for various types of analyses, including but not limited to, *sociolinguistics*, *pragmatics*, *syntactic*, and *discourse analyses*. The study also guides scholars through the challenging process of gathering sociolinguistic data from *Twitter* without revealing any identifiable information about the subjects, such as *gender* and *socio-economic status*, that might not necessarily be visible in a medium that grants anonymity for its online users (Herring, 2001). The current study would also familiarize scholars with some of the most powerful analytical tools, data mining tools, and discourse analysis tools, such as *Twitter Advanced Search* and *AntConc*.

During the past three decades, there has been an abundance of linguistic research on DMs dedicated solely to discuss the behavior of DMs; nevertheless, they seem to fail in guiding linguistics scholars in terms of the recommended analytical approaches in studying DMs in (a)synchronic CMC. It is worthy to mention that scholars have little familiarity with CMC since it is considered as a relatively new research territory which explains the dearth of pragmatic studies on discourse markers in CMC. The lack of adequate familiarity with major frameworks and analytical tools in CMC along with poor programming skills in mining data for rigorous discourse analysis has led to the scarcity of

DMs studies in CMC. The current study will make scholars and other researchers more familiar with CMC field along with its data mining tools and analytical tools so linguists and discourse analysts can indulge more in this emerging area of linguistic research (see Al Rousan, 2015; Baron, 2010; Palacio & Gustilo, 2016; Raclaw, 2006).

The study of NA discourse markers also has other significant implications for Arabic translators, modern-day grammarians, and lexicographers. The multifunctionality, roles, and characteristics of DMs has sparked several discussions and heated debates among Arabic scholars and academics. DMs are extremely hard to list their definitions in Arabic dictionaries. DMs lack semantic meanings and instead have pragmatic meanings that depend on the context of occurrence (e.g., Brinton, 1996, 2017; Schourup, 1999). Similarly, DMs pose a challenge for Arab translators as they are not easily translatable as other linguistic items since they have various pragmatic and procedural meanings (see Al-Harashsh & Kanakri, 2013). Along similar lines, DMs pose a challenge for modern-day grammarians given the fact they tend to have unpredictable syntactic behavior (e.g., Owens & Rockwood, 2008). Therefore, the current study would give lexicographers, translators, as well grammarians with an overview of the general pragmatic, discourse, textual, and interpersonal functions for Najdi Arabic DMs and the syntactic slots they tend to occupy. This study should encourage Arabic translators, modern-day grammarians, and lexicographers to explore Arabic DMs in general and Najdi Arabic DMs in particular, employing various theoretical approaches to document the pragmatic meanings and the grammatical rules of Najdi Arabic DMs. Consequently, this study should spark a shift in focus for many Arab scholars from solely studying MSA grammar and lexicon to studying Arabic dialects.

Studying NA discourse markers has a great significance for the linguistic study in general. The study will provide a fresh perspective and approach for studying discourse markers in a new emerging medium that has not yet thoroughly approached by modern-day pragmatists, syntacticians, and discourse analysts. The study will also give scholars a clear understanding of the significant differences discourse markers in general and NA discourse markers in particular tend to exhibit in terms of their pragmatic, discourse, interpersonal functions across two unique contexts, namely CMC and face-to-face communications. The study will dissect the proposed taxonomies by a number of scholars to examine if they could provide reasonable explanations for the pragmatic and discourse functions of the three NA discourse markers. The study will encourage scholars to revisit and tweak these taxonomies once there are unique pragmatic, discourse, interpersonal, and interactional functions for the three NA discourse markers emerging out the data that have not reported in the literature.

### **The Goals of the Study**

This current study has several goals that motivated the selection of the dissertation topic. First, the study aims at contributing to the already existing literature on discourse markers in Modern Standard Arabic and other local Arabic dialects, especially Najdi Arabic. The scarcity of linguistic studies on Najdi Arabic DM's various functions in CMC clearly shows that there has been a tremendous need for various linguistic analyses to address the nagging gap in the literature, including approaches from *sociolinguistic*, *syntactic*, *discourse*, and *conversation analysis*' perspectives. Second, the study also aims at motivating Arabic scholars and other researchers interested in Arabic to explore this area of research by recommending a number of data mining and analytical tools,

including *AntConc*, *Advanced Twitter search tool*, and *SPSS*. Third, the current study aims at providing a new perspective on studying Arabic discourse markers in CMC that could inspire other scholars to conduct studies along similar lines. Recently, there have been a couple of pragmatic studies on Arabic DMs in CMC across a number of social media platforms (such as Al Rousan, 2015). Fourth, the study aims at offering linguistic scholars with a general overview of the pragmatic and discourse functions of Najdi Arabic DMs in CMC which could be a starting point for a number of comparative studies on the use of DMs across spoken and CMC contexts. There has been no single study that thoroughly explores the functions of Arabic DMs across two different contexts which might yield interesting results.

The current study extensively scrutinizes the discourse, pragmatic, textual, and attitudinal functions of three Najdi Arabic DMs by Najdi Arabic native speakers in their *Twitter* communications, known as *elzibda*, *min jid*, and *maʕ nafsak*. The discourse marker *elziba* ‘lit. the essence or the gist’ is one of Najdi Arabic recent and widely used discourse markers in *Twitter* communications. The discourse marker *min jid* ‘lit. for real’ is another common discourse marker popular among Najdi Arabic *Twitter* online users. The discourse marker *maʕ nafsak* ‘lit. with yourself’ is one of the most common Najdi Arabic DMs that was introduced to the Saudi community in the middle of 2010 through a popular Saudi comedy sitcom known as *Suktum Buktum* ‘lit. no speak no hear.’ The spread of the discourse marker *maʕ nafsak* in the Saudi community in general and Najd region in particular is beyond the scope of this study. The current study decided to shed light on these DMs given the fact the preliminary results of an earlier conducted pilot

pragmatic study shows these three Najdi Arabic DMs populate the speech of Najdi Arabic native speakers in *Twitter* communications (Alaswad, 2017).

### **Research Questions**

The current study aims at dissecting the pragmatic and discourse functions of Najdi Arabic DMs in CMC, especially *Twitter*, that recently emerged as relatively a new linguistic research territory. *Qualitatively*, the study's primary purpose is to determine Najdi Arabic DMs various pragmatic, discourse, attitudinal, interpersonal, and textual functions within Najdi Arabic *Twitter*s users' utterances. The study's main goal also to explore the sociolinguistic factor possible effects on the pragmatic use of Najdi Arabic DMs, such as *gender* and *socio-economic status*. *Quantitatively*, the study aims at uncovering the sentential positions and slots Najdi Arabic DMs tend to occupy on *Twitter*. The study also aims at determining and pinpointing the frequency of occurrence for these Najdi Arabic DMs and the linguistic items they tend to collocate with in Najdi Arabic tweets. Therefore, this study raises a number of questions worthy of close investigation as follows:

1. What are the major pragmatic and discourse functions of the three Najdi Arabic DMs, namely *elzibda*, *min jid*, as well as *maʕ nafsak*?
2. What are the sentential positions that these Najdi Arabic DMs occupy within constituents?
3. What is the linguistic behavior these three Najdi Arabic DMs exhibit in terms of collocations and frequency of occurrence?
4. What sociolinguistic factors (e.g., socio-economic status, gender) appear to have an effect on the use of Najdi Arabic DMs?



## **The Organization of the Dissertation**

The rest of the dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 2 provides a holistic overview of the contemporary literature review on Najdi Arabic variety, discourse markers, Computer-Mediated Communications, and emoji. The literature review discusses DMs frameworks, terms, features, functions, and cross-linguistic empirical studies. The literature review also provides an overview of CMC theoretical background along with a number of empirical studies. It also offers a snapshot of emoji history, evolution, functions, and recent studies. Chapter 3 discusses thoroughly the processes of data collection of the three Najdi Arabic DMs as well as some of the challenges faced during those processes. Chapter 4 provides an in-depth analysis of Najdi Arabic *Twitter* and general discussion for the various (socio)pragmatic, attitudinal, discourse as well as syntactic functions of Najdi Arabic DMs. Chapter 5 provides a precise conclusion for the dissertation, some implications of the current study, and new directions for linguistic scholars and other researchers interested in conducting studies on DMs, especially Najdi Arabic DMs.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The first section of the dissertation begins with an overview of Najdi Arabic variety origin and its relation to two older Arabic varieties, namely *Classical Arabic* and *Modern Standard Arabic*, followed by a thorough discussion about their various linguistic features, including *phonological*, *morphological* and *syntactic* features. The second section introduces the major theoretical frameworks utilized to tackle discourse markers' pragmatic and discourse functions, along with a number of cross-linguistic discourse markers studies. It also highlights some of the major issues in the discourse markers' contemporary literature in terms of discourse markers functions, features, and concepts. The third section touches on the historical development of discourse markers shedding light on the linguistic phenomenon formally known as grammaticalization and providing some of the posited pathways in the literature by a number of prominent scholars in their effort to explain discourse markers development path. The fourth section offers a general overview of computer-mediated communications types along with linguistics and paralinguistic features. It discusses issues related to gender in CMC, including *self-representation*, *gender equality*, as well as *discourse style*. This section also provides a couple of linguistic studies conducted on a number of discourse markers in CMC. The fifth section concludes with an interesting discussion on emoji origin and evolution and provides a detailed description of emoji's major functions in CMC. It also provides a review of empirical studies on emoji and discusses the emoji ambiguity issue that is reported in a number of cross-linguistic studies in the literature.

## **Najdi Arabic**

Najdi Arabic (NA) is one of the Arabic language varieties that is spoken primarily in Najd region in the middle of Saudi Arabia (Alothman, 2012; Ingham, 1994). Najdi Arabic has approximately ten million native Najdi speakers residing in Najd region (Alothman, 2012). It is also spoken by Arabic Bedouin and urban tribes with roots in Najd Region across various Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including *Kuwait* and *Qatar*. These Arabic tribes share the same spoken variety of Najdi Arabic and have similar linguistic features despite the fact they reside a hundred miles away. Najd region derived its name from the Arabic language which literally means Plateau (Ingham, 1994), and it comprises of a number of different provinces within Saudi Arabia, including *Al Qassim*, *Riyadh*, and *Ha'il* (Alothman, 2012; Ingham, 1994). Najd region is surrounded by a number of deserts, including Al-Dahna Desert, Al-Nafud Desert, and Rub' al Khali (Alothman, 2012; Ingham, 1994). In other words, Najd region is enclosed by vast deserts that stretch to thousands of kilometers. For instance, "Rub' al Khali is the largest erg or continuous sand desert in the world and occupies the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula" (Kumar & Abdullah, 2011, p. 105). According to Kumar and Abdullah (2011), The Rub' al Khali Desert "covers approximately 560,000 km<sup>2</sup> extending from United Arab Emirates in the east to ~1500 km west to the hills of southwestern Saudi Arabia and Yemen" (p. 105). The following map shows the Najd region along with the aforementioned deserts as follows:

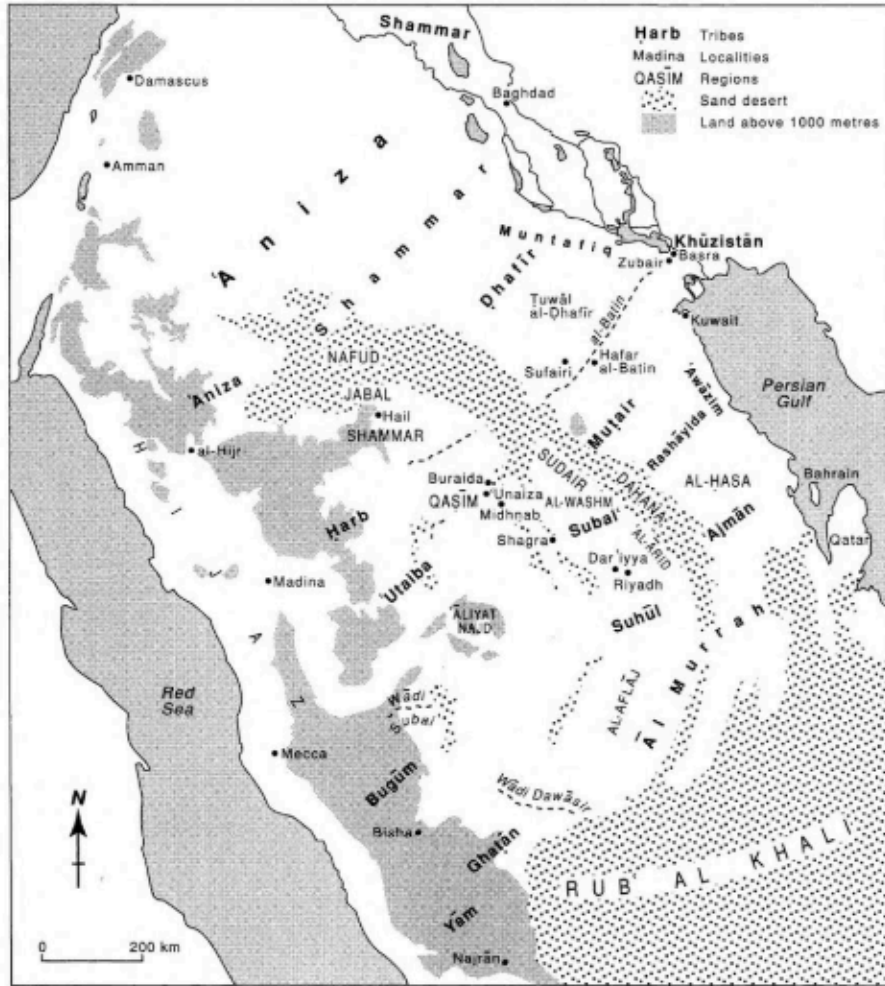


Figure 1. Najd and Surrounding Areas Adapted from Ingham (1994)

Najdi Arabic is one of the most prestigious Saudi Arabic varieties that is used for poetry, literature, and oral narratives. Najdi Arabic, as many modern-day Arabic dialects, is directly derived from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Najdi Arabic has four main recognized varieties spoken, namely *Central Najdi*, *Northern Najdi*, *Mixed Northern-Central*, as well as *Southern* (Ingham, 1994). These four Najdi Arabic varieties have unique linguistic features that slightly distinguish them from each other, including *phonological features*. For instance, the voiceless velar stop /k/ is replaced with voiceless alveolar affricates /tʃ/ in Northern Najdi in a specific phonological environment.

Interestingly though, these four Najdi Arabic varieties are spoken by different tribes residing in various geographical areas separated by mountains, deserts, and provinces. Ingham (1994) categorization of the various spoken varieties in Najd region is still highly cited in the literature as follows:

1. “Central Najdi. The dialect of Central Najd [spoken in Riyadh and surrounding areas] ... and the central Bedouin tribes also the ‘Anizah of the Syrian desert.
2. Northern Najdi. The dialect of Jabal Shammar and of the Shammar tribes of Northern Najd and the Jazirah.
3. Mixed Northern-Central. The dialect of Qasim [*Al Qassim*] and of the Dhafir tribe.
4. Southern. The dialect of Najran and the Ghatan tribe of the south and of the Al Murrah and ‘Ajman tribes of the east” (p. 5).

### **Najdi Arabic and diglossia in Najd region**

In the Najd region today, there has been an interesting linguistic phenomenon in which more than one spoken variety is used simultaneously for various communicational and interactional purposes, including *Najdi Arabic* and *Modern Standard Arabic* (see Alothman, 2012) This fascinating linguistic phenomenon is formally referred to in the literature as *Diglossia*<sup>1</sup> (Ferguson, 1959). Native Arabic speakers make use of Najdi Arabic along with Modern Standard Arabic in their various face-to-face and CMC

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<sup>1</sup>“A relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation” (Ferguson, 1959, p. 336).

interactions. Interestingly, there has been a hierarchy defining the roles along with the perceived status of these two varieties in Najd region. According to Ferguson (1959, p. 327), spoken languages or varieties tend to be assigned different roles and statuses across bidialectal or bilingual communities, such as “*high variety*” and “*low variety*.” For instance, Classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic is perceived as a “high variety” while other local Arabic varieties, such as Egyptian varieties, are perceived as a “low variety” (Ferguson, 1959). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Najdi Arabic is perceived as the low variety whereas Modern Standard Arabic is perceived as the high variety that enjoys a higher status in Najd region. Modern Standard Arabic is used in highly formal settings such as academic institutions, public schools, and government offices. On the other hand, Najdi Arabic is used for other informal settings such as at home, among friends, and during family gatherings.

### **Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic**

There have been intense debates among Arab linguists about the origin of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and its relation to Classical Arabic (CA). Among the few things they reach a complete consensus on is that the Arabic language is one of the oldest Semitic languages that holds some phonological and morphological resemblance to other sister languages within the tree family, such as *Aramaic* and *Hebrew*.

Classical Arabic is one of the oldest known forms of Arabic which resembles the dialect of Prophet Mohammed’s tribe, *Quraish tribe* (Khrisat & Alharthy, 2015).

Classical Arabic is considered a sacred language by a large number of Muslims around the world because it is the legitimate linguistic tool to uncover and successfully interpret various Quranic verses. During the past fifteen centuries, Classic Arabic was significantly

documented by the Quran (Khrisat & Alharthy, 2015); thus, Arab grammarians currently tend to refer to the Quran to assess the grammatical acceptability of some of their Modern Standard Arabic sentences.

On the other hand, Modern Standard Arabic is considered by many Arab scholars as descended of Quranic Arabic or Classical Arabic in which it inherited its current phonological, syntactic along with morphological systems (see Alothman, 2012; Khrisat & Alharthy, 2015). Modern Standard Arabic is the declared official language across twenty-two Arabic countries in the Middle East and North Africa (Al-Shareef & Hain, 2016). Modern Standard Arabic is ranked the sixth most spoken language in the North and South hemispheres with two hundred and fifty million speakers (Elmahdy, Gruhn, Minker, & Abdennadher, 2009). According to Elmahdy et al. (2009), “MSA is not the natural spoken language for native Arabic speakers and it is considered as a second language for all Arabic speakers. Colloquial (or dialectal) Arabic is the natural spoken Arabic in everyday life” (p. 169). Therefore, Modern Standard Arabic is not acquired as a first language at home but instead formally acquired through schooling (Al-Shareef & Hain, 2016). Despite lacking native speakers, MSA is not listed as one of the most endangered languages in the world as it is widely used across the Middle East and North Africa on a daily basis. The following table shows the consonantal inventory of two Arabic varieties, namely *Modern Standard Arabic* and *Najdi Arabic* as shown by Alghmaiz (2013), and Ingham (1994), with minor changes in the table organization, especially in the order of place of articulation, and in the addition of voiced alveolar fricative /dz/.

Figure 2. A comparative consonantal inventory for Najdi Arabic, Classical Arabic, and Modern Standard Arabic

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Interdental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palato-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
<b>Stop</b>	b			t d tʕ dʕ**				k g* q			ʔ
<b>Fricative</b>		f	θ ð ðʕ	s z sʕ		ʃ		x y		ħ ʕ	h
<b>Affricate</b>				tʕ* dʕ*		ɟ					
<b>Nasal</b>	m			n							
<b>Approximant</b>				r			j				
<b>Lateral</b>				l							
<b>Glide</b>	w										

\* means these sounds only found in Najdi Arabic

\*\* means these sounds only found in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic

The Shaded cells also mean these sounds do not exist in either variety.



## **Najdi Arabic Linguistics Features**

### ***Najdi Arabic phonology***

As shown above in Figure 2, Najdi Arabic has a relatively large consonantal inventory compared to other varieties of the Arabic language. This consonantal inventory gives native Najdi Arabic speakers the opportunity to pronounce Classical or Modern Standard Arabic words with no effort on their part due to the considerable resemblance between Najdi Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic consonantal inventories (Alghamiz, 2013). Najdi Arabic has inherited the vast majority of consonants from Classical Arabic, except for the pharyngealized voiced alveolar stop /d<sup>ʕ</sup>/ (Alghmaiz, 2013). Therefore, Classical Arabic words with pharyngealized voiced alveolar stop /d<sup>ʕ</sup>/ tend sometimes to get substituted by native Najdi speakers with a pharyngealized voiced interdental fricative /ð<sup>ʕ</sup>/ (Alghmaiz, 2013). Fortunately, these two phonemes are allophones of the same phoneme in which the use of one phoneme instead of the other would not result in changing the intended meaning of the word. On the other hand, Najdi Arabic has numerous phonemes that Classical Arabic along with Modern Standard Arabic lack, including *the voiceless alveolar affricate /ts/*, *the voiced stop velar stop /g/* (Alghmaiz, 2013; Alothman, 2012) and *alveolar affricate /dz/* (Alothman, 2012).

As for the vowel system, Najdi Arabic has relatively more vowels than Classical or Modern Standard Arabic (see Alothman, 2012; Ingham, 1994). In Najdi Arabic, there are *five long vowels*, /i:/, /u:/, /a:/, /o:/ and /e:/, *three short vowels* /i/, /u/ and /a/, (Ingham, 1994). On the other hand, Modern Standard Arabic along with Classical Arabic has three long vowels, /i:/, /u:/, /a:/ and three short vowels, /i/, /u/, /a/, (Alothman, 2012; Bani Salameh & Abu-Melhim, 2014). Najdi Arabic has all the vowels Classical Arabic and

Modern Standard Arabic has in its vowel inventory, including the three short vowels with their long counterpart (Allothman, 2012). Nevertheless, there are two long vowels Najdi Arabic has and Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic lack, such as /o:/ and /e:/ (Allothman, 2012; Ingham, 1994).

### ***Najdi Arabic syntax and morphology***

Najdi Arabic has a less complex grammar than Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic since many morphological and grammatical cases that inflect *verbs*, *nouns*, *adjectives* were completely lost (see Allothman, 2012; Ingham, 1994).

Nevertheless, Najdi Arabic still retains some of the prominent grammatical features of Classical and Modern Standard Arabic, such as *person*, *gender*, and *number agreement* (see Allothman, 2012; Ingham, 1994). As for the word order, Najdi Arabic shows more flexibility since it allows two different word orders, such as SVO and VSO (Ingham, 1994). The most apparent difference between these two word orders is that the verb follows the subject in the former whereas it preceded the subject in the latter. These word orders are considered grammatical and acceptable by many Native Najdi speakers. However, some Arabic scholars, including Ingham (1994), claim that VSO is the default word order that most Najd Arabic sentences tend to exhibit. Similarly, Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic have free word order allowing both SVO and VSO (Allothman, 2012).

Najdi Arabic has inherited besides the flexible word order a complete morphological system from Classical and Modern Arabic (see Allothman, 2012). Najdi Arabic morphology closely resembles that of Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic in which nouns and verbs receive grammatical cases at their ends, such as *gender*,

*number, person* (Allothman, 2012). Najdi Arabic morphology consists of the following major morphological categories that are found in Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic and classified by a number of Arabic scholars including Ibn Aqeel (1980) as mentioned in (Allothman, 2012):

- The first morphological category is *fiʿl* ‘lit. *verb*’ such as *verbs*.
- The second morphological category is *ism* ‘lit. *particle*’ such as *adjectives* and *nouns*.
- The third morphological category is *ḥarf* ‘lit. *letter*’ such as *articles, pronouns, demonstrative, and conjunctions* (p. 97).

Najdi Arabic nouns and adjective get marked for feminine and masculine gender as well as singular, dual, and plural number (Allothman, 2012). Najdi Arabic verbs also get inflected for feminine and masculine gender along with singular and plural number (Allothman, 2012). The dual case is completely lost for verbs in Najdi Arabic (Allothman, 2012). Najdi Arabic has inherited an interesting word-formation process from Classical or Modern Standard Arabic (see Ryding, 2005). Ryding (2005) provides a concise description for the noun word formation process Arabic language along with Najdi Arabic exhibit as follows:

Arabic nouns are usually derived from lexical roots through application of particular morphological patterns. The use of patterns interlocking with root phonemes allows the formation of actual words or stems. Noun patterns themselves carry certain kinds of meaning, such as “place where action is done,” “doer of action,” “name of action,” “or instruments used to carry out action” (p. 74).

As for Najdi Arabic tense, there are three main tenses that are shown across NA sentences, these are *the perfect, past, and present* (Allothman, 2012). The future is communicated through the addition of the prefix *bæ-*, or the lexical word *ræḥ* before the

Najdi Arabic verbs (Alothman, 2012), such as *bæ-ʔkl* or *ræḥ ʔkl* both of which mean ‘I will eat.’ The present tense is indicated by the use of “personal suffixes and prefixes” before the verb (Alothman, 2012, p. 119), as in *ta-ʔkl-un* ‘you eat’. The past tense is shown through the use of “personal suffixes” with the verb (Alothman, 2012, p. 120), as in *ʔkl-at* ‘she ate.’

### **Discourse Marker Theoretical Background**

The study of discourse markers is not a new phenomenon given the fact it started in the late 70s with scholars and researchers showing a tremendous interest in studying “the production and comprehension of extended discourse, and more generally, in pragmatic and textual aspects of utterance interpretation” (Schourup, 1999, p.228). Labov and Fanshel (1977) were among the first scholars recognizing the significance of discourse markers in utterance planning, production, and interpretation after analyzing the use of DM *well*. Levinson (1983) was another prominent scholar recognizing the textual and pragmatic roles of discourse markers within the utterances that need to be thoroughly and extensively explored.

After Levinson (1983) encouraged scholars to scrutinize DMs roles, there has been a tremendous increase in scholarly studies aiming to tackle their textual, pragmatic, discourse, interpersonal functions within the written and spoken utterances across languages (e.g., Al-Batal, 1990; Al Rousan, 2015; Bidaoui, 2016; Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Aijmer, 2002, 2008; Aijmer & Lewis, 2017; Blakemore, 1987; Brinton, 1996, 2006, 2017; D’Arcy, 2017; Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Owens & Rockwood, 2008; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999). The interesting behavior of discourse markers has attracted the attention of many scholars across various linguistics fields, including *pragmatics*,

*sociolinguistics, phonology, and syntax*, resulting in a number of published articles, manuscripts, dissertations, and books (e.g., D’Arcy, 2017; Fraser, 1991, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987; Marmorstein, 2016; Owens & Rockwood, 2008). Some scholars have focused on single discourse markers, such as D’Arcy (2017) on *like*, while other scholars conducted comprehensive studies on a number of discourse markers, including Schiffrin (1987) and Fraser (1990, 1993, 1996, 1999). During the past three decades, American English discourse markers were scrutinized extensively more than other languages discourse markers, dissecting their *syntactic* and *pragmatic* functions (e.g., D’Arcy, 2017; Fraser, 1990, 1993, 1996; Schiffrin; 1987; Schweinberger, 2015; Tagliamonte & D’Arcy, 2004; Tagliamonte, 2005; Tottie, 2011). There has been a tremendous amount of research on discourse markers, resulting in a number of proposed definitions, characteristics, features, frameworks, as well as analytical approaches (see Ament & Parés, 2018; Blakemore, 1987, 2002; Brinton, 1996; Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999).

Scholars have proposed several analytical approaches to approach discourse markers, including *coherence-based* (Schiffrin, 1987) and *relevance-based framework* (Blakemore, 1987). According to Schourup (1999), “DMs [discourse markers] have been investigated within a large number of frameworks reflecting divergent research interests, methods, and goals” (Schourup, 1999, p. 228). The *coherence framework* was proposed by Schiffrin (1987) and adopted by Fraser (1990) and Redeker (1990). The *relevance framework* was adopted from Sperber and Wilson (1986) relevance theory and adopted by Blakemore (1987). The literature shows that scholars adopting these two frameworks have not reached a complete agreement regarding discourse markers concepts, general features, characteristics, semantic status, as well as grammaticalization pathways (e.g.,

Aijmer, Foolen, & Simon-Vandenberg, 2006; Ament & Parés, 2018; Blakemore, 1987, 2002; Brinton, 1996; Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999; Redeker, 1990) as will be shown in more details the next sections.

### **Discourse markers concepts**

During the past three decades, there has been many heated debates among linguistic scholars, pragmatists, as well as discourse analysts regarding these interesting linguistic items (e.g., Aijmer, Foolen, & Simon-Vandenberg, 2006; Blakemore, 1987, 2002; Brinton, 1996, 2017; Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999; Redeker, 1990). The literature shows that there seems to be no general agreement regarding major concepts or terms when it comes to these linguistic items (Fraser, 1999; Schourup, 1999). Therefore, several concepts were proposed in the literature to describe the behavior of these linguistic items, including but not limited to, *discourse markers* (Fraser, 1990, 2009, 2015; Ranger, 2018; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999, 2011), *discourse operators* (Redeker, 1991), *discourse connectives* (Blakemore, 1987), *semantic connectives* (Zarei, 2013) *discourse particle* (Aijmer, 2002; Schourup, 1985), *pragmatic marker* (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg, 2004, 2006; Aijmer, Foolen, & Simon-Vandenberg, 2006; Brinton, 1996, 2006, 2017, Fraser, 1996). Some of these labels have been seen to be more favored than others by the vast majority of scholars. There have been four concepts more frequently adopted by scholars, namely *discourse particle*, *discourse marker*, *pragmatic participle*, and *pragmatic marker* (Brinton, 2017).

However, *discourse marker* has been the most popular concept in the literature that was first introduced by Schiffrin (1987) and later adopted by many linguistic scholars (e.g., Brinton, 1996; Ranger, 2018; Schourup, 1999). According to Brinton (1996), “Discourse

marker is perhaps the most common name suggested for the seemingly empty expressions found in oral discourse ...” (p. 29). Along similar lines, Schourup (1999) comments on the popularity of discourse marker “The term DM ... is merely the most popular of a host of competing terms used with partially overlapping reference” (p. 228).

The literature shows there has been a number of attempts to draw the line between the most commonly used concepts, including *discourse marker*, *discourse particle*, *pragmatic marker*, and *pragmatic particle* (Brinton, 2017). For instance, Fraser (1990) states that *pragmatic marker* is the big umbrella term for *discourse marker* which is a (sub)category of commentary pragmatic markers. Along similar lines, Schourup (1999) provides a precise distinction between *discourse marker* and *discourse particle*. First and foremost, the difference between *particle* and *marker* boils down to the fact that the former tends to refer to a “syntactic term” while the latter is used for a “functional class” (Schourup, 1999, p. 229). Second, the concept *discourse participle* is used to indicate linguistic items other than *discourse markers* “that are uninflecting (‘invariable’), such conjunctions, prepositions, interjections, and adverbs ...” (Schourup, 1999, p. 229). Third, the concept *discourse particles* seem to be inclusive as some scholars used it to refer to certain linguistic items, such as “scalar and modal particles” (Schourup, 1999, p. 229). According to Schourup (1999), the concept *discourse marker* is more preferable as it appeared that it “acquired a narrower and more precisely specifiable reference than DP [discourse particle]” (p. 229). Aijmer, Foolen, & Simon-Vandenberg (2006) also distinguishes between *discourse particle* and *pragmatic marker* as the former is considered as a category of the later that is “more comprehensive functional class” (p. 103). According to Aijmer et al. (2006), *discourse particles* can be differentiated from

*pragmatic markers* on the bases of their three factors: *multifunctionality function, the syntactic and phonological features*. For instance, *discourse particles* tend to be “monosyllabic and are placed in pre-front field,” such as *well* (Aijmer, Foolen, & Simon-Vandenberg, 2006, p. 103).

### **Discourse markers linguistics features**

Scholars have long been interested in the idea of characterizing the linguistic features and functions of discourse markers since the early 1980s. Therefore, there has been a growing number of research studies by scholars coming from various linguistic disciplines to dissect the *phonological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, interpersonal, and attitudinal* functions of these discourse markers (e.g., Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Blakemore, 1987; Brinton, 2017; Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Owens & Rockwood, 2008; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999). Nevertheless, there has been a little agreement among scholars regarding the general features and characteristic of discourse markers (see Ament & Parés, 2018; Brinton, 1996, 2017; Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999).

During the past three decades, a number of prominent linguistic scholars have proposed numerous characteristics precisely describing *discourse markers’* general linguistic features. The syntactic feature of DMs is that “[DMs] occur either outside the syntactic structure or loosely attached to it” (Brinton, 2017, p. 9). Discourse markers tend to show a preference for the initial position of the utterance (Brinton, 2017; Schourup, 1999). Discourse markers are not obligatory as their occurrence is considered “optional” (Brinton, 2017; Schourup, 1999). The phonological feature of DMs is they are believed to “form a separate tone group, but they may also form a prosodic unit with preceding or



following material” (Brinton, 2017, p. 9). The semantic feature of DMs is that they have pragmatic meaning that does not have an effect on the truth conditionality of the utterance (Brinton, 2017; Schourup, 1999). The sociolinguistic feature of DMs is that they are used more frequently in the spoken genre, especially in informal settings (Brinton, 1996, 2017). Discourse markers are also frowned up by academics as they are “stigmatized” features of spoken conversations (Brinton, 2017, p. 9). Discourse markers functions differently in the speech of female speakers than male speakers (Brinton, 2017, p. 9).

Discourse markers are considered oral speech features since they are commonly found in spoken conversations (Brinton, 2017; Schourup, 1999). However, according to Schourup (1999), there is “no principled grounds exist on which to deny DM status to similar items that are largely found in written discourse” (p. 234).

Discourse markers are multi-categorical as they derived from various syntactic categories, including but not limited to, *verbs*, and *interjections*, (Brinton, 2017; Fraser, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999). Therefore, discourse markers cannot be grouped under a syntactic category as they are comprised of a “functional category” (Schourup, 1999, p. 234). Discourse markers had been developing from a number of syntactic classes throughout the centuries through an interesting linguistic phenomenon referred to in the literature as *grammaticalization* (see Brinton 1996; D’Arcy, 2017; Schourup, 1999), which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Discourse markers usually prefer the initial position in the sentence to “restrict contexts early before interpretation can run astray” (Schourup, 1999, p. 233). However, some discourse markers can also occur at the end of the utterance (Fraser, 1990;

Schourup, 1999). According to Schourup (1999) initiality alone cannot be taken as a criterion to determine if the linguistic element is a discourse marker since many items tend to occur in that position. For instance, discourse markers can be distinguished from *commentary markers*, *interjections*, as well as *vocatives* that occur in the initial position in that discourse markers besides their preference for initial position, they also indicate sequential relations between segments (Fraser, 1990).

There seem to be three key characteristics that can set discourse markers apart from other linguistic expressions, namely *non-truth conditionality*, *connectivity*, as well as *optionality* (Schourup, 1999). Discourse markers are not obligatory as their absence have no effect on the semantic meaning of the sentences (Brinton, 2017; Fraser, 1990; Schourup, 1999). As for connectivity, discourse markers are utilized to “relate utterances or other discourse units” (Schourup, 1999, p. 230). Nevertheless, scholars have not reached a complete agreement regarding the number of utterances discourse markers can connect within the constituents (Schourup, 1999). Shiffrin (1987) claims that discourse markers can link up to two “adjacent” utterances resulting in “*local coherence*.” On the other hand, Lenk (1998) claims that discourse markers can link utterances which are not close to each other resulting in a “*global coherence*.” Along similar lines, Blakemore (1987) claims that the utterances could also be seen coherent even if the discourse markers link utterances to others that are not necessary explicitly transmitted. Other scholars, such as Shiffrin (1987), claim that utterances have to be “adjacent” to interpreted as coherent. According to Schourup (1999), “The dispute over connectivity is thus tied to the more general debate between relevance theorists and proponents of

coherence-based models of discourse, in regard to the nature of utterance interpretation” (p. 231).

### **Discourse markers functions**

The literature shows there have been numerous studies describing a number of functions for discourse markers that stem from various analytical approaches and methodologies (e.g., Brinton, 1996; Ament & Parés, 2018). Among the first scholars was Brinton (1996) who came up with a comprehensive classification of discourse markers functions. Brinton (1996) claims that there are two primary functions discourse markers general exhibit, namely *textual* and *interpersonal functions*. The textual functions allow the interlocutors to produce, maintain, and preserve coherence within the utterances (Brinton, 1996). The interpersonal functions make the interlocutors communicate their “attitudes, evaluations, judgments, expectations ... the role of the speaker and the role assigned to the hearer” (Brinton, 1996, p. 38). Brinton (1996) provided a detailed list of the textual and interpersonal functions for discourse markers as follows

- i “to initiate discourse, including claiming the attention of the hearer, and to close discourse;
- ii to aid the speaker in acquiring or relinquishing the floor;
- iii to serve as a filler or delaying tactic used to sustain discourse or hold the floor;
- iv to mark a boundary in discourse, that is, to indicate a new topic, a partial shift in topic (correction, elaboration, specification, expansion), or the resumption of an earlier topic (after an interruption);

- v to denote either new information (Erman 1987: 201; Schiffrin 1987a, as cited in Brinton, 1996) or old information (Quirk et al. 1985: 1482; Schiffrin 1987a, as cited in Brinton, 1996);
- vi to mark “sequential dependence”, to constrain the relevance of one clause to the preceding clause by making explicit the conversational implicatures relating the two clauses, or to indicate by means of conventional implicatures how an utterance matches cooperative principles of conversation (Levinson 1983: 128-129, 162-163, what he calls a “maxim hedge” as cited in Brinton, 1996);
- vii to repair one’s own or others’ discourse;
- viii subjectively, to express a response or a reaction to the preceding discourse or attitude towards the following discourse, including also “back-channel” signals of understanding and continued attention spoken while another speaker is having his or her turn and perhaps “hedges” expressing speaker tentativeness, and;
- ix interpersonally, to effect cooperation, sharing, or intimacy between speaker and hearer, including confirming shared assumptions, checking or expressing understanding, requesting confirmation, expressing difference, or saving face (politeness)” (p. 37-38).

Along similar lines, Ament and Parés (2018) adopted Fung and Carter (2007) a core functional paradigm of discourse markers in pedagogic discourse classifications with little modifications and adjustments. This classification breaks down discourse markers into four interesting functions, such as *interpersonal*, *cognitive*, *structural*, and

*referential*. With each of the aforementioned categories, there are several numbers of different functions. Ament and Parés (2018, p.47) describe the four discourse functions as follows:

DMs [discourse markers] in the *cognitive* category are thought to provide information on the cognitive state of the speaker and instruct the hearer as to how to construct their mental representation of the ongoing discourse. *Structural* DMs serve metalinguistic textual functions on how the flow of discourse is to be segmented. *Referential* DMs mark relationships between the utterances before and after the DM ... *interpersonal* DMs, are thought to be used to mark affective and social functions on spoken grammar, and indicate how the speaker feels towards the discourse statements (Andersen, 2001, as cited in Ament & Parés, 2018, p. 47).

Ament and Parés (2018) provide scholars with the most updated and neatly organized discourse markers functions classification. Ament and Parés (2018) reduce the number of functions under the *referential* function by omitting *comparison*. Ament and Parés (2018) also add another interesting function under interpersonal function that is *interest and back channel* that Fung and Carter (2007) lack. Ament and Parés (2018) also add *hesitation and elaboration* under cognitive function. Similarly, Ament and Parés (2018) combine *Sequencing* and *topic shifts* into *sequencing topic shifts* under structural function as shown in the table.

Table 1. Categorization of Pragmatic Markers According to Functions Adapted from Ament and Parés (2018, p.48)

Functions	Example items
<b>Cognitive</b>	
Denote thinking process	<i>Well, I think</i>
Reformulation / self-correction	<i>In other words, I mean</i>
Elaboration / Hesitation	<i>It's like /sort of, well</i>
Assessment of the listener's knowledge about the utterances	<i>Right?</i>
<b>Structural</b>	
Opening and Closing of topics	<i>Ok, right, well, now</i>
Sequencing topic shifts	<i>Anyway(s), so, then, next</i>
Summarizing options	<i>And, so yeah</i>
Continuation of or return to topics	<i>Additionally, and so, and, plus</i>
<b>Referential</b>	
Cause / contrast	<i>Because /but, although</i>
Consequence / Digression	<i>So /anyway</i>
<b>Interpersonal</b>	
Mark shared knowledge	<i>You see, you know</i>
Indicate speaker attitudes	<i>Yes, of course, really, I agree</i>
Show emotional response / interest and back channel	<i>Great, sure, ok, yeah</i>

The literature shows scholars along with discourse analysts have not yet reached a complete agreement in terms of general discourse markers functions as can be shown by the various proposed classifications, categorizations, and taxonomies (e.g., Brinton, 1996; Ament & Parés; 2018). Interestingly, there have been some functions that have resonated or echoed across these taxonomies, including *textual* and *interpersonal*. Some of the functions scholars seems to agree on are *indicating attitudes*, *opening and closing marker*, *confirmation seekers*, and *repair marker* (Ament & Parés, 2018; Brinton, 1996).

However, some of these functions were categorized differently by a number of scholars. For instance, Ament and Parés (2018) classified *confirmation seekers* and *repair markers* as cognitive function, whereas Brinton (1996) classified the former as interpersonal function while the latter as textual function. Similarly, *topic switcher* is one of the textual functions for Brinton (1996), but it is one of the structural functions for Ament and Parés (2018).

### **Major discourse markers theories**

During the past four decades, there has been a surge of studies on discourse markers by a number of scholars coming from various linguistics fields applying different approaches and theories (e.g., Blakemore, 1987; Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Redeker, 1991; Schiffrin, 1987). The literature on the linguistic behavior of discourse marker is vast since linguistic scholars, pragmatists, and discourse analysts have shown a great interest in the pragmatic and syntactic behavior of these discourse markers. There have been two major theories proposed by scholars and adopted by linguistic researchers to account for the behavior of discourse markers: *Coherence-based theory* and *Relevance-based theory*. These theories have significant implications for the understanding of pragmatic markers, their textual, and interpersonal functions within the utterances (see Blakemore, 1987; Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Redeker, 1991; Schiffrin, 1987).

#### ***Coherence-based theory***

One of the earliest and most adopted theories for studying discourse markers is a Schiffrin (1987) *coherence-based theory*. Schiffrin (1987) scrutinized the pragmatic functions of *because, and, but, so, or, I mean, y'know, now, oh, well, then, and now*. According to Schiffrin (1987), discourse markers contribute to the coherence by linking

“adjacent utterances”, resulting in “local coherence” (p. 24). Schiffrin (1987) proposed a five plane of talk, namely *exchange structure*, *action structure*, *ideational structure*, *participation framework*, and *information state*. *The exchange structure* is “the outcome of the decision procedures by which speakers alternate sequential roles and define those alternations in relation to each other” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 24). *The action structure* “... indicate[s] that speech acts are situated – not only in terms of speakers’ identities and social setting, but in terms of what action proceeds, what action is intended, what action is intended to follow, and what action actually does follow” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 25) *The ideational structure* shows “three different relations between ideas contribute to the overall configuration of idea structures: cohesive relations, topic relations, and functional relations” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 26). *The Participation framework* shows “the different ways in which speaker and hearer can relate to one another ...[And] The ways in which speakers and hearers can be related to their utterances” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 27). “[*The information state* involves the organization and management of knowledge and meta-knowledge” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 28).

Redeker (1991) drew upon Schiffrin’s (1987) coherence theory showing a dissatisfaction with the complexity of the proposed coherence model. Redeker (1991) claims that Schiffrin’s discourse marker concept should be more precise to identify and pinpoint linguistic items that qualify to be as discourse makers. Redeker (1991) also criticizes Schiffrin complicated analytical framework which further needs to be modified, changed, and simplified. Therefore, Redeker (1991) reduced the coherence model from five to three planes of talk, such as *ideationally*, *rhetorically*, and *sequentially* as follows:

- “Two discourse units are *ideationally* related if their utterance in the given context entails the speaker's commitment to the existence of that relation in



the world the discourse describes. Examples are temporal sequence, elaboration, cause, reason, and consequence, and so forth;

- Two discourse units are considered to be *rhetorically* related if the strongest relation is not between the propositions expressed in the two units but between the illocutionary intentions they convey;
- Sequential transitions are paratactic or hypotactic relations between ideationally and rhetorically only loosely related adjacent discourse segments” (p. 1168).

Redeker (1991) states that “*anaphoric pronouns and noun phrases,*” “*clausal indicators of discourse structure,*” and “*deictic expressions as far as they are used anaphorically*” are not considered as discourse operators (p. 1169).

Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999) is another prominent scholar that adopted Shiffrin (1987) coherence theory by conducting an interesting consecutive work. Fraser was among the first scholars to distinguish between *discourse markers* and *pragmatic markers* claiming that the latter is the big umbrella for the former. According to Fraser (1990), discourse markers lack semantic meaning but instead have procedural meaning allowing interlocutors to express emotions and attitudes. During the past three decades, Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999) was occupied with the idea of characterizing discourse markers to figure out their characteristics and features. Interestingly, Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999) constantly changed discourse marker definition to determine what (dis)qualifies as a discourse marker. Fraser (1990) disqualified a number of discourse markers proposed by Schiffrin (1987) including *y’know*, *oh*, *well* since they do not indicate any relations among segments. Nevertheless, Fraser (1996) included DMs that were previously disqualified in his previous (1990) work, such as interjection *oh*, and vocative *doctor*. In his latest work, Fraser (1999), eliminates all the *commentary pragmatic markers*, including *vocatives*, *pause markers*, and *modal particles* since they show no relations

among segments. Fraser (1999) also included other linguistics items that have previously disqualified, including *since*, *and*, *in spite of that*, and *however*. Fraser (1999) provides a justification for the decision of including the previously excluded linguistic items as follows:

I have now come to the conclusion that all the marked expressions ... [*since*, *and*, *in spite of that*, and *however*] should be considered as DMs. First, because I cannot find any principled basis to distinguish among them, and second, because each of the expressions relates two separate messages, which I take to be a sine quonon of DMs (p. 940).

According to Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999), there are four major pragmatic markers, such as *basic markers*, *commentary markers*, *discourse markers*, and *parallel markers*. Basic pragmatic marker “signal[s] the force of the basic message,” (Fraser 1990, p. 386), such as *I regret* not buying a new car. Commentary pragmatic marker “encode[s] an entire message – both force and content - which (message) constitutes a comment on the basic message itself” (Fraser 1990, p. 386), such as *Honestly*, I had to buy a new laptop. Parallel pragmatic marker “encode an entire message, but one separate from and in addition to the basic and/or commentary message(s)” (Fraser 1990, p. 387), such as *Willie*, do your homework. Discourse markers “signals how the speaker intends the basic message that follows to relate to the prior discourse” (Fraser 1990, p. 387).

### ***The relevance-based theory***

The relevance-based theory is another adopted theory in studying discourse markers that emerged about the same time as the coherence theory. Among the first scholars that utilized this model is Blakemore (1987) by drawing on Sperber and Wilson (1986) relevance theory framework. According to the Blakemore, (1987), discourse connectives “constrain the interpretation of the utterances that contain them by virtue of

the inferential connections they express” (105). Blakemore (1987), considered the following linguistic elements as discourse connectives: *after all*, *so*, *moreover*, and *furthermore*. Discourse connectives lack semantic meaning but instead have procedural meaning with no effect on the truth conditionality of the utterances (Blakemore, 1987). After severe criticisms from Wilson and Sperber (1993), Blakemore (1987) had to finetune the proposed model adopting the proposed recommendations. In her previous model, Blakemore (1987) states that words with no semantic meaning cannot be truth-conditional under any circumstances. Wilson and Sperber (1993) provided a new model of relevance that solved the shortcomings of Blakemore (1987) relevance model that later adopted by Blakemore (2002) as shown below:

- Personal pronouns lack conceptual meaning and greatly known by having an effect on the truth-conditionality of the sentence;
- Along similar lines, discourse connectives also lack conceptual meaning, but the main difference is that they have no effect on truth-conditionality of the sentence;
- On the other hand, adverbials have semantic meaning but have no effect on the truth-conditionality of the sentence;
- Manner adverbial have semantic meaning and have an effect on truth-conditionality of the sentence (p. 21).

### **Discourse markers in contemporary English literature**

Since the early 90s, linguistic scholars along with pragmatists have been empirically studying the linguistic behaviors of a number of discourse markers across different English dialects and varieties, such as *American English* (e.g., Croucher, 2004;

Fraser, 1990, 1996, 1999; Redeker, 1990; Schiffrin, 1987) *British English* (Tottie, 2011), *British and Irish English* (Schweinberger, 2015), *Canadian English* (Tagliamonte & D’Arcy, 2004) by utilizing various analytical frameworks and approaches. In American English, Redeker (1990) carried out a study adopting a narrative approach to explore how American college students produce discourse and achieve coherence through the use of two different types markers, namely *ideational and pragmatic markers*. The participants were shown a couple of relatively short movies and were asked to describe the scenes to other participants. The study results show that the relationship type between the participants and the listeners affects the communication style. For instance, participants used an informal register with the listeners they had familiarity with whereas they used a formal register with strangers or outsiders. Furthermore, participants utilized quotes in retelling the story for various purposes: They used quotes with friends to explain the story while they used quotes with strangers to prove that they got the story. The results also indicate that participants who are familiar with listeners utilized the three markers of pragmatic structures significantly, such as *interjections, connectives, and comment clauses*, more than with strangers. Similarly, participants used the three ideational markers more when conversing with outsiders, including *temporal adverbials, semantic connectives, and simple subordinators*. The extensive use of pragmatic markers among friends reflects that the fact the subjects added exaggeration elements to their narrative. The participants known for their excessive use pragmatic markers with friends tend to use fewer ideational markers than when conversing with strangers.

In Canadian English, Tagliamonte & D’Arcy (2004) conducted a longitudinal sociolinguistic study exploring the use of quotative *be like* in the speech of youth

Canadians in Toronto to track the various changes in the Canadian English quotative system over the period of nine years. Tagliamonte et al. (2004) built a sizeable corpus of spoken conversations of Youth Canadians that roughly consist of five hundred thousand words collected from face-to-face sociolinguistic interviews. The corpus shows that Youth Canadians makes use of several quotative verbs, such as *go*, *say*, *think*, *be like*, *zero*, *explain*, *ask*, and *realize*. The corpus shows that the most frequent quotative verb is *be like* followed by quotative verb is *zero*, and *say*, respectively. Interestingly though, the corpus also shows that quotative verbs *go* and *say* were more frequent than *be like* in 1995, but this trend is completely reversed where *be like* is more common than these verbs in 2003. The study also shows there is a noticeable constraint on the use of *be like* as it is seen used more often with the first person and for internal thought. Nevertheless, the result shows that female subjects, their ages between 17-19 years old, tend to use *be like* for internal dialogue and direct speech more than their males counterpart. The result also shows that subjects older than 19 years old are the ones responsible for making the quotative verb *be like* used for direct speech. The use of the quotative *be like* for internal dialogue is the strongest among younger speakers where it gets weaker among the older subjects. The results also show that *be like* is currently undergoing a grammaticalization process that would change the current effects of sociolinguistic factors along with grammatical constraint on person and quote content. Therefore, the study highly predicts that there would be no effect of gender on the use of *be like* as it would be used with the third person and for direct speech.

In British English, Tottie (2011) conducted a sociolinguistic study examining the effect of sociolinguistic factors on the frequency of occurrence and use of hesitation

markers, such as *uh* and *um*, in the spoken British English. The study adopted two varieties of British National Corpora (BNC): The context-governed ‘BNC-CG’ and the demographic ‘BNC-DEM’, with varying levels of formalities and various age cohorts. The results show that the fillers in BNC-CG are more prevalent than in BNC-DEM, which is not expected given the fact that the former is considered “more formal” (Tottie, 2011, p.178). The results also show that sociolinguistic factors have a significant impact on the use and frequency of hesitation markers. For instance, gender plays a crucial role on the frequency of pauses as males tend to use fillers, such as *uh+um*, in telephone conversations more frequently than females in both corpora. On the other hand, females tend to use nasalized fillers *um* more frequently than males in both corpora, and they have higher filler frequency in CG than male in DEM. Age also turned out to be a determining factor for the choice of hesitation marker. For example, older subjects tend to use a higher frequency of *uh+um* fillers because of “slowing down of [their] cognitive functions that necessitates more time to retrieve words” (Tottie, 2011, p. 191). Nevertheless, there is no evidence showing the younger generation tend to use fewer fillers, or the older generation tend to use more fillers. Younger generation tends to use nasalized fillers more than older generation. Socio-economic status has an effect on the frequency of hesitation markers as people with higher social status tend to have a higher frequency of filler, *um*. Following the footsteps of Tottie (2011), Schweinberger (2015) investigates the (socio)pragmatic and discourse functions of the quotative verb *like* in two British varieties, *Irish English* and *South-Eastern British English*. The results show that *like* has a number of interesting functions, frequency of occurrence, and occupy various syntactic positions in Irish and British English. For instance, the discourse marker *like* is

most likely “clause-final” in Irish English whereas it is mostly “clause-medial” in British English. The “clause-external” *like* has “broader scope” on the sentence and is usually utilized by native English speakers “to buy [more] processing time” (Schweinberger, 2015, p.119). On the other hand, “clause-medial” *like* has a narrower scope on the sentence and functions either as “hedging device” or “focusing device.” As for the sociolinguistic effect on the use of *like* in both English varieties, *like* is mostly used by males, their ages range between nineteen and twenty-five, in Irish English and by male participants younger than twenty-five years old in British English.

### **Discourse markers in contemporary Arabic literature**

Arab linguists and pragmatists have shown an increasing interest in studying the various pragmatic, discourse, textual, and interpersonal functions of Arabic discourse markers during the past three decades (Al-Batal, 1990; Al-Harashseh & Kanakri, 2013; Al Rousan, 2015; Ghobrial, 1993; Mobarki, 2018). These scholars have adopted several frameworks to approach discourse markers and understand their functions and roles within the spoken or written utterances. The contemporary literature on Arabic discourse markers shows that there have been a few numbers of studies that thoroughly and deeply dissected the pragmatic functions of discourse markers. The initial Arabic pragmatic studies on discourse markers has not started until early 1990s, focusing on *Modern Standard Arabic* (Al-batal, 1990; Ghobrial, 1993) which later on was followed by a wave of studies on Arabic dialects at the beginning of 2010s, including *Jordanian Arabic* (Al-Harashseh & Kanakri, 2013), and *Najdi Arabic* (Al Rousan, 2015). There have also been other cross-dialectal comparative studies on discourse markers across Arabic dialects,

such as *Kuwaiti, Emirati, and Jeddawi Arabic* (Owens & Rockwood, 2008) and *Morocco, Algeria, and Egyptian Arabic* (Bidaoui, 2016).

Among the first Arab scholars to ever approach the topic of discourse markers was Al-Batal (1990) merely focusing on Modern Standard Arabic “connectives” in written Arabic texts, such as *wa-*, at *the clause, paragraph, sentence*, as well as *phrase levels*. According to Al-Batal (1990), discourse markers have a crucial function in allowing readers to easily grasp written texts by indicating a number of relations among segments, such as *providing necessary elaborations*. Following Al-Batal (1990) footsteps, Ghobrial (1993) explores three different discourse markers in the spoken conversations of Native Carine Arabic arguing that *inta-ṣaaref, tayyab*, and *yṣani*, are the equivalents of *y’know, well*, and *I mean*, respectively. According to Ghobrial (1993), these Carine Arabic discourse markers have unique pragmatic functions and obey the maxims of conversations, such as *maxims of relevance and manner, the maxim of manner, and the maxim of quality*. Some of the pragmatic functions of these discourse markers are *indicating a complete agreement and showing a reception of someone’s utterance*.

In Jordanian Arabic, Al-Harashseh & Kanakri (2013) conducted a pragmatic study on the discourse marker *Tayyib* in Jordanian Arabic which literally means *ok* to explore its procedural meanings and the effects of sociolinguistics factors on its various functions. Al-Harashseh et al. (2013) utilized a discourse and conversation analysis framework and drew upon the Relevance Theory. Al-Harashseh et al. (2013) gathered eighteen video-recordings from thirty-six Jordanian Arabic college students, each conversation about thirty minutes. The study shows that the discourse marker *Tayyib* has



a number of different pragmatic functions, such as *topic initiator*, *topic terminator*, *confrontational device*, *mitigator device*, *show a complete agreement*, as well as *hold the floor*. This discourse marker tends to occupy different syntactic positions, such as alone, or preceding a noun phrase, declarative phrase, or even interrogative phrase. The study also shows that the interpretation of the discourse marker *Tayyib* depends on shared cultural knowledge along with linguistic cues, including intonations and facial expressions.

Interestingly enough, there have been other fascinating (socio)linguistic studies exploring the functions of discourse markers across a number of similar Arabic dialects spoken in neighboring Arabic countries. Owens & Rockwood (2008) conducted a large-scale pragmatic corpus-based study to analyze the functions of one of the most frequent discourse markers *yaʕni* across three Gulf Arabic varieties, *Kuwaiti*, *Emirati*, and *Hejazi*. This study draws upon conversational pragmatics framework and Grice's theory of conversation. The data collected was seven hundred and nineteen instances of *yaʕni* out of twenty-seven thousand words from Gulf Arabic speakers. The discourse marker *yaʕni* occurs in different grammatical contexts and positions in the utterances, including *between two prepositional phrases*, *verb and object*, *before predicate adjectives*, and *between auxiliary verb and main verb*. Nevertheless, the most common site for the discourse marker is *between two propositions*. Phonologically, the discourse marker *yaʕni* can occupy various phonological positions: before, after, or without a pause. The discourse marker *yaʕni* has pragmatic functions such as, *elaboration device*, *repair device*, *hesitation device*, as well as *code-switching device*. The discourse marker *yaʕni* collocates mostly with *yaʕni fa*, *bass yaʕni*, and *maʕruuf yaʕni*. To tackle the meaning of

DM *yafni*, Owens & Rockwood (2008) came up with two interesting perspectives: (i) *yafni* has various meanings depending on the contexts, such as “*in sum*” and (ii) *yafni* has “a core meaning” that is to provide “*elaboration*” that can be further divided into three types: “*generalize, specify, and continue.*”

Similarly, Bidaoui (2016) carried out a comparative sociolinguistics study to get a sense of how the elaboration is expressed by four groups of native Arabic speakers with various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The data was collected from twenty-four subjects from various Arabic countries: *Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt* through informal conversations and sociolinguistic interviews. Bidaoui (2016) adopted the relevance theory framework to account for the frequency of use and the selection of discourse marker by participants in certain contexts. The study shows that the participants provided elaborations through the use of various pragmatic markers, such as *l?inna, ?afan, z?ma, I mean, parce que*. The most common discourse marker among the three nationals is the classical Arabic discourse markers *l?inna*. Interestingly enough, the three nationals made use of other local discourse markers besides the CA discourse markers: The Egyptian subjects used the DM *?afan* and the Moroccan subjects used the DMs *hit* and *lahqaf* while Algerian subjects used the French DM *parce que*. The use of elaboration discourse markers is based on a number of social factors, including *individual choices, interaction type, and nationality*. The national background has an effect on the choice of discourse markers during the social interactions. For instance, Algerian subjects tend to use the French DM *parce que* to index in-group identity. The interactions type also has an effect on the choice of the discourse marker. For example, Algerians used the French discourse marker *parce que* with other Algerians and Moroccans subjects;

however, they used the CA discourse marker *l?inna* with Egyptians to avoid miscommunications as they are not expected to know French.

### **Grammaticalization of Discourse Markers**

During the past three decades, a number of prominent linguistic scholars have been greatly fascinated with the linguistic phenomenon formally known as *grammaticalization* since it provides useful insights into comprehending the development of discourse markers throughout the course of history (see Brinton, 1996, 2017; D’Arcy, 2017). Grammaticalization provides scholars with thorough and detailed explanations for the various syntactic, morphological, and semantic changes discourse markers exhibit to have a better understanding of the language current development directions (see Brinton, 1996, 2017; D’Arcy, 2017). Scholars have approached the topic of grammaticalization of discourse markers from two different perspectives, such as *synchronic* or *diachronic* (Brinton, 1996). According to Brinton (1996), “Grammaticalization can be considered both a synchronic and diachronic process (see Lehmann 1985, as cited in Brinton, 1996), though it is more commonly studied as the latter” (50). Unfortunately, the literature shows that vast majority of current linguistic studies on the development of discourse markers are synchronic in nature (e.g., Al-Harashseh & Kanakri, 2013; Baron; 2010; Bidaoui, 2016). Nevertheless, there have been a few numbers of diachronic linguistic studies that extensively traced the development of discourse markers for over a couple of decades (e.g., Brinton, 1996; 2017; D’Arcy, 2017; Tagliamonte & D’Arcy, 2004). The literature shows that there have been several diachronic studies that focused on single discourse markers, *like* (D’Arcy, 2017), or on a number of discourse markers, such as *gan*, and *anon* (Brinton, 1996).

Brinton (1996) offers a concise explanation for Kurylowicz (1965) proposed definition for the process of grammaticalization:

... grammaticalization is the development of fully grammatical forms (function words, clitics, and inflections) as well as of “more grammatical” forms such as derivational affixes, from independent lexical items (p. 51).

The grammaticalization process can occur to linguistic expressions, such as discourse markers, at various linguistic levels, including but not limited to, *syntactic*, *morphological*, and *semantic levels* (D’Arcy, 2017; Brinton, 1996). According to Brinton (1996), “while grammaticalization is normally seen as underlying the development of grammatical markers, it can also explain the development of pragmatic markers [discourse markers].” (p. 50).

There have been heated discussions among linguistic scholars regarding the effect of the grammaticalization process on the semantic status of discourse markers. Some scholars, such as Fraser (1990), claim that discourse markers lack propositional meaning but instead have a pragmatic or interpersonal meaning. On the other hand, Schifffrin (1987) claim that discourse markers have propositional meaning except for *oh* and *well*. Along similar lines, Brinton (1996) claims that discourse markers have undergone a semantic change from proposition to textual to interpersonal meaning. Therefore, the absence of the discourse marker would not result in changing the semantic meaning of the utterance (Brinton, 1996; Schourup, 1999). The lack of propositional meaning does not indicate that discourse markers have no meaning as the use of inappropriate discourse marker would make the sentence unacceptable (Schourup, 1999), as shown in the following example:

A: Did you arrive early? B: Oh (/ \*well), why, of course. (Schourup, 1999, p. 243).

Schourup (1999) provides a great justification for the unacceptability of the discourse marker *well* in this specific example. According to Schourup (1999), there is “an encoded content sufficient to relate these DMs [discourse markers] to the respective ‘slots’ in which they can appear” (p. 243). Therefore, discourse markers are not completely without meaning (Schourup, 1999), and that explains the unacceptability of the discourse marker *well* in the context above.

The vast majority of synchronic and diachronic discourse markers studies clearly show there has been a remarkable semantic shift resulted in discourse markers acquiring a number of interpersonal and pragmatic functions (e.g., Brinton, 1996; D’Arcy, 2017; Fraser, 1990; Schiffrin, 1987). However, the literature shows that scholars are still not in line regarding the pathway discourse markers took during the grammaticalization process. Romaine and Lange (1991) were among the first scholars to suggest the following pathway for the discourse marker *like* as shown in Brinton (1996, p. 62):

PROPOSITIONAL	TEXTUAL	INTERPERSONAL
<i>like</i> (proposition)	<i>like</i> (conjunction)	<i>like</i> (focuser)
	<i>like</i> (quotative)	

Pragmatic markers developed from lexical items with semantic or propositional meanings and ended up with procedural meanings (e.g., D’Arcy, 2017; Brinton, 1996). A number of linguistic scholars provided pieces of evidence supporting Romaine and Lange (1991) who suggested pathway for the discourse marker *like*. Schweinberger (2015) shows that *like* has undergone a grammaticalization process from preposition and ended

up having a number of interpersonal and procedural functions, such as *hedging*. Along similar lines, D’Arcy (2017) supports this argument showing that *like* changed dramatically during the past eight centuries from a preposition to conjunction and finally to interpersonal. D’Arcy (2017) claims that Romaine and Lange’s (1991) grammatical pathway greatly accounts for the historical development of *like*. According to D’Arcy (2017), “The pathway that Romaine and Lange (1991) propose for LIKE ... the first stages are uncontroversial in that the preposition is older than the conjunction, each attested from Early Middle English and Central Middle English respectively” (59-60).

As shown above, Romaine and Lange’s (1991) grammaticalization pathway seems to account for the discourse marker *like* and thus cannot be generalized to all discourse markers (D’Arcy, 2017). D’Arcy (2017) claims that a single grammatical pathway cannot account for the grammaticalization of all discourse markers since the “the developmental pathway hinges on the syntactic origin, not the endpoint” (59). Therefore, Brinton (2006) seems to provide the development pathways for a number of discourse markers, as presented in D’Arcy (2017):

1. “matrix clause> matrix clause/parenthetical disjunct> discourse marker
2. subordinate clause> parenthetical disjunct
3. adverb/preposition> conjunction/sentence adverb> discourse marker” (p. 59)

According to D’Arcy (2017), Brinton’s (2006) grammaticalization pathways could be used to account for the historical development of a number of different discourse markers in Old and Middle, and Modern English. The first pathway shows the grammaticalization of the discourse markers *I say*, and *you know* “from matrix clauses requiring that complements” (D’Arcy, 2017, p. 59). The second pathway shows the

grammaticalization of the pragmatic marker *I guess* “when the deletion of the complementizer creates a parenthetical disjunct” (D’Arcy, 2017, p. 59). The last pathway shows the development of the linguistic expressions *indeed* (Modern English), *anon* (Middle English), *witodlice* (Old English), and *like* (D’Arcy, 2017). According to D’Arcy (2017), “The difference between these other forms and LIKE [*like*] is that their development does not include a stage as conjunction, having developed directly from adverbial elements” (59).

### **Computer-Mediated Communications**

Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC) is “the communication produced when human beings interact with one another by transmitting messages via networked or mobile computers, where “computers” defined broadly to include any digital communication device” (Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015, p. 127). With the increasing popularity of the internet in the 90s, females started using the internet which “had previously been an almost exclusively male domain” (Herring, 2000, p. 1). Before the internet era, the vast majority of people tended to make most of their communications either face-to-face or remotely through *mails*, *telephones*, or *faxes*. The first-of-its-kind networking system was invented in the 70s to replace typical face-to-face communications by connecting computers to transmit and receive crucial data for the U.S. national defense (Hafner & Lyon 1996, As cited in Herring & Stoerger, 2014). Shortly afterward, the internet started to attract the attention of many people with different linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds around the globe. For instance, this network was first adopted by scholars and researchers working in academia and then

followed by people working in different sectors in the 80s; However, it was not popular among the public until the early 90s (Herring & Stoerger, 2014).

Computer Meditated Communications can be classified based on a number of parameters reported in the literature. Baron (2010) claims that there are two main parameters could be used to distinguish various types of CMC. Baron's (2010) first parameter is formally known as synchronicity which has two types, such as *synchronous* and *asynchronous CMC*. The *asynchronous CMC* is an online medium that allows users to interact with each other without having to be online at the same moment, such as *e-mails* (Baron, 2010). On the other hand, the synchronous CMC is real-time online medium that requires users to be online to interact by transmitting and receiving messages, such as *real-time chat rooms* (Baron, 2010). Baron's (2010) second parameter classifies CMC based on the number of online users involved in the CMC communications. For instance, the CMC that takes place solely among two online users is "one-to-one," whereas among many online users is "many-to-many" (Baron, 2010).

The linguistic behavior of online users in CMC has attracted the attention of linguistic scholars. The literature shows that there have been several concepts proposed by scholars to describe the discourse style or CMC language adopted by online users engaged in CMC communications, such as *Netspeak*, *Chattisch*, and *Netzslang* (Androutsopoulos, 2006). Netspeak or CMC language has several interesting features reported in the literature, such as using *simplified grammar*, *non-typical spellings*, *abbreviations*, and *deleting subjects and pronouns* (Herring, 2012). Since netspeak is hard to decipher to outsiders, a number of lexicographers created online dictionaries dedicated to providing definitions to the most popular internet slangs and acronyms, such



as *Netlingo Dictionary*, *Internet and Text Slang Dictionary*, and *Urban Dictionary*. A number of acronyms have widely been used during the past few years in which they became an essential part of many CMC platforms. Some of these acronyms along with their definitions are listed in the table below:

*Table 2. A list of Acronyms Used Commonly Across CMC Platforms*

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Stand For</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
LOL	Laugh out loud	“An abbreviation that stands for ‘laugh out loud’ to you, but ‘lots of love’ for your mom” (Urban Dictionary).
JK	Just Kidding	“Just kidding. Used at the end of a sentence to make it completely void, therefore, contributing nothing to the conversation and wasting everyone's time” (Urban Dictionary).
SMH	Shake my head	“[It] typically used when something is obvious, plain old stupid, or disappointment” (Urban Dictionary).

### **Gender and CMC**

During the early days of 1990s, many linguistics scholars had shown immense interest in conducting studies on gender and CMC that stem from the fact that females started to have a noticeable presence on the internet (Herring, 2000). Therefore, females had a larger representation across various computer communication systems, including *online chats*, *blogs*, as well as *forums*. Nevertheless, some females preferred to stay anonymous in CMC communications during the early stages of the internet to enjoy all

the perks that come with anonymity (Selfe & Meyer, 1991), including but not limited to, *avoid verbal and sexual harassment* (Herring, 1998c), and *avoid being held responsible or accountable for their words* (Herrings, 2000).

The literature shows that there have been a number of linguistics studies on the role gender plays in CMC communications in terms of the discourse style, self-representation and equality. Herring (2000) was among the first scholars to observe the effect of gender on the adopted discourse style and behavior in CMC communication. According to Herring (2000), men and women tend to show unique linguistics practices across synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communications. For instance, in asynchronous CMC, males tend to be *more confrontational, use vulgar language, present their opinion without solid evidence, and compose larger messages* than their females counterparts while females tend to be *more understanding, send shorter posts and receive fewer responses, and back up any claims they make during the discussions* (Herring, 2000). In synchronous CMC, males tend to *get fewer messages and attention in online real-time chatrooms, utilize fewer emojis, flirt more with the opposite sex* while females have different linguistic style in which they *use emoticons excessively to express their feelings and attitudes and they get harassed more than males in synchronous CMC* (Herring, 2000).

Gender also has a significant effect on how online users represent themselves on various CMC platforms, such as *Twitter*. Both genders represent themselves differently in social media platforms either staying completely anonymous (Nakamura, 1995) or revealing their true identities through the use of a *username, profile picture* along with a *short bio* (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Early CMC platforms gave users the

opportunity to take on fake usernames and photos to project their desired identities (Nakamura, 1995). Nevertheless, the vast majority of social media platforms currently seem to push users to reveal their identities (Herring & Kapizdic, 2015), including *Twitter*. According to Herring and Kapizdic (2015), current social media platforms require both genders to represent themselves through the use of their real photos. Therefore, males and females tend to share photos on their online profiles that conform to socially or culturally constructed norms of beauty or masculinity (Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008). Herring and Kapizdic (2015) states that the result of their earlier study, Kapizdic and Herring (2011), shows that females tend to send photos of “them in a seductive manner” while males photos “show them at a farther distance from the camera and looking away from the viewer” (p. 148).

Gender inequality tends to surface in computer-mediated communications despite several claims of granting gender anonymity (Herring and Stoerger, 2014). Some scholars believe someone might be able to conceal gender identity and remain anonymous. Other scholars, including Herring and Stoerger (2014), claim reaching complete anonymity is impossible since there are linguistic cues that reveal someone’s gender identity. According to Herring and Stoerger (2014):

The linguistic features that signal gender in CMC are stereotypically sex-linked and similar to those that have been described ... for face-to-face interaction. They include verbosity, assertiveness, use of profanity, (im)politeness, typed representations of smiling and laughter, and degree of interactive engagement (p. 570).

As mentioned before, females tend to be less assertive and support their claims with evidence and often get harassed by other male online users (Herring, 2000). The gender inequality persists in CMC communication in the form of sexual harassment

forcing females to adopt nicknames not revealing their gender identity (Herring, 1998c). Interestingly, males sometimes choose feminine nicknames to increase their chances of interacting with females (Herring, 1998c). According to Herring (2000), “the longer someone participates [in CMC communications], the more likely it is that they will [unintentionally] reveal their actual gender.” Nevertheless, there are some reasons online users prefer to cover up their gender identity, including *to increase their credibility*, and *to be taken seriously when engaging in online conversation* (Herring, 2000).

Computer-mediated communication field has recently gained popularity among sociolinguists and other researchers interested mainly in the interplay between CMC, language, and society (Ge & Herring, 2018; Herring, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2000, 2018a, 2018b, Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015; Herring & Dainas, 2017, 2018; Herring & Kapidzic, 2015; Herring & Stoerger, 2014; Kapidzic & Herring, 2011). Scholars have been long curious to explore the role of sociolinguistic factors on the linguistic practices of online users across various CMC platforms (e.g., Herring, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2000, 2001, 2018a, 2018b). However, scholars have come across a huge obstacle in which crucial information for their sociolinguistic studies are sometimes not made public, including *age*, *gender*, and *socio-economic status* (Herring, 2001). Therefore, researchers would solely rely on the publicly available information from online users’ profiles to conduct their various analyses (see Herring, 2001). Interestingly though, there have been social behavior and linguistic clues that online users leave behind, allowing researchers to uncover these pieces of information (Herring, 2001). For instance, *Gender* can be inferred visually by usernames (Herring, 2001), or even linguistically by adopting the socially agreed upon communication styles (Herring, 1998c). *Age* can also be inferred

based on the personal stories and recent experiences (Herring, 1998c). Similarly, the complexity of the syntactic structures and the vocabulary level can indicate the highest level of *education* (Herring, 1998a).

### **Discourse markers studies in CMC**

The contemporary literature on Arabic studies in CMC shows that Arab scholars and linguists approached this emerging field of study from various perspectives, such as *Critical Discourse Analysis* (Aljarallah, 2017) and *Discourse Analysis* (Al-Khawaldeh, 2018; Al Rousan, 2015). Arab scholars have conducted numerous interesting linguistic empirical studies during the past few years, including *Arabic discourse markers* (Al-Khawaldeh, 2018; Al Rousan, 2015). There have been a few Arabic studies investigating the use of Arabic discourse markers in CMC platforms (Al-Khawaldeh, 2018; Al Rousan, 2015). Al Rousan (2015) studied the use of the discourse marker *maʕ nafsak* by Saudi college students in their online interactions with each other through the use of social networking apps, such as *WhatsApp* and *BBM*. Seventeen students took part in the study, and their ages ranged from eighteen to nineteen. Al Rousan (2015) collected his data via participants' personal diaries in which the participants were instructed to save their conversation history on their smartphones and then share it with the researcher. The study shows that there are twelve different uses for the DM *maʕ nafsak*, including *objection*, *showing lack of interest*, *frustration*, *unwillingness*, or *disappointment*. This study result also shows that the discourse marker *maʕ nafsak* is more prevalent among young Saudi speakers. Interestingly though, this study has not discussed how dialectally different those Saudi speakers were in particular. In other words, the study has no mention of the

spoken dialects of the Saudi subjects which might turn out to have a crucial effect on the pragmatic functions and roles of the discourse marker *maʿ nafsak*.

Along similar lines, Al-Khawaldeh (2018) investigated the use of Modern Standard Arabic discourse markers *kama* in “the journalistic discourse” from two of the most famous news outlets websites in the Middle East, *Alarabia* and *Aljazeera*. The study’s primary aim is to shed light on one of the most commonly used DMs in Modern Standard Arabic to understand the pragmatic along with the discourse functions it plays within the texts. The study’s main goal is also to determine the frequency of MSA discourse marker *kama* and to pinpoint the communicative and interactional functions it exhibits across three different genres of these two news websites, including *sports news*, *politics news*, as well as *opinions articles*. The study relied on both quantitative and qualitative methods to fully explore the linguistic behavior of this discourse marker. The results of the study reveal that it has four main pragmatic functions, such as *providing elaboration*, *indicating similarity*, *offering evidence*, as well as *providing examples*. Interestingly though, the most common pragmatic function that was prevalent in the corpus was to provide elaboration that literally accounts for about half of the occurrences. On the other hand, the least common pragmatic function exhibited in the corpus was to provide examples that was only about thirteen percent frequent.

## **Emoji**

### **Emoji origin and evolution**

Emoji have become a trending phenomenon around the world with many people from various racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds adopting emoji in their computer-mediated communications (Lu, Ai, Liu, Li, Wang, Huang, & Mei, 2016). The

vast majority of synchronic and asynchronous CMC platforms are racing to provide the latest sets of emoji (Ling, 2018). For instance, a number of prominent social media platforms along with other third-party companies are constantly creating numerous emoji keyboards at online users' disposal (Ling, 2018). Emoji is a Japanese word that contains two combined syllables with the first syllable 'lit. *picture*,' and the second syllable 'lit. *Character*' (Herring & Dainas, 2017; Ling, 2018; Lu, Ai, Liu, Li, Wang, Huang, & Mei, 2016). Emojis were created towards the end of the 90s by the Japanese DoCoMo cellphone employee Shigetaka Kurita to encourage people to engage in CMC using the I-mode service provided by the company (Ling, 2018; Ljubešić & Fišer 2016). Emojis were officially introduced to allow people to communicate their feelings, emotions, as well as attitudes (Al Rashdi, 2015; Herring & Dainas, 2017; Ljubešić & Fišer 2016). Therefore, social media users tend to use emoji excessively in their CMC to avoid miscommunications and to “compensate for the lack of body language and subtle facial expressions” (Ling, 2018, p. 187). Prior to the creation of emoji, scholars long realized this particular issue in CMC communications; therefore, in 1982, Scott Fahlman, a Computer Science professor Emeritus at Carnegie Mellon University, created emoticon to avoid getting messages taken out of context in CMC (Al Rashdi, 2015; Ling, 2018). Emoticons “consists of a series of text characters (typically punctuation or symbols) and is used to represent a facial expression or gesture” (Ling, 2018, p. 12).

Emoji have evolved during the past two decades and gone through some drastic changes since they first appeared back in the late 1990s (see Ling, 2018). As mentioned before, in 1998, the Japanese DoCoMo cellphone employee Shigetaka Kurita invented 180 emoji (Ling, 2018). Ten years later, in 2008, *Apple* showed a great interest in emojis

by designing a special keyboard later called *Apple Emoji Keyboard* (Ling, 2018). In 2010, Unicode Consortium officially added emoji in a first attempt to make sure they have the same interpretations and representation around the world (Danesi, 2017; Ling, 2018). In 2015, Emojis reached the peak of their popularity with *the face with tears of joy emoji* awarded by *Oxford English Dictionary* the word of the year (Danesi, 2017; Ling, 2018; Ljubešić & Fišer 2016; Lu, Ai, Liu, Li, Wang, Huang, & Mei, 2016). In the same year, a new update included emoji representing marginalized ethnic and sexual groups (Ling, 2018). In 2017, *Apple* announced a new feature called “Animoji” that relies on ““facial recognition sensors to detect user facial expressions and uses microphones to record users voices, and then generate 3D animated emoji” (Ling, 2018, p. 53).

### **Emoji ambiguity**

Emoji are now an essential part of synchronic and synchronic computer-mediated communications around the globe (see Al Rashid, 2015; Ling, 2018). Emoji allow social media users to convey various pragmatic functions, including *expressing their feelings and moods, showing attitudes, decorating text messages, and showing politeness by saving someone’s face* (Al Rashid, 2015; Dainas & Herring, in press, 2019; Danesi, 2017; Li & Yang, 2018). Nevertheless, there have been a number of reported instances in the literature that show emoji could be completely ambiguous leaving interlocutors unable to interpret the intended meanings (e.g., Al Rashid, 2015; Herring & Dainas, 2017; Ling, 2018). Ling (2018) claims that “the designer gave every emoji an official definition, however, because each user’s thinking and feelings are different, resulting in a wide variety of interpretation of emoji” (p. 28). Therefore, Emoji have acquired several pragmatic and procedural meanings during the past few years that go beyond their



official meaning (Dainas & Herring, in press, 2019). For instance, *the tears of joy emoji* whose original meaning is to indicate something *funny* is used by one Chinese subject as a *softening* (Dainas & Herring, 2019). Some scholars, including Herring and Dainas (2019, p. 4), claim that there are a number of emoji that are “inherently more ambiguous than others.”

The contemporary literature on emoji shows that there are a number of factors that lead to emoji ambiguity other than the one mentioned earlier, including *cultural factors* (Dainas & Herring, 2019) and *(socio)linguistic factors* (An, Li, Teng, & Zhang, 2018; Bosch & Revilla, 2018; Ge & Herring, 2018; Herring, & Dainas, 2017, 2018). The “culture coding ... this is the interpretation of the same forms in specific cultural ways” of emoji is one of the factors contributing to ambiguity (Danesi, 2017, p. 30). For instance, the use of *thumb up emoji* in some South American and Middle Eastern cultures has a sexual connotation that could get someone in serious trouble (Danesi, 2017). Therefore, online users have to be careful not to come across as inappropriate or culturally insensitive when interacting with people from different cultures. Along similar lines, some sociolinguistic factors are believed to contribute to the ambiguity in emoji interpretation (An, Li, Teng, & Zhang, 2018; Bosch, & Revilla, 2018; Dainas & Herring, in press, 2019; Herring & Dainas, 2017). Some scholars claim that *age* contributes significantly to emoji ambiguity (An, Li, Teng, & Zhang, 2018; Bosch & Revilla, 2018; Herring & Dainas, 2017). For instance, Herring and Dainas (2017) states that young subjects not necessarily have completely similar interpretations of emojis that is in line with the interpretations of older subjects. On the other hand, scholars claim *gender* might

not have a significant impact on the ambiguity of emojis interpretation (e.g., Dainas & Herring, in press, 2019; Herring & Dainas, 2018).

### **Emoji functions**

The literature on emojis is highly scarce with few scholars recently recognizing their numerous pragmatic, interpersonal, and attitudinal functions across a number of CMC platforms (e.g., Al Rashid, 2015; Dainas & Herring, in press, 2019; Li & Yang, 2018), reflecting a tremendous need for thorough and extensive academic research to refine, support or even refute the already existing functions proposed in the literature. The literature shows that there have been few attempts to classify emoji functions and establish comprehensive analytical frameworks. The dearth of studies on emoji functions is attributed to the recency of this area of research. A few numbers of scholars have made remarkable attempts to scrutinize the different functions of emojis by utilizing various qualitative and quantitative methods, such as Al Rashdi (2015) Herring and Dainas (2017), Li and Yang (2018). Li and Yang (2018) adopted Yus (2014) emoticons pragmatic functions taxonomy to determine the functions of emoji. Along similar lines, Herring and Dainas (2017) created several taxonomies to better tackle emojis functions after emojis (sub)categories and functions coming out the corpus. However, Dainas and Herring (in press, 2019) later revisited their earlier taxonomy to better capture emojis functions. Similarly, Al Rashdi (2015) has not adopted any taxonomy from other linguistic scholars but rather made the categories of emoji functions naturally coming out the corpus, as shown in the following table.

Table 3. *Emoji Communicative Functions Adapted from Al Rashid (2015, p.221-222)*

<b>Interpersonal Meaning</b>	Indicate emotions
	Indication of approval
	Indication of the fulfilment of a requested task
	Approval and disapproval of other' messages
	Responses to thanks and compliments
	Conversational openings and closings
<b>Propositional Meaning</b>	Contextualization cues
	Indexical signs
	Substitutes for lexical items
<b>Emoji Sequence Meaning</b>	Indicate intensity of emotions
	Indicating insistence
	Displaying excitement and enthusiasm
	Showing Solidarity
	Adding emphasis or highlighting certain part of an utterance
	As a resource in creating play

Al Rashid (2015) classified emojis communicative functions into three major functions: *interpersonal*, *propositional*, along with *emoji sequence meaning*. The interpersonal category contains functions such as *indicating emotions*, *fulfilment of task*, *approval and disapproval of others' messages*, *response to thanks and compliments*, as well as *conversational openings and closing*. The propositional category includes three different functions, *contextualization cues*, *indexical signs*, as well as a *substitute for lexical items*. There are also some interesting functions for the sequences of emoji, such as *indicate intensity of emotions*, *indicating insistence*, *displaying excitement and enthusiasm*, *showing solidarity*, *adding emphasis or highlighting certain part of an utterance*, and *as a resource in creating play*.

Li and Yang (2018) drew on Yus's (2014) emoticons pragmatic functions taxonomy to scrutinize the various pragmatic functions and roles of emoji. Li and Yang

(2018) listed the Yus (2014) taxonomy neatly in numerical order for easy reference as follows:

*Table 4. Pragmatic Functions of Emoticons Adapted from Yus (2014, p.518-526) in Li and Yang (2018, p. 3)*

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(1) to signal the propositional attitude that underlies the utterance and which would be difficult to identify without the aid of the emoticon;
(2) to communicate a higher intensity of a propositional attitude which has already been coded verbally;
(3) to strengthen/mitigate the illocutionary force of a speech act;
(4) to contradict the explicit content of the utterance (humor);
(5) to contradict the explicit content of the utterance (irony);
(6) to add a feeling or emotion toward the propositional content of the utterance (affective attitude toward the utterance);
(7) to add a feeling or emotion toward the communicative act as whole (feeling or emotion in parallel to the communicative act);
(8) to communicate the intensity of a feeling or emotion that has been coded verbally.

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Li and Yang (2018) claim that Yus’s (2011) non-verbal behavior interpretation taxonomy is by far “the taxonomy prototype of emoji functions ... which covers more possibilities compared with the previous studies.” (p. 3). Li and Yang (2018) also added that Yus (2014) emoticons pragmatic functions, which is the most refined taxonomy of non-verbal behavior interpretation taxonomy, “... has been so far the most comprehensive and complete with a wide coverage [as shown in the table above]” (p. 3).

Dainas and Herring’s (in press, 2019) emoji pragmatic functions taxonomy has undergone several crucial stages until it got to its current status. In the initial stage, Herring and Dainas (2017) created the taxonomy after the categories came out of the corpus on graphicons functions. Nevertheless, Herring and Dainas (2017) have noticed emoji was the most used graphicons deserving a separate study on its own. Therefore, the

original taxonomy was revised, refined, and finetuned to tackle the various pragmatic functions of emojis as shown below:

*Table 5. Formal and Lay Descriptions of Pragmatic Functions of Emojis Based on Herring and Dainas (2017) Adapted from Dainas and Herring (in press, 2019, p. 10-11)*

<b>Function</b>	<b>Formal Description (Herring and Dainas 2017)</b>	<b>Survey Option: The emoji shows that the user is...</b>	<b>Additional Clarification</b>
Tone Modification	Graphicon directly modifies text, clarifying how a message should be interpreted	Associating a specific Tone (e.g. happy or Some related tone) with their comment	That is, the emoji tells the reader how the comment is intended to be interpreted.
Softening	N/A	Softening their comment	For example, making the comment less forceful or more polite.
Reaction	Graphicon used to portray a specific emotion in response to something that has been posted	(Virtually) expressing an emotion in response to previous content, not necessarily related to the text of their comment	That is, reacting directly to the prompt.
Action	Graphicon used to portray a specific physical action	(Virtually) saying [Text of Message], and then performing a virtual action (e.g. smiling)	That is, performing each part of the comment in sequence, one part after the other.
Mention	Mentioning a graphicon rather than using it, e.g., Use: "I'm so excited! :-) Mention: "That jerk had the nerve to send me a :-)"	Illustrating the text of their comment	That is, the emoji is a graphic illustration of some word(s) in the comment.
Riff	Graphicon is humorous elaboration on, play on, or parody of a previous graphicon or comment	N/A	N/A

Sequence	A series of consecutive graphicons (often of the same type) that convey a narrative of some kind as oppose to a composite message	N/A	N/A
Physical Expression	N/A	Literally (physically) Doing what the emoji Expresses (e.g. smiling) While typing their comment	At the time the message was typed, the Facebook users was actually feeling or doing what the emoji expresses.
Decoration	N/A	Just using the emoji as decoration	The emoji has no function except to make the text more visually interesting or appealing.
Ambiguous	The graphicon has multiple, distinct meanings	More than one function Is equally plausible (Specify/Explain your Choices)	After considering all of the options, you think there is no one best answer.
Other	Cases that cannot be accounted for by the coding scheme	Other (explain)	None of the above options captures how you think the emoji functions in this comment. Instead you think...
“ I don’ t know”	N/A	I have no idea	You totally give up

Herring and Dainas (2017) provide a comprehensive and detailed description and categorization of emojis distinctive pragmatic functions. The categorization has shown several interesting functions emoji exhibit across the data, such as *tone modification*, *reaction*, *action*, *mention*, *riff*, *ambiguous*, as well as *other*. Dainas and Herring (in press, 2019) made a couple of essential adjustments to their first-ever proposed taxonomy to

make sure the newly refined taxonomy accurately and precisely capture emoji functions. Herring and Dainas (2018) got rid of two categories, such as *riff* and *sequence*, and divided *tone* category into two categories, namely *tone modification* and *softening* (Dainas & Herring, in press, 2019, p. 9). On the other hand, they introduced several new categories to better tackle emoji pragmatic functions, such as *physical action* and *decoration* (Dainas & Herring, in press, 2019, p. 9).

The literature on emoji functions taxonomies and classifications clearly shows that there seems to be a general agreement among scholars regarding some functions emojis tend to exhibit, including *expressing emotions and attitudes* and *show intensity of feelings* (Al Rashdi, 2015; Li & Yang, 2018). Nevertheless, some scholars, on the other hand, seem not to be completely in line with some of the proposed functions that could be attributed to the various approaches, methodologies, and analytical frameworks adopted to study emojis (see Al Rashid, 2015; Herring & Dainas, 2017; Li & Yang, 2018). For instance, there have been categories found exclusively in specific taxonomies, such as *decoration*, *ambiguous* (Dainas & Herring, in press, 2019), and *solidarity* and *contextual cues* (Al Rashdi, 2015), which might be taken to show emojis have distinctive pragmatic functions in different languages. Nevertheless, scholars have to thoroughly explore and challenge the proposed taxonomies on various languages to come up to such conclusion. Interestingly, these taxonomies have been only utilized on a single language, such as Al Rashdi (2015) on *Arabic*, Herring and Dainas (2017) and on *English*, and Li and Yang (2018) on *Chinese*; but have not yet been adopted across different languages. Therefore, longitudinal cross-linguistic studies are much needed to formally challenge these taxonomies to determine their accuracy and applicability across various languages,

including *Arabic* and its various dialects. The current study utilizes the taxonomies mentioned above (e.g., Al Rashdi, 2015; Herring and Dainas, 2017; Li and Yang, 2018) along with new categories that might come out of the *Twitter* corpus to analyze emojis numerous pragmatic functions across Najdi Arabic tweets.

### **Emoji major empirical studies**

Al Rashdi (2015) was among the first Arab scholars to explore the functions of emojis on *WhatsApp*. Al Rashdi (2015) examined the various functions emojis play in Omani's *WhatsApp* conversations. The study aims at observing how Omani online users transmit and decipher text messages with emoji and at examining the sociolinguistic factors effects on the use and frequency of emoji. Al Rashdi (2015) collected the data from two gender-separate *WhatsApp* groups: one group is male-dominated group whereas the other is female-dominated group. The male group contains fifteen male members mostly engineers whereas the female group contains thirty females with different jobs. The study reveals that male and female groups utilized a large array of emoji to *express emotions, moods, attitudes, and other communication needs*. Female and male groups collectively used a hundred and twenty-one different emoji. The study shows there is a remarkable effect of gender on the use of emoji as it turns out that females' employment of emoji surpassed their males counterpart, and some emoji are only found in certain gender-separate groups. For instance, the *wrapped present emoji* interpreted as a gift by Omani *WhatsApp* users was only seen in the female group. The study also reveals that emoji has a number of pragmatic functions, such as *turn initiator* and *turn closer, express excitement and compliment, to show complete (dis)approval*. Interestingly, the



sequencing of emoji has some interesting functions, including *to show intensity of feeling*, *add emphasis* or even *indicate excitement*.

An, Li, Teng, and Zhang (2018) carried out an interesting study exploring the factors that could have an impact on the use of emoji in Smartphone-Mediated Communications, including the sociolinguistic factors and power relations among online users. The primary aim of the study was to examine if these factors have an effect on the frequency and type of emoji used in the online interactions. The researchers collected about six thousand eight hundred and twenty-one chat logs from a hundred and fifty-eight Chinese native speakers engaging in a popular instant messaging app in China known as *WeChat*. The analysis of the study shows that the participants used about seventy-two different types of emoji in their texts in which only twenty were used more frequently than others. The four most commonly used emoji were *tears of joy emoji*, *slightly smiling face emoji*, *beaming face with smiling eyes emoji*, and *crying face emoji*, respectively. As for the effect of sociolinguistic factors on emoji frequency, it turns out that the gender of the participants and power relations play no role on the frequency of emoji; however, age seems to have a crucial effect as participants younger than 25 tend to use way more emoji than participants over fifty years old. As for the effect on the type of emoji used, the analysis reveals that younger generation used emoji that communicated “complex feelings” whereas older generation “used more positive emoji” (An et al, 2018, p. 426). For instance, the older generation used *hug emoji* while the younger used *tears of joy emoji*. The analysis of the study also shows that the power relations and relationship type play a role in the type and frequency of emoji as participants. For example, younger

generation tend to use easy-to-interpret emoji with older generation to get their messages across.

Along similar lines, Bosch and Revilla (2018) conducted a comparative survey study shedding light on the Millennials' emoji usage in two Spanish speaking countries, namely *Spain* and *Mexico*. This study aims at understanding *the interpretations, the frequency, and the contexts of emoji usage* among two Spanish groups with various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The results show that emoji are used mainly in both countries in *instant messaging, social media platforms, and e-mail*. The results also show that that three main reasons for using emoji in Spain and Mexico are to *show emotions, decorate their messages, and to get their message across*. There is a remarkable effect of age and power relations on the frequency of emoji. For instance, emoji used more among younger generation, especially friends, while they are rarely used with professors or with older generation. There is also an effect of gender as females in Spain and Mexico tend to utilize more emoji than their males' counterpart. Interestingly, emoji are interpreted slightly different in both countries as some emoji tend to acquire more pragmatic meanings than others. For instance, the *praying hand emoji* share the same interpretation of *please*, but it is interpreted as *sorry* in Spain while it is interpreted as *pray* in Mexico.

In their consecutive work, Herring and Dainas (2017, 2018) and Dainas and Herring (in press, 2019) paved the way for other linguistic scholars interested in studying the functions of graphicons, including *emojis*, in CMC communications across social media platforms by proposing frameworks, methodologies, and analytical approaches to tackle their discourse and pragmatic functions. Herring and Dainas (2017) conducted a large-scale study examining the use of a number of graphicons, including *emoji*,

*emoticon, GIF, and Meme*, in Facebook comment threads from four publicly available Facebook groups, namely *Cat GIFs, EmojiXpress, Grumpy Cat Memes, and Strickers*. The motivation behind the study was to examine the various functions of these graphicons across Facebook comments. Herring and Dainas (2017) drew on *Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA)* framework to scrutinize the frequency of occurrence for each type of graphicons. The study collected a tremendous amount of graphicons from Facebook, specifically nine hundred and seventy-five graphicons, three hundred and seventy-seven from male subjects and five hundred twenty-seven from female subjects, and seven from other gender non-identified subjects. The analysis of the study shows there are a number of instances of graphicons that are hard to categorize due to their ambiguity and vagueness in some contexts. The analysis of the study also shows there are six important functions these graphicons generally exhibit: *tone modification, reaction, mention, riffing, narrative sequence*, as well as *action*. The most common functions of graphicons are *reaction, tone modification, and mention* respectively. On the other hand, the least common functions of graphicons are *ambiguous, other, and sequence*, respectively. The analysis of the study shows that the only graphicon that seem to show all of the six functions is emoji. The most commonly used graphicon are *Emojis, emoticons, and image*, respectively. On the other hand, the least frequently used graphicons are *sticker, video and GIF*.

Herring and Dainas (2018) carried out another interesting linguistic study exploring the effect of gender on emoji interpretations and perceptions. The main goal of the study is to observe if there are any differences in terms of how emojis are deciphered by male and female subjects across various contexts. Herring and Dainas (2018) collected

data from a hundred and twenty-one males, three hundred and fifty-two females, and fifty gender unidentified subjects. Herring and Dainas (2018) adopted an online survey questionnaire to investigate how males and females get the intended meaning of emojis and how often they use emojis in their various online communications. The results show that female subjects tend to use emojis in their CMC conversations more than their male counterparts. The study reveals interesting findings in which there is no major difference regarding emoji interpretations among the two genders but rather the difference is usually based on the type of the social media platform. The participants, including males and females, tend to interpret emojis mostly as *tone modification*. However, female participants believe that emoji have functions such as *reaction* and could have *multiple functions* more than their male counterparts. On the other hand, the gender unidentified subjects chose functions for emojis, including *multiple functions*, *other functions*, *action*, *mention* and *softening*, more than both genders. The gender unidentified subjects chose *multiple functions* and *other functions* more than both genders. On the other hand, male subjects chose emoji functions, such as *I don't know*, *decorative*, and *action* more than female subjects. One of the most surprising results of the study is that gender groups could have a slightly different interpretations for the same emoji. For instance, the *tears of joy emoji* is perceived as *actions* by gender unidentified group while it is interpreted as *tone modification* by male and female participants. The highest agreement on the pragmatic functions were observed in *Tongue out emoji*, *frown emoji*, and *crying emoji*. The most frequent pragmatic function subjects chose for a number of emojis were *tone modification* followed by *action* and *mention*.

Dainas and Herring (in press, 2019) revisited the data collected from their (2017) study to further explain thoroughly the findings regarding the potential interpretations of emoji pragmatic functions. The current study aims to investigate the most preferable interpretations for emoji pragmatic functions and whether or not there is a general consensus regarding the emoji interpretations between different gender groups and the researchers. The results confirm the findings of Herring and Dainas (2017) study in which the most chosen pragmatic function for emojis was *tone modification*, and emoji interpretations highly depends on the type of emoji in question. Furthermore, the results confirm the findings of Herring and Dainas (2017) study in which there is a remarkable effect of age on the interpretation of emoji because since older subjects show different interpretations than young subjects. The results show that, the most preferred functions assigned to emoji by the subjects are *tone*, *action*, *mention* while the least preferred functions are *other functions*, *I don't know*, and *physical action*. As for the interpretations of emoji, *smiles emoji* are perceived as *softening*, and *heart eyes emojis* as *virtual actions*. Interestingly, the pragmatic functions emoji take within the context might not necessary match the functions reported in other studies or even the official meaning assigned to emoji. For instance, the *slightly smiling face* interpreted as *happy* without a text but in other examples it represents a *mitigator* or *softening*. The study subjects tend to agree on *tone* as their number one choice for the pragmatic function of many emoji but they show more disagreement on *reaction*. The study subjects show agreement on the pragmatic function of the *tongue out emojis*, *crying emoji*, and *frowning emoji* than other emojis. The subjects agree with Dainas and Herring (in press, 2019) mostly on *tone* and *mention* while they mostly disagree on *reaction and action*. As for the results of the survey, there

are eight categories emerges after analyzing the subjects responses. The two most comment categories are *I love and use emoji* and *emoji as a new language*, respectively.

### **Summary**

The chapter offered a detailed review of the discourse markers' major frameworks and approaches across several languages and varieties. It indicated that discourse markers tend to exhibit numerous similar linguistic features and functions cross-linguistically, including *pragmatic, discourse, and interpersonal functions*. The chapter also provided a thorough overview of emoji origin and functions in Computer-mediated Communications showing that emoji are an essential part of CMC communications as they get integrated into messages delivering various pragmatic, interpersonal, and semantic meanings.

The following chapter discusses the various processes involved in data collection, handling, and storage, as well as data analysis. It also offers scholars with some tips on conducting discourse markers studies in computer-mediated communicatees platforms, especially *Twitter*. The next chapter also describes the challenges encountered during the aforementioned processes involved in building a relatively large corpus for the current study.

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter provides a general overview of the processes of data collection, and data analysis followed precisely during writing this dissertation. The various sections of the chapter describe data gathering and handling, along with data analysis as follows, *Twitter data collection tool, the study corpus, data handling, data analysis*, as well as *challenges in data gathering and data analysis*. The *Twitter* data collection section offers a comprehensive step-by-step guide on how to execute various types of searches for linguistic scholars and researchers interested in collecting data from *Twitter* to build a huge corpus. The study corpus section describes thoroughly the process of data collection that led eventually to building a relatively large corpus. The data handling section describes the processes involved in storing the data obtained from *Twitter* with particular attention paid to protecting the identity of people involved in the study. The data analysis section gives an overview of the various stages involved in the analysis of the collected data. The challenges in data gathering and data analysis section discusses in detail the obstacles faced and the steps taken to overcome those challenges.

#### **Twitter Data Collection Tool**

A powerful analytic and search tool was employed to collect data publicly available from *Twitter*, formally known as *Twitter Advanced Search*. *Twitter* has provided scholars along with other researchers with an important powerful analytical tool to conduct their various conversational and discourse analyses. Aljarallah (2017) was among the first Arab scholars to utilize *Twitter Advanced Search* tool to gather huge data

necessary to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia.

*Twitter Advanced Search* tool is not available for *non-Twitter* users as scholars must register and create a *Twitter* account to enjoy the perks that come with this search tool. There two ways to access *Twitter Advanced Search* tool to carry out unlimited number of searches needed for various linguistic inquiries as follows:

1. Typing in the address bar of the browser the following address:  
<https://twitter.com/search-advanced>. This is straight forward and by far considered way easier than the second one.
2. Performing a search by plugging in keywords into the search bar of *Twitter* which is in located at the top center of the page. Once the search comes up with a list of tweets, click on the advanced search link located at the right of the page.

*Twitter Advanced search* is a built-in analytical tool that allows linguistic scholars to narrow down their research scope by *specific keywords, twitter online users, geographical places*, as well as *a timeframe* to further increase and improve the precision, the validity, as well as the accuracy of the results. Under the *Twitter Advanced Search tool*, there are four fields, namely *words, people, places*, and *dates*, that make researchers able to perform various types of intriguing searches. This excellent search tool provides linguistic researchers and other scholars with the opportunity to combine these fields to execute different types of searches needed for in-depth linguistic analyses. One could search for the use of the discourse marker *Okay* in The City of Tempe between 2013-2018, by plugging in this information in the three following fields, *words*,



*geographical area*, and *dates*. Similarly, linguistic scholars have the option to avoid and eliminate certain words from the tweets during their search by inserting the word they wish not to encounter in the *None of these words* box under the word heading.

Under the four *Twitter Advanced Search* fields, there are several search boxes that further help researchers to refine their searches. The word field has several search boxes that allow scholars to conduct various linguistic analyses, including *discourse analysis*, *syntactic analysis*, as well as *collocation analysis*. Under the word field, there are six search boxes can be taken advantage of based on the type of linguistic research conducted, such as *all of these words*, *this exact phrase*, *any of these phrases*, *none of these words*, *these hashtags*, and *written in X language*. The first three search boxes might seem similar on the surface, but they give entirely different search results. For instance, executing three different searches about the annual meeting of Linguistic Society of America (LSA) by plugging in the following phrase “2019 LSA Annual Meeting” in each one of the first three searches during each search will result in the following. In the first search in the *all of these words* box, the results would contain these words scattered in the tweets which are not necessarily be adjacent to each other. In other words, the tweet might have LSA at the beginning of the tweet, while the other two words “Annual Meeting” might be placed at the end of the tweet. The second search, *this exact phrase* box, would give tweets with these three words adjacent to each other. The third search would show tweets that have any of these three words. On the other hand, *none of these words* search box shows tweets without these words in case the researcher wished to eliminate them. *These hashtags* search box allows linguists interested in conducting discourse analysis studies to gather data by inserting words in one of the first

three search boxes and specify the hashtag needed for the study. The last option *written in X language* allows scholars to select the language of the tweets in case they are conducting a study on a non-Latin script language since Latin script is the default script for *Twitter* searches. Under the place field, researchers can narrow down their research by a specific geographical area that can range from a country to a small town by typing the name of the location they wish to get tweets from in particular. For instance, if linguistic scholars wish to stay up-to-date with the latest workshops and panels conducted by LSA in their last meeting, then insert ‘New York,’ the name of the city where the meeting was held. Under the time field, researchers can focus on a specific timeframe when collecting their data from *Twitter* by selecting a from and to date to show tweets posted within the specified date range. In that case, linguistic scholars would insert in *from date* ‘3-1-2019’ and ‘6-1-2019’ in *to date* to get tweets about LSA 2019 Annual Meeting. Under people field, there are three interesting search boxes that determine the type of people whose tweets researchers might wish to view, such as *from these accounts*, *to these accounts*, as well as *mention these accounts*. *From these accounts* gives results from certain *Twitter* users that are of high interest to researchers. *To these accounts* shows tweets that were directed to specific *Twitter* users as a response to their tweets. *Mention these accounts* shows tweets that mention certain *Twitter* users to get their attention to a heated debate or to engage them in an on-going conversation.

## The Study Corpus

The current study initially aimed at collecting 1500 tweets that contain three of the most common Najdi Arabic discourse markers, such as *elzibda*, *min jid*, and *maʕ nafsak*, to have a deeper and broader understanding of their various discourse, pragmatic, and syntactic functions. Therefore, the sociolinguistic corpus would have 500 tweets for each of the three NA discourse markers showing various instances, occurrences, as well as functions. There were rigid criteria for selecting tweets with NA discourse markers to be included in the study for (socio)pragmatic and syntactic analyses as follows:

- (i) The tweets should include the surrounding utterances including the preceding and following utterances.
- (ii) The tweets should have socioeconomic information about NA *Twitter* users including *socioeconomic status* and *gender*.
- (iii) The tweets should have a crystal-clear context to successfully determine the pragmatic and syntactic functions of NA discourse markers.
- (iv) The tweets should be posted from the Najdi region showing NA *Twitter* users' profiles and tweets geotagged

For instance, the tweets must have preceding and following utterances in order to have a complete understanding of their contexts of occurrences along with the discourse, pragmatic, and syntactic functions. In other words, tweets that lack any of the surrounding utterances, either prior or following utterances, were not included in the analysis. Similarly, tweets with ambiguous or unclear contexts that are hard to determine were excluded from the study, given the fact that it would lead to uncertainty in the analysis. The following example shows a tweet with an ambiguous context lacking prior

utterance that initiated the conversation which was later not considered during the analysis of the data as follows:

**Example 1.**

A: (The tweet is not available)

B: *Min jid* wəʃh tæbi.in int.i

**DM** what want.1fSG you.1fSG

“DM, what you want?”

As can be seen from the example above, there is a crucially important piece of information missing that could provide an adequate explanation for the employment of the discourse marker *Min jid* in particular by NA Twitter users in that context. The use of the DM above could express two distinct pragmatic functions that have different consequences. The first pragmatic function is to show agreement with the preceding utterance. The second pragmatic function is to express annoyance toward other interlocutors. Therefore, the missing tweet that started the conversation resulted in making the context ambiguous affecting the accuracy of the analysis.

Before collecting data, the study determined to focus only on tweets without *emojis*, *emoticons*, *GIFs*, *memes*, or *pictures* since that would further complicate the analysis of the study. Nevertheless, the initial observation of *Twitter* shows that the vast majority of tweets make excessive use of *emojis* as they have numerous interesting pragmatics, discourse, textual, attitudinal, and interpersonal functions and serve various communication needs for *Twitter* online users, including *expressing emotions* and *attitudes* (see Al Rashdi, 2015). The initial observation of *Twitter* also shows that *emojis*, *memes*, and *GIFs* are crucial for *Twitter* communications as only a handful of tweets

posted by NA *Twitter* users lack them. Interestingly, the initial observation also shows that by far, emojis were the most commonly used among NA *Twitter* users. Therefore, tweets with emojis, memes, and GIFS were determined be within the scope of the current study since they are crucial for understanding the pragmatic and discourse functions of NA discourse markers in the tweets. For the aforementioned reason, another framework, namely *Multimodal Discourse Analysis*, were added to *Discourse Analysis* and *Conversation Analysis* to examine and analyze various instances of the three NA discourse markers.

The study utilized *quantitative* and *qualitative* research methods to shed light on the various roles of the three NA discourse markers among Najdi Arabic speakers in their *Twitter* communications. The primary goal behind making the study quantitative and qualitative in nature is to gain a deeper understanding of the various functions NA discourse markers play within the utterances composed by Najdi Arabic *Twitter* online users, such as (socio)pragmatic, discourse, as well as syntactic functions. As mentioned before, the current study would gather between 1500 tweets containing at least one of the three discourse markers. The study would execute three separate searches to collect 500 tweets containing one of the three NA discourse markers to carry out various qualitative and quantitative linguistic analyses.

*Qualitatively*, the current study examines the (socio)pragmatic functions of NA discourse markers, including, interpersonal and attitudinal functions, along with the role sociolinguistic factors play on the use of NA discourse markers, such as gender and socio-economic status indicated by Brinton, (2017), D'Arcy (2017), and others as important factors. There are several techniques employed to collect sociolinguistic

information needed to conduct a rigorous sociolinguistic analysis (D'Arcy, 2017). As for the gender, it was inferred through authentic names and pictures of NA *Twitter* online users. For this aforementioned reason, profiles lacking real pictures, or authentic names were not considered for the linguistic analyses. In other words, the tweets should have both a picture and name for accurate and precise determination of the gender of NA *Twitter* users. As for the socio-economic status, it was obtained through a rigorous search for keywords in NA *Twitter* users' bios. These bios are found in *Twitter* users' profiles right under their profile pictures and are easily accessible. *Twitter* users in general, including NA *Twitter* users, are limited to a hundred and sixty characters imposed on them by *Twitter* to craft their bios. Therefore, NA *Twitter* bios tend to be short and straight forward, making identifying the socio-economic status an easy job. The socio-economic status of NA *Twitter* users was inferred from their educational level and occupation mentioned in their bios. The highest educational level of NA *Twitter* users accurately and reliably reflects where NA subjects fall in terms of their socio-economic status. Therefore, NA *Twitter* users were classified according to their education level, ranging from high school diploma and bachelor's degree to an M.A. and Ph.D. degree. NA *Twitter* users were also grouped based on their study majors, and the study field pursued to obtain the degree. It should be noted that age was excluded from the sociolinguistic analysis since the vast majority of NA *Twitter* users tend not to disclose this personal 'sensitive' information.

*Quantitatively*, the study explores the syntactic positions NA discourse markers occupy within the utterances of NA *Twitter* users, the linguistics items NA discourse markers tend to collocate with across various contexts, as well as the frequency of

occurrence of NA discourse markers as indicated by D’Arcy (2017). The study scrutinizes the various contexts of occurrences for NA discourse markers to observe the slots they occupy within *Twitter* online utterances looking for any grammatical constraints on their occurrence as indicated by D’Arcy (2017). The study also examines the likelihood of NA discourse markers to occur in *Twitter* communications among native NA speakers. The frequency of each discourse marker would be compared to the total number of collected words the *Twitter* corpus, including DMs and non-DM words. The items that tend to collocate with NA discourse markers would be determined by the use of collocation analytical tool *AntConc*.

### **Data Handling**

After the data needed to build a sociolinguistic corpus was collected from *Twitter*, they were manually inserted into excel sheets. Initially, there were three different excel sheets for each one of the three NA discourse markers, which was extremely inconvenient to keep track of the data and conduct linguistic analyses. Therefore, three tabs were created for NA discourse markers in a single excel sheet within easy reach to make executing various (socio)pragmatic and syntactic analyses at once a less stressful and more enjoyable experience. In the excel sheet, there are eight columns organized as follow: *Tweet, translation, pragmatic function, syntactic position, syntactic category, socio-economic status, major, and gender*. The categorization of the excel sheet into different columns provides a systematic and practical approach to conduct precise and thorough (socio)pragmatic and discourse analyses dissecting NA discourse markers (socio)pragmatic, discourse, textual and interpersonal functions. In the first column, there are tweets with NA discourse markers along with either the preceding and following

utterances to have a better understanding of their contexts. In the second column, rough Arabic translation was provided to understand the roles NA serves in each utterance. In the third column, the various pragmatic and discourse functions NA exhibit in each instance were listed there. In the fourth and fifth columns, the sentential position each NA discourse marker occupies, and the syntactic categories tend to accompany NA discourse marker were listed. In the six and seventh columns, the current socio-economic status of NA *Twitter* users was explicitly mentioned in terms of the highest degree obtained along with the major of the study, respectively. In the eighth column, the gender of the NA *Twitter* online user was specified. The three following tables offer a snapshot of the three Najdi Arabic discourse markers in the excel sheet used to build the *Twitter* corpus:



Table 6. A Snapshot of the Najdi Discourse Marker *Min Jid* in the Twitter Corpus

Tweet	Translation (Rough)	Pragmatic Functions	Sentential Position	Syntactic Category	Socioeconomic Status	Major	Gender
<p>أ: الحمد لله لقيت مادة في علم الاجتماع حلوة قبل لا أموت ❤️ ب: وين موسى يشوف خل يستانس مسكين صار لك سنه تسبين تخصسه 😞😞 أ: من جد لحظه تاريخيه 😞 وصلل</p>	<p>A: Thank God! I finally found a great anthropology course before I die ❤️ B: Where is Moses to see this! Let him celebrate. Poor him. You have been talking bad about his major for a year 😞😞 A: <b>Oh yeah!</b> (This is) A Historic moment. Here he comes.</p>	Being Sarcastic	Initial	DP	B.A. Degree	Mass Communication	Female
<p>أ: ماش احس اني مستكر الاجازة.. بييلي اتعود عليها 😞 ب: اييه تعودنا نذاكر ٢٤ ساعة أ: من جد 🙄</p>	<p>A: I am not used to the vacation yet. I need some time to get used to it 😞 B: <b>Yeah</b>, we are used to studying 24 hours. C: <b>For real</b> 🙄</p>	Show agreement	Alone	None	B.A. Degree	Dental Studies	Male

Table 7. A Snapshot of the Najdi Discourse Marker Elzibda in the Twitter Corpus

Tweet	Translation (Rough)	Pragmatic Functions	Sentential Position	Syntactic Category	Socioeconomic Status	Major	Gender
<p>أ: سبحان الله عشان ابي اعرف وش صار بقيم اوف ثرونز مافيني اتابعة محد خرب علي ولا قريت بالغلط ! رحنت قروب صاحباتي اسال مين اللي ميت 🤔 ب: متأكدته؟؟؟ أ: اي 🤔 الزيدة اي ميس يو</p>	<p>A: Glory be to God! Because I want to know what happened on <i>Games of Throne</i> since I do not want to watch it. Nobody spoiled it for me (yet), and I did not read about it mistakenly (on social media)! (So) I went to my friends' group to ask them about who died 🤔 B: Are you sure??? A: Yup 🤔 <b>Anyway</b>, I miss you.</p>	Change the topic	Initial	DP	B.A. Degree	Designer	Female
<p>أ: الزيدة رجولي عورتتي من جلسة السيارة متى نوصل البيت 🤔 ♀</p>	<p>A: <b>Hey!</b> My feet hurt me from sitting in the car. When are we going to be home 🤔 ♀</p>	Conversation opener	Initial	DP	B.A. Degree	Business	Male

Table 8. A Snapshot of the Najdi Discourse Marker *Maʿ Nafsak* in the Twitter Corpus

Tweet	Translation (Rough)	Pragmatic Functions	Sentential Position	Syntactic Category	Socioeconomic Status	Major	Gender
أ: عش حياتك وانت متصالح مع نفسك، لا تربط سعادتك بأشياء قد تأتي او لا تأتي	A: live your life at peace <b>with yourself</b> . Do not link your happiness with things might or might not come	Non-DM	Final	PP	B.A. Degree	Medical lab	Female
أ: وعندما تكون صادق مع نفسك ومع غيرك .. تجد للحياة طعم اخر . #كذبه_ابريل	A: When you become honest <b>with yourself</b> and others, you will find a different taste to life. #April fools	Non-DM	Medial	AdjP and ConjP	M.A. Degree	Business	Male

The following section discusses in detail the process of storing the *Twitter* data collected for the current study in various safe places along with the process of dealing with highly sensitive identifiable information for the subjects.

### **Data Storage**

The spreadsheet with the collected data from *Twitter* regarding the three of the most common NA discourse markers were handled with care and stored in various places for easy and quick retrieval and avoidance of data loss or corruption, including the researcher's laptop, cloud storage services, personal email, as well as an external hard drive. The data was securely stored in the aforementioned places for unspecified time and would not be shared with any person or entity, except with the dissertation chair, Professor Karen Adams. In other words, the researcher is the sole person that could have unlimited access to the spreadsheet anytime to review, scrutinize, and conduct various linguistic analyses on the collected data. Interestingly enough, several steps were taken during the process of data collection and storage to guarantee and ensure the confidentiality of the data. First, all the identifiable information about NA *Twitter* online users, including their real names, *Twitter* usernames, *Twitter* profile links, socio-economic status, age, and gender, were removed once the data collected and stored. Second, NA *Twitter* online users were assigned Roman Letters, such as A and B, to ensure confidentiality and protect their identity by not disclosing their names. For instance, *Twitter* online users would be assigned letters, such as A, for the first speaker, B, for the second speaker. Third, when famous public figures and celebrities were mentioned in NA tweets their names were concealed, and they were referred to according to their professions, such as *politicians*, *poets*, or *soccer players*. Fourth, swear and curse

words were censored and referred to as *curse word*, given the fact that it is not acceptable to include offensive language in academic texts or research without any type of censorship.

### **Data Analysis**

The study employs a mixed method research to analyze the collected data qualitatively and quantitatively to have more comprehensive understanding of the linguistic behavior of NA discourse markers in CMC among Najdi Arabic native speakers. Specifically, the primary aim of the dissertation is to uncover the various (socio)pragmatic, discourse, and syntactic functions of NA discourse markers on *Twitter*. During the lengthy process of data analysis, the researcher drew from the already established frameworks in the literature on *discourse analysis* (Schiffrin, 1987; Paltridge, 2006, 2012) *computer-mediated communications discourse analysis* (Herring & Dainas, 2017, 2018) along with *syntactic analysis of discourse markers* (Owens & Rockwood, 2008). The study also adopted the taxonomy proposed by a number of prominent scholars working in the area of discourse analysis (Al Rousan, 2015; Schiffrin, 1987) to code various NA discourse markers' functions and other classifications proposed by Al Rashdi (2015), Herring and Dainas (2017, 2018) Dainas and Herring (in press, 2019) and Li and Yang (2018) to scrutinize the various pragmatic and communicative functions of emojis in NA tweets.

All the various pragmatic, textual, and interpersonal functions of NA discourse markers was subsumed under one (sub)heading and accompanied by various examples and a thorough explanation of the context. Interestingly though, the analysis of the *Twitter* corpus reveals an interesting fact that there are new classifications that these three

NA discourse markers exhibit other than the ones already reported in the literature. For this aforementioned reason, the taxonomies previously proposed by linguistic scholars were slightly modified by considering the addition of new classifications that better capture the different pragmatic functions of NA discourse markers. These new classifications clearly show that discourse markers are continually evolving as they acquire new pragmatic functions that serve the need and meet the demand of native speakers' needs. Among the new categories found in the data are: (a) *getting to the heart of the story after an introduction* and (b) *delivering a joke punchline*.

### **Transcription**

The *Twitter* corpus data were transcribed following the transcription conventions, such as *International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)* and *Leipzig latest Morphological Interlinear Glosses*, once the data collection process completely finished. The process of transcribing the data has undergone many significant stages to reach the finished product. First, the data was roughly transcribed by providing an English translation for the utterances focusing on the potential pragmatic functions each NA discourse markers have within the utterances. At the first stage, the discourse analysis transcription method is not employed yet in order not to have to compensate for the readability of the utterances and to have a quick first impression for NA discourse markers in *Twitter*. Second, the chosen utterances were transliterated from Najdi Arabic into English following the *International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)* closely to show the accurate and precise pronunciation and phonology of various Najdi Arabic lexical words. It is worth mentioning that vowels and diphthongs tend not to be represented in Arabic written texts, which in turn make many non-native Arabic speakers confuse words with the same spelling but are ones that have

distinct pronunciation and meaning. For instance, Najdi Arabic lexical word *min jid* has two different pronunciations that communicate entirely different meanings depending on the vowels used in the first and second syllables. The use of unstressed vowel in the first word ‘mən’ and unstressed vowel in the first syllable in the second word and low front vowel in the second syllable in the second word ‘ʒədæ’ would communicate a meaning along the lines of ‘The one who works hard.’ On the other hand, the use of unrounded short front vowel in the first word ‘min’ and unrounded short front vowel in the second word ‘ʒid’ would make native NA speaker recognize it as the discourse marker. Third, utterances were glossed morpheme-by-morpheme adopting Leipzig morphological interlinear glosses conventions to show the syntactic and morphosyntactic properties of NA utterances, such as *number*, *person*, *gender*, and *tense*. Interestingly though, the morphosyntactic and syntactic properties of various NA linguistic items are not explicitly shown in *Twitter*; thus, glosses are used to reflect these properties by indicating their *tense*, *gender*, and *number*. The following example is taken from *Twitter* data shows how the interlinear glosses reflect the aforementioned properties as follows:

**Example 2.**

A: ʕənd.I      dəwam   1.saʕa   ʕafara   bas   mə.ʔdri   eʃ   səħa.ni   min elħin  
 Have.**1.SG** work   O’clock   ten   but **NEG.know.1SG** what   wake.**1SG**   right now  
 ‘I have work at 10 O’clock, but I have no idea what woke me up right now!’

B: maʕ   nafsak   qaim.ah   nami   bas  
**DM**            Woke up.**3fSG**   sleep.**IMP**   just  
 ‘Are you serious? Just go back to sleep!’

As shown in the example above, the interlinear glosses would give linguistic scholars with little familiarity with Najdi Arabic grammar and morphology with the opportunity to experience firsthand the morphosyntactic properties of NA lexical items through the provided examples. The interlinear glosses provide a thorough linguistic analysis for each linguistic item by breaking it down to smaller components reflecting its various morphosyntactic property along with a literal translation. English translations then are provided to show the meaning of the sentences and the (socio)pragmatic functions of NA discourse markers in each example.

### **Challenges in Data Collection**

The process of collecting data from an asynchronous CMC medium, such as *Twitter*, was not smooth since there have been some unforeseen issues and challenges along the way. As mentioned before, the current study initial goal was to collect 1500 tweets to scrutinize the discourse and pragmatic functions of the three most common NA discourse markers used in *Twitter*, namely *elzibda*, *min jid*, and *maʕ nafsak*. The first two Najdi Arabic discourse markers seem to be highly productive more than the third one and incorporated into Native Najdi Arabic tweets across different contexts since they have numerous pragmatic and attitudinal functions. Najdi Arabic speakers tend to transmit and decipher these various functions with less effort on their part as shown by their responses and intense engagement in the online conversations.

However, after the finish of the initial data gathering, it became evident that the vast majority of the instances for the other lexical item *maʕ nafsak* were not as discourse marker but rather non-discourse marker instances. These non-DM instances have conceptual ‘semantic’ meaning that get translated and interpreted by other NA Twitter



online users literally word by the word, roughly meaning ‘with yourself.’ On the other hand, the discourse marker function has different interesting functions, such as *objection*, *showing a lack of interest*, *frustration*, *uncertainty*, *unwillingness*, or *disappointment* (Al Rousan, 2015). Unfortunately, the non-DM lack the pragmatic functions that the DM implicitly and explicitly communicate across various written and spoken contexts.

Therefore, it was determined that the NA discourse marker *maʕ nafsak* was excluded from the analysis of the study given the fact there were only a few instances of discourse markers in NA *Twitter* communications as shown in *Twitter* data and the study corpus. The study shifted the focus to the other two productive NA discourse markers in *Twitter* and thus aimed to collect 1000 tweets to build the corpus. The thorough search in *Twitter* data clearly shows that there are trends frequently occurring among the other two DMs, namely *elzibda* and *min jid*, respectively. Therefore, it was concluded that these two DMs are highly productive among NA subjects in their *Twitter* communications.

Nevertheless, building a *Twitter* corpus consisting of a thousand tweets for these two DMs comes with their fair share of issues. For some of the NA tweets, it is extremely difficult to view the original tweets they responded to since some *Twitter* online users tend to set their *Twitter* profiles private. So, any tweets those *Twitter* online users post tend not to be shown to the public, and only the tweets responding to their tweets are shown since the profiles of the ones responding are not private. Therefore, the understanding of the context was not possible, given the missing tweets that initiated *Twitter* online conversations. Consequently, these tweets were not collected or even considered in the analysis of the (socio)pragmatic and syntactic study. Similarly, some NA tweets were challenging to pinpoint the purpose behind posting them on *Twitter*. The

lack of a goal behind composing a tweet results in a difficulty in determining the context. As mentioned earlier, the context is crucial for accurate understanding and interpretation of discourse markers functions, and thus, any NA tweets that either lack context or pose a difficulty in determining the context were not included in the study.

After collecting the targeted number of tweets to build the sociolinguistic corpus to conduct numerous linguistic analyses for the study, it has been noticed that there were a handful of tweets that belong to the same NA *Twitter* online users. At the time of data collection, close attention was paid to collect tweets from different NA *Twitter* users to have a more comprehensive and accurate representation for the linguistic behavior of the three NA discourse markers. The reason behind unintentionally having tweets from the same NA *Twitter* users was because some of these users tend to change their profiles pictures occasionally to reflect their current state of mind. To overcome this nagging issue, two techniques were applied to guarantee there are no more than one tweet for each NA online user in the data. The first technique is to get NA tweets sorted alphabetically by username in *Twitter* corpus for easy recognition of repeated *Twitter* users. The second technique is to search for the username before inserting the tweet in the *Twitter* corpus built for this study to make sure there is no repeated NA *Twitter* users. Once found many tweets from the same *Twitter* NA online users, only one tweet is kept in the corpus whereas the rest gets removed as they are not needed for the analysis.

Some NA tweets collected in the *Twitter* corpus were initially thought to be posted from Riyadh where most Najdi Arabic native speakers reside. Nevertheless, it turned out that these tweets belong to *Twitter* online users living in Non-Najdi areas, such as *Jeddah* and *Dammam*. Unfortunately, a great deal of the data was deleted immediately

since the collected tweets represent other Saudi dialects that are outside the scope of the current study. This particular issue was discovered during the process of ensuring the accuracy and validity the collected data. It turned out that the cause of the issue was that the execution of *Twitter* searches needed some significant adjustments for accurate locating of NA tweets. When utilizing the *Twitter Advanced Search* tool to generate searches by inserting Riyadh in the search box, it will generate search in *Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*. Therefore, the search would turn results for tweets not only in Riyadh but also in other surrounding areas that can go as far as 600 miles. The practical solution is to delete the word *Saudi Arabia* from *Twitter* search bar after the search is generated to get tweets exclusively from Riyadh region. After adopting this interesting technique *Twitter* searches show geo-tagged tweets and geo-tagged profiles from Riyadh.

Collecting a tremendous amount of data in itself poses a great challenge for storing, managing, as well as analyzing the data. After collecting data from *Twitter* to build the study corpus, the spreadsheet turned out to be extremely slow and constantly not responding that resulted in making the process of entering data in the excel sheet complex, time-consuming, and mind-numbing task. Furthermore, scrolling up and down the excel sheet was frustrating and energy-draining, given the fact that it would take forever to respond or perform any required task. After collecting the data entirely by using *Excel*, an Apple alternative to Microsoft Office Excel known as *Numbers* was adopted to review the data since it is more efficient and faster to browse and edit. In other words, reviewing and making adjustments to the collected data by scrolling through the *Excel* sheet takes a relatively longer time than on *Numbers*. Therefore, *Excel* tends to lag and slow down so often, making storing the data a real challenge. Unfortunately, this

lagging issue seems always to be coupled with other nagging issues, including but not limited to, crashing, freezing, becoming not responding, and sometimes unexpectedly closing *Excel* spreadsheet. When the excel shuts down all of the sudden, it might lead to the catastrophic loss of unsaved changes to data. On the other hand, *Numbers* is more reliable, given the fact that it makes data reviewing and entry faster without worrying about the spreadsheet application getting constantly lagged, frozen, crashed, or shut down.

The spreadsheet also appeared to have another issue that it was not an easy task to insert emojis into the excel sheet. For instance, when inserting a tweet with emojis collected from *Twitter* into the excel sheet, only the text would be inserted while emojis would get inserted outside of the excel cell larger than they are in the tweet. Initially, emojis were reduced to a smaller size and then got pasted into the excel cells which was time-consuming. The most practical solution was to insert the tweets with emojis in *Google Translate* and then copy the original tweets without translation from the text box and paste them into the excel sheet.

### **Challenges in Data Analysis**

There have also been other challenges faced during the process of data analysis that changed the course of Najdi Arabic discourse markers interpretations. *Twitter* corpus shows there are numerous instances and occurrences of NA discourse markers that are ambiguous and vague. Therefore, it was challenging to classify these NA discourse markers according to the proposed categories in the literature by prominent linguistic scholars or even determine their exact discourse or pragmatic functions. In other words, these various ambiguous instances of NA discourse markers have undetermined functions

for some reason was not easily uncovered. These NA discourse markers instances were ultimately subsumed under a new proposed category called *Ambiguous Function* where linguistic scholars are highly encouraged to thoroughly investigate these NA discourse markers instances to pinpoint their functions to contribute to the literature. The contemporary literature on discourse markers shows that there are many ambiguous instances for discourse markers (Brinton, 2006; Fraser, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987)

Similarly, there have been many instances of NA discourse markers in *Twitter* that appear to serve more than one interesting pragmatic function simultaneously that causes a challenge in analyzing the data and determining their primary function. In other words, these various pragmatic functions seem to be communicated instantly all together through the use of NA discourse marker in a certain context. For instance, there have been occurrences of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the *Twitter* corpus that serves two distinct functions pragmatically, such as (a) to *grab someone's attention*, and (b) to *be humorous*. Therefore, this posed a struggle for several linguistic scholars to list them under one of the already established categories. To overcome the issue in determining NA discourse markers' main function in the instances in which they have more than one pragmatic function simultaneously is to create a new category called *multiple functions*. Under the *multiple functions* heading, all the instances for the NA discourse markers with several pragmatic functions in the same occurrences will be listed.

The *Twitter* corpus shows that these three discourse markers have many alternative spellings as do many colloquial words in Arabic dialects, including Najdi Arabic. These spellings show the Najdi Arabic *Twitter* online users are not in line when it comes to representing these discourse markers orthographically. For instance, some NA

*Twitter* online users represent NA discourse markers, such as *min jid*, and *maʕ nafsak*, with two distinct syllables, such as /من جد/ and /مع نفسك/. Others tend to represent these NA discourse markers as one complex syllable joined together as one word, such as /منجد/ and /معنفسك/, respectively. Similarly, there are two spellings for the discourse marker *elzibda* one with either *taa marbuta* /ة/ or *haa marbuta* /ه/, such as /الزبدة/ and /الزبده/.

These two letters pose a source of confusion for many Arabic speakers, including native speakers, given the fact that it is hard to predict their context of occurrence. As a result, several Arab grammarians dedicated chapters in their books to shed light on this orthographic issue. The alternative spellings for NA discourse markers are widely acceptable as they are commonly used by NA native speakers in their *Twitter* communications. Interestingly enough, there is no single orthographic convention for Arabic dialects, including Najdi Arabic, whereas the orthographic standard and tradition for Modern Standard Arabic was well-established a long time ago. Therefore, Najdi Arabic speakers tend to adopt whatever spelling they believe better represents the word. Someone is highly expected to abide by the strict orthographic and spelling rules of Modern Standard Arabic while they are not held accountable for misspellings in Arabic dialect. MSA is viewed as a high variety that should be respected, whereas Arabic dialects, including Najdi Arabic, are negatively viewed as a low variety (see Ferguson, 1959). For the purpose of the current study, the aforementioned spellings for the Najdi Arabic discourse markers, *elzibda*, and *min jid*, were taken into account during the process of data analysis. In other words, the alternative spellings would be considered as representable for the two NA discourse markers.

As mentioned before, some of the tweets Najdi Arabic speakers tend to post on *Twitter* include a direct reference to famous people that can be identified easily by the general public. These famous people range from *political leaders, philosophers, sports analysts, to even soccer players*. Therefore, NA tweets with these famous people had to be completely censored and instead replaced with their current profession. The censorship of some parts of the NA tweets poses a massive challenge in providing adequate interpretations and explanations of the context without compromising data confidentiality and anonymity for the people mentioned in the tweets. For instance, there is a NA tweet that started a whole thread arguing that a superstar soccer player for a famous Saudi soccer club should be banned for life. In this particular tweet, the complete context was not provided, and the only way to access the context is through revealing the name of the player. However, the names for famous people were censored to ensure their privacy and protect their identity. On the other hand, there are some NA tweets whose contexts were not affected by the censorship of famous people mentioned in the tweet, and thus they were involved in the analysis. For other NA tweets, it is hard to establish their contexts without readers' prior knowledge of the people involved in the tweets. Therefore, these tweets, in particular, were excluded from the analysis of the study.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides scholars with a thorough qualitative and quantitative analyses of the *Twitter* corpus in hope to better dissect and understand the *pragmatic, discourse, interpersonal*, as well as *syntactic* behavior of the two Najdi Arabic discourse markers commonly used in *Twitter*, namely *min jid*, and *elzibda*. *Qualitatively*, this chapter shows the intriguing functions these two NA discourse markers exhibit within a number of NA *Twitter* utterances ranging from *pragmatic, discourse, textual, interpersonal*, to *cognitive* functions. This chapter also discusses the effect of sociolinguistic factors, including *gender* and *socioeconomic* status, on the use of NA discourse markers. *Quantitatively*, this chapter offers a detailed list of the numerous syntactic positions these two NA discourse markers occupy within the utterances along with the frequency of occurrence for each of the two NA discourse markers. This chapter also sheds light on some of the linguistic items that collocate with these NA discourse markers across various contexts. In this chapter, the data analysis will be followed by a thorough discussion regarding the various pragmatic and syntactic functions of these NA discourse markers.

During the data analysis stage, a number of native Najdi Arabic speakers and Najdi Arabic linguistic experts were consulted to precisely determine the various syntactic and pragmatic functions of the NA discourse markers *min jid* and *elzibda*. Interestingly, the analyses of the *Twitter* corpus reveal that the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* have unique *pragmatic, textual, interpersonal, and cognitive* functions that might not be present in the other. Nevertheless, there has been a similar



resemblance among these two NA discourse markers in terms of their *pragmatic*, *interpersonal*, and *syntactic* behavior, as it will be shown later in this chapter.

### **The Discourse Marker *Min Jid* Pragmatic Functions**

The *Twitter* corpus clearly shows that NA discourse marker *min jid* is highly productive in NA *Twitter* utterances having a number of pragmatic and procedural meanings across a variety of different contexts. During the initial phase of the *Twitter* corpus analysis, there have been a number of emerging categories delineating the various functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid*. Nonetheless, there have been various functions that show a great resemblance in terms of their pragmatic, procedural, and semantic meanings necessitating their grouping under clearly defined and unified categories. At first, the grouping of these functions seemed as a daunting task given the fact that creating a category and taxonomy encompasses these similar functions was challenging. These pragmatic functions are considered synonymous, communicating similar meanings with a slight difference. For instance, the *Twitter* corpus shows there have been numerous occurrences of the NA discourse marker *min jid* showing *shock* while in others *showing disbelief*. For this aforementioned reason, the decision was made to group the aforementioned functions under the category *Expressing a complete shock, surprise, and disbelief*. The fascinating pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid* were grouped as follows:

- Showing a complete agreement.
- Indicating seriousness along with sincerity.
- Intensifying the meaning of the utterance.
- Expressing negative attitudes towards something or someone.

- Being sarcastic, ironic, funny, as well as humorous.
- Expressing a complete shock, surprise, and disbelief.
- Validating the truthfulness of the statement by asserting it is true
- Initiating Conversations to grab others' attention.
- Expressing an immense curiosity towards something or someone.
- Expressing Emotions
- Being confrontational and aggressively approaching others.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned functions had to be further subsumed under one umbrella according to the resemblance in their pragmatic functions. On the surface, some of the functions reported above show a significant similarity with a slight difference in their meanings, including *shock* and *disbelief*. Therefore, these functions were grouped under one unified category for the sake of economy and clarity in writing and also to better represent their pragmatic functions. The following list shows the eleven pragmatic, interpersonal, and discourse functions *min jid* tends to have in distinctive contexts as follows: *Showing agreement, indicating seriousness, intensifying device, expressing negative attitudes, being sarcastic, expressing a shock, asserting something is true, initiating conversation expressing a curiosity, express emotions* as well as *being confrontational*. These eleven pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid* will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

### **Show Agreement**

The use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to show agreement was ubiquitous in the *Twitter* corpus. Interestingly though, Najdi Arabic native speakers along with other Najdi Arabic linguistic experts consulted during the data analysis stage claim the NA

discourse marker *min jid* is generally employed to show agreement. The *Twitter* corpus shows that the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to appear as a response to NA *Twitter* users showing agreement with what has been already mentioned in their tweets. The corpus also shows that the NA discourse marker *min jid* sometimes tends to collocate with the religious discourse marker *wallah* ‘by God’ to show strong agreement. When serving this particular pragmatic function, the NA discourse marker *min jid* exhibits similar behavior to the English discourse marker ‘yeah,’ showing a complete agreement. Nevertheless, there have been other fascinating functions that NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to communicate while serving the aforementioned function, resulting in two simultaneous pragmatic functions. For instance, the employment of NA discourse marker *min jid* besides expressing agreement could also express negative attitudes or even curiosity.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to show agreement as follows.

**Excerpt 1.**

*The NA Twitter was discussing the fact that many people know each other, showing how small the world is.*

1. A: ʔl.dənja sʰxira wæ kəl ʔl.næs ja3rfu  
the.world small.3f and all the.people know.3PL

“the world (is) small and all of the people know”

2. bæʕdʔ ʔl.wædʔʕ jaxwuf ʃwæja  
each other the.situation scary a little

“each other and the situation is a little scary”

3. B: min jid !!

→ DM

“DM!!”

In excerpt 1, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was employed as a response to the first NA *Twitter* user’s utterance and was accompanied by a double exclamation mark. In this excerpt, there are no other linguistic items co-occurring with the NA discourse marker *min jid* except for the exclamation mark which serves a significant pragmatic function. The use of the exclamation marks is not random as it provides the NA discourse marker *min jid* with another layer of pragmatic and procedural meaning. In other words, the NA discourse marker *min jid* in this context communicates two simultaneous pragmatic functions one of which is acquired by the co-occurrence with the exclamation mark which is *to express shock*. The first NA *Twitter* user initiates this conversation to inform the wider NA *Twitter* community that the world is small given that everyone seems to know everyone. The phrase ‘the world is small’ is a common phrase used in NA to show the surprise of discovering mutual connections among the acquaintances, friends, or family members. The first NA *Twitter* user stated the fact the acquaintances along with friends might have previously met is a little scary. On the other hand, the second NA *Twitter* user agreed with the first NA *Twitter* user utterance through the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid*. Nevertheless, the second NA *Twitter* user also employed exclamation marks along with the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express agreement and a complete shock.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to show agreement as follows.

## Excerpt 2.

*The NA Twitter asked another NA Twitter user about how to identify two-faced people based on their characters.*

1. A: ʔlli fæðʔi j.iʃlm.ni bi.ʔl.xasʔ

That not busy.3SG 3SG.teaches.me in.the.direct message

“the (one who is) not busy (has to) teach me in the direct message”

2. kef ʔrif æbu wədʒ wæ kef ʔrif æbu wədʒen 😂😂

how 1sg.know one-faced and how 1sg.know two-faced

“how I know one faced and two-faced people 😂😂”

3. #wef\_rai.k\_fi\_æbu wədʒen

#what\_opinion.3SG\_in\_two\_faced

“#what is\_your opinion\_in\_two-faced\_people”

4. B: j.æʃni kəl jom ləh wədʒ mæra mæʃ.ək

it.means everyday has face one time with.2SG

“It means everyday (he) has a face one time with you”

5. wæ mæra ðʔədɪk

and the other time against.2SG

“and the other time against you”

6. A: fæhmət hæbet ʃərɦ.ɪk 😂

Got it loved.1SG explanation.2SG

“Got it! I loved your explanation 😂”

7. B: ʃərɦ wəɦd.æh mæl.hæ nʌʃs 😂😂

explanation someone.f NEG.has mood

“it is an explanation for someone who has no mood 😂😂”

8. A: min jid 😂

→ DM

“for real 😂”

9. B: 😞

In excerpt 2, the NA discourse marker *min jid* co-occurred with the tears of joy emoji as a response to the second NA *Twitter* user. The presence of the *tears of joy emoji* plays a role in the interpretation of the pragmatic function of NA discourse marker *min jid* in particular and the utterance in general. Therefore, the employment of other emoji types could possibly result in an interpretation that is different than the one wished by the first NA *Twitter* user. Similar to excerpt 1, the NA discourse marker *min jid* acquired another layer of pragmatic function with the existence of the *tears of joy emoji* besides showing complete agreement. In the excerpt above, the first NA *Twitter* user seems to struggle with understanding the concept of two-faced and is requesting a thorough explanation. The first NA *Twitter* user had a hard time identifying people with two-faced from people with a single face. For this aforementioned reason, the second NA *Twitter* jumped to offer an explanation in hope to clarify things to the first NA *Twitter* user. According to the second NA *Twitter* user, people with two-faced behavior tend to be manipulative as they would be with you one day and against you another. The second *Twitter* user was highly satisfied with the explanation provided by the first NA *Twitter* user. On the other hand, the first NA *Twitter* jokingly stated this explanation was

offered by someone who has no mood to do anything. The first *Twitter* user employed the NA discourse marker *min jid* along with the *tear of joy emoji* 😂 to show agreement and amusement.

### **Showing Seriousness**

There has been another interesting pragmatic function that the NA discourse marker *min jid* exhibits that is to show seriousness. The corpus shows there have been numerous occurrences in which NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse marker *min jid* to show seriousness of intents or actions. In other words, the presence of the NA discourse marker in such a context indicates to others that the NA *Twitter* user is being serious. Interestingly though, the *Twitter* corpus shows that seriousness could be further categorized and divided into three distinctive subcategories, such as *showing the seriousness of someone's action or intent*, *questioning someone's seriousness*, as well as *carrying an action in a serious manner*. These aforementioned subcategories of seriousness share an undeniable resemblance in terms of their pragmatic and semantic meaning which is to solely show seriousness. For the sake of clarity and economy, these subcategories were grouped under one big umbrella named 'showing seriousness.' The three subcategories of seriousness pragmatic and procedural function would be explained thoroughly as follows: -

- a. *Showing the seriousness of someone's action or intent*: The use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* shows that the NA *Twitter* user is serious about carrying out an action or having a serious intent to accomplish a certain action. In other words, the presence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* affirms the seriousness of the NA *Twitter* user.

- b. *Questioning someone's seriousness*: On the other hand, the employment of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in this context questions and doubts the seriousness of NA *Twitter* user's intents or actions. Therefore, the presence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* shows that other NA *Twitter* users are not sure whether or not NA *Twitter* is currently being serious.
- c. *Carrying out an action in a serious manner*: The use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* indicates that a course of action is being taken seriously. Therefore, other NA *Twitter* users realize that the NA *Twitter* user is doing the action in a serious manner.

Nevertheless, the *Twitter* corpus shows that these subcategories occur in different proportions within the data with some subcategories more common than others. For instance, the first subcategory that is to *show seriousness* by far surpassed the other two subcategories suggesting that this subcategory must be the category they fall under. On the other hand, the second subcategory which is to *question someone's seriousness* was not as common as the other subcategories, as shown in the corpus. The few occurrences of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to *question someone's seriousness* might be explained by the fact that it is generally considered a face threatening act and rude behavior to doubt the truthfulness of other NA *Twitter* users.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to show seriousness as follows.

**Excerpt 3.**

*The NA Twitter users had a nagging question about the permissibility of shaving the unibrows in Islam.*



1. A: jædʒuz lau ʔntif ʔl.fæʃər mæ bain hæwadʒb.i wæ læ læʔ

Permissible if shave the.hair between eyebrows or NEG

“Is it permissible to shave the unibrow or not?”

2. B: tæræ min ʃlæmæt ʔl.dʒmæl iðæ mæ t.drin

→ DM from the.signs the.beauty if NEG 3fSG.know

“DM (it is) one of the beauty signs if you do not know”

3. A: ʔmanæh

→ DM

“Seriously?”

4. B: min jid ʔ.tkləm

→ DM 1SG.talking

“I am talking seriously”

In excerpt 3, there have been three various NA discourse markers occupying the initial positions of the utterances as short responses, including *tæræ*, *ʔmanæh*, as well as *min jid*. The NA discourse marker *min jid* was used in the initial position preceding the verb phrase *ʔ.tkləm* ‘lit. I am talking’ to express seriousness. In the excerpt above, the first NA *Twitter* user initiated the conversation to inquire about the permissibility of removing unibrows in Islam. The second *Twitter* user used the NA discourse marker *tæræ* to affirm that unibrow is one of the beauty signs implying not to shave them. Nevertheless, the first *Twitter* user was not too sure whether or not the second *Twitter* user was being sarcastic or serious. Therefore, the first *Twitter* user employed the NA discourse marker *ʔmanæh*, questioning the seriousness of the second *Twitter* user. The second *Twitter* user used the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express seriousness.



7. jæfni kəl hæða bi.wægt wæhd  
 → DM all this at.time same  
 “DM all (of) this (happens) at the same time”
8. bi.hjæt.i mæ ʃəf.t wæ læ səmʃɛ.t bæzi kiða  
 during.life.my NEG saw.1SG or even heard.1SG like this  
 “I have not seen or heard (something) like this during my life”
9. jæfni zwadz bil.ʏsʔb bil.ʔikræh  
 → DM marriage by force by coercion  
 “DM marriage by force (and) by coercion”
10. B: ʔuð bi.allah hæða ɣæzu  
 1SG.seek refuge with.Allah this invasion  
 “I seek refuge with Allah this (is an) invasion”
11. A: rfæʔ.æt ðæʃtʔ.i  
 increase.3fSG blood pressure.my  
 “She increased my blood pressure”
12. B: min jid hæl klæm  
 → DM this talk  
 “Is this story true”
13. A: wæ.allah ʔl.ʃædʔim wæ.ana dʒælsa ʔljom sʔær  
 → DM the.greatest while.I sitting today happened  
 “DM it happened while I was sitting today”

In excerpt 4, the NA discourse marker *min jid* has a pragmatic function that is similar to the ones in the previous excerpt that is *to show seriousness*. This NA discourse

marker serves the second subcategory of seriousness that is to *question someone's seriousness*. In the above excerpt, there has been two discourse markers utilized within the utterances, including the NA discourse marker *min jid* and the discourse marker *jæʕni*. As mentioned before, the discourse marker *jæʕni* is highly productive discourse marker that seems to be prevalent in various Arabic varieties, including Najdi Arabic variety. The discourse marker *jæʕni* was utilized twice serving two functions within the various utterances. The first instance of the *jæʕni* functions as a verb 'lit. it means' clarifying that 'all of the marriage proposal steps happen simultaneously.' The second instance of *jæʕni* is used to express the end of someone's turn within the conversation. In the excerpt above, the first NA *Twitter* user was agitated that there was a family that intended to overwhelm the guy asking for their daughters' hand. The first NA *Twitter* user was not happy that this family was being too demanding placing a burden on the shoulder of a young couple. During marriage proposals in Najdi region, someone is not expected to bring wedding ring or even too much cash but rather flowers and gift. Once the approval from the father is received, family and friends will be invited to an engagement ceremony in which then the guy would bring cake and wedding ring and register their wedding with the presence of two witnesses from the family. Therefore, demanding all of the aforementioned stuff before meeting the families get to know each other is not acceptable. The first NA *Twitter* user stated that skipping the crucial steps in proposing makes it a wedding by force. The second NA *Twitter* users believed this type of wedding proposal is like an invasion in which people get taken against their wills. Therefore, the second NA *Twitter* questioned the first *Twitter* user's seriousness as what

has been said seemed unbelievable. The first NA *Twitter* user employed the religious discourse marker *waallah* ‘lit. by God.’ to show seriousness.

### **Intensifying Device**

The *Twitter* corpus built for the current study clearly shows that there have been a number of instances in which the NA discourse marker *min jid* has been employed across various utterances as an intensifying device. As an intensifying device, the NA discourse marker *min jid*'s sole function is to intensify the conceptual meanings of the propositions. The NA discourse marker *min jid* serving this pragmatic function shows a great resemblance to numerous English intensifiers, such as *so*, *very*, and *really*. Without the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* as an intensifying device, the utterances would tend not to have the same intensity or emphasis a NA speaker wishes to communicate. Nevertheless, the presence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is extremely crucial in delivering the intensity of meanings across various contexts. Interestingly though, NA *Twitter* users tend to employ the religious discourse marker *wallah* ‘lit. by God’ alongside the NA discourse marker *min jid* to even place a greater emphasis on the propositions. The *Twitter* corpus shows that the religious discourse marker *wallah* along with the NA discourse marker *min jid* collocated in many instances across numerous contexts.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* as an intensifying device as follows:

### Excerpt 5.

*The NA Twitter user was complaining about how tough this semester in particular as opposed to other semesters.*

1. A: ?l.tirm            haðæ        min jid        min jid        ibtilæ?    😞💔

→ the.semester    this        DM        DM        ordeal

“this semester is DM DM an ordeal 😞💔”

2. B: ?tfig            mæf.k        🙋

agree.1SG        with.2SG

“I agree with you 🙋”

In Excerpt 5, the first NA *Twitter* user has shown an interesting use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* that the vast majority of other NA *Twitter* users have not exhibited, as shown in the *Twitter* corpus. The first NA *Twitter* user employed the NA discourse markers *min jid* twice within the same utterance close to each other with no intervening constituents to communicate the intensity of meaning that one discourse marker alone could not deliver. In other words, the repetition of the NA discourse marker *min jid* places a great emphasis on the intended meaning. The placement of the NA discourse marker *min jid* twice before the adjective *ibtilæ?* ‘lit. ordeal’ was not random by any means as the goal is to intensify the currently faced ordeal. The first NA *Twitter* user was not satisfied with the semester as evident by the employment of the discourse marker *min jid* with the noun *ibtilæ?* which generally tends to have a negative connotation. The first NA *Twitter* user employed the *broken heart emoji* 💔 to express sadness and the *upside-down emoji* 😞 to show frustration. On the other hand, the second

NA *Twitter* user completely agreed with the first NA *Twitter* user that this semester in particular was considered the toughest. The second NA *Twitter* user used the *women facepalming emoji* 🙄 to show frustration.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* as an intensifying device as follows

**Excerpt 6.**

*The NA Twitter user was talking about a new coffee shop that just opened recently in Riyadh called ‘Camel Step.’*

1. A: məhmæsʔ.ʔa xətʔwæt dʒemʔl ækðər min raʔisæ  
 roastery step camel more than perfect

“Camel Step Roastery is more than perfect”

2. məhmæsʔ.ʔa ʔtʔlʔb mɪn.həm gəhwæ wa ʔdæwat  
 roastery order.1SG from.2PL coffee and tools

“It is a roastery that I order from coffee and stuff”

3. wa mæ ʔtʔfəʃ 😊😂💙💙💙  
 and NEG bored.1SG

“and I never get bored 😊😂💙💙💙”

4. B: eʃ ʔfdʔel gəhwæ muxtəsʔa ʕɪndhəm  
 What best coffee specialty have.2PL

“What is the best specialty coffee they have?”

5. A: ɛðjubjæ buʒi ʕən tædzrəbæ maræ həlu.wæ lækən bi.məhmæs  
 Ethiopia boje from experience so nice.f but in.roasteries

“Ethiopia boje is so nice from (my) experience but in (other) roasteries”

6. A: ʔstəʃməl ʔl.baræzili wa mustæhil ʔbʃəd ʃən.uh  
 use.1SG the.brazilian and impossible stay away from.it  
 “I use the Brazilian, and it is impossible that I stay away from it”
7. wa læʔ ʃ.badl.u  
 or NEG 1SG.replace.3SG  
 “or I even replace it”
8. min jid tʻm həlu ❤️❤️❤️❤️🙏  
 → DM taste nice  
 “DM (it) tastes nice ❤️❤️❤️❤️🙏”

In Extract 6, the first NA *Twitter* user used the NA discourse marker *min jid* only once, unlike the NA *Twitter* user in the previous extract. In extract 5 and extract 6, the NA discourse marker *min jid* preceded and modified nouns placing great emphasis on their conceptual meanings. The NA *Twitter* user started this conversation to inform other NA *Twitter* users about the recent experience at Camel Step Roastery that just opened recently. The first NA *Twitter* user stated that Camel Step Roastery is not just a regular coffee roastery place. This stems from the fact that the first NA *Twitter* user tends to get coffee along with other stuff without getting bored. The use of a sequence of *heart emoji* ❤️❤️❤️ expresses love for this roastery while *the tears of joy emoji* 😂 shows laughing at oneself as going to the same place might be considered odd. On the other hand, the second NA *Twitter* user got curious to know more about their coffee specialty. Nevertheless, the first NA *Twitter* user provided a thorough answer violating the maxim of quantity offering more information than needed. Therefore, the NA first *Twitter* user



instead of only discussing the best coffee at Camel Step Roastery, the NA first *Twitter* user went on to discuss coffee options at other roasteries. For instance, the first NA *Twitter* stated that Ethiopia boje is the best coffee option available at Camel Step Roastery from personal experience. The first NA *Twitter* also stated that Brazilian coffee is another great option available at other coffee shops. The use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* before *tʔm həlu* ‘lit. it tastes nice’ along with the sequence of *heart emojis* ❤️❤️❤️❤️ shows that the first NA *Twitter* loves the taste of the Brazilian coffee. The use of the *praying hand emoji* 🙏 also shows appreciation for this Brazilian coffee in particular.

### **Expressing Negative Attitude**

In the *Twitter* corpus, there have been numerous interesting instances of the NA discourse markers *min jid* in which it was used by NA *Twitter* users mainly to express a negative attitude and frustration. In these contexts, the NA discourse marker *min jid* acts as an attitudinal marker marking negative attitudes in the NA *Twitter* users’ utterances. For this aforementioned reason, NA *Twitter* users would instantly realize these attitudinal utterances and interpret them as such. Interestingly, these attitudinal utterances play a key role in the dynamics of the computer-mediated communications among NA *Twitter* users and clearly set the conversations’ tone as being attitudinal tone. These attitudinal utterances also shape the responses of other NA *Twitter* users to NA *Twitter* users’ attitudinal tweets. The *Twitter* corpus shows that there are some noticeable patterns in the responses towards NA *Twitter* user’s attitudinal utterances that aim at changing the current state of mind from negative to positive. Some of the NA *Twitter* users’ noticeable

responses toward attitudinal utterances are *stating something to lift NA Twitter users' spirits* or even *share NA Twitter users' frustration and anger*. The *Twitter* corpus also shows that NA *Twitter* users rely on the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express a number of different attitudes either directed at someone or something. For instance, there are some instances in which NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse marker *min jid* to show an attitude regarding an unfortunate event that happened recently which needed to be brought up to the wider *Twitter* community. On the other hand, there are other instances in which NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse marker *min jid* solely to express frustration at other people.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express negative attitudes as follows.

**Excerpt 7.**

*The NA Twitter user was complaining about being always on call, having responsibility, and commitment as a doctor to save humans' lives.*

1. A: min jid taræ bdet ʔkrah fei esmo on kol 🙄

→ DM DM started.1SG hate.1SG something called on call

“DM DM started to hate something is called on call 🙄”

2. B: ʔl.daktor dæjm fi dʒæhizijæ ʔa.ʕænək allah wa  
the.doctor always in readiness help.2SG Allah and

“the doctor is always in readiness (May) Allah will help you and”

3. ʕakər allah dʒuhdək  
thank.2SG Allah effort.2SG

“Allah will thank your effort”

In Excerpt 7, the NA discourse marker *min jid* co-occurred with other discourse marker *taræ*. As mentioned before, the discourse marker *taræ* confirms the truth of statements and propositions and holds NA *Twitter* users’ accountable for the truth of their utterances. Therefore, the NA *Twitter* user employed the aforementioned discourse marker to affirm the truthfulness of the utterance. In the excerpt above, the discourse marker *min jid* proceeded the discourse marker *taræ* to express a negative attitude and frustration about being recently on call most of the time. The first NA *Twitter* user was not satisfied to be constantly on call, which is evident by the use of the discourse marker *min jid* and the *steam from nose emoji* 🤔. The use of *steam from nose emoji* shows anger and immense frustration toward something. The second *Twitter* user stated that doctors are always in readiness to work and save patients’ lives. The second *Twitter* user then moves on to offer a couple of prayers to the first *Twitter* user during this stressful time.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express negative attitudes as follows.

**Excerpt 8.**

*The NA Twitter user was having a conversation regarding the bad grades received in the semester which made it one of the toughest semesters ever.*

1. A: hæða ?l.tirm ?lli t.qul.un sæhɪl wa n.dʒməʃ fi dradzət 😊

this the.term that say.3PL easy and collect.3PL in it grades

“this is the term that you say is easy and we collect grades in it 😊”

2. B: bæ.mut mɪn jɪd wa.allah mæ hbetu 😞😞😞

→ DM DM DM NEG like.3SG.PAST  
“DM DM by Allah I did not like it 😞😞😞”

In Excerpt 8, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was also accompanied by other discourse markers within the same utterance. Nevertheless, the significant difference between these two excerpts, excerpt 7 and excerpt 8, is that the NA discourse *min jid* is followed by the NA discourse marker in the former while in the latter is surrounded by two discourse markers. In other words, the NA discourse marker *min jid* is preceded by NA discourse markers *bæ.mut* ‘lit. I will die’ and followed by the religious discourse marker *wa.allah* ‘lit. by Allah’ to express great frustration and annoyance. The use of these discourse markers, in particular, to go hand in hand with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in this context is not random as it conveys the intended pragmatic meaning. For instance, the NA discourse marker *bæ.mut* tends to be used to convey annoyance and frustration. The NA discourse marker *min jid* communicates that the NA *Twitter* user is greatly frustrated and currently having a negative attitude. On the other hand, the religious discourse marker *wa.allah* is used to affirm the truthfulness of the NA *Twitter* user’s utterance. In the excerpt above, the two NA *Twitter* users were having a conversation about the semester being harder than anticipated. The first NA *Twitter* user was not satisfied with the grades received during the semester which was not as easy as other classmates claimed. The use of the *expressionless face emoji* 😞 shows a shock and disbelief. The second *Twitter* user showed an agreement with the concerns that the first NA *Twitter* users voiced, as evident by the use of the three discourse markers communicating undeniable frustration.

The sequence of loudly *crying face emoji* 🤔🤔🤔 shows a great sadness.

### **Expressing Sarcastic**

The *Twitter* Corpus also shows that there have been a few occurrences of the NA discourse marker *min jid* expressing sarcasm and irony. Therefore, the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* serves the function of setting the tone of the utterance as humorous and sarcastic to be interpreted as such without being taken seriously. In other words, the NA discourse marker *min jid* serving this pragmatic function communicates to others that the NA *Twitter* user is being sarcastic. The absence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* might lead to misunderstanding where things get taken out of contexts. Without the presence of the NA discourse marker *min jid*, the NA *Twitter* users tend to take advantage of laughing acronyms to express utter sarcasm, including *hhhhhh*. Nevertheless, the *Twitter* corpus shows there have been numerous instances in which laughing acronyms along with emojis collocated with the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express sarcasm. Interestingly though, there have been a number of other instances in which the NA discourse marker *min jid* was not collocated with either laughing acronyms or the *tears of joy emoji* as the use of NA discourse marker *min jid* alone is sufficient to express sarcasm.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* without emoji to express sarcasm as follows.

#### **Excerpt 9.**

*The NA Twitter user was complaining about the road work by Riyadh metro that resulted in major roads closing.*

1. A: subħan allah tʔlʔst mɪn ʔl.məktʌb mɪn tʔrig ʔl.ʔhsaʔ

- glory to Allah leave.1SG.PAST from the.office from road Al.Ahsa  
 “Glory to Allah! I left the office from Al.Ahsa Road”
2. wa li knish salah bi Lezama wa fadzʔah  
 and I been half an hour in the.traffic and all the sudden  
 “and I have (stuck for) half an hour in the traffic and all the sudden”
3. ʔ.lga næfsi bi ʔl.sitin mæʔ inhum mitwazin  
 found.1SG myself in the Sixteen even though they are parallel  
 “I found myself in the Sixteen (Road) even though they are parallel”
4. mɪn jɪd ʔl.ʕlɒm tɪʔawar shukrən qitʔər ʔrɪjɑðʔ  
 → DM the.knowledge progressed thank you metro Riyadh  
 “DM the knowledge progressed! Thank you Riyadh Metro”

In Excerpt 9, the NA *Twitter* user started the utterance with the use of a famous religious phrase that later became a discourse marker *subhān Allah* ‘lit. glory be to Allah.’ The religious discourse marker *subhān Allah* is used across many contexts communicating various meanings. One of the most common meaning is to praise God once someone witnesses a miracle, such as *the birth of a newborn baby*. Another common meaning is to glorify and remember Almighty Allah. Nevertheless, in recent years the religious discourse marker *subhān Allah* acquired a number of pragmatic functions, including but not limited to, *express shock, disbelief, sarcasm* as well as *empathy*. The religious marker *subhān Allah* tends to act like the English discourse marker OMG in that it expresses sarcasm. The placement of the religious discourse marker *subhān Allah* at the beginning of the utterance in this context has a great significance in setting the tone of the utterance as being ironic or humorous. In the

excerpt above, the NA *Twitter* was sarcastically wondering how he suddenly got to the Sixteen Road after being stuck for half an hour on the AlAhsa Road even though both roads are in close proximity to each other. Riyadh Metro road work caused delays and traffic congestions resulting in making the NA *Twitter* user's daily commute taking longer than usual which is about four minutes. The NA discourse marker *min jid* proceeded the second utterance containing a mockery of the progress of the knowledge of (Road construction and maintenance) by Riyadh Metro to finish on another humorous and sarcastic note. Obviously, the NA *Twitter* user has a completely different opinion that was merely uttered in the utterance implicitly implying that Riyadh Metro had caused a terrible traffic jam. The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express sarcasm as follows.

**Excerpt 10.**

*The NA Twitter user was discussing her current mood and feelings during the past few days in a sarcastic and humorous manner.*

1. A: kil ʔlli ʔ.həsa hæɫ jomen ʔn xlas?  
all that 1SG.feel these day.DU that enough  
“all that I feel during these couple of days is that enough”
2. mæ.ʔdri wɛʃ ʔlli xlas? bəs xlas? min jid  
→ NEG.know.1SG what that enough but enough DM  
“I do not know what that is enough but enough DM”

In excerpt 10, the NA discourse marker *min jid* has an interesting behavior in which it occupied the final position of the utterance. The *Twitter* corpus shows that *min jid* has an undeniable preference for the initial position of the utterance. Therefore, the

final position tends not to be a preferred landing site for the NA discourse marker *min jid*. The NA *Twitter* user states that the feelings and the pressure that she had during the past couple of days made her want to say enough, but she had no idea what she has to say enough for and then ended the utterance by stating enough in a sarcastic manner. The absence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* would result in a wrong interpretation in which others might think that the NA *Twitter* user is in an extreme state of distress and needs comfort and support. The repetition of the adjective *xlas* 'lit. enough' that usually has negative connotations three times within the same utterance along with ending the NA discourse marker *min jid* shows creativity on the NA *Twitter* user's part in making humorous utterances.

### **Expressing Shock**


Expressing shock is another fascinating pragmatic function observed for the NA discourse marker *min jid*. The *Twitter* corpus clearly shows there has been numerous instances in which NA *Twitter* users conveyed a feeling of a shock and surprise towards unpleasant events. The use of the NA discourse *min jid* in these contexts tends to communicate that NA *Twitter* users are experiencing a mixed feeling of shock, surprise, along with disbelief. In other words, the presence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the utterances signal to other NA *Twitter* users that the NA *Twitter* user is currently in a state of shock. Therefore, the sole role of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is to highlight the aforementioned feelings of shock. The *Twitter* corpus shows there have been a number of instances in which the use of NA discourse marker *min jid* was accompanied by linguistic items along with punctuation marks to express shock, including *exclamation marks*.




The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express shock as follows.

**Excerpt 11.**

*The NA Twitter users were having an argument about the recent loss of Al-Hilal team in the Saudi Professional Soccer League.*

1. A: ʔl.ʔxfæg fi mubar.æ læʔ t.æʕni ʔl.nihæja 

the.failure in game.fSG NEG fSG.mean the.end

“the failure in a game does not mean the end (of the world) ”
2. B. Person’s name min jid.ik !!
 

→ Person’s name DM.2mSG

“Person’s name, DM!!”
3. B: ʔl.mubaræ ʔlli ʔxfʌq fi.hæ ʔl.səbæk Person’s name
 

the.game the.failed.3mSG in.it.3mSG the.plumber.3mSG Person’s name

“the game that the plumber Person’s name failed in it”
4. B: ʔmənɬæ ttʔʌdər ʔl.dəwri bi farig xəms nuqatʔ
 

expense leading the.league with difference five point.PL

“at the expense of leading the league with five points difference”
5. B: wæ tðmʌn ʔl.dəwri bi nisba kbiræ
 

and guarantee the league with probablity.fSG high.fSG

“And guarantee the league (title) with a high probability”
6. wæ xsæart ʔrbʌʕ nuqatʔ fi ʔl.munʕætʔf ʔl.ʔxir
 


and lost four point.PL in the.turn the.last

“And losing four points in the last turn”

7. B: niæja            mudziða

Ending            painful

“A painful ending”

In excerpt 11, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was utilized right after the name of the first NA *Twitter* user. The NA discourse marker *min jid* was also followed by a couple of exclamation marks. The placement of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in this particular position in which it got surrounded by a vocative along with exclamation marks is not random in any shape or form. The NA discourse marker *min jid* serves a fascinating pragmatic function by strategically occupying this landing site that is to express a complete shock. Interestingly, the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in this very context greatly resembles face-to-face conversations. For instance, interlocutors in face-to-face interactions tend to mention others' names while using discourse markers with a high-pitched tone to express shock, such as *seriously*. In the excerpt above, two NA *Twitter* users were having a heated argument regarding the poor performance of Al-Hilal team that caused the team to lose many points in the Saudi Professional League. The conversation started with the first NA *Twitter* user consoling the team after their recent game loss stating that losing a game is not the end of the world. The first NA *Twitter* user then employed a sequence of *blue heart emoji*  representing the color of the Al-Hilal team at the end of the utterance to lift the team's spirits. Nevertheless, the second NA *Twitter* was shocked to see the first NA *Twitter* user's reaction after a major game loss. The second NA *Twitter* user then provided a justification for showing a complete shock claiming that it is the sole fault of the team coach. The second NA *Twitter* user referred to the coach as the plumber that is a derogatory term in Saudi Arabic

dialect employed to describe people who have no idea how to do their job right. The second NA *Twitter* user was fierce since Al-Hilal team lost four important points in the last turn that could have made the team win the Saudi Professional League title.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express shock as follows.

**Excerpt 12.**

*The NA Twitter user was complaining about the housekeeper who kept wearing her outfits.*

1. A: ʔæmlt.næ t.lbəs mlæbs.i wæ t.tʔwər snæb 🙄🙄

housekeepr.our 3fSG.wear.pres outfits.my and 3fSG.take snæp

“Our housekeeper wears my outfits and takes Snapchats 🙄🙄”

2. B: læʔ læʔ weʃ ðæ !!!

NEG NEG What this

“No no, what (is) this!!!”

3. A: hæwl.ət ʔ.hun.hæ lækən mæ qæder.ət

tried.1fSG 1sSG.stop.3SG but NEG able.1fSG

“I tried to stop her, but I was not able to”

4. t.dxəl ʔl.yurfæ wæ t.tnæga bi ʔjæb.i

3fSG.enter the.room and 3fSG.picks up in absence.1fSG

“she enters the room and picks up (outfits) in my absence”

5. B: bdzæħa min jid !!

→ rudeness DM

“Rudeness for real!”

In excerpt 12, the NA discourse marker *min jid* occupied the last position within the second *Twitter* users' utterance. Similar to the previous excerpt, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was not accompanied by other discourse markers, including other NA or religious discourse markers. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *min jid* in excerpts 13 and 14 seems to be followed closely by exclamation marks. It comes as no surprise that exclamation marks co-occurred with the NA discourse marker *min jid* as it is typically used to indicate shock and disbelief. In the above excerpt, the NA discourse marker *min jid* occurred right after the noun *rudeness* and before exclamation marks to express a shock at the rudeness behavior of the housekeeper. The first NA *Twitter* user was not satisfied with the behavior of the housekeeper who tends to sneak into her room and try on her outfits while taking numerous Snapchats. The use of the sequence of *weary face emoji* 😞😞 delivers a message that the first NA *Twitter* was greatly frustrated. The second NA *Twitter* was also shocked by the housekeeper's behavior, as evident by the use of double negative particles along with a couple of exclamation marks. The first NA *Twitter* user has done everything within her power to stop the housekeeper from wearing the outfits. However, the housekeeper would enter the room without her permission and wears the outfits. The housekeeper's behavior tends to make the first NA *Twitter* have to share her odd behavior with the wider NA *Twitter* community.

### **Asserting Something is True**

Asserting the truthfulness of the statement is another interesting pragmatic function of NA discourse marker *min jid*, as shown by the *Twitter* corpus. The presence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* communicates to other NA *Twitter* users that there is no doubt about the utterances' truthfulness. The *Twitter* corpus shows that NA *Twitter*

users employ the NA discourse marker *min jid* to affirm the truthfulness of utterances in which it gets placed either right before or after the statement needed to be confirmed.

Once NA *Twitter* users employ the NA discourse marker *min jid* to affirm the accuracy of the utterances, they could be held accountable if the utterances turned out not to be accurate. To avoid being accountable for the truthfulness of the utterances, some NA *Twitter* users prefer not to use the NA discourse marker *min jid* for this particular meaning.

Interestingly though, the NA discourse marker *min jid* behaves pragmatically similar to the NA discourse marker *tæræ* which is used mostly to affirm the validity of the utterances. Nevertheless, the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* commits NA *Twitter* users to the truth of the proposition more than *tæræ*.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to assert something is true as follows.

**Excerpt 13.**

*The NA Twitter user was offering appreciation for King Abdulaziz charter which must be adapted by other universities in the region as well*

1. A: daim ʔ.graʔ miðæq j.əræ.næ dzæmæŋet ʔæzoz

Always 1SG.read charter 3SG.see.us university Azoz

“I always read King Abdulaziz ‘it sees us’ character”

2. mæ kin.t ʔŋrif eʃ jæŋni

NEG did.1SG. know what means

“I did not know what it means”

3. lækən ʔhɪn ʔreft min jid muædra dzæmilæ

→ but now 1SG.know DM initiative beautiful

“but now I know (what it means), DM beautiful initiative”

4. n.ftæqd.hæ            fi        ʔl.dzæmiʕ.æt  
1PL.miss.3fSG        in        the.univerisities.3fPL

“we miss (those initiatives) in the universities”

In excerpt 13, the NA *Twitter* discourse marker *min jid* occurred before the noun phrase *muædra dzæmilæ* ‘lit. beautiful initiative’ to assert the truthfulness of the utterance. Therefore, the presence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* makes the utterance interpreted as being genuine and accurate with no place left for doubt. Without the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid*, the utterance would end up with a completely different interpretation in which others might think the NA *Twitter* user is merely stating an opinion. The NA *Twitter* user never knew the meaning behind King Abdulaziz university charter. Nevertheless, after fully understanding and comprehending the various sections of the university charter, the NA *Twitter* user now realizes the beauty of the charter. For this aforementioned reason, the NA *Twitter* user believes King Abdulaziz university charter should be adapted by other universities in Saudi Arabia.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to assert something is true as follows.

**Excerpt 14.**

*The NA Twitter was providing updates about a soccer game between Al-Nassr from Saudi Arabia and Agmk from Uzbekistan in the Asian Champions League*

1. A: ʔxiræn            hdʌf    ʔl.tæqdəm    li.næsər  
         finally goal    the.lead        for.Nassr

“finally, the lead goal for Al-Nassr Soccer Club”

2. fi.intðʔær ʔl.mæzid min ʔl.ʔhdæf bi.ʔðən ʔilæh  
still.waiting the.more from the.goals Willing God  
“I am still waiting for more goals, God willing!”
3. #Al-Nassr\_Agmk  
# ʔnæsər\_ædzmk
4. A: mæshaʔ allah ʔlæ ʔl.gnæm hɔlf ʔælmɪ min jid  
→ How impressive! Alghanam’s goal international.3mSG DM  
“How impressive! Alghanam’s goal is international, DM”
5. A: hɔlf dzæmil ʔæxər min dzuliano  
goal beautiful another from Giuliano  
“Giuliano scored another goal”
6. ðulæðia ʔælmɪ.ah tæhsəm ʔl.ʔumor  
three international.3fSG finish off.PAST the.matters  
“three international (goals for Al-Nassr) finished off the game”

In excerpt 14, the NA discourse marker *min jid* occurred after a noun phrase unlike in the previous excerpt in which it appeared right before a noun phrase. However, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was not accompanied by other discourse markers in both excerpts. In the above excerpt, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was used to assert that the goal scored during the game by the player named *Alghanam* is considered as an international goal. Interestingly though, NA interlocutors generally tend to describe phenomenal goals that are hard to score as international goals. The NA *Twitter* user is providing updates on *Twitter* about the intense soccer game between Al-Nassr and Agmak in which only one team will qualify to the second round of the Asian Champions

League. The NA *Twitter* user posted three updates reporting the goals scored by Al-Nassr players, including *Alghanam*, and *Giuliano*.

### **Conversation Opener**

The *Twitter* corpus shows that the NA discourse marker *min jid* has been employed to initiate various types of conversations. As a conversation opener, the NA discourse marker *min jid* is employed with the goal to grab the attention of NA *Twitter* users to engage in the on-going conversations, ranging from personal experiences to current trending topics in the Saudi society in general and Najdi society in particular. Initiating conversations is one of the most common pragmatic functions for discourse markers across various languages, including *English* (Ament and Parés, 2018; Brinton, 1996) and *Arabic* (Ahmad, 2013; Mobarki, 2018). The NA discourse marker *min jid* has a similar pragmatic function to a number of English discourse markers, including *so*, and *OK*. Interestingly though, the English discourse marker *so* can be employed to initiate and terminate conversations (Vaneva & Pachovshki, 2015). Similarly, the NA discourse marker *min jid* can be used as a conversation opener. Nevertheless, there has been no single instance in the *Twitter corpus* showing the NA discourse marker *min jid* terminating the conversation. Fortunately, the other NA discourse marker *elzibda* serves as the conversation closer function.

The following example shows the conversation opening function of the NA discourse marker *min jid*:

#### **Excerpt 15.**

*The NA Twitter user was surprised that it was raining in the Najd region which was an unusual sight to watch since it rarely rains there.*



1. A: min jid fi mat'ar

→ DM there rain

“DM, is there rain (right now)?”

2. lef ahas ini minʕæzl.a ʕən ʔl.dinya 😊!

why feel.1fSG 1SG isolated.1fSG from the.world

“why I feel isolated from the world 😊!”

As can be seen from excerpt 15, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was strategically placed at the beginning of the utterance preceding all of the other constituents to draw the attention of NA *Twitter* users to the topic of the conversation about the recent rains in Najd region. The NA discourse marker *min jid* serves a similar pragmatic function to the English discourse marker ‘Hey’ attracting interlocutors to join the newly initiated conversation. The NA discourse marker *min jid* seems to have another layer pragmatic function besides the primary pragmatic function of *opening and initiating conversation*. The secondary pragmatic function the NA discourse marker *min jid* serves is to *show surprise and shock* that is often used to open conversations about surprising events including a sudden change in weather.

The NA *Twitter* user seems utterly surprised that it was raining in the Najd region since it is generally considered a rare occasion to witness. It comes as no surprise that the Najd region being surrounded by a number of deserts gets rain every once in a while. Once the Najd region gets showers of rain, the NA *Twitter* users will hear about it through the *Twitter* social media platform. Therefore, the NA *Twitter* user felt isolated given the fact the NA *Twitter* user just found out that it was pouring in the Najd region without even knowing about it beforehand. The use of exclamation mark at the end of the

utterance indicates a complete surprise which was accompanied by *smiling cat emoji* 😊 to express laughing at oneself.

The following example also shows the conversation opening function of the NA discourse marker *min jid*:

**Excerpt 16.**

*The NA Twitter user has an instant translation test tomorrow and needs the prayers of other NA Twitter users.*

1. A: min jid æxær mæra ʔ.tʰlæb.kom t.dʃun.li b.ʔl.tawfig 🙏

→ DM last time 1SG.request.2PL 2PL.pray.1SG.acc for.the.success 🙏

“DM, (this is) the last time I request you to pray for the success (of the test)”

2. bukra ʃænd.i fainal tardzma fawriya  
tomorrow have.1sG final translation instant

“Tomorrow I have an instant translation final”

3. wa ʔ.his .... læʔ ya.ʃid læʔ t.dʒi 💔

and 1SG.feel ... NEG VOC.holiday NEG 1SG.come

“and, I feel .... Don’t come O’ holiday don’t come 💔”

In Excerpt 16, the NA *Twitter* user employed the NA discourse marker *min jid* in a similar fashion, leaving it at the beginning of the utterance. The NA discourse marker *min jid* plays an effective role in grabbing the attention of NA *Twitter* users acting like an attention grabber device. The undeniable preference of the NA discourse marker *min jid* for the initial position in particular stems from the fact that it makes initiating

conversations much easier. In the excerpt above, the NA *Twitter* user started this particular conversation to get immense support from other *Twitter* users in terms of prayers and Goodluck wishes. The use of the adverb phrase *æxər mərə* ‘lit. last time’ before making a request for support shows that the NA *Twitter* user desperately needs prayers. The use of *hand over mouth monkey emoji* 🙊 shows that NA *Twitter* is embarrassed to request this help. Obviously, the NA *Twitter* user has a difficulty with the instant translation class as evident in the use of the Saudi Arabic proverb *læ? ya.ʕid læ? t.dʒi* ‘lit. don’t come, O’ holiday don’t come.’ This proverb often used to indicate something extremely terrible about to happen. According to the proverb, holidays in general are happy occasions and spread happiness and joy in the world. Nevertheless, when holidays come early before someone gets prepared, they bring sadness and misery. The use of *broken heart emoji* 💔 shows that the NA *Twitter* user believes her heart is going to get broken from performing terribly on the final test.

### **Expressing Curiosity**

The *Twitter* corpus also shows that there have been a few number occurrences of NA discourse marker *min jid* used solely to express immense curiosity. Within these contexts, the NA *Twitter* users employ the NA discourse marker *min jid* to clearly state that a very critical piece of information is greatly needed to be explicitly communicated through the utterances. For this aforementioned reason, the NA discourse marker *min jid* prefaced various interrogative sentences expressing a sense of urgency to get immediate responses to the NA *Twitter* users’ intriguing questions. The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to proceed numerous interrogative phrases, including *le()* ‘why’ and *kef* ‘how,’ along with the negative phrase *mæ-* across a number of different contexts. Interestingly

enough, the NA *Twitter* users have employed a number of interesting linguistic and paralinguistic features to express curiosity during their *Twitter* communications resembling face-to-face communications. Nevertheless, the pitch along with loudness are communicated differently in *Twitter* by taking advantage of two techniques, such as *exclamation marks* and *prolongation usage*. First, the adoption of exclamation marks shows that the NA discourse marker *min jid* is pronounced with a higher pitch than other surrounding utterances. Second, the adoption of prolongation shows a sudden increase in pitch and loudness.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express curiosity as follows.

**Excerpt 17.**

*The NA Twitter users were discussing the topic of paintings that tend to receive less attention and recognition from the wider Twitter community*

1. A: leʃ ʔl.rasm.æt ʔl.həlu.wæ dæjm ma.fi  
 why the.painting.PL the. beautiful.3fSG always NEG  
 “why do the beautiful paintings always no”
2. ʔhəd kɪðɪr jəʃuf.hæ  
 there one much see.3fSG  
 “much people see it?”
3. wa ʔl.ʔʃjaʔ ʔlli tfæʃəl jækðər ʔl.təʃziz  
 and the.things that embarrassing how.much the.support.  
 “and the embarrassing things (gets) too much support ...”
4. wa ʔl.laɪkʔ.æt ʃle hæ 😊😊??

and like.PL on.3SG

“and likes on them 😊😊??”

5. B: min jid leeeeeeeeeej

DM why

→ “DM why”

In Excerpt 17, the NA discourse marker *min jid* preceded the NA wh-question *lef*, with a significantly prolonged vowel communicating intensity, to understand the reasons behind this interesting social phenomenon. The NA discourse marker *min jid* has crucial importance in conveying the intended pragmatic functions which is to express immense curiosity. The NA discourse marker *min jid* also has another secondary pragmatic function that is to *show frustration* toward this social phenomenon. In the above excerpt, the first NA *Twitter* user voiced a curiosity about the reason behind beautiful paintings receiving almost no attention on *Twitter*. In contrast, other embarrassing things get more likes and support from the wider *Twitter* community. The first NA *Twitter* user employed a sequence of *smiley face emoji* right 😊😊 before question marks to set a friendly tone. The second NA *Twitter* seemed to share the same curiosity as the first NA *Twitter* user. At first glance, the analysis of this excerpt might seem challenging since the NA discourse marker *min jid* has two pragmatic functions used simultaneously. In other words, the employment of the NA discourse marker *min jid* serves two pragmatic functions, namely *showing curiosity*, and *showing frustration*. Nevertheless, the former is considered more noticeable than the other in the above context. Therefore, the decision was made to make showing curiosity as its primary pragmatic function. Interestingly, there have been some

instances showing overlapping in the functions which will be discussed later in the chapter.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to express curiosity as follows.

**Excerpt 18.**

*The NA Twitter user was talking about how to should deal with people in this day and age.*

1. A: suʔæl      min jid    kef      ʔl.wæhd    jæ.gul    tʔ.ʕæməl  
 → a question    DM    how    the.one    3MSG.say 3MSG.deal.imp  
 “(I have) question, DM how someone say deal”  
 mæʕ    ʔl.næs    bi.xubð    læʔ    tʕæməl.hum    bi.ħusən nijah  
 with the.people    with.meanness    NEG treat.3PL with.great intention  
 “with people with meanness (and) do not treat them with great intention”
2.    fi    hæða    ʔl.wagt    wa ʔl.muftɾəð    ʔn    tʕæml.ək    ʔlæ  
 in    this      the.time    and the.supposed    that    deal.3SG    based  
 “in this time and (what is) supposed is that you deal based”
3.    ħusən nijah.tək      liʔən      ʔlæ    nija.tukəm      turzæg.un  
 great intention. 3SG because based intention.SPL provided for.3PL  
 “great intention because based on your intentions, you will be provided for  
 (by God).”

In Excerpt 18, the NA discourse marker *min jid* also occurred before a wh-question preceding the whole interrogative sentence. However, the NA discourse marker *min jid* preceded another NA wh-question that is *kef* ‘lit. how’ to express an immense

curiosity towards a general belief regarding dealing with people in this day and age. The NA *Twitter* user employed the word *su?ael* ‘lit. question’ in the initial position to get NA *Twitter* users’ attention and to make it clear that an intriguing question will be posed. Interestingly, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was used in the initial position right before the question gets posed to show that the NA *Twitter* user is greatly curious in finding out an answer to this begging question. Obviously, the NA *Twitter* user was curiously eager to understand the motive behind some NA *Twitter* users stating that people should always be treated with meanness and disrespect. The curiosity was sparked since this aforementioned statement makes absolutely no sense to the NA *Twitter* user. Therefore, the NA *Twitter* user started questioning their motives and reflected on how someone’s intentions have consequences on how they get rewarded by God.

### **Being Confrontational**

The *Twitter* corpus shows that there have been a number of instances of the NA discourse marker *min jid* indicating that NA *Twitter* users are being confrontational. Within these few instances, the NA discourse marker *min jid* marks the start of intense confrontations and the change of mood during heated arguments. For this aforementioned reason, the employment of NA discourse marker *min jid* during heated arguments shows that opinions are given in an aggressive manner resembling face-to-face interactions in which the tone of voice is getting louder. Along similar lines, the employment of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in CMC heated conversations shows a change in NA *Twitter* users’ tone of voice. As previously mentioned, non-verbal cues tend to be a major shortcoming of CMC communication (Ling, 2018). Therefore, NA *Twitter* users show the

increase of voice through the adoption of exclamation marks marking confrontational utterances.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to be confrontational as follows.

**Excerpt 19.**

*The NA Twitter user was complaining that some people tend to criticize doctors and health workers when they see them having fun outside of work.*

1. A: mæ ʔ.fhem sælfət ʔlli læʔ ʃæf.ʔo tʔlæb  
 NEG 1SG.understand matter that when see.3PL student.PL  
 “I don’t understand the matter (with the ones) when they see students”
2. ʔæu ʔfræd ʔlqitʔæʃ ʔlsʔhi jæmzuhun ʔæu jistæhbil.un  
 or employees sector health joking.3PL or messing around.3PL  
 “or health sector employees joking or messing around”
3. xæridʒ ʔl.dəwæm gal.u ʔfa hæðæ ʔlli ʔrwahnæ bi.jæd.hum !!  
 outside the.work say.3PL OMG this who our soul.1PL in.hand.3PL  
 “outside of work they say OMG these are who our souls in their hands!!”
4. jæʃni min jid ʔl.tʔæbib mæ ji.ðʔhək? sʔnəm? mæ jhes  
 → DM DM the.doctor.3mSG NEG laugh.3mSG statue NEG feel.3mSG  
 “DM DM the doctor doesn’t laugh? Is he a statue? Doesn’t he feel?”
5. hædzər !!! taræ ʃædi n.gul nɪkət wæ n.ðʔhək? i:  
 → rock DM normal say.1PL say jokes and laugh.1PL yeah  
 “a rock DM it is normal that we (as doctors) say jokes and laugh, yeah”
6. ʔ.bʃər.kum n.fɪlləhæ wæ n.ðʔhək ʔlæ



1SG.give good news.3PL have fun.3PL and laugh.3PL at

“To give you good news, we (also) have fun and laugh at”

7. tʃb.næ wæ ʔlm.næ wæ n.tʔgtʔig ʔlæ ksret ðʔhur.na  
exhaustion.3PL and pain.3PL and 3PL.make fun at broken back.3PL

“(our) exhaustion and pain, and make fun at our broken backs”

8. B: 😂

9. B: læzm t.næfs.un mæʃ.hum 😂😂😂

Should imp.become grumpy.2PL with.3PL

“you should become grumpy like them 😂😂😂”

In excerpt 19, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was preceded by a linguistic item that tends to be used mostly as a discourse marker, namely *jæʕni* ‘lit. it means.’ As a discourse marker, *jæʕni* is one of the most common discourse markers found across the vast majority of Arabic varieties, including *Najdi Arabic*. Mobarki (2018) has conducted an extensive dissertation study on the pragmatic roles of *jæʕni* in spoken conversations showing it has numerous functions, including but not limited to, *signal elaborations*, and *claim the floor*. Nevertheless, *jæʕni* in this excerpt functions as a verb, as evident by its position in the utterance preceding the NA discourse marker *min jid* and the subject *ʔl.tʔæbib* ‘lit. the doctor,’ to comment on the previous utterance in a sarcastic manner. The presence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* shows that the first NA *Twitter* user is being confrontational, dealing with the situation in an aggressive manner. The first NA *Twitter* criticizes people who tend to bash doctors and other health workers when seeing them having fun during their break. The first NA *Twitter* user then moves on to pose a confrontational question implying that doctors are humans too with feelings.

Interestingly, the first NA *Twitter* user employed the NA discourse marker *taræ* that is used widely across Arabic varieties, including *Najdi Arabic*, to affirm that it is perfectly normal for doctors to joke and mess around. The second NA *Twitter* user jokingly recommends the first NA *Twitter* to be grumpy like those people. The use of a sequence of *tears of joy emoji* 🤣🤣🤣 shows the second NA *Twitter* user was laughing hard.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* to be confrontational as follows.

**Excerpt 20.**

*The NA Twitter user was mocking another NA Twitter user who tends to be preoccupied with the final tests.*

1. A: wen.ik      ?xtbæræt lef    mæ    tdzi.næ      ?xtbær.æt  
           where.2SG    tests    why    NEG    vist.2SG.us    tests  
           “where are you? (I’m having) tests. why don’t visit us? (I’m having) tests”
2.    xl.næ    n.tʰlæʕ    ðæ    ʔl.ʔsbuʕ    ?xtbæræt    lef    mæ    t.rʌd  
           let.1PL 1PL.hang out this the.week tests why NEG 1SG.respond to  
           “let us hang out this week! (I’m having) tests. Why do not you respond to”
3.    wæts      ?xtbæræt    ʃlon.ək    ?xtbæræt  
           WhatsApp tests    how.2SG    tests  
           “WhatsApp? (I’m having) tests. How are you? (I’m having) tests.
4.    ʃfi.k                      ?xtbær.æt  
           what up with.2SG    tests  
           “What’s up with you? (I’m having) tests”
5. B: min jid    ?xtbæræt    haða    mustaqbəl.li    iða    lʌm    ʔ.ħafið    ʕleh

→ DM tests this future.1SG if NEG 1SG.protect it  
“DM tests. This is my future if I do not protect it”

6. t.əbi t.nfəŋ.ni int !!!  
2SG.going 2SG.help.me you.1SG  
“Are you going to help me!!!”

In excerpt 20, the NA discourse marker *min jid* was used in the initial position as a response to the first NA *Twitter* mocking utterance. In this excerpt, there were no other NA discourse markers accompanying the NA discourse marker *min jid* since the NA discourse marker *min jid* alone is sufficient to show that the second NA is being confrontational. The first NA *Twitter* mocked the second NA *Twitter* who kept turning down every social interaction and invitation because of not finding a balance between social life and school. Therefore, the first *Twitter* user created a mockery imaginary conversation pretending like having a conversation with the second NA *Twitter* in which the second NA *Twitter* user would respond to every question with ‘(I am having) tests.’ The second NA *Twitter* user used the NA discourse marker *min jid* to show intense confrontation and strong dissatisfaction with the first NA *Twitter* users’ utterance. The second NA *Twitter* user claimed that no one including the first NA *Twitter* user would help the second NA *Twitter* user to be successful. The use of exclamation marks serves a crucial function marking the end of the second NA *Twitter* users’ confrontational utterance.

## The Discourse Marker *elzibda* Pragmatic Functions

### Express Sarcasm

Expressing sarcasm is one of the most common pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in which it signals that the utterances are solely intended for sarcasm and irony. For this aforementioned reason, the utterances should not be interpreted literally since it would inevitably communicate a completely different meaning resulting in miscommunication. To avoid all sorts of misinterpretations, NA *Twitter* users are highly expected to interpret and decipher the utterances sarcastically as originally intended. The *Twitter* corpus shows sarcasm communicated through the employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* could be further categorized into three categories: *Being sarcastic, mocking someone or something*, as well as *delivering a joke punchline*. These subcategories emerged from the *Twitter* corpus and share a core semantic meaning since they are merely intended for sarcasm. At first glance, they might look completely similar, but there are little details that pragmatically set them apart from each other. Nevertheless, they are grouped under one pragmatic function due to their semantic similarity and for economic purposes. The three subcategories are discussed with much detail below:

- (i) Being sarcastic/humorous: NA *Twitter* users become sarcastic by composing utterances delivering meanings entirely different than what it is communicated on the surface.
- (ii) Mocking someone or something: It is solely making fun of other *Twitter* users and/or addressing them in a condescending manner.

- (iii) Delivering a joke punchline: It is the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to signal the last stage of the joke.

The *Twitter* corpus shows that the mocking someone is the least common subcategory under sarcasm while being sarcastic is the most common among the aforementioned subcategories of sarcasm.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to express the first subcategory of sarcasm as follows.

**Excerpt 21.**

*The first NA Twitter was sarcastically discussing the issue of waking up late for school.*

1. A: *elzibda ?lli ləʕb bi.sæʕti ?l.bailodzijah jʕtrif*  
 → DM who 2sg.messes with.clock.my the.biology impr.confess  
 “DM, (the one) who messes with my biological clock has to confess!”
2. *?mæ sæʕft kʌl jom ?gom min næʕsi bəʕd ?l.wægt*  
 As for every day 1sg.wake by self.my after the.time  
 “As for the fact that every day I wake up by myself after the time”
3. *bi.nesʔ sæʕah mæhib hæʕæ* 😊❤️  
 by.half hour NEG acceptable  
 “by half an hour is not acceptable (at all) 😊❤️”

In excerpt 21, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred initially right before a complementizer phrase *?lli* ‘lit. who’ to undoubtedly express sarcasm and humor within the utterance. The first NA *Twitter* user seemed to constantly struggle with waking up on time to go to the university and attend classes. For this aforementioned, the first NA

*Twitter* user sarcastically stated the one messes with the biological clock must come forward and confess since waking up about half an hour late after the time is not an acceptable situation. The utterance was concluded with two emoji showing the current mood of the first NA *Twitter* regarding the issue of waking up late, namely *slightly smiling emoji* 😊 along with *broken heart emoji* 💔. The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to express the second subcategory sarcasm as follows.

**Excerpt 22.**

*The first NA Twitter was mocking someone he saw at the university who had a school bag with wheels.*

1. A: elzibda ɡbɒl ʃwɑi                      fi ʔl.dʒæmʃah ʃeft    wæɦɪd  
 → DM    a moment ago            in the.university    1sg.saw someone  
           “DM, (just) a moment ago, I saw someone in the university”
2.    mæʃi            mʃ.æh            ʃentʹah ʔm ʃdʒlaæt  
           walking    has.3msg bag            with wheels  
           “walking with (a school) bag with wheels”
3.    hahahahahahaha  
           hahahahahahaha  
           “hahahahahahaha”
4. A: wællah        jæ ʃklæh kæn jəðʹhɛk bæs mæ dʒet fi bæli  
 → 1sg.swear looked    was funny    but NEG cross my mind  
           “I swear he looked funny. But it did not cross my mind”
5.    ʔsʹawræh                                      sʹraɦa

1sg.take a picture.him honestly

“(to) take a picture of him, honestly”

In excerpt 22, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared in the initial position preceding an adverb phrase *gbal fwa* ‘lit. (just) a moment ago’ to express another subcategory of sarcasm that is distinct from the one communicated in the previous excerpt. In this current excerpt, the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* serves the pragmatic function of mocking of someone. In the excerpt above, the first NA *Twitter* user was mocking someone dragging a school bag with wheels that tends to be associated with high school students. The use of the laughing acronym *hahahahahahaha* at the end of the first utterance shows that the first NA *Twitter* user was laughing hard. The first NA *Twitter* user after that wished they had captured that funny incident on camera.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to express the third subcategory of sarcasm as follows.

**Excerpt 23.**

*The first NA Twitter was telling a joke about a close friend who challenged him to stay without food for three consecutive days.*

1. A: Person’s name *thedani* *ʔnuh bi.jdzles ðlæð ʔjam bdun ʔkAl haahai*  
Person’s name 2sg.challenge.me that will.stay three days with no food lol  
“Person’s name challenged me to stay three days with no food lol”
2. A: *elzibda ʔn.uh ʔljom bi.jtnawəm bi.ʔl.mustæʃfæh hu wæ wədʒhæ*  
→ DM that.he today will.admitted in.the.hospital he and face.his  
“DM that he will be admitted to the hospital with his (lame) face”
3. *ʔbu ʔl.fæʃalijæt ʔl.naimah*

creator the.events the.sleeping

“creator of the boring events”

4. B: ʔrdʒɛʃ dæwæm hæði bdeθæ

Impr.go back work this beginning.its

“Go back to work! This is just the beginning (of the vacation)!!”

5. A: hhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

Hahaa

“hahaa”

In excerpt 23, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared initially preceding a complementizer phrase with the an embedded subject *ʔn.uh* ‘lit. that.he’ to express sarcasm that is slightly different than the ones already mentioned in the last two excerpts. The presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in this context gives NA *Twitter* users the opportunity to express the third subcategory of sarcasm that is to deliver a joke punchline. The NA preference of the discourse marker *elzibda* tends to occupy this position within the last stage of the joke is to mark the joke punchline. The NA *Twitter* user started the joke stating that a close friend named Abdullah dared him to stay with no food for three consecutive days. The first NA *Twitter* user then went on to the last stage to deliver the joke punch line by stating ‘Anyway, he (Person’s name) will be admitted to the hospital with his (lame) face. The creator of boring events.’ The second NA *Twitter* user jokingly suggested that the first NA *Twitter* user should terminate the vacation immediately and go back to work. This stems from the fact the first NA *Twitter* along with Person’s name has done a dangerous dare that could have gotten both of them killed.



## Concluding and Summarizing

Summarizing and concluding is the most common pragmatic function that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* exhibits within numerous utterances in the *Twitter* Corpus. The corpus shows a plethora of occurrences of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* with the pragmatic function of *concluding and summarizing* the main idea of the utterances. The employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* allows NA *Twitter* users to leave out the superfluous and unnecessary details that slow down the processing of various utterances. In other words, the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* makes NA *Twitter* users conclude with few words to ease the comprehension of the utterances. The *Twitter* corpus shows there are two subcategories that come under the concluding pragmatic functions as follows:

- (i) In a nutshell: Providing a neat summary of something concluding what already mentioned before or mentioning something for the first-time leaving out all the little details.
- (ii) The bottom line: Offering solely the crucial part of the information in an argument with no details.

As shown above, these two subcategories share the same pragmatic function marking a conclusion. The semantic resemblance both subcategories show along with the economy in writing necessitates grouping them under the same pragmatic function.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to conclude and summarize as follows.

**Excerpt 24.**

*The first NA Twitter was discussing a recent sexual harassment that happened in one of the famous shopping streets.*

1. A: *elzibda mɪn ʔl.ħædið      lau mæ ʔmdæk tsaʊrɪn      muʔði au*

→ DM    from the.incident If Neg could.f take a picture.f bully or  
“DM from the incident, if you couldn’t take a picture of a bully or”

2. *muthrɪf      ħægɪk mæ.jmdɪh      jrdʒɛʃ lɪk 🙋*

sexual harasser    right.f Neg.has the chance      return you

“the sexual harasser, your right (to press charges) will be lost 🙋”

3. *jælet jsʔɪr      ʔdʒbæri trkɪb      kəmiræt      lkʌl ʔl.sæiræt*

hope becomes mandatory installing cameras all the.cars

“I hope installing cameras on cars becomes mandatory”

4. *bɪ.sæʃd bɪ.ʔmur      kɪðɪræ mu bəs ʔl.tæħrʊf*

will.help with.things many Neg Neg the.sexual harassment

“It will help with many things not only (detering) sexual harassment”

5. # *muthrɪf\_Street Name*

#sexual harasser\_Street Name

“#sexutal harasser\_Street Name”

In excerpt 24, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* at the beginning of the utterance preceded all of the other segments within the utterance. The employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in this position before the prepositional phrase *mɪn ʔl.ħædið* ‘lit. from the incident’ serves a concluding and summarizing function. In other words, the presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* communicates to other NA *Twitter* users the

utterance is the summary or the concluding remarks of the story. The first NA *Twitter* user took part in the ongoing conversation through the trending hashtag after a recent sexual harassment case took place in the shopping street. Fortunately, the victim of the assault was quick enough to film the verbal sexual harassment aiding the authorities in arresting the harasser in a timely manner. Therefore, the first NA *Twitter* user gave a concluding remark of the incident based on what could have happened in the case where failing to capture the sexual assault on camera would make it extremely hard to press any charges. The first NA *Twitter* user then moved on to suggest passing a law to make installing cameras on cars a mandatory requirement to deter numerous crimes, including *sexual harassment*.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to conclude and summarize as follows.

**Excerpt 25.**

*The first NA Twitter was frustrated that people nowadays had to turn a blind eye to be happy in their life*

1. A: ?lwæhid s<sup>2</sup>ær læzm jsaui næfsu mæ jsmaʕ wæ.læ jʃuf  
 someone became must pretend self.his NEG 2sg.hear and.Neg 2sg.see  
 "someone becomes must pretend that he does not hear, see"
2. wæ.læ jgræʔ wæ.læ jiħəs ʕʃæn  
 and.Neg 2sg.reads and.Neg 2sg.feels in order to  
 "read, or feel, in order to"
3. Mæ jnekð ʕlæ næfsu wæ jʕiʃ sæʕid  
 Neg 2sg.make miserable on himself and live happy

“not make himself miserable, and live happy”

4. elzibda xlik dzədær

→ DM impr.become a brick wall

“DM, you have to become a brick wall”

In excerpt 25, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was used towards the end of the utterance contrary to the preceding excerpt. The presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was not random as it concludes and summarizes the main point of the argument in a couple of words. The first NA *Twitter* was making an argument that people must pretend like they lost all their senses to stay happy. The first NA *Twitter* also added that paying attention to everything with their senses would make people miserable and frustrated, given the amount of evil in the world. To conclude the argument in just a few words, the NA *Twitter* employed the NA discourse marker *elzibda* stating people should be like a brick wall with no feelings, morals, or integrity.

### **Getting to the Heart of the Story After an Introduction**

The employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* also has another interesting pragmatic function allowing NA *Twitter* users to get to the heart of the story after a long introduction. The *Twitter* corpus shows the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to set the stage for the story to be unfolding right before NA *Twitter* users' very eyes. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* is used after a long introduction to draw the line between the context needed to comprehend the story and the story that is currently being told. Once this line becomes blurry, NA *Twitter* users might mistakenly believe all the segments are part of the context resulting in false misinterpretation. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* has a number of important functions beside setting clear boundaries between the context

and the story. First and foremost, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* allows for an easy transition into the main story. Second, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* gives NA *Twitter* users the opportunity to hold the floor and keep the attention of other NA *Twitter* users during the telling of long stories. Third, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows the relations among the various segments to aid the other NA *Twitter* users in successfully deciphering the story.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to get to the heart of the story as follows.

**Excerpt 26.**

*The NA Twitter user told the story of her brother who gets irritate when other male players joined the same video game.*

1. A: ax.ui            læfb    mæfa.i bæbdzi wæ kəl mæ dəxəl wæħid  
                          brother.my   played   with.me PUBG and everytime join someone  
                          “my brother played with me PUBG and everytime someone joined”
2.    dʒlæs j.thəwaf    mæf.a        jæ.wræf    tyæzəl        ʔxt.i  
                          Prog    2msg.fight with.him    voc.kiddo 2msg.fliter    sister.my  
                          “he was fighting with him! Hey kiddo, you’re flirting with my sister?”
3.        ʔ.gol.lɪk            ʔ.tʳidi.h                    jæ.ɪbn.ʔl.ħlæl  
                          1sg.tell.you    2sg.kick out.3msg        voc.son.the.halal  
                          “I am telling you should kick him out! (I was like) O’ son of the halal”
4.        xl        ʔl.wæləd j.tkləm bæfden    n.tfæhəm  
                          leave   the boy    3msg.speak then 1pl.discuss  
                          “leave the boy speak (first), then we will discuss if there is any issue”

5. elzibda ʔlli ʔsm.u person's name wæ lɪb.næ ʔæsf.in  
 → DM whoever name.his person's name and play.1pl sorry.1pl  
 “DM whoever his name is person's name and we played, we are sorry!”
6. wæ ʔðr.na tʔɪ.næ ʔsrar bet.næ ʔnd.ɪk  
 and excuse.us spelled.1pl secrets house.our in front.you  
 Excuse us! We aired our dirty laundry in front you”
7. B: jæ.ɦjæ.ti mæ.ʃf.ti person's name ax.ui j.gol  
 voc.love.my NEG.see.you person's name brother.my 2msg.say  
 “O’ my love, you did not see my person’s name brother saying”
8. t.ʃæli hæwʃ.ih j.gol klæm qðer 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄  
 2fsg.come 2fsg.scold.him 3msg.say words bad  
 “come and scold him, he is saying bad words 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄”
9. A: jæ.ræb.i 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄  
 → voc.God.my  
 “OMG 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄”

In excerpt 26, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was employed before a complementizer phrase ‘ʔlli’ to get to the heart of the story after providing a through context. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred after a long stretch of utterances produced to set the stage for a recent story that happened to the first NA *Twitter* user. At first glance, it might seem there was too much information provided that is more than what NA *Twitter* users need to decipher the intended meaning of the utterance. Nevertheless, this information is crucial to clearly understand and successfully interpret the utterance. In the excerpt above, the first NA *Twitter* user was frustrated because of the

embarrassing jealous behavior her brother tends to show once male gamers join PUBG game. The brother seems to suspect that male gamers would take every opportunity to flirt with the first NA *Twitter* user resulting in ongoing verbal altercations with those male gamers. On the other hand, the sister was explaining to the brother that those male gamers have not joined the voice conversation and thus he should not jump to the conclusion. The presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* allowed the first NA *Twitter* user to get to the heart of the story which is someone named *person's name* who has been offended. Therefore, the first NA *Twitter* user felt the need to be apologetic in this tweet. The second *Twitter* user seemed to have a slightly different experience with her little brother in which he tends to ask her to scold foul-mouth male gamers. The presence of the sequence of *tears of joy emoji* showed that the second *Twitter* user found her little brother's reaction hilarious and extremely funny. The first NA *Twitter* user employed the English discourse marker 'OMG' to express disbelief which was followed by a sequence of *tears of joy emoji* 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔 showing intense laughter.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to get to the heart of the story as follows.

**Excerpt 27.**

*NA Twitter user tells a touching story that happened to him during his childhood at the convenience store in which someone handed him money when he was short one Riyal.*


1. A: ʕtʔu.næ mæwqf dʒæmil həsəl luk mæʕ næs mæ t.ʕrfun.hum 🤔  
 tell.us story beautiful happened to you with people NEG you.know

“Tell us a beautiful story that happened to you with people you did not know 🧑”

2. B: zæmæn wæ.ʔnæ sʔxir rəht ʔl.bqæla  
Long time ago when.I young 1sg.went the.convenience store  
“long time ago, when I was young, I went to the convenience store”
3. wæ jom dʒit ʔhæsb tʔlɛʃ ʔl.hsæb ʔkðər min ʔlli mæʃi  
and when was about 1sg.pay turned out the.total more from than have.I  
“and when I was about to pay, the total turned out to be more than I have”
4. bi.rijæl wæ kæn wærai wæhɪd elzibda ʃæfni  
→ by.Riyal and was behind.me someone DM saw.me  
“by one Riyal, and there was someone behind me, Anyway, he saw me”
5. bæ.rdʒɛʃ ʃei min ʔl.ʔyræðʔ ðɛm tʔlæʃ rijæl  
fut.return something from the.stuff then 2msg.pulled out one Riyal  
“ about to return something from the stuff, then he pulled out one Riyal”
6. wæ ʃ.tʔæni wæ hlɒf ʔxð.ɛh  
and 2msg.gave.me and 2msg.insisted 1sg.take.it  
“and gave it to me and insisted that I take it.”
7. ʔl.moqf ʔlæ gɛd mæhu bæsitʔ wæ ʃædi ʔilæ ʔnuh lil.jom jsʃdni 💙  
the.story despite being simple and normal it is until.today  
“Despite the story being simple and normal, even today it makes me  
happy 💙”

In excerpt 27, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred before a verb phrase *ʃæfni* ‘lit. he saw me’ after a somehow shorter stretch of utterance than the previous



excerpt. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* seems to serve the same pragmatic functions in both excerpts in which it gives NA *Twitter* the opportunity to get to the heart of the story after a long introduction. In other words, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* marked the part of the story that seemed to be the climax or the pinnacle of the story. The second NA *Twitter* user responded to a question posited by the first NA *Twitter* user about the most memorable story that happened with a stranger. The second NA *Twitter* began the story with the phrase ‘long time ago’ that is used to indicate something that happened at some point in time in the past. Interestingly though, this phrase in particular is considered a cliché in storytelling as a large number of stories seem to have the same opening line. Nevertheless, the second NA *Twitter* user gave a clear timeframe for the story by stating the story that happened during childhood. The second *Twitter* user was at a local convenience store getting some stuff. Nevertheless, the second *Twitter* found out he was short one riyal. During that time, there was a stranger behind him waiting in line along with other customers. Therefore, the second *Twitter* user was about to return some of the stuff since he could not afford to pay the total, and he would not keep people waiting in line longer. The second NA *Twitter* user used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to get to the pinnacle of the story: When the stranger saw the second NA *Twitter* user about to return some of the groceries the stranger handed him a riyal. The second NA *Twitter* seems to be touched and moved by the stranger’s generosity. The use of the *heart emoji*  expresses the feeling of appreciation and love for what the strangers have done.

### **Expressing Negative Attitude**

Expressing a negative attitude is among the most common pragmatic functions the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows across utterances in the *Twitter* corpus. There

have been a number of instances showing the NA discourse marker *elzibda* used to express a negative attitude. Unfortunately, the *Twitter* corpus has no instances of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* showing a positive attitude which resulted in making this very discourse marker as a negative attitudinal marker. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* expresses numerous negative attitudes as observed in the corpus ranging from *anger, frustration* to merely *boredom*. The presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* signals to other NA *Twitter* users that NA *Twitter* user is currently in a state of frustration, boredom, or even anger. Therefore, other NA *Twitter* users would successfully perceive and interpret the current attitude of NA *Twitter* user. The *Twitter* corpus shows that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is employed more than the NA discourse marker *min jid* to communicate a negative attitude.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to express negative attitude as follows.

**Excerpt 28.**

*The first NA Twitter was frustrated with the fact there were way too many detours near his house.*

1. A: fi      thwil.æt      kæðir.ah      ʃnd      bait.næh

there    detour.fpl    many.f      near    house.our

“there are many detours near our house”

2.    fæ læzʌm    tdxɪl      hærah      lau    tbi      tʳug      ʔræʃ

so    must    impr.enter    neighborhood    if    you.want    routes    faster

“so, you must enter a neighborhood if you want faster routes”

3.    elzibda    swear word    hæʔ'in      sʌbʃ      mætʔbæt      bʔgɛl    min

→ DM swear word put.they seven road bumps less than  
“DM, those swear word put seven road bumps in less than”

4. mijah wæ ʃrin mitər  
a hundred and twenty meter  
“a hundred and twenty meters”

5. B: ləkum ʃfer sænwæt kɪðæ jæʃni ʔl.wəðʔʃ dʒidid ʃlaikum  
→ have been ten years like this DM the.situation new to.you  
“you have been like this for ten years. DM the situation new to you?”

In excerpt 28, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared in the initial position before the determiner phrase (e.g., swear word) which had to be censored as recommended in academic research. The first NA *Twitter* user employed the discourse marker *elzibda* to show frustration and great annoyance. The reason that sparked the first NA *Twitter* user’s anger was that there were many detours near where he lives making it difficult to get to his house. With the current situation, the NA *Twitter* user had to take a longer route since the shorter one was unfortunately blocked. According to the first NA *Twitter* user, the construction works made a terrible mistake leaving seven road bumps in less than a hundred and twenty meters. The second NA *Twitter* user was not surprised by the attitude of the first NA *Twitter* user given the fact that he had been in this situation for ten years.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to express negative attitude as follows.

**Excerpt 29.**

*The first NA Twitter was extremely annoyed after going to a major shopping street and finding many people flirting with passersby.*

1. A: ʔwɛl mərəh ʔdʒi ʔl.tæhlijah fi.ʔl.wikɪnd mɪn ðlæð snæwæt

first time 1sg.go the.tahlia in.the.weekend in three years

“first time I go to the Tahlia Street in the weekend in three years”

2. elzibda mænib dʒai mərəh ðænijah

→ DM NEG.I go time another

“DM I won’t go back (there) again!!”

3. B: ʔfæ leh

→ DM why

“DM why?”

4. A: trɟim bizjædah wæ.ləhudʒ

Giving out numbers too much and.low class people

“too much giving out numbers! (There are so many) low class people!”

5. wæ.ʔfæriʃ sʔæjər kɪlh θuɪl.æt auvər

and.the.street became full detours over

“and the street became full of detours. It is over!”

In excerpt 29, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred in the initial position before the negative phrase *mænib dʒai* ‘lit. I won’t go’ to express a negative attitude. The first NA *Twitter* user recently paid a visit to the shopping street after three long years of not going there. However, the first NA *Twitter* user regretted this decision as the experience turned out to be extremely bad. The first NA *Twitter* was not satisfied with

this recent experience which can be induced from the phrase ‘he won’t go back (there) again.’ The second NA *Twitter* user was curious to know the reason behind the attitude of the first NA *Twitter* user. It seems that the first NA *Twitter* user was extremely annoyed with the ongoing street detours along with the disorderly behavior of the shopping street goers who tend to flirt with and harass passersby.

### **Expressing Emotions**

Expressing a variety of emotions is another interesting pragmatic function the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* exhibits within various utterances, as shown in the *Twitter* corpus. There have been numerous occurrences of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* expressing emotions that ranged from *happiness, sadness, worrisome, to fear*. The employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* gives NA *Twitter* users a peace of mind as they could easily communicate their current emotions and state of mind across different contexts. Emoji usually tend to accompany the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to show different types of emotions. For instance, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was accompanied in one instance by the dancing lady to represent happiness and excitement while in the other with the crying face emoji to represent sadness.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to express emotions as follows

#### **Excerpt 30.**

*The NA Twitter talked about an emotional moment after finding out the graduation was soon.*

1. A: ʔmes fi ʔl.muħæðʔr.æh wæ.ʔl.dæktur jæktɛb ʔl.bæb ʔl.ræbɪʃ  
yesterday in the.lecture.f and.the.doctor 3msg.write the.chapter the.four

“yesterday, when the doctor in the lecture wrote the fourth chapter”

2. ʔɪstauʕɛbt ʔni xlæsʔ fi nihaɪæt axr tɪrm li.ʔl.mærɦlæh ʕl.dʒæmiʕijæh  
3msg.realized I finally in end last term for.the.level the.undergraduate

“I just realized I am in the end of the last term of the undergraduate level”

3. elzibda xənægtni ʔl.ʕibræh wagtha.

→ DM choked.me the.tears at that moment

“I became emotional (very sad) at that moment”

4. B: 😞

5. A: 💔

In excerpt 30, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared at the end of the utterance before the verb phrase *xənægtni ʔl.ʕibræh* ‘lit. the tear choked me’ to express a fascinating pragmatic function that is to show emotions and feelings. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred toward the end of the utterance in this context to signal the current emotional state of the first NA *Twitter* user. The first NA *Twitter* just had an emotional moment after the professor wrote on the board chapter four realizing the long-awaited dream of graduation had finally come true. Therefore, the first NA *Twitter* became incredibly emotional trying hard to hold back the tears from falling. The first NA *Twitter* user employed the NA idiom *xənægtni ʔl.ʕibræh* showing that the fact that final semester had almost come to an end was a very emotional moment. The second NA *Twitter* felt the need to share the same emotional state of the first NA *Twitter* use, as shown by using *sad emoji* 😞. On the other hand, the first NA *Twitter* posted a *broken heart emoji* 💔 to show the current sad emotional state.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to express emotions as follows

**Excerpt 31.**

*The first NA Twitter was wondering how some people stay active all the time despite not having enough sleep.*

1. A: mæshaʔ allah fi næs ʔndi ʔhes.hum mæ j.ænæmoun  
 → DM there people have.I 3msg.feel.them Neg 3pl.sleep  
 “OMG! There people (I know) I feel that they do not ever sleep”

2. sit wæ ʔʃrin sæʔæh mæ.tfæʃlin eʃ ʔl.xutʔæh ʃbæb  
 sixty-two hours 3pl.active what the.plan guy.pl  
 “they are sixty-two hours active! What is the plan, guys?”

3. B: elzibda ʔni mæbsut.æh læʔnəh ʔzjen ʔxtbær li ðæ ʔl.tirm  
 → DM I happy.f because.it best test for me this the.term  
 “DM I am so happy because it is the best test for me this term”  
 ʔlhmd.lil.allah wæ ʔtʔi næfsi nædʒmah ★  
 Thanks.to.God and 1sg.give myself star.f  
 “Thanks God! And I give myself a star ★”

In excerpt 31, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred in the initial position of the utterance preceding a verb phrase *ʔni mæbsut* “lit. I am so happy,” serving two fascinating simultaneous pragmatic functions. The first pragmatic function the employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows is to change the current topic of conversation to another interesting one. The second pragmatic function the use of the NA discourse marker shows is to express *feelings, emotions*, along with *the current emotional*

*state*. The conversation started with the first NA *Twitter* user expressing utter surprise regarding the fact some people have less sleeping time, and yet it has no effect on their productivity level at work. For this aforementioned reason, the first NA *Twitter* user jokingly wondered if these people could share some tips on staying awake for twenty-six hours. The use of twenty-six hours instead of twenty-four hours that a typical day has was an exaggeration to show these people never sleep. On the other hand, the second NA *Twitter* seemed not to find this conversation topic fascinating. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* allowed the second NA *Twitter* user to steer from the conversation topic to express happiness since the test turned out to be great. The use of the star emoji 🌟 represents the lexical word ‘a star.’

### **Topic Changer**

Changing the topic is considered one of the crucial pragmatic functions that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to exhibit in which it abruptly diverts the topic of the discussion at hand to a completely different one. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows that the current topic of conversation came to an end, and there is a new topic that requires their immediate attention. The *Twitter* corpus clearly shows that there have been a number of reasons that motivate that sudden topic shift, including but not limited to, *moving to another pressing topic that needed to be discussed*, *reminding someone to carry out a certain action*, as well as *expressing missing someone deeply*. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows similar pragmatic function to a number of English discourse markers, including *so*, *by the way*, and *anyway*, that are used to express a change in the direction of the conversation into a new one.




The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a topic changer as follows.

**Excerpt 32.**

*The first NA Twitter user discussed the recent rains in Najd in which later this topic was changed by the second NA Twitter user*

1. A: wæ ʔmtʔr.æt sɔmæʔ ʔl.tʔæif 

and rained.f sky the.Taif

“and the Taif sky has (just) rained ”

2. B: jæ sælæm zai.næ

Voc great like.1PL

“Oh great, like us (we just had rain)”

3. A: ʔl.ʔyləb ʔmtʔr.æt ʕənd.hum

the.most rained.f have.3PL

“most people have rain (where they live)”

4. B: elzibda tæræ lɪk wæhsha

→ DM DM you are missed

“Any way! you know that you’re missed”

5. A: wæ.allah hæta int lɪk wæhsha ʃəmsawi bi.hæl.dənja


→ DM even you are missed what are up to in.this.world

I swear to God! Even you are missed. What are you up to in the world?”

6. B: ʔbd wæ.allah drəsah wæ.gælg wæ.inti

→ Nothing DM studying and.stress and.you

“Nothing, I swear! (just) studying and going through stress. And you?”

In excerpt 32, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* co-occurred with another NA discourse marker *tæræ* ‘lit. you know’ to change the current topic of the conversation from being about the unexpected rainstorms in the region to suddenly expressing the feeling of missing the first NA *Twitter* user. The use of the two aforementioned NA discourse markers allowed the second NA *Twitter* user to smoothly make a transition from one discussion topic to another with sudden abruptness. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared in the initial position to express to the first NA *Twitter* user that the topic was being switched signaling to NA *Twitter* users to abandon the topic of the conversation in favor of the new proposed topic. In the above excerpt, the first NA *Twitter* user was pleased to find out that it finally rained in Taif, as shown by the use of the three consecutive *blue heart emoji* . On the other hand, the second NA *Twitter* was happy with this news given the fact it also rained in the Najd region. The first NA *Twitter* then informed the second NA *Twitter* user that it rained in most parts of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. After that, the second NA *Twitter* user employed the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to change the direction the conversation takes to express missing feeling to the first NA *Twitter*. The first NA *Twitter* user employed the religious discourse marker *wæ.allah* ‘lit. I swear’ to confirm that the feelings are mutual and wondered what the second NA *Twitter* user has been up lately. The second NA *Twitter* user seemed to have been busy with school.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a topic changer as follows.

**Excerpt 33.**

*The NA Twitter user informed the NA Twitter community that the SIM card expired, and thus cannot use any other social media platform other than Twitter.*

*After that, the NA Twitter abruptly changed the topic.*

1. A: ʔl.sælaem ʕlaik.um wæ.jəsʕid sʔəbaħ.kəm jæ.rʌb bi.kəl.xer  
the.peace upon.you and.brighten morning.3PL voc.God with.all.good

“Peace upon you! May God brighten your morning with all good!”

2. mæ jəʃtyel ʕndi ila twitær ʃæriħ.æt ʔl.bæjanæt mintʌhja 😞🙏

NEG works with.me except Twitter SIM card.f expired.f

“Nothing works with me except Twitter (since my) SIM card is expired”

3. elzibda wəʃ mesawin

→ DM what have you been up to

“DM, what have you been up to (lately)?”

In excerpt 33, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* also used alone with no other discourse markers to divert the conversation topic to another one. The conversation initiated with the goal to inform the wider NA *Twitter* that the NA *Twitter* users’ data was used up completely. Therefore, the NA *Twitter* user would not be able to check messaging apps or even other social media platforms, except for *Twitter*. The NA *Twitter* user has not started with the bad news immediately but rather greeted the NA *Twitter* community. The NA *Twitter* user adapted the Islamic greeting *ʔl.sælaem ʕlaik.um* ‘lit. peace be upon you’ that is considered more formal than other greetings, such as *æhlain* and *hælæ* ‘lit. hello.’ The NA *Twitter* user also adapted another NA greeting *jəsʕid sʔəbaħ.kəm ja.rʌb bi.kəl.xer* ‘lit. May God brighten your morning with all good’ which

is a typical morning greeting among NA interlocutors. After greeting the *Twitter* NA community, the NA *Twitter* user then shared the bad news of the SIM card expiration which was accompanied by *grinning squinting emoji* 😏 and *see-no-evil monkey emoji* 🙈. The employment of these aforementioned emoji shows the current attitude of the NA *Twitter* user toward the used-up data in which he found hilarious. The NA *Twitter* user after that felt the need to change the topic by using the NA discourse marker *elzibda* by asking what other NA *Twitter* users have been doing lately in an attempt to give up the floor.

### **Conversation Opener**

Similar to the NA discourse marker *min jid*, the *Twitter* corpus also shows that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is employed to initiate various types of conversations and ongoing discussions. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* expresses to other NA *Twitter* users that a new conversation has been initiated requiring their immediate involvement along with their active engagement. Therefore, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to preface the recently introduced topic of conversation, acting like an attention grabber device to grab the attention of other NA *Twitter* users. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* serving this very pragmatic function shows a clear resemblance to numerous English discourse markers that are known for initiating conversations and drawing the attention of interlocutors, including *hey*, and *so*. Interestingly though, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* not only can be employed to open conversations but also to terminate conversations even if the whole utterance is not in Najdi Arabic variety as well which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a conversation opener as follows.

**Excerpt 34.**

*The NA Twitter user was taking the opportunity that Ramadan was around the corner to seek others for forgiveness.*

1. A: *elzibda* ræmaðʔan dʒai wæ mə.ʔbya jkun fih ʔħʌd ʃail ʒali  
→ DM Ramadan coming and NEG.1sg.want there someone mad at.me  
“DM Ramadan is coming! I don’t want anyone to be mad at me”
2. au bixætʔ.ruh ʃei au məzħæ mən.ni dʒərəæht.uh !  
or deep down.his something or prank.f from.me hurt.3fsg  
“or deep down (be mad at me) or hurt from me because of a prank !”
3. sæmh.u.ni kɪl.kum wæ.ʔnæ msæmh ʔl.kɪl  
imp.forgive.me all.you and.I I.forgive all  
“(Please) all of you forgive me, and I will forgive you “
4. wæ.mħlɪl.kum ʒlæ kɪl ʃei  
and.stop feeling resentful for everything  
“and stop feeling resentful for everything (you have done).”
5. B: ʔnæ mə sæmh.tɪk  
I NEG forgive.you  
“I did not forgive you”
6. A: ʔnt curse word  
You curse word  
“You get out of here!”

7. B: ha haa haaa      leh   jæ.ʔxi  
         laughing acronym    why    voc.brother  
         “lol, why my brother?”

In excerpt 34, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was used in the initial position of the utterance preceding all of the constituents within the utterance. The placement of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in this particular position acts as an attention grabber device. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* attracted the attention of other NA *Twitter* users to the aforementioned topic of conversation. Since Ramadan was around the corner, the first NA *Twitter* took the opportunity to seek other NA *Twitter* users' forgiveness since it is the time of the year where people are expected to perform good deeds to become closer to God. Therefore, the first NA *Twitter* user reminded other NA *Twitter* users about the upcoming of the month of Ramadan seeking their forgiveness to make sure no one stills hold a grudge. The first NA *Twitter* user acknowledged that other NA *Twitter* users might get hurt because of a lame and innocent prank he pulled a while ago. In other words, The NA *Twitter* user knows that even if he means no harm other NA *Twitter* users might still get hurt and hold a grudge. For this aforementioned reason, the first NA *Twitter* user encouraged other NA *Twitter* users to offer and seek forgiveness in order to feel the inner peace, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. The first NA *Twitter* user offered forgiveness to other NA *Twitter* users right after seeking their forgiveness to show his seriousness. Nevertheless, the second NA *Twitter* user jokingly stated that he would not forgive the first NA *Twitter* user. The first NA *Twitter* user seems to know that the second NA *Twitter* user was not serious, as can be seen from the

response. The conversation then drifted from the main topic that was about seeking forgiveness to teasing each other.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a conversation opener as follows.

**Excerpt 35.**

*The NA Twitter user shared the news of finally securing a nice apartment after a long hunt for apartments.*

1. A: *elzibda* lget ʃɪgah curse word bəs sɪrhæ bæli ʃwai

→ DM 1sg.found apartment curse word but price.it expensive sort of  
“DM, I just found a great apartment, but it is sort of expensive”

2. ʃwafi ʔʃtri ræhti 😊

No problem 1sg.buy comfort.1sg

“It is not a big deal! I buy my comfort ☺ ”

3. B: wæ.allah lɛdʒəl ræhti ʔdfʌʃ ʔhm ʃai artæh

→ I swear for comfort.1sg 1sg.pay most important thing rest

“I swear, for my comfort I would pay! The most important thing is I rest”

4. A: wæ.allah lget wæhda ʃɛgah nəðɪfah wæ bi.ʃmarat ʃwaiɛl

→ I swear 1sg.found one.f apartment clean.f and in.tower families

“I swear, I found a clean apartment in a family apartment tower”

5. jæʃni mu ʃɛzæb curse word bi.arbʃtʰʃɛʃ ʔɪf bi.ʔl.sænah

à DM NEG single curse word by.fourteen thousand in.the.year

“DM, it is not in a nasty single apartment tower! It costs 14,000 a year”

6. bəs ʔʃtri ræhti

but 1sg.buy comfort.1sg

“but I buy my comfort!”

7. B: hɪlu ʃsæ ɣrf.hæ kbɪr.ah wæ.allah rbʃtʔʃɛʃ ʔɪf hlaiwa

→ Beautiful hope rooms.3fsg big.3fsg I swear fourteen thousand not bad

“beautiful! I hope its rooms are big! I swear fourteen thousand is not bad”

8. jæʃni bi.ʔl.faher houl ʔɪfain rijæl

→ DM in.the.month around two thousand Riyal

“It means around two thousand Riyals a month”

In excerpt 35, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* also occurred initially before the rest of the segments within the utterance. However, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* preceded a noun phrase *Ramadan* in the previous excerpt, whereas it preceded a verb phrase *I get* ‘lit. I found’ in the current excerpt. Similar to the previous excerpt, the occurrence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in this position gives the NA *Twitter* user the opportunity to grab other NA *Twitter* user’s immediate attention in which it acts as an attention grabber device. In the excerpt above, the first NA *Twitter* user was pleased to finally find a nice apartment to move in into after a long and tiring hunt for apartments. Nevertheless, the first NA *Twitter* user stated the apartment seemed a bit pricy, but it was worth it for the sake of his comfort. The second NA *Twitter* user was in line with the first NA *Twitter* user by claiming that money should not stand between someone and their comfort. The first NA *Twitter* user then went on to provide little more details about the apartment, including its price, location, as well as current condition. The apartment the first NA *Twitter* found was in a great condition in a family apartment tower that cost about 14,000 Riyals a year. Finding an apartment in a family apartment tower as opposed



to a single apartment tower is considered a plus since the apartments in the latter tend to be in a pretty bad shape. The second NA *Twitter* voiced a little concern regarding the spacing in the apartment suspecting it might turn out to be small. Nonetheless, the second NA *Twitter* believed that the rent seemed extremely reasonable.

### **Conversation Closer**

Unlike the NA discourse marker *min jid*, the *Twitter* corpus shows that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is also used to close various conversations and discussions. It seems safe to state that the employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* could express either the opening or closing of conversations depending on the context of occurrence. As mentioned before, the discourse marker *elzibda* could be used to start conversations drawing the attention of other NA *Twitter* users to a new conversation topic. On the other hand, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* could also be used to express to other NA *Twitter* users that the current conversation came to an end. Therefore, the presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows that the NA *Twitter* user wishes to terminate the conversation gracefully. Interestingly though, closing CMC conversations tends to be generally a challenging task as NA *Twitter* users might end up looking rude if their conversations were terminated abruptly. To overcome the nagging issue of breaking off conversations in *Twitter*, NA *Twitter* users seem to employ the NA discourse marker *elzibda* since it politely shows that the conversation is about to finish given other NA *Twitter* users the opportunity to say any last words without coming across as rude or inconsiderate. Similarly, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is also employed in face-to-face conversations *to terminate conversations* without making NA native speakers coming across as rude.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a conversation closer as follows

**Excerpt 36.**

*The NA Twitter user just had a terrible car accident that cost him his car in which he collided head-on with another vehicle and hit a curb.*

1. A: ?lhmd.lil.allah ʕa kil hæl

Thanks.to.God for everything

“Thanks to God for everything!”

2. B: wen sʔadəm fih ?lhmd.lil.allah ʕalæ slam.tk

Where hit.2sg at Thanks.to.God for saftey.your

“Where did you hit (another car) at? Thanks God, for your safety!”

3. A: allah j.slmik fi tisʕawi wæ sʔba

Allah protect.you with Chevrolet Caprice and curb

“May God protect you! I collided with Chevrolet Caprice and a curb”

4. B: bi.ʔl.hædid wæ.læ fik ?lhmd.lil.allah

on.the.metal and.NEG about you Thanks.to.God

“the damage is (only) on the metal not you, Thanks God,”

5. B: jæ.sbikah m.sriʕ sʔah ?

voc.idiot 2sg.past.speeding right

“You idiot! you were speeding right?”

6. A: læ? mæ ?srʕt bæʕden ʔxər wæhd j.tkləm ʕa sbələh ʔnt

NEG NEG 1sg.sped by the way last one 1sg.speak about idiocy you

“No, I didn’t speed! By the way, the last one to speak about idiocy is you”

7. B: ʔdʒel wæʃlon ʔnʃdem ʔl.moter kiðæ !! xlasʔ motr.ɪk ʔl.tʃliħ  
 So how damaged the.car like this !! that's it car.your the.junkyard  
 “So, how your car was damaged like this!! Your car goes to the junkyard”
8. A: tʌb.i t.solf ʔnt sʔʌħ *elzibda* bæʃden ʔ.fhm.ɪk kɪl fei  
 → Want.2msg 2msg.talk you right DM later 1sg.explain.you everything  
 “You want to talk right? Anyway, I will explain (to) you everything later!”
9. A: wexər xlasʔ wagtək bæ.num  
 leave up time.your will.sleep  
 “Leave! Your time is up. I will sleep”

In excerpt 36, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred toward the end of the NA *Twitter* user's last turn after a long exchange to express the end of the conversation. The use of the first NA discourse marker *elzibda* showed to the second NA *Twitter* user that the first NA *Twitter* user no longer wishes to take part in the current conversation. Unlike the last two excerpts, the presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in this excerpt has the pragmatic function of terminating the conversation rather than starting the conversation. The first NA *Twitter* posted the picture of the wreck of his car along thanking God for everything good and bad. The second NA *Twitter* user was curious to know where the accident took place, thanking God for the safety of the first NA *Twitter* user. The first NA *Twitter* then stated that he hit another vehicle and curb during this tragic accident. The second NA *Twitter* thanked God as the accident looked bad, and thus the first NA was lucky enough to get out of the accident alive. Interestingly, the second NA *Twitter* seemed to jump to the conclusion implicitly, accusing the first NA *Twitter* user of causing the accident by driving way over the speed limit. Nevertheless, the first

NA *Twitter* user was extremely irritated by the uttered accusation, as can be seen from the long series of altercations between the two. During the altercation, the second NA *Twitter* user claimed the fact the car was badly wrecked proved that the NA *Twitter* user was speeding. On the other hand, the first NA *Twitter* user felt the need to terminate the conversation immediately as the second NA *Twitter* seems not to understand what happened exactly during the accident. Therefore, the employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* allowed the first NA *Twitter* user to leave the conversation indicating to the second NA *Twitter* users that the current conversation came to an end.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a conversation closer as follows.

**Excerpt 37.**

*The NA Twitter user got into an argument with another NA Twitter user regarding why it was not acceptable to claim having the worst luck in the world.*

1. A: lau jsau.un dʒæiz.ah læ.ʔkðer ʔnsæn hʌðʔah zɪft bi.ʔl.dənʒa  
 If do.3pl prize.f for.most human luck.3msg bad in.the.world  
 “If they do a price for the human with the worst luck in the world,”
2. A: ræh ʔmut bi.hædið wæ ʔnæ raih ʔxð.hæ  
 fut die in.accident while I going to receive.3fsg  
 “I will die in an accident while I am going to receive it”
3. B: kɪl mɪn jgʊl hæl kɪlm.æh t.lgæ.æh mu raðʔi ʔn qdr.æh  
 Anyone says this thing.f 1sg.find.him NEG satisfied with fate.his  
 “Anyone says this thing, you will find him not satisfied with his fate”
4. B: wæ næfs.æh bi.ʔl.mæqam ʔl.ʔauwəl ʔhmɪd ræb.ɪk wæ.fuf

And self.m.Acc.his in.the.place the.first impr.thank God.your and.see  
“and himself in the first place! Thank your God and see (that)”

5. nij.æh.tik tæræ.hæ hi ʔl.dæfiʃ ʔl.ʔuwæl

→ intent.f.your DM.f is.f the.motivation the.first

“your intention, as you know, is the first motivation”

6. A: ʔni ʔræ nijæt.i wæ.ʔntum læʔ tra.un.hæ

I see intention.my and.you NEG see.you.it

“I see my intention and you do not see it”

7. B: ja.ʔl.sæhər 😊 ʔl.ħʌðʔ mu.kɪl fei jæ.ʔx.i

Voc.the.witch the.luck NEG.everything voc.brother.my

“O’ witch 😊. The luck is not everything, O’ my brother!”

8. A: ʃdɛxʌl ʔl.səhər bi.ʔl.mæuðʔuʃ

How the.magic with.the.topic of conversation

“how the magic (has anything to do) with the topic of the conversation”

9. A: mɪn wen j.dʒi.næ ħʌð wæ.ʔl.ræzig mɪn.ʔl.smæʔ

From where will.come to.us luck when.the.sustainer from the.sky

“From where the luck will come to us when the sustainer is in the sky”

10. wæ.ʔl.ħæsd.in bi.ʔl.ʔrðʔ

and.the.envious.3pl in.the.earth

“and the envious ones are on the earth”

11. B: jæ.ʔx.i mæ.ʔhed bi.jhæsd.ɪk wæ.allah ʔ.ħtm

voc.brother.my NEG.one will.envey.you I swear impr.take care

“O’ my brother, no one will envy you, I swear! Take care”

12. bi.næfsik wæ.ʎmlɪk wæ.ʎl.nijæ ʎl.nijæ  
of.self.f.your and.deed.your and.the.intention the.intention  
“of yourself, your deed, and your intentions”
13. A: ʎ.ɦtm fi.ni ɦetʔ bæɪk ʎælaijæ  
impr.take care of.me impr.don’t forget me  
“take care of me. Don’t forget me!”
14. læʔ t.lxbatʔ ʎl.ʎmur fi bæʎðʔhæ  
NEG 2msg.mix the.things with each other  
“Do not mix things with each other”
15. B: elzibda ʎxaləsʔ ʎl.ʎrbiʎæ wæ.ʔtfðʔl.ɪk wæ.ʎsæʎʎd.ɪk  
→ DM 1sg.finish the.wednesday and.1sg.become available and.1sg.help.you  
“Anyway, I finish Wednesday, I will become available to help you”
16. fi binæʔ ʎl.mustʌqbɛɪ 😂  
in building the.future  
“in building the future 😂”

In excerpt 37, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was used in a similar fashion to the one in the previous excerpt in which it behaves as a conversation terminator device. The presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* within the NA second *Twitter* user’s last turn serves the pragmatic function of abruptly ending the current conversation. Interestingly though, the second NA *Twitter* user finished the conversation on a funny note with the use of *tears of joy emoji* 😂 to make sure not to come across as rude or ill-mannered. The conversation started with the first NA *Twitter* user complaining about his luck stating even if there was a reward for the person with the worst luck in the world, he

would most likely die on his way to receive the award. The second NA *Twitter* user claims that people believe they have the worst luck tend to have a weak faith in God. For this aforementioned reason, the first NA *Twitter* user should be thankful to God and know that intention is the motivation behind everything. The first NA *Twitter* user then teased the second NA *Twitter* user claiming that the second NA *Twitter* user cannot see his intention as he does. The second NA *Twitter* jokingly asked if the first NA *Twitter* is a witch possessing some special power. The employment of *stuck out tongue emoji* 🙄 sets the tone of the utterance as being humorous. The first NA *Twitter* user seems to be confused given the fact magic and sorcery has nothing to do with the main topic of conversation. The conversation then takes an interesting turn drifting from the main topic of the conversation in which the first NA *Twitter* user claimed that many people are jealous and envious. On the other hand, the second NA *Twitter* user seems not to agree with the first NA *Twitter* user stating that the first NA *Twitter* should focus more instead on having great intention and carrying out good deeds. After that, the first NA *Twitter* again drifted from the topic of the conversation forcing the second NA *Twitter* user to end the conversation. Therefore, the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* by the second *Twitter* user shows that the conversation has been terminated.

### **Expressing Shock**

As shown in the *Twitter* corpus, expressing shock is another pragmatic function that the NA discourse marker *min jid* and the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tend to show across various utterances. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* clearly shows that NA *Twitter* user is currently in a state of shock not able to understand what just happened recently or even comprehend something that turned out to be contrary to expectations.

The primary pragmatic function of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* within this context is to communicate the feelings of shock as experienced by the NA *Twitter* user. Therefore, the presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* would make deciphering those feelings of shock an easy task.

Example 38 shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to express shock as follows.

**Excerpt 38.**

*The first NA Twitter was shocked that there were many worshipers during the fajr prayer ‘lit. predawn prayer’ in which many people tend to miss since it is early in the morning.*

1. A: *elzibda yribah ʔl.fædzər ðlæð sʔfuf wæ nʌsʔ* 😂😂

→ DM weird the.fajr three rows and half

“DM, this is weird! three rows and half during alfajr prayer 😂😂”

2. ʔwəl marah 😂😂

first time

“first time (ever) 😂😂”

3. B: ʔl.ʔixtibræt jæ hæbibɪ

the.tests O’ love.my

“(they are having) tests, O’ my love”

In excerpt 38, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occupies the initial position of the utterance preceding the adjective phrase *yribah* ‘lit. weird’ to give the first NA *Twitter* user the opportunity to express shock. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* gave the NA *Twitter* user the opportunity to show a feeling of shock toward finding three rows





“wow, what is this technology! Honestly, they impressed me 🙏”

In excerpt 39, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared in the initial position preceding the verb phrase *lxmni* ‘lit. shocked me’ to express complete shock toward the fact the traffic police department was able to locate the location immediately. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* occupying this very position clearly express a feeling of shock. The NA *Twitter* user composed the utterance with the sole goal to inform the wider NA *Twitter* community about the recent experience with the traffic police department. It seems seeing a carpet left on the highway that poses a hazard to other vehicles was not the motivation behind initiating this conversation. This current conversation seemed to be started to inform others that the traffic police departments has an impressive technology that could locate someone once they are in an active call. The first NA *Twitter* user was surprised and impressed by the efficiency of the police department in dealing with emergency calls.

### **Topic Returner**

Returning to the original topic of the conversation is another pragmatic function spotted in the *Twitter* corpus that the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* exhibits. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* not only could be utilized within utterances to change the conversation topic but also to return to the previous topic. Serving the latter textual pragmatic function, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* signals to other NA *Twitter* users that the NA *Twitter* user wishes to get back to the previous topic to discuss it thoroughly and in greater detail. Clearly, the employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows various interactional moves, including changing and returning to the topic, giving NA *Twitter* users the opportunity to steer the direction of the conversation to whichever

direction wished. Therefore, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is used once the NA *Twitter* user wishes to return to the original topic. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to act as a topic returner device clearly showing that the conversation has drifted from the topic of the conversation forcing other NA *Twitter* user to get back to the initial topic of the conversation. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tend to show similar pragmatic function to a number of English discourse markers, including but not limited to, *so*, *anyway*, as well as *anyhow*.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a topic returner as follows.

**Excerpt 40.**

*The NA Twitter user was looking for the best Spanish language institute in Riyadh*

1. A: bimæ ʔn ʔhəm                      ðlæð lux.æt                      hi ʔl.ʔrbi  
       Since that most important three languages.fPL are the.Arabic  
       “Since that the three most important languages are Arabic,”
2.    wæ ʔl.ʔnglizi    wæ ʔl.sbani            ʔ.həs            ʔ.tʃlʌm            ʔsbani 🤔  
       and the.English and the.Spanish 1SG.feel 1SG.learn Spanish  
       “English, and Spanish, I feel I (should) learn Spanish 🤔”
3.    bəs fi            mʃæhed            kwaisah bi.ʔl.rijaðʔ  
       but there institutions good    in.the.Riyadh  
       “but (are) there good (language) institutions in Riyadh?”
4. B: ʔhəm                      ʃi            ʔn.ɪk            ɦt²et ʔl.sbani mɪn ʃndɪk  
       Most important thing that.you put    Spanish from you  
       “Most important thing that you put Spanish (with no evidence)”

5. C: wæ.allah ʔl.kis mæ jʃug ʃindah

→ I swear the.bag NEG prevent him

“I swear! this (lying) bag does not prevent him (from telling lies)”

6. wæ bi.kul ðigah allah jħfðah

and with.all confidence God protect.him

“and with all confidence. May God protect him!”

7. A: mæ.ʔdri ʔða ði ʔl.ʔsʔajjah sʔdig aw læʔ bəs ʃmuman

NEG.1SG.know if this the.statistics true or not but anyway

“I don’t know if this statistics (is) true or not, but anyway”

8. ʔl.həndi wæ ʔl.sʔini məhkur.æt bi.dawlæh wæhdah 🙋

the.Indian and the.chinese confined.3fPL to.country one

“Indian and Chinese (languages) are confined to a single country 🙋”

9. elzibda n.rdzæʃ li.ʔl.suʔal fi mʃæhed ʔsbani bi.ʔl.rijaðʔ 😞😞

→ DM 1PL.return to.the.question there institutions Spanish in.the.Riyadh

“DM, (let’s) return to the question! Are there Spanish institutions in

Riyadh 😞😞”

In excerpt 40, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was used by the first NA *Twitter* user after the other two NA *Twitter* users greatly diverted from the main topic of the conversation. The first NA *Twitter* user initiated this conversation in hope to find the best language institution that has been known for its excellence in teaching Spanish. The first NA *Twitter* user started the utterance by providing a justification for learning Spanish, given the fact that Spanish is considered one of the most important languages to learn besides Arabic and English. Therefore, the first NA *Twitter* user was seriously thinking

about learning Spanish, which was evident through the use of *the thinking emoji* 🤔. The other two NA *Twitter* users were convinced that Spanish is among the three most spoken languages around the world. The second NA *Twitter* user mockingly stated that this was something that the first NA *Twitter* user made up. The third NA *Twitter* user also sarcastically accused the first NA *Twitter* of being a liar stating information with no evidence. Nevertheless, the first NA *Twitter* stated that this statistic might not be accurate to avoid any accountability. The first NA *Twitter* user then shared an info graph of the ten most spoken languages showing the languages spoken in India and China referred to as Indian and Chinese. The first NA *Twitter* user after that used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to force the two NA *Twitter* users to get back to the original topic of conversation which was about finding the best Spanish language institution.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a topic returner as follows.

**Excerpt 41.**

*The NA Twitter user was talking about the procrastination issue that slowed the preparation for the exams.*

1. A: #kef.ək\_mæʃ\_ʔl.muðækra

#how are.you\_with\_the.studying

“#how\_are\_you\_with\_studying”

2. mitæ ʔl.ʔxtbar.æt ʔl.nihæʔij.ah lil.dʒæmiʃ.jin

when the.exam.fPL the.final.f for.college student.PL

“when is the final exams for college students?”

3. elzibda min mæð.li mæ jiʃrəf jiðækər

- DM who like.me NEG 1sg.know 1sg.study  
 “Anyway, who is like me don’t know how to study”
4. ilæ lelat ʔl.ʔxtbar ʔ?!  
 until night the.test  
 “until the night of the test ʔ?!”
5. mæhma hæwəl.æt wæ.fædet ʔumri  
 No matter try.1sg and.available myself  
 “No matter (how much) I try to make myself available”
6. wæ.ʔnab.ni ðʔmiri mustæhil ʔʔræf ʔ.ðækər  
 and.feeling guilty conscience.my impossible 1sg.know 1sg.study  
 “and my conscience feels guilty, it is impossible I know how to study”
7. gabl ʔl.ʔxtbar bi.ʔkðər mɪn jom mæ.ʔdri lef 🧑♂️  
 before the.test by.more than a day NEG.know why  
 “more than a day before the test. I don’t know why 🧑♂️”
8. B: kent næfs.ək bəs hel ðʔxatʔ hawɪl t.ðækɪr  
 1sg.was like.you but so stressful imp.try 2sg.study  
 “I was like you, but (this is) so stressful! Try to study”
9. ʔʃæn t.rædzɪʃ wæ tdzib dradz.æt hɪlwæ 🙏🌸  
 so 2sg.revise and 2sg.get grade.fpl beautiful.f  
 “so you (can) revise and get beautiful grades 🙏🌸”

In excerpt 41, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is also employed after the digression from this trending conversation topic among the NA community which was

initiated by another NA *Twitter* user through a hashtag. The use of *elzibda* in the former and current excerpts forced NA *Twitter* users to return to the main topics of discussion. Nevertheless, the first NA *Twitter* user digressed from the topic in this excerpt while in the other excerpt, other NA *Twitter* users diverted from the topic initiated by the first NA *Twitter* user. The hashtag was created to engage college students in a conversation about the preparation for the final exam. The NA *Twitter* started by diverting the topic from being about how to prepare for the finals to asking about when the finals take place. After the NA *Twitter* user realized the digression from the topic, the NA discourse marker was *elzibda* to get back to the main topic of the conversation. The first NA *Twitter* user was wondering if there are any other people sharing the same habit of not studying for the finals until the last minute. The first NA *Twitter* user then added that all of the adopted techniques to prepare before the final failed. The second NA *Twitter* user claimed to have the same procrastination issue as the first NA *Twitter* that affected the preparation for finals. Nevertheless, the second NA *Twitter* user recommended the first NA *Twitter* user to start studying for the final to get good grades.

### **Code-Switching Device**

One of the fascinating functions of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is that it allows NA *Twitter* users to freely switch to another variety, acting solely as a code-switching device (see Poplack, 1980). The NA discourse marker *elzibda* gives the NA *Twitter* users the opportunity to codeswitch between varieties of the same language that share cultural and historical traits along with linguistic features and between two distinctive language varieties belonging to different language families. The former code-switching type is a prime example of a switch from Modern Standard Arabic to Najdi

Arabic and vice versa which is more prevalent in the *Twitter* corpus. The employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to code-switch from Modern Standard Arabic to Najdi Arabic is by far more common than from Najdi Arabic to Modern Standard Arabic. On the other hand, the latter code-switching type is a code-switch from Arabic to English that it is extremely rare in the *Twitter* corpus. Interestingly though, the *Twitter* corpus shows that NA *Twitter* users tend to code-switch from one language variety to another for various reasons, including but not limited to the following, *to throw a quick sarcastic comment*, and *to explain and simplify complex concepts*, as well as *to change the tone to a more serious one*. The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as code-switching device switching from Modern Standard Arabic to Najdi Arabic as follows.

**Excerpt 42.**

*The NA Twitter user was criticizing the employees who cared much about the way people behaved.*

1. A: ʔ.təʕdʒʌb mɪn ʔl.muwaðʕef ʔllði jæ.ħmɪl hem  
 1sg.surprised by the.employee.3msg who cares  
 “I am surprised by the employee who cares (much about)”
2. ʔmradʔ ʔl.ʔæxr.in fi ʔl.tʕæmæl mæʕ.ɛh !  
 illnesses the.other.pl in the.dealing with.him  
 “others’ illnesses (ill manners) in dealing with him!”
3. hunak ʔmur læʔ təʕʔl.lu bi.hæ læʔnʔ.hu læʔ jumkin.kum ʔl.tæħekum  
 there things NEG worry.2pl about.it that NEG could.2pl the.control  
 “there are things you don’t have to worry about as you could not control”



4. bihæ au ʔl.sæjtʳæ ʕlai.hæ fæhijæ xæridzæ ʕen ʔirædt.kum  
 it or the.manage on.it it.is out of control.you  
 “it or manage it. It is out of your control!”
5. hæɫ jumkin.kum mənʕ ʃɛxsʔ jætəhɛð bi.sʔæt hæð  
 Q could.you prevent someone 3msg.speak in.voice sharp  
 “Could you prevent someone (who) speaks in a sharp voice”
6. min ʔn jætəhɛð au juɣɛr næbrɛt sʔoutu  
 from that 3msg.speak or change tone voice.his  
 “from speaking or (ask him to) change his tone of voice?”
7. [elzibda NA [ɣair mænðʔur.rik tətəɣair hæɫɛtk ʔl.ʔnfiʕælijæh  
 → DM change perspective.your fut.passive.change state.your emotional  
 “change your perspective, your emotional state will be changed”
8. jxɛf ʔl.ðʔɛtʔ ʕlek] NA  
 fut.passive.reduce the stress on you  
 “(and) the stress will be reduced on you”

In excerpt 42, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred toward the end of the utterance proceeding the imperative verb *ɣair* ‘lit. change.’ The placement of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in this position was not random by any means as it serves a fascinating pragmatic function within the current utterance. The presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* introduces the code-switched utterance from Modern Standard Arabic to Najdi Arabic. The code-switching was initiated with the goal to simplify Modern Standard Arabic complex concepts to a more accessible variety to the wider NA *Twitter* users. As mentioned before, Modern Standard Arabic is the language of education

and literacy and is used widely to indulge in discussions related to science, religion, and society. Nevertheless, the use of Modern Standard Arabic during ongoing discussions sometimes seems not to be entirely accessible to the average speaker. For these aforementioned reasons, the NA *Twitter* user tend to code-switch to Najdi Arabic right after introducing the concept in Modern Standard Arabic to provide an easy to understand definition. In the excerpt above, the NA *Twitter* user adapted Modern Standard Arabic to address the wider NA *Twitter* community regarding the nagging issue of employees caring too much about customers' rude behavior. The NA *Twitter* user seems to be in a state of disbelief that some employees get easily irritated by the rudeness of their customers. The NA *Twitter* user firmly believed that these employees should not get bothered over the behavior of customers since they had no control over them. After that, the NA *Twitter* user went on to provide an interesting question to make NA *Twitter* get the point 'Could you prevent someone with a sharp voice from speaking or to force them to change their tone of voice?' To simplify the concept and ensure comprehensibility, the NA *Twitter* user switched from MSA to Najdi Arabic variety stating that 'change your perspective, your emotional state will be changed.'

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as code-switching device switching from Modern Standard Arabic to Najdi Arabic a follows.

**Excerpt 43.**

*The NA Twitter user was telling a joke comparing olives to human beings since both need water to stay fresh and clean.*

1. A: ʔnðer            lɪ.zɛjtun kef juðʔʕ        fi ʔl.mæʕ kai læʔ    jæ.tʕɛfn

Impr.look at the.olive how pass.put in the.water so NEG 3msg.go rancid  
“look at how the olive is put in the water, so it does not go rancid”

2. jæ.tdʒeʕd wæ tð'her ræʔih.tuh ! ʔntæ ʔjuhæ ʔl.ʔnsæn kəl zɛjtun.æh  
3sgm.wrinkled and spread smell.it you O' the.human like olive.f  
“(or) wrinkled and its smell spread. You, O' human, are like olive”

3. t.ħtædʒ lil.mæʕ jomian [elzibda NA [træwɛʕ təkfa] NA 😊😂  
→ 3msg.need for.water every day DM impr.3msg.take a shower please  
“you need water every day! DM, take a shower please 😊😂”

In excerpt 43, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was also utilized toward the end of the utterance proceeding the imperative verb *træwɛʕ* ‘lit. take a shower.’ The employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in this context has the same pragmatic function as in the previous excerpt in which it allows the NA *Twitter* user to code-switch between varieties. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared in these two excerpts to perform code-switches motivated by different reasons, including *simplifying concepts* in the last excerpt while *throwing a joke punchline* in this excerpt. As mentioned before, the vast majority of switches in the *Twitter* corpus are from Modern Standard Arabic to Najdi Arabic which explains why the code-switches to NA in these two excerpts. In this excerpt, the NA *Twitter* user composed this utterance to throw in a funny joke in which humans were compared to olives showing that they both need water to survive and stay clean. The NA *Twitter* started by urging NA *Twitter* users to observe the way olive is placed in water in order not to go rancid. Similarly, humans also are in great need of water to maintain excellent personal hygiene. At the joke punchline, the NA *Twitter* user employed the NA discourse marker *elzibda* switching to NA in which he

stated, ‘Please shower!’ along with a couple of *laughing emoji* 😂😂 ending the utterance in a funny tone.

### **Be Confrontational**

The analysis of the *Twitter* corpus reveals that there have been certain instances in which the NA discourse marker *elzibda* signals various kinds of confrontations. The employment of the NA discourse markers *elzibda* also shows a shift in tone from being neutral to extremely annoyed, mirroring the sudden increase in someone’s pitch and tone during intense face-to-face arguments. As mentioned earlier, the phonological cues including tone, pitch, and stress are unfortunately non-existent across a variety of different Computer-Mediated Communications (Ling, 2018), including *Twitter*. Fortunately, the presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* gives NA *Twitter* users the opportunity to communicate negative attitudes marking confrontational utterances and clarifying what sparked heated arguments.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to be confrontational as follows.

#### **Excerpt 44.**

*The first NA Twitter was annoyed that some people started complaining about the prices of gas going up lately.*

1. A: elzibda ?ni mæʃ ?rtifæʃ ?sʃær ?l.bənzɪn wæ ?lli mu gædər

→ DM I with increase prices the.gas and whoever NEG can

“DM I am with the increase of gas prices and whoever cannot (pay for it)”

2. ʃndəh wæsæ?əl ?l.muwæs?læt ?l.ʃæmeh wæ.ʃl.daulæh ?bʌs?

has.he means the.transportation the.public and.the.country knows better

“he has public transportations, and the country knows better.”

3. #Oil\_Company\_Name #bænzin

# Oil\_Company\_Name #Gas

“# Oil\_Company\_Name #Gas”

4. B: ?fækər bi.ʔl.ʔistiqaɛləh mɪn ʔl.ʕmɛl bisʌbəb ʔrtifæʕ ʔl.bænzin

1sg.think of.the.resigning from the.work because increase the.gas

“I’m thinking of resigning from work because of the increase of gas”

5. wæ ʔl.mæʕifæh ʔl.bænzin j.kɛlf.ni jomian ðilð ʔl.rætɪb

and the.living the.gas 1sg.cost.me every day third the.salary

“and the living (expenses). The gas costs me third of the salary every day”

6. A: fækər kef t.tʔauer næfs.ɪk wæ.t.ʕli dexlɪk

impr.think how 2sg.develop self.your and.2sg.increase income

“think how to develop yourself, increase your income”

7. wæ.txdid msʔærɪfɪk ʔl.ʕæhrijaɛh mu tfækər bi.ʔl.ʔistiqaɛləh

and.specify expenses monthly NEG 2sg.think about the resignation

“and specify expenses monthly instead of thinking about the resignation”

8. A: tʰdid\*

specify

In excerpt 44, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred in the initial position before the determiner phrase ‘I’ to give the NA *Twitter* user the opportunity to mark the utterance as confrontational. The first NA *Twitter* user started the current conversation with the goal to confront people who complain about the sudden increase in the prices of gas. For instance, the first NA *Twitter* confronted the opponents of the increase in the

prices of gas by bluntly stating they should consider other transportation alternative, including public transportation, and the increase of prices is justifiable since the government knows their job. Nonetheless, the second NA *Twitter* user was not in line with the first NA *Twitter* user since the gas now costs third of the earned salary. For this aforementioned reason, the second *Twitter* user was seriously considering resignation from the current job. The first NA *Twitter* criticized this decision harshly, stating the second NA *Twitter* user should focus on developing critical skills to increase the income instead of resignation.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to be confrontational as follows.

**Excerpt 45.**

*The first NA Twitter was frustrated that there were people against the opening of the stores during prayer times.*

1. A: #fλth\_ʔl.mæhlæt\_wegt\_ʔl.sʻalah

#opening\_the.stores\_during\_the.prayer

“##opening\_the.stores\_during\_prayers”

2. wællah jæ.fi kəmiat tətʻrλf bi.ʔl.tæg

→ 1sg.swear there so much extremism in.the.tag

“I swear there (is) so much extremism in the (hash)tag”

3. elzibda ʔiðæ fæθt ʔl.mæhlæt læ ʔʃufkum ttsæwagun təmæm

→ DM if open.f the.stores Neg 1sg.see.you shopping.3pl. OK

“DM, If the stores open, I don’t want to see you shopping, OK!”

In excerpt 45, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared initially before a complementizer phrase ‘*if*’ showing that the NA *Twitter* user was being confrontational during the heated argument about opening stores during prayer times. The first NA *Twitter* user was interested in the trending topic of leaving retail stores and restaurants open during prayer times, as can be seen from joining the ongoing conversation through the hashtag. The first NA *Twitter* was frustrated that there were a large number of people against extending the stores business hours. The first NA *Twitter* user believed there was so much extremism in the hashtag given the one-sided opinion of the opponents of opening stores who would not consider the counterpart point of view. Therefore, the first NA *Twitter* employed the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to be confrontational, stating if the stores ever open during prayers, he does not want to see these people shopping.

### **Elaboration and Continuation**

The analysis of the *Twitter* corpus also shows there have been several instances in which the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was employed to express elaboration and continuation. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* serving this very pragmatic function shows that the utterances are not fully communicated as NA *Twitter* users must provide crucial elaboration to deliver their intended meanings. The presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* expresses that elaboration is needed to get the messages across effectively and to increase the comprehensibility of the utterances. The elaboration tends to be either within the same turn or within multiple turns, as shown in the *Twitter* corpus. Nevertheless, the elaboration within multiple turns tends to serve another pragmatic function besides elaboration that is to signal to other NA *Twitter* users that the turn is not yet finished (e.g., to hold the floor). On the other hand, the elaboration that occurs within

the same turn signals to other NA *Twitter* users that the following utterances is an elaboration of the preceding and should be interpreted as such. The *Twitter* corpus clearly shows that the latter elaboration type is more common than the former with only two instances.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to elaborate and continue as follows.

**Excerpt 46.**

*The first NA Twitter created a new curse word once another driver cut in front of him possibly leading to a terrible accident.*

1. A: gɛbəl ʔsbuʃ rfæʔ                      ðæʃtʰ.i                      wæ ana ʔsug  
ago week 2msg.increase blood pressure.my while I driving  
“A week ago, someone increased my blood pressure while I was driving”
2. xtərəʃt sæbah    elzibda glthæ læ. person's name bæʃden wæ.ʃdɛl ʃle hæ  
→ 1sg.created .swear word DM said.it to. person's name then and.changed.it  
“I created swear word! Anyway, I said it to person's name and then he changed it”
3. wæ.tʰl.næ                      ʔna wa.ʔijah bi.ʔgwæ sæbah li.hæðæ ʔl.qrʌn  
and came up.we I and.him with.strongest swear word for.this the.century  
“we came up, I and him, with the strongest swear word in this century”
4. B: wɛʃi  
What  
“what is it?”
5. A: wæts wæts



what what

“what! What!”

6. B: omaigad so kjut

→ OMG so cute

“OMG! So cute.”

In excerpt 46, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared initially before a verb phrase *glthæ* ‘lit. I said’ to allow the first NA *Twitter* to elaborate and continue. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* expressed an elaboration of the preceding utterance resulting in adding more information for understanding the utterance. Therefore, the prior and following utterances would be interpreted as having an elaboration relationship. The first NA *Twitter* user shared a current event with the NA *Twitter* community in which a reckless driver cut in front of the first NA *Twitter* user’s car, possibly leading to a terrible accident. For this aforementioned reason, the first NA *Twitter* user coined a curse word. In the excerpt above, the employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* gave the first NA *Twitter* user the opportunity to continue the story stating that another NA *Twitter* had to change the curse word. Therefore, the first NA *Twitter* user along with the other NA *Twitter* user could take the full credit for coining this curse word. Interestingly enough, the current curse word seemed to be derived from the English word (e.g., *what* /wæt/) to show disbelief and annoyance. Nonetheless, the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ was added to the end of the curse word to make it sound slightly different than English.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to elaborate and continue as follows.

**Excerpt 47.**

*The first NA Twitter was in the hunt for the best sea food restaurant in Cairo*

1. A: ʔl.ʔkʌl ʔl.bæhri fi ʔl.qaħirah ʔtʔu.nah tɔzæribkum fi ʔl.qaħirah ?  
the.food the.sea in the.Cairo you.give.us experience.your in the.Cairo ?

“(Could you) give us your experience with the food in Cairo?”

2. B: fi matʔʕem fi ʔl.ʕɔzuzah mugabəl six mæfui  
there restaurant in the.agouza in front skewer grill

“There is a restaurant in Agouza in front of skewer grill place”

3. nsit ism.u 🤔 elzibda mumtæz dziden wæ nðʔif

→ 1sg.forgot name.its DM good incredibly and clean

I forgot its name 🤔 DM, it is incredibly good and clean (restaurant)”

In excerpt 47, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred initially before an adjective phrase *mumtæz dziden* ‘lit. incredibly good’ to show elaboration and continuation, especially after recovering from forgetting the name of the restaurant. The first NA *Twitter* was in the hunt for the best restaurant in Cairo known for its excellent quality seafood. The second NA *Twitter* user seemed to have been to numerous restaurants, including seafood restaurants around the metropolitan area of Cairo. Nonetheless, the second NA *Twitter* for some reason seemed to struggle in remembering the name of the restaurant, as evident by stating ‘I forgot its name’ and employing the *thinking emoji* 🤔. To express elaboration of this preceding utterance, the second NA *Twitter* user used the NA discourse marker *elzibda*, stating ‘it is incredibly good and clean (restaurant).’

### Resultative marker

The *Twitter* corpus built for the current study shows that besides the already mentioned functions, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to behave as a resultative marker signaling an action is a direct result of another. The NA discourse *elzibda* communicates to other NA *Twitter* users that the preceding along with the following utterances are in a resultative relationship and thus should be interpreted as such. Interestingly though, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows a pragmatic behavior similar to a number of English resultative markers, including, *so*, *thus*, *therefore*, and *as a result*. Similarly, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows resemblance in terms of its resultative function to numerous Modern Standard Arabic, including but not limited to, *fa-* ‘lit. so’ linking utterances in a resultative relationship.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a resultative marker as follows.

#### Excerpt 48

*The first NA Twitter was distracted in class and when the professor found that out the whole class had a quiz.*

1. A: mtekjah bi.tuiter wæ sʔltni ʔl.dktorah wɛʃ glna

1 fsg.sitting on.Twitter and she.asked.me the.doctor.f what said.we

“I was sitting on *Twitter*, and the doctor asked me what we just said”

2. glt ma.ʔdri elzibda bisbti ʕtʔna kuiz

→ 1sg.said NEG.know DM because.me gave.us quiz

“I said I do not know! So, because of me she gave us a quiz”

3. B: ʔnti ʔl.tʔlib.ah ʔl.manbo.ða 😊

à You.f the.student.f outcasted.f  
“you are the outcasted student 😞”

4. B: ʔl.manko.ðɑ \*

→ the.afflicted  
“the afflicted student”

In excerpt 48, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared in the initial position of the utterance before a prepositional phrased *bisbti* ‘lit. because of me.’ The presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the aforementioned context pragmatically functions as resultative marker showing that an action resulted in another undesirable action. The first NA *Twitter* user was distracted and not paying attention during the class. Therefore, the professor decided to put the first NA *Twitter* user on the spot by asking about the topic of discussion. When the first NA *Twitter* user could not answer the posed question, the professor announced that the whole class would have a quiz next class. The second NA *Twitter* user upon receiving this news called the first NA *Twitter* user as the outcasted student, but the intended meaning was the afflicted student. Nevertheless, since both of these words are minimal pairs differing only in one sound, it resulted in the typo.

The following example also shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a resultative marker as follows.

**Excerpt 49.**

*The first NA Twitter had a terrifying experience in which the car started moving when she jumped into the driver’s seat.*

1. A: oumaigad tau riht mæf abu.i ædʒib bitsæ wæ nizel jdʒib.hæ

→ OMG just went with dad.my get pizza and got out bring.it

“OMG! Just went with my dad to get pizza. He got out to bring it”

2. ʔnæ rɦət mikænuh ʃlæ.ʔsæs ʔlʃɛb kɪðæ kʔni bzeɾ

I went seat.his so play this like a kid

“I went to his seat so I (could pretend like I was driving) like a kid”

3. elzibda mɪʃtɛt ʔl.sæjarah wænæ mæ.dri

→ DM moved.f the.car.f and.I NEG.know

“therefore, the car started moving before I know it”

4. A: bəʃden ɡɪmt ʔsug ʃædi kʔni ʔʃɪf mɪn zæmæn

After that was driving normal as if 1sg.know for a long time

“After that, I was driving normal as if I know for a long period of time”

5. ʔugsɪm bi.ʔallah mæ.dri kef ɡedəɾt

1sg.swear to.God NEG.know how 1sg.able

“I swear to God! I do not know how I was able to (drive the car)”

6. mɪn ʔl.sʔdmæh mæ.ʔtæðekʌɾ weʃ suait

from he.shock NEG.1sg.remember what I.did

“I do not remember from the shock what I did”

In excerpt 49, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occurred before the verb phrase *mɪʃtɛt* ‘lit. moved,’ showing a resultative relationship between the prior and following utterances. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* expresses that the moving of the car is the result of the first NA *Twitter* user jumping into the driver’s seat and playing with the steering wheel. In this current excerpt, the first NA *Twitter* user shared a recent terrifying incident that happened when the car started moving while waiting for the dad to get the pizza. The NA *Twitter* user employed the discourse marker *OMG* to express

shock that the car suddenly moved when the NA *Twitter* user was simply on the driver's seat pretending like driving the car. After the car started moving, the first NA *Twitter* was able to control the car despite the little driving experience.

### **Repair Device**

Repairing utterances and segments is also another intriguing pragmatic role the presence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows in the *Twitter* corpus. Nonetheless, the repair function is considered by far the least common pragmatic function among NA *Twitter* users with a single instance, as shown in the corpus. The employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to repair utterances reflects the effort on NA *Twitter* users' part to recover after choosing the wrong lexical word. The use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* introduces to other NA *Twitter* users the repaired utterances. The literature also shows repair generally could be either self-initiated or other-initiated as introduced by (Paltridge, 2006, pp. 119-120) as follows:

- Self-repairs: occurs when there is 'no apparent error to the other speaker that needed to be corrected in what had been said.'
- Other-repairs: 'occurs where the error is apparent to the other speaker.'

Interestingly though, the one instance in the *Twitter* corpus was a lexical repair initiated by others after selecting a wrong lexical word that does not fit the context. The dearth of instances of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* serving this very pragmatic function posed a challenge in finding if *elzibda* exhibits other repair types, such as *other-repairs*.

The following example shows the use of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as a repair device as follows.

**Excerpt 50.**

*The first NA Twitter was annoyed that high school students are taking a standardized test near the university causing a traffic problem.*

1. A: ʔhɛl ʔl.gæwasʔər ʕɪnd.hum ɪxtɪbær qudəræt ʔljom bi.dzæmʕt.næ  
family the.minors have.they test abilities today in.university.our  
“the minors have Abilities Test today in our university?”

2. liʔn ʔl.zħmæ ʔlli ʔnd ʔl.bauwæba mu tʔbiʕijah  
because the.traffic that at the.gate NEG normal  
“because the traffic at the (university) gate is not normal”

3. B: tɛħsʔili mub qudəræt  
Achievement NEG abilities  
“Standardized Achievement Test not Abilities Test!”

4. A: ʔlli hu  
Whatever is  
“whatever it is!”

5. B: tɛħsʔili mu qudəræt  
Achievement NEG abilities  
“Standardized Achievement Test not Abilities Test!”

6. A: gijæs elzibda  
→ assessment DM  
“(A test given by) the National Center of Assessment, DM”

In excerpt 50, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appeared alone in the final position of the utterance after the noun phrase *gijæs* ‘lit. assessment.’ The NA discourse

marker *elzibda* shows an intriguing pragmatic function that is considered extremely rare as shown by the *Twitter* corpus. The primary pragmatic function of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the above context was to introduce a repaired utterance. The repair was not a self-repair but rather other-repair initiated by others as can be seen from the second NA *Twitter* persistence on correcting the first NA *Twitter* opening utterance. The first NA *Twitter* was greatly frustrated regarding the fact there was so much traffic near the university gate. The roads were congested with traffic given the fact that high school students were taking a standardized test near the university. The first NA *Twitter* user believed the traffic was unbelievable, possibly leading to delays more than usual. The second NA *Twitter* directed the utterance to correct the obvious error in the first NA *Twitter* user's utterance regarding the type of standardized test high school students were having. The first NA *Twitter* user thought high schoolers were having Abilities Test. Therefore, the second NA *Twitter* user had to repeat the repaired utterance twice until the first NA *Twitter* initiated the repair. To save his face, the first NA *Twitter* initiated a repair without admitting fault stating it was anyway a test given by the National Center of Assessment.

### **The Quantitative Analysis of Twitter Corpus**

In this section a number of statistical analyses will be presented in which the latest version of SPSS was used to conduct those analyses. *Quantitatively*, this section provides a thorough discussion about the pragmatic, syntactic, and sociolinguistic behavior of the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid*. The first section provides a detailed account of the various pragmatic functions of the two NA discourse markers along with the frequency of occurrence for each of these functions. The second section provides a list of



the various syntactic positions the two NA discourse markers occupy across a variety of different contexts, including *alone*, *initial*, *medial*, and *final*. The third section discusses the linguistic items that collocate with the NA discourse markers, as shown in the *Twitter* corpus. The fourth section discusses the effect the sociolinguistic factors, including *gender* and *socio-economic* status, appear to have on the use of these two NA discourse markers.

### **The NA Discourse Markers Frequency of Occurrence**

The first section shows the frequency of occurrence of the two NA discourse markers *min jid* and *elzibda* along with their numerous pragmatic functions, including *textual*, *interpersonal*, as well as *cognitive*. Table 9 shows the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid* and *elzibda* across various contexts. Table 10 shows the frequency of occurrence for each of the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid*. Similarly, table 11 shows the frequency of occurrence for each of the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *elzibda*.

Table 9. The Pragmatic functions of NA Discourse Markers

Discourse Marker	Textual	Interpersonal	Cognitive
<i>elzibda</i>	To Conclude and Summarize To Get to the Heart of the Story As Topic Changer *As Conversation Opener As Conversation Closer As Topic Returner As Code-Switching Device To Elaborate and Continue As Resultative Marker To Show the importance of something To Make a Request As Clarification Device	*To Express Sarcasm *To Express Negative Attitude *To Express Emotions *To Express Shock *To Be Confrontational *To Express Curiosity As a Mitigator Device	For Realization As Repair Device
<i>min jid</i>	As Intensifying Device *As Conversation Opener	To Show Agreement To Show Seriousness *To Express Negative Attitude *To Express Sarcasm *To Express Shock To Assert Something is True *To Express Curiosity *To Express Emotions *To Be Confrontational	N/A

\* means these functions are found across both NA discourse markers

As shown in Table 9, the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* both exhibit a distinctive and fascinating pragmatic behavior. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to be more productive than the NA discourse marker *min jid* showing a number of various functions across the *textual*, *interpersonal*, and *cognitive* pragmatic categories. Interestingly though, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* serves other functions pragmatically which are not observed for the NA discourse marker *min jid*, including *cognitive functions*. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* has *textual*, *interpersonal*, as well as *cognitive pragmatic functions* while the NA discourse marker *min jid* has only *textual* and *interpersonal* pragmatic functions.

The NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows *twelve textual functions* as follows: *As code-switching device, as conversation opener, as conversation closer, as clarification device, as resultative marker, as topic changer, as topic returner, to conclude and summarize, to elaborate and continue, to get to the heart of the story, to show the importance of something, as well as to make a request*. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* also has *seven interpersonal functions*: *As a mitigator device, to be confrontational, to express curiosity, to express emotions, to express attitudes, to express sarcasm, as well as to express shock*. Furthermore, The NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows *two cognitive functions*: *As repair device and for realization*.

The NA discourse marker *min jid* shows *nine interpersonal functions*, including *to show seriousness, to assert something is true, to be confrontational, to express curiosity, to express negative attitude, to express sarcasm, to express emotions, to express shock, and to show agreement*. The NA discourse marker *min jid* also shows two *textual functions*, including *as conversation opener* and *as intensifying device*. Nevertheless, the

NA discourse marker *min jid* seems not to exhibit any cognitive functions, as shown by the *Twitter* corpus.

Interestingly though, the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* seem to show some resemblance in terms of their pragmatic behavior given the fact they seem to share six interpersonal functions, namely *to be confrontational*, *to express negative attitude*, *to express emotions*, *to express sarcasm*, *to express curiosity*, as well as *to express shock*. Nonetheless, the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to signal more interpersonal functions, including *expressing agreement*, *showing seriousness*, and *asserting something is true*. The NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* also share a single textual function that is *to open conversations*. However, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tend to signal more textual functions such as, *to conclude and summarize*, *to elaborate and continue*, *to get to the heart of the story*, *to show the importance of something*, *to make a request*, *as code-switching device*, *as conversation closer*, *as clarification device*, *as resultative marker*, *as topic changer*, *as topic returner*.

The *Twitter* corpus shows that these aforementioned pragmatic functions both the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* tend to show across numerous contexts occurred in different frequencies. The pragmatic functions found across the two NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* tend to be similar to each other and serve the same *textual* and *interpersonal* pragmatic functions. For instance, the two NA discourse marker *elzibda* and *min jid* share a single *textual* pragmatic function that is *to open conversation* allowing NA *Twitter* users to initiate various kinds of conversations.

Table 10 clearly shows the number of occurrences along with the percentages for the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid*.

Table 10. The Frequency of occurrence for the Pragmatic Functions of the NA Discourse Marker *Min Jid*

<i>Textual</i>	N	Percent	<i>Interpersonal</i>	N	Percent	<i>Cognitive</i>
As Intensifying Device	26	5.2%	To Show agreement	326	65.2%	N/A
*As Conversation Opener	10	2%	To Show Seriousness	32	6.4%	
			*To Express Negative Attitude	24	4.8%	
			*To Express Sarcasm	20	4%	
			*To Express Shock	20	4%	
			To assert something is true	19	3.8%	
			*To Express Curiosity	7	1.4%	
			*To Express Emotions	5	1%	
			*To Be Confrontational	4	0.8%	
<b>Total</b>	36	7.2%		457	91.4%	
<b>Grand Total</b> (Textual, interpersonal, cognitive)	*500	100%				

\* there are seven instances showing *min jid* with non-pragmatic function accounting for one point four percent

As shown in Table 10, the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid* vary in frequency of occurrence with some functions more frequent than others. For instance, *showing agreement* occurred three hundred and twenty-six times in the corpus making up sixty-five percent of the total occurrences. On the other hand, *expressing emotions* occurred five times in the corpus accounting for only one percent of the occurrences. The two major pragmatic functions the NA discourse marker *min jid* expresses are *to show agreement* (326 N, 65%), as well as *to show seriousness* (32 N, 6.4%), respectively. This is followed by *as intensifying device* (26 N, 5.2%) and *to express negative attitude* (24 N, 5%). The three following pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid* have a similar frequency of occurrence: *to express sarcasm* (20 N, 4%), *to express emotions* (20 N, 4%), and *to assert something is true* (19 N, 4%). The three least common pragmatic functions the NA discourse markers *min jid* shows are *to express curiosity* (7 N, 1%), *to express emotions* (5 N, 4%), as well as *to be confrontational* (4 N, 1%). It seems safe to state that the primary function of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is *to show agreement* given the fact that this very function alone accounts for almost two-thirds of the data.

The *Twitter* corpus shows that the NA discourse marker *min jid* mainly communicates *interpersonal* functions that makeup ninety one point four percent of the occurrences. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *min jid* only serves *textual* functions in seven point two percent. In other words, the NA discourse marker *min jid* seems to be more productive when it comes to *interpersonal* functions as opposed to *textual* functions, which is not surprising given it has only two textual functions.

Table 11 shows the frequency of occurrence for the various pragmatic functions the NA discourse marker *elzibda*.

Table 11. The Frequency of occurrence for the Pragmatic Functions of the NA Discourse Marker Elzibda

<i>Textual</i>	N	Percent	<i>Interpersonal</i>	N	Percent	<i>Cognitive</i>	N	Percent
To Conclude and Summarize	96	19.2%	* To Express Sarcasm	118	23.6%	For Realization	2	0.4%
To Get to the Heart of the Story	41	8.2%	*To Express Attitude	36	7.2%	As Repair Device	1	0.2%
As Topic Changer	34	6.8%	*To Express Emotions	36	7.2%			
*As Conversation Opener	25	5%	*To Express Shock	16	3.2%			
As Conversation Closer	22	4.4%	*To Be Confrontational	9	1.8%			
As Topic Returner	16	3.2%	*To Express Curiosity	4	0.8%			
As Code-Switching Device	12	2.4%	As a Mitigator Device	1	0.2%			
To Elaborate and Continue	9	1.8%						
As Resultative Marker	7	1.4%						
To Show the importance of sth	5	1%						
To Make a Request	2	0.4%						
As Clarification Device	1	0.2%						
<b>Total</b>	270	54%		220	44%		3	0.6%
	*500	100%						
<b>Grand Total</b> (Textual, interpersonal, cognitive)								

\* there are seven instances showing elzibda with non-pragmatic function accounting for 1.4% percent.



As shown in Table 11, there have been more variations in the frequency of occurrences for the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* ranging from a single occurrence to a hundred and eighteen occurrences. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* is primarily used to express sarcasm (118 N, 23.6%) which is closely followed by to conclude and summarize (96 N, 19.2%). Getting to the heart of the story is ranked third with forty-one occurrences accounting for eight percent of the occurrences. The following pragmatic functions have the same percent of occurrences: to express emotions (36 N, 7.2%), to express negative attitude (36 N, 7.2%), along with as topic changer (34 N, 6.8%). Conversation opener (25 N, 5%) along with conversation closer (22 N, 4.4%) are ranked seventh and eighth common pragmatic functions, respectively. The least common functions of the NA discourse markers *elzibda* are to express shock (16 N, 3.2%), as topic returner (16 N, 3.2%), as code-switching device (12 N, 2.4%), to be confrontational (9 N, 1.8%), to elaborate and continue (9 N, 1.8%), as resultative marker (7 N, 1.4%), to express something is important (5 N, 1%), and to express curiosity (4 N, 0.8%). On the bottom of the list comes the following pragmatic functions as a clarification device, as repair device, and as mitigator device each accounting for less than one percent.

Unlike the NA discourse marker *min jid*, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* signals mostly textual functions accounting for fifty-two percent of the occurrences, which comes as no surprise since the latter has more textual functions than the former. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* also serves interpersonal functions that account for forty-four percent of the occurrences. Nonetheless, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows cognitive functions in less than three percent of the occurrences.

## The NA Discourse markers Syntactic Positions

The second section shows the syntactic positions the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* occupy in the utterances along with the collocated syntactic categories with varying degrees of frequency, as shown in the *Twitter* corpus. This section offers scholars with preliminary analysis and discussion of the syntactic behavior of the two NA discourse markers in terms of their preferred syntactic positions. This section will not scrutinize the syntactic positions of these two NA discourse markers with a syntactic tree as this will remain for future research. In other words, this section will briefly discuss the positions these NA discourse markers occupy within the utterances.

Table 12 shows the syntactic positions the two NA discourse markers occupy along with the number of occurrences and percentages. The syntactic positions of these two NA discourse markers are broken down into different tables with each table represents a position occupied by the NA discourse markers along with the collocated syntactic category. Tables 13-16 show the syntactic categories co-occurred with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in alone, initial, final, and medial position, respectively. On the other hand, tables 17- 20 show the syntactic categories collocated with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in alone, initial, final, and medial position, respectively.

Table 12. The Sentential Positions the NA Discourse Markers occupy

Discourse Marker	Sentential Position	N	Percentage
<i>Elzibda</i>	Alone	1	0%
	Initial	439	88%
	Medial	37	7%
	Final	23	5%
	<b>Total</b>	500	100%
<i>Min Jid</i>	Alone	96	19%
	Initial	274	55%
	Medial	94	19%
	Final	36	7%
	<b>Total</b>	500	100%

As shown in Table 12, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to occupy various syntactic and sentential positions, namely *alone*, *initial*, *medial*, as well as *final*. Interestingly though, the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* occur in other positions besides the initial position, including *medial*, *final*, and *alone* position. Contrary to the generally held belief by a number of prominent scholars, including Brinton (1996), these NA discourse markers seem not to occur predominately in the initial position. This stems from the fact that these NA discourse markers occur in a wide variety of syntactic positions within the utterances, as shown in the table above.

The NA discourse marker *elzibda* appear in the initial position four hundred and thirty-nine times accounting for eighty-eight percent of the instances. Nevertheless, there have been a few instances showing the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occupying the medial position with thirty-six occurrences making up seven percent of the total

occurrences. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to disfavor the final position as shown by the twenty-three occurrences accounting for only five percent. Interestingly though, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* rarely occurs alone with no prior or following constituents. The *Twitter* corpus shows there is a single occurrence for the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in which it was not accompanied by any other lexical items. Along similar lines, the NA discourse marker *min jid* appear in the initial position two hundred and seventy-four times accounting for fifty-five percent that is a little over half of the occurrences. However, the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to show a similar preference for the medial and alone positions in which each account for nineteen percent of the occurrences. The NA discourse marker *min jid* seems to disfavor the final position showing thirty-six occurrences only accounting for seven percent of the occurrences.

Similar patterns could be seen across the two NA discourse markers in which they show some (dis)preference for the same syntactic positions. For instance, the two NA discourse markers tend to choose the initial position as their first landing site whereas they avoid the final position, as shown by the *Twitter* corpus. Nevertheless, the alone position seems to be more preferred by the NA discourse marker *min jid* than the NA discourse marker *elzibda* with ninety-six accounting for nineteen percent of the occurrences. It seems like some of the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid* played a role in making the alone position as one of the preferred positions. For instance, the *Twitter* corpus shows that the pragmatic function of *showing agreement* gives the NA discourse marker *min jid* the opportunity to occur alone.

*Table 13. The Syntactic Categories Co-occur with the NA discourse Marker Elzibda in the Alone Position*

<b>Discourse Marker</b>	<b>Syntactic Position</b>	<b>Syntactic Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Elzibda	Alone	Alone	1	100%
		<b>Total</b>	1	100%

*Table 14. The Syntactic Categories Co-occur with the NA discourse Marker Elzibda in the Initial Position*

<b>Discourse Marker</b>	<b>Syntactic Position</b>	<b>Syntactic Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Elzibda	Initial	AdjP	12	3%
		AdvP	30	7%
		ConjP	106	24%
		DP	115	26%
		NegP	22	5%
		PP	12	3%
		VocP	9	2%
		VP	133	30%
		<b>Total</b>	439	100%

As shown in Table 13, there is a single occurrence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in which it was not accompanied by any linguistic item either following or preceding. For this aforementioned, it can be induced that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* rarely occurs alone. The *Twitter* corpus shows that the single occurrence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* expresses *negative attitude*. The occurrence of the discourse marker *elzibda* in the alone position was followed by a couple of exclamation marks communicating *negative attitude* in this context. The alone syntactic position is not considered as one of the preferred landing sites as with the NA discourse marker *min jid* as evident by the single occurrence, as shown by the *Twitter* corpus. The native Najdi Arabic speakers along with linguistic experts claim that the alone position is not a common syntactic position for the NA discourse marker *elzibda*.

As shown in Table 14, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to be accompanied by a number of syntactic categories with varying degrees of frequency in the initial position of the utterance. These syntactic categories are *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP), *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), *Determiner Phrase* (DP), *Negative Phrase* (NegP), *Preposition Phrase* (PP), *Vocative Phrase* (VocP), as well as *Verb Phrase* (VP). Nevertheless, there have been three preferred syntactic categories that co-occur with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the initial positions, such as *Verb Phrase* (VP), *Determiner Phrase* (DP), and *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP). The first preferred syntactic category is the *Verb Phrase* co-occurring with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in a hundred and thirty-three occurrences making up thirty percent of the total occurrences. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to mostly communicate three pragmatic functions once collocating the *Verb Phrase* (VP) as follows: *expressing sarcasm* (38 N, 29%),

*concluding and summarizing* (17 N, 13%), as well as to *get to the heart of the story* (16 N, 12%).

The second preferred syntactic category is the *Determiner Phrase* with a hundred and fifteen co-occurrences accounting for twenty-six percent of the occurrences. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* exhibit a number of pragmatic functions once collocating with the *Determiner Phrase* (DP), including *express sarcasm* (23 N, 20%), *conclude and summarize* (19 N, 17%), and *change the topic* (15 N, 13%). The third preferred syntactic category is the *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) with a hundred and six co-occurrences accounting for twenty-four percent. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* communicates various pragmatic function once followed closely with *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), including *express sarcasm* (33 N, 31%), *express emotions* (13 N, 12%), and *get to the heart of the story* (13 N, 12%).

The five remaining syntactic categories seem not to be favored by the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the initial position given the fact that they together account for twenty percent of the occurrences. For instance, *the Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) co-occurred thirty times with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* making up seven percent and is followed closely by *Negative Phrase* (NegP) with twenty-two co-occurrences accounting for five percent of occurrences. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* mostly *express sarcasm* once co-occur with these two aforementioned categories. For instance, the NA discourse marker *min jid* with *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *expresses sarcasm* in eight times accounting for thirty-six percent whereas the NA discourse marker *min jid* with *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) *expresses sarcasm* in thirteen times accounting for forty-three percent. The three least favorite categories tend to collocate with the NA discourse

marker *elzibda* in the initial position are *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) (12 N, 3%), *Preposition Phrase* (PP) (12 N, 3%), and *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) (9 N, 2%), respectively. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows a variety of different pragmatic functions with these three aforementioned syntactic categories. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* with *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) mostly expresses *negative attitudes* in five times accounting for forty-one percent. The NA discourse marker with *Preposition Phrase* (PP) mostly shows two pragmatic functions, including *concluding and summarizing* (3 N, 25%) and *shows the most important thing* (3 N, 25%).



*Table 15. The Syntactic Categories Co-occur with the NA discourse Marker Elzibda in the Final Position*

<b>Discourse Marker</b>	<b>Syntactic Position</b>	<b>Syntactic Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Elzibda	Final	AdjP	1	4.3%
		AdvP	1	4.3%
		ConjP	1	4.3%
		DP	11	47.8%
		PP	3	13%
		VP	6	26%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown in Table 15, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* co-occurs with various syntactic categories in the final position ranging from *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP), *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), *Determiner Phrase* (DP), *Preposition Phrase* (PP), to *Verb Phrase* (VP). As mentioned before, the discourse marker *elzibda* tends to disfavor the final position, which can be explained by the low number of occurrences. Nevertheless, there have been two syntactic categories that appear with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the final position, including *Determiner Phrase* (DP) and *Verb Phrase* (VP). The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) co-occurs with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* eleven times accounting for almost half of its occurrences in the final position. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* with *Determiner Phrase* (DP) has mainly the pragmatic function of *concluding and summarizing* (6 N, 55%). The *Verb Phrase* (VP) appears with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* six times making up a little over a quarter of the NA discourse marker *min jid's* occurrences in the final position. The NA *elzibda* with *Verb Phrase* (VP) solely serves the function of *concluding and summarizing* six times accounting for a hundred percent. The *Preposition Phrase* (PP) co-occurs with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the final position in three occurrences accounting for thirteen percent. The NA *elzibda* with *Preposition Phrase* (PP) exhibits the following pragmatic functions, *show sarcasm*, *to conclude and summarize*, as well as *to express the most important thing*. The three remaining syntactic category *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP), *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), and *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) tend to co-occur once with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* which show they rarely collocate with it. The NA *elzibda* tends to exhibit pragmatic functions other than the aforementioned once collocating with the *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP), *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), and *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) in the

final position. The NA *elzibda* with *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) *expresses emotion* in one occurrence. The NA *elzibda* with *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) *terminates the conversation* in one occurrence. The NA *elzibda* with *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) *concludes and summarizes* in one occurrence.

Interestingly though, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* seems to show a similar preference toward certain syntactic categories in the initial and final position. For instance, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to co-occur mostly with *the Determiner Phrase* (DP) and *the Verb Phrase* (VP) in the aforementioned positions. Nonetheless, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* prefers *the Verb Phrase* (VP) in the initial position whereas this pattern seems to be reversed with *the Determiner Phrase* (DP) more preferred in the final position. Similarly, *the Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) seems to be highly disfavored by the NA discourse marker in the initial and final position.

Table 16. The Syntactic Categories Co-occur with the NA discourse Marker Elzibda in the Medial Position

Discourse Marker	Syntactic Position	Syntactic Category Preceding and Following	N	Percent
Elzibda	Medial	AdjP and ConjP	1	2.7%
		AdjP and DP	1	2.7%
		AdvP and ConjP	1	2.7%
		AdvP and VP	1	2.7%
		ConjP and ConjP	3	8.1%
		ConjP and DP	2	5.4%
		ConjP and PP	1	2.7%
		ConjP and VP	1	2.7%
		DP and AdvP	1	2.7%
		DP and PP	1	2.7%
		DP and VP	2	5.4%
		NegP and ConjP	1	2.7%
		PP and ConjP	2	5.4%
		VP and AdvP	1	2.7%
		VP and ConjP	5	13.5%
		VP and DP	2	5.4%
		VP and NegP	2	5.4%
		VP and Number*	1	2.7%
		VP and PP	5	13.5%
		VP and VocP	1	2.7%
VP and VP	2	5.4%		
<b>Total</b>			37	100%

\* The NA discourse marker elzibda was followed by numeric number

As shown in Table 16, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* appears with a large array of syntactic categories in the medial position occurring between two distinct syntactic categories with varying degrees of occurrences. At first glance, it might seem there is no general pattern regarding the preferred syntactic categories in the aforementioned position. Nevertheless, there have been two syntactic categories each account for fourteen percent of the total occurrences, such as between *the Verb Phrase (VP) and Preposition Phrase (PP)* (5 N, 14%) as well as between *the Verb Phrase (VP) and the Conjunction Phrase (ConjP)* (5 N, 14%). Interestingly, there has been a noticeable pattern in which the NA discourse marker *elzibda* gets preceded by similar syntactic categories in many instances and is not necessarily followed by the same categories. For instance, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is preceded by the *Verb Phrase (VP)* while followed by other categories in fifty-seven percent of the occurrences, including but not limited to, *Vocative Phrase (VocP)*, and *Preposition Phrase (PP)*. Similarly, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is preceded by *Conjunction Phrase (ConjP)* while followed by other categories in nineteen percent of the occurrences, such as *Verb Phrase (VP)*, *Conjunction Phrase (ConjP)*, as well as *Preposition Phrase (PP)*. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* also occurs between a *Determiner Phrase (DP)* and other syntactic categories in eleven percent of the occurrences. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* appears medially after *Adjective Phrase (AdjP)* and before either *Conjunction Phrase (ConjP)* or *Determiner Phrase (DP)*; after *Adverb Phrase (AdvP)* and before either *Conjunction Phrase (ConjP)* or *Verb Phrase (VP)* each accounting for six percent of the total occurrences. The least common landing sites for the NA discourse markers in the medial position tend to be between *Preposition Phrase (PP)* and *Conjunction Phrase*

(ConjP) (2 N, 5%) along with between *Negative Phrase* (NegP) and *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) (1 N, 3%)

The NA discourse marker *elzibda* co-occur between various two syntactic categories to express a variety of different pragmatic functions. The *Twitter* corpus clearly shows that NA discourse marker *elzibda* is predominately employed in the medial position *to conclude and summarize*. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* exhibited the pragmatic function of *concluding and summarizing* in twenty-seven times accounting for seventy-three percent. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* also shows the pragmatic function of *getting to the heart of the story* three times between the *Verb Phrase* (VP) and *the Verb Phrase* (VP), the *Verb Phrase* (VP) and *Negative Phrase* (NegP), as well as the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) and *Verb Phrase* (VP). The NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows the pragmatic function of *showing emotions* one time between the *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) and *Verb Phrase* (VP). The NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows the pragmatic function of *showing the most important thing* one time with between the *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) and *Determiner Phrase* (DP). The NA discourse marker *elzibda* shows the pragmatic function of *showing curiosity* between the *Adjective Phrase* (AdvjP) and *Determiner Phrase* (DP).

*Table 17. The Syntactic Categories Co-occur with the NA discourse Marker Min Jid in the Alone Position*

<b>Discourse Marker</b>	<b>Syntactic Position</b>	<b>Syntactic Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Min Jid	Alone	Alone	96	100%
		<b>Total</b>	96	100%

*Table 18. The Syntactic Categories Co-occur with the NA discourse Marker Min Jid in the Initial Position*

<b>Discourse Marker</b>	<b>Syntactic Position</b>	<b>Syntactic Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Min Jid	Initial	AdjP	21	7.6%
		AdvP	16	5.8%
		ConjP	17	6.2%
		DP	117	42.7%
		NegP	18	6.6%
		PP	16	5.8%
		VocP	5	1.8%
		VP	61	22.2%
		InterjP	3	1.0%
		<b>Total</b>	274	100%

As shown in Table 17, the NA discourse marker *min jid* appears in the alone position with ninety-six occurrences, which almost makes up about twenty percent of the total five hundred occurrences. Unlike the discourse marker *elzibda*, the NA discourse marker *min jid* seems to consider the alone position as one of the favorite landing sites after the initial position alongside medial position. In this alone position, the NA discourse marker *min jid* tend to either occur alone with no accompanying utterances or to be followed closely by numerous emoji. The *Twitter* corpus shows the occurrence of the NA discourse marker *min jid* alone seems to mostly serve the pragmatic function of *showing agreement*. For instance, the NA discourse marker *min jid* shows agreement in ninety-four occurrences accounting for ninety-eight percent. On the other hand, the NA discourse marker *min jid* shows *shock* and *expresses sarcasm* each occurs one-time accounting for one percent. As mentioned before, the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the alone position gets accompanied by emoji to communicate another layer of pragmatic and procedural meaning besides *showing agreement*. The employment of *tears of joy emoji* 😄 with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the alone position *shows agreement* along with *sarcasm*.

As shown in Table 18, Similarly to the NA discourse marker *elzibda*, the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to prefer the initial position with two hundred and seventy-four occurrences accounting for fifty-five percent of the total occurrences. The NA discourse marker *min jid* also tends to precede the same syntactic categories, such as *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP), *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), *Determiner Phrase* (DP), *Negative Phrase* (NegP), *Preposition Phrase* (PP), *Vocative Phrase* (VocP), *Verb Phrase* (VP) as well as *Interjection Phrase* (InterjP). The *Twitter*



corpus shows that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* occupying the initial position tends to appear at the beginning of NA *Twitter* users' turns preceding the aforementioned syntactic categories.

Furthermore, the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to share the same preference for the syntactic categories with the NA discourse marker *elzibda*. For instance, the NA discourse marker *min jid* prefers the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) and *Verb Phrase* (VP) as their uppermost favorite landing sites. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *min jid* co-occurs with the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) in a hundred and seventeen accounting for forty-two point seven percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* with the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *show agreement* in seventy-seven accounting for sixty-six percent. On the other hand, the NA discourse marker *min jid* also co-occurs with *Verb Phrase* (VP) in sixty-one instances accounting for twenty-two percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* collocate with *Verb Phrase* (VP) to *show agreement* in forty-eight accounting for seventy-nine percent. Interestingly, this pattern is reversed with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* given the fact it collocates mostly with *Verb Phrase* (VP) in a hundred and thirty-three accounting for thirty percent and with the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) in a hundred and fifteen accounting occurrences for twenty-six percent, respectively.

The third most common collocate is the *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) occurring twenty-one times accounting for seven point six percent. The fourth most common collocate is the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) occurring eighteen times accounting for six point six percent. The NA discourse marker mainly *shows agreement* once collocating with either the *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) or the *Negative Phrase* (NegP). The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to collocate with the *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) to *show agreement* in

sixteen times accounting for seventy-six percent. On the other hand, the NA discourse marker *min jid* once collocating with the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) tends to *show agreement* in fourteen times accounting for seventy-seven percent.

Along similar lines, the NA discourse marker *min jid* also can be considered to occur before *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) as the least favorite landing site with two percent of the occurrences. Unlike with other syntactic categories, the NA discourse marker *min jid* with *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) tends to *show seriousness* (2 N, 40%) besides *showing agreement* (3 N, 60%).

Interestingly, the NA discourse marker *min jid* seems to show the same frequency of occurrences for the *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), as well as *Preposition Phrase* (PP) each makes up six percent of the total occurrences. The NA discourse marker *min jid* rarely co-occur with *Interjunction Phrase* (InterjP) with three occurrences accounting for one percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* predominantly *shows agreement* when collocating with the *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), *Preposition Phrase* (PP), as well as *Interjunction Phrase* (InterjP) in the initial position. The NA discourse marker *min jid* with *Preposition Phrase* (PP) predominately *shows agreement* in fifteen times accounting for ninety-four percent. On the other hand, the NA discourse marker *min jid* with *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) *shows agreement* in fifteen times accounting for eighty-eight percent whereas the NA discourse marker *min jid* with *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) *shows agreement* in thirteen times accounting for eighty-one percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates with *Interjection Phrase* (InterjP) to *show agreement* (2 N, 66%) and *express sarcasm* (1 N, 33%).

*Table 19. The Syntactic Categories Co-occur with the NA discourse Marker Min Jid in the Final Position*

<b>Discourse Marker</b>	<b>Syntactic Position</b>	<b>Syntactic Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Min Jid	Final	AdjP	4	11.11%
		AdvP	2	5.5%
		ConjP	1	2.7%
		NegP	2	5.5%
		DP	9	25%
		PP	10	27.7%
		VP	6	16.66%
		InterjP	2	5.5%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown in Table 19, the NA discourse marker *min jid* appears after numerous syntactic categories in the final position, including *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP), *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), *Negative Phrase* (NegP), *Determiner Phrase* (DP), *Preposition Phrase* (PP), and *Verb Phrase* (VP). The *Twitter* corpus shows that NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to occur right after the aforementioned syntactic categories in the final position predominantly at the end of the NA *Twitter* users' turn. The *Twitter* corpus also shows that there have been a couple of occurrences of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the final position appearing at the end of the utterance within the same NA *Twitter* users' turn. The *Twitter* corpus also shows that these aforementioned syntactic categories abide by the syntactic rules of Najdi Arabic in terms of word order that is mostly VSO. In Najdi Arabic variety, the *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) tends to follow the noun in VSO. Similarly, the *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) tends to follow the verb in VSO. The *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) along with the *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) tends to follow the verb in VSO. The *Negative Phrase* (NegP) tends to precede the verb in VSO. The *Verb Phrase* (VP) tends to precede the subject along with the object in VSO.

The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to prefer the *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) with ten occurrences accounting for twenty-eight percent of the total occurrences. The NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates with *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) in the final position to *show agreement* in six times accounting for sixty percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to favor the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) and the *Verb Phrase* (VP) in the final position. The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) is the second common landing site for the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the final position with nine occurrences accounting for

twenty-five percent followed by the *Verb Phrase* (VP) with six occurrences accounting for seventeen percent of the total occurrences. The NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates with the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) in the final position to *show agreement* in four times accounting for forty-four percent whereas with *Verb Phrase* (VP) to *show seriousness* three times accounting for fifty percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* co-occurs with the *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) in the aforementioned position four times making up eleven percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates with *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) to show the four following pragmatic functions: with one occurrence each accounting for twenty-five percent: *show sarcasm*, *show emotions*, *express shock*, and *show agreement*. The syntactic categories, including the *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) and *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), seems to be disfavored by the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the final position. The NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates with *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) to *express sarcasm* (1 N, 50%), and *show seriousness* (1 N, 50%). On the other hand, The NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates once with *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) to function solely as an *intensifier device*. The *Negative Phrase* (NegP) also seems not to be common with only two occurrences accounting for six percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates with *Negative Phrase* (NegP) to *express negative attitude* (1 N, 50%) and *express sarcasm* (1 N, 50%).

Interestingly, the NA discourse marker *min jid* tend to show seven pragmatic functions in the final positions, such as *showing agreement*, *expressing sarcasm*, *showing negative attitude*, *to show seriousness*, *to assert something is true*, *as an intensifier device*, and *to express shock*. The NA discourse marker *min jid* mostly exhibits the pragmatic function of *showing agreement* that occurred thirteen times accounting for

forty percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* next shows the two following pragmatic functions, *expressing sarcasm* (6 N, 17%) and *showing seriousness* (5 N, 14%). The NA discourse marker *min jid* also shows the four pragmatic functions which are less frequent than the aforementioned ones, such as *as an intensifier device* (3 N, 8%) , and *to express shock* (3 N, 8%), *to assert something is true* (2 N, 5%), and *showing negative attitude* (3 N, 8%).

Similar to the NA discourse marker *elzibda*, the NA discourse marker *min jid* tend to show a preference towards the same syntactic categories, such as *Determiner Phrase* (DP) and *Preposition Phrase* (PP). Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *min jid* chooses the *Preposition Phrase* (PP) as its first landing site whereas the NA discourse marker *elzibda* prefers the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) as its landing site. Unlike the NA discourse marker *elzibda*, the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to choose *Negative Phrase* (NegP) as one of the landing sites in the final position

Table 20. The Syntactic Categories Co-occur with the NA discourse Marker *Min Jid* in the Medial Position

Discourse Marker	Syntactic Position	Syntactic Category Preceding and Following	N	Percent
Min Jid	Medial	AdjP and ConjP	1	1%
		AdjP and DP	3	3%
		AdvP and Number	1	1%
		AdvP and VP	6	6%
		ConjP and AdjP	4	4%
		ConjP and AdvP	1	1%
		ConjP and ConjP	2	2%
		ConjP and DP	2	2%
		ConjP and NegP	3	3%
		ConjP and PP	1	1%
		ConjP and VP	10	11%
		DP and AdjP	5	5%
		DP and ConjP	2	2%
		DP and DP	2	2%
		DP and PP	1	1%
		DP and VP	3	3%
		NegP and DP	3	3%
		NegP and NegP	1	1%
		PP and AdjP	4	4%
		PP and AdvP	1	1%
		PP and ConjP	4	4%
		PP and DP	2	2%
		PP and PP	1	1%
		PP and VP	4	4%
		PP and VocP	1	1%
		PP and NegP	3	3%
		VocP and AdjP	1	1%
		VocP and DP	2	2%
		VocP and PP	1	1%
		VocP and VP	2	2%
		VP and AdjP	1	1%
		VP and AdvP	1	1%
		VP and ConjP	4	4%
VP and DP	3	3%		
VP and NegP	1	1%		
VP and Number	1	1%		
VP and PP	2	2%		
VP and VocP	2	2%		
VP and VP	1	1%		
VP and DM	1	1%		
		Total	94	100%

As shown in Table 20, the NA discourse marker *min jid* co-occurs with a large number of syntactic categories in the medial position appearing between two distinctive syntactic categories. The most favorite landing site for the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the medial position is between *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) and *Verb Phrase* (VP) (10 N, 11%). The same pattern for the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is found with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the medial position. The NA discourse marker *min jid* seems to be preceded by similar syntactic categories, including *Determiner Phrase* (DP), *Prepositional Phrase* (PP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), as well as *Verb Phrase* (VP). The most common syntactic category to precede the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the medial position is *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) (20 N, 21%) while being followed by other syntactic categories, including *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP). The second common syntactic category which appears before the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the medial position is *Verb Phrase* (VP) (17 N, 18%) while being followed by syntactic categories, such as *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), and *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP). The third common syntactic category which comes right before the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the medial position is *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) (15 N, 15%) followed by categories, including *Negative Phrase* (NegP), and *Prepositional Phrase* (PP). The fourth common syntactic category comes right before the NA discourse marker *min jid* is *Determiner phrase* (DP) (13 N, 13%) while being followed by *Determiner Phrase* (DP), *Verb Phrase* (VP), *Prepositional Phrase* (PP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP), *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP). The least common syntactic categories that precede the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the medial position are *Adjective Phrase*



(AdjP) (4 N, 4%), *Negative Phrase* (4 N, 4%), *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) (6 N, 6%), *Phrase Adverb Phrase* (7 N, 7%), respectively.

The NA discourse *min jid* collocates with a number of syntactic categories in the medial position to serve different pragmatic functions. The NA discourse marker *min jid* shows five major pragmatic meanings once co-occurring between two distinctive syntactic categories, as shown in the *Twitter* corpus, including *as an intensifying device* (19 N, 20%), *show agreement* (18 N, 19%), *show seriousness* (14 N, 15%), *express negative attitude* (13 N, 14%), and *assert something is true* (11 N, 12%). Interestingly, the medial position is one of the most preferred landing sites for the NA discourse marker *min jid* functioning *as an intensifying device* with nineteen occurrences out of twenty-five occurrences across the initial, medial, and final positions accounting for seventy-six percent. Similarly, the medial position is also preferred for the NA discourse marker serving the pragmatic function of *showing negative attitude* with thirteen occurrences out of twenty-five across the initial, medial, and final syntactic positions accounting for fifty-two percent. Besides the five aforementioned pragmatic functions, the NA discourse marker *min jid* shows other pragmatic functions that are by far less frequent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* in the medial position is employed to show the following procedural meanings, such as *express shock* (5 N, 5%), *show sarcasm* (4 N, 4%), *show curiosity* (3 N, 3%), *be confrontational* (2 N, 2%), as well as *show emotions* (1 N, 1%). There have been four instances in the medial position showing the linguistic item *min jid* with non-discourse marker function.

### **The NA Discourse Markers Collocations**

The third section shows the linguistic items collocate with the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* across various positions, especially the *initial* and *final* position. Table 21 shows the linguistic items co-occur with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* across the *initial* and *final* Positions. Similarly, Table 22 shows the syntactic items which collocate with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the *initial* and *final* Positions. This section also provides a list of emoji collocate with the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* in the aforementioned positions. Tables 23-24 show the emoji which collocate with the discourse marker *elzibda* and *min jid* in the initial position.

Table 21. The Syntactic Items Co-Occurred with the NA Discourse Marker Elzibda Across the Initial and Final Positions

Discourse Marker	Syntactic Position	Collocated Item	Translations	Syntactic Category	N	Percent	
Elzibda	Initial	aljoun	today	AdvP	5	3%	
		illi	that	ConjP	5	3%	
		fi	in	PP	4	3%	
		bæʕd(en)	later	AdvP	6	4%	
		kɪl	all	DP	6	4%	
		yæ-	O'	VocP	6	4%	
		iðæ	if	ConjP	7	5%	
		ænæ	I	DP	9	6%	
		læʔ	not	NegP	10	7%	
		mæ	not	NegP	11	7%	
		ɪnn (-h, -hum)	that	ConjP	81	54%	
				<b>Total</b>		150	100%
			Final	(jæ)ʕtʔ(ni, unæ)	give	VP	4
		hæ(ði)		this	DP	4	50%
		<b>Total</b>			8	100%	

As shown in Table 21, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocates with a number of linguistic items belonging to various syntactic categories in the initial and final position across numerous contexts. The analysis of the *Twitter* corpus clearly shows that there has been an interesting pattern for the linguistic items that tend to collocate with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* across the preceding and following positions. These linguistic items tend to be single-word items that co-appear with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* multiple times either in the initial or the final position depending on their preferred syntactic positions. For instance, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocated eighty-one times in initial position with the linguistic item *inn (-h, -hum)* ‘lit. that’ as follows ‘*elzida inn (-h, -hum)*.’ Similarly, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocated with *hæ(ði)* ‘lit. this’ in the final position four times accounting for fifty percent. The *Twitter* corpus shows no collocations with longer number of linguistic items in the preceding and following utterances. In other words, there has been no instance showing the NA discourse marker *elzibda* preceded and followed by a long stretch of linguistic items across a variety of contexts. For this aforementioned reason, the collocations conducted on single-word linguistic items, such as *aljourn* ‘lit today.’

In the Initial position, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocates with thirteen linguistic items that belong to six syntactic categories, including *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP), *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP), *Determiner Phrase* (DP), *Vocative Phrase* (VocP), *Negative Phrase* (NegP), and *Preposition Phrase* (PP). The most common collocate is the *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) or *Complementizer* (CP) *inn* and its various variants, including *inn-uh* and *inn-hum*, occurring eighty-one times making up forty-six percent of the occurrences. The collocation of the *Complementizer* (CP) *inn* along with its variants

with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was surprising given the fact this *Complementizer* in particular accounted for fifty-four percent that is a little over half of the collocations in the initial position.

The second most common collocate is the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *mæ-* occurring eleven times accounting for seven percent. The third most common collocate is the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *læ?* appears ten times with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the initial position making up seven percent. The fourth common collocate is the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *ænæ* co-occur with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* nine times accounting for six percent of the total occurrences in the initial position. The fifth common collocate is the *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) *iðæ* with seven occurrences accounting for five percent. The least common collocations in that *Twitter* corpus are the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *kil*, the *Adverb phrase* (AdvP) *bæʕd(en)*, and the *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) *yæ-* each with six occurrences accounting for four percent. This followed by the *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *fi* with four occurrences accounting for three percent, the *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) *illi*, and the *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) *aljoum* with five occurrences each accounting for three percent.

Interestingly though, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to collocate mostly with linguistic items that are *Conjunction Phrases* (ConjPs) or *Complementizers* (CPs), including *subordinating Conjunction*. For instance, the *Twitter* corpus shows there are three *Subordinating Conjunction Phrases* (ConjPs) together makes up sixty-two percent of the collocations in the initial position, such as *inn* (54%), *iðæ* (5%), as well as *illi* (3%). The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to collocate next with *Negative Phrases* (NegPs) including *mæ-* (7%) and *læ?* (7%) both account for fourteen percent of the total

occurrences. The two *Negative Phrases* (NegPs) *mæ-* (7%) along with *læʔ* (7%) seem to have similar frequency of co-occurrence with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the initial position. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* after that collocates with *Determiner Phrases* (DPs) *ænæ* (6%) and *kɪl* (4%) making up ten percent. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* then collocates with the *Adverb Phrases* (AdvPs) *bæʃd(en)* (6 N, 4%) and *aljoun* (5 N, 3%) accounting for seven percent. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to rarely collocate with the *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) with only seven occurrences accounting for four percent and the *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *fi* with only four occurrences accounting for three percent.

Along similar lines, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocates with different linguistic items belonging to syntactic categories, such as *Verb Phrase* (VP) and *Determiner Phrase* (DP), in the final position. Nevertheless, there are few collocations in the final position with a total of eight occurrences. For instance, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocates with the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *hæ(ði)* (4 N) while collocating with *Verb Phrase* (VP) *jæʃtʔ* and its variants, such as *jæʃtʔni*, *jæʃtʔunæ*, *ʃtʔni*, and *ʃtʔniunæ* (4 N).

The NA discourse marker *elzibda* communicates numerous pragmatic functions and procedural meaning once co-occurring with various linguistic items across the initial and final position. In the final position, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* co-occurs with the *Verb Phrase* (VP) *jæʃtʔ* (4 N, 100%) and the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *hæ(ði)* (4 N, 100%) solely to show the pragmatic function of *concluding and summarizing*.

The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to collocate mostly with linguistic items in the initial position given the fact this particular position is the most favorite landing

site with four hundred and thirty-nine counting for eighty-eight percent. In the Initial position, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* predominately collocates with the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *læʔ* (4 N, 40%), the *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) *aljoun* (3 N, 50%), and the *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjPs) *inn* (23 N, 28%) *iðæ* (4 N, 60%), *illi* (2 N, 40%) to show *sarcasm*. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocates with the other *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *mæ* to show *sarcasm* (4 N, 40%) *express shock* (3 N, 30%), as *conversation opener* (1 N, %10), to *conclude and summarize* (1 N, 10%), as a *codeswitching device* (1 N, 10%), and *express negative attitude* (1 N, 10%). The *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *iðæ* collocates with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the initial to show *sarcasm* (4 N, 40%), *to be confrontational* (1 N, 10%), *conclude and summarize* (1 N, 10%), *express negative attitude* (1 N, 10%), *change the topic* (1 N, 10%), *return to the topic* (1 N, 10%), as well as *as code-switching device* (1 N, 10%)

The NA discourse marker *elzibda* seems to show more variations in terms of the pragmatic functions once collocating with the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *kil*, the *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *fi*, the *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) *yæ-*, the *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) *bæʕd(en)*, the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *æncæ*, and the *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) *inn*. The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *kil* collocates with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to in the initial place to *conclude and summarize* (1 N, 16.6%), *express emotion* (1 N, 16.6%), *to get to the heart of the story* (1 N, 16.6%), *to change the topic* (1 N, 16.6%), *to return to the topic* (1 N, 16.6%), and *to show the most important thing* (1 N, 16.6%). The *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *fi* collocates with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *show the most important thing* (2 N, 50%), *show negative attitude* (1 N, 25%) as well as *to get to the heart of the story* (1 N, 25%). The *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) *yæ-*

collocates with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *change the topic* (1 N, 16.6%), *continue and elaborate* (1 N, 16.6%), *concluding and summarize* (1 N, 16.6%), *express sarcasm* (1 N, 16.6%), *as conversation opener* (1 N, 16.6%), and *to express emotions* (1 N, 16.6%). The *Adverb Phrase* (AdvP) *bæʕd(en)* collocates with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *express sarcasm* (2 N, 33%), *get to the heart of the story* (1 N, 16.6%), *to return to the topic* (1 N, 16.6%), *as conversation opener* (1 N, 16.6%), and *to end the conversation* (1 N, 16.6%). The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *ænæ* collocates with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *conclude and summarize* (1 N, 11%), *to be confrontational* (1 N, 11%), *as conversation opener* (1 N, 11%), *end the conversation* (1 N, 11%), *as topic returner* (1 N, 11%), *express sarcasm* (1 N, 11%), *express negative attitude* (1 N, 11%), *as a code-switching device* (2 N, 22%). The *Conjunction Phrase* (ConjP) *inn (-h, -hum)* collocates with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the initial position to *show sarcasm* (23 N, 28%), *express emotions* (13 N, 16%), *summarize and conclude* (9 N, 11%), *to get to the heart of the story* (9 N, 11%), *express attitudes* (8 N, 10%), *as conversation opener* (4 N, 5%), *as code-switching device* (3 N, 4%), *be confrontational* (3 N, 5%), *continue and elaborate* (2 N, 2%), *end the conversation* (2 N, 2%), *express shock* (2 N, 2%), *show curiosity* (1 N, 1%), *as resultative marker* (1 N, 1%), and *for clarification* (1 N, 1%).

The following table shows the most common collocates for the NA discourse marker *min jid* across the initial and final positions.



Table 22. The Linguistic Items Co-Occurred with the NA Discourse Marker *min jid* Across the Initial and Final Positions

Discourse Marker	Syntactic Position	Collocated Item	Translation	Syntactic Category	N	Percent	
Min Jid	Initial	allah	God	DP	3	5%	
		akðær	more	DP	3	5%	
		yærib(æh)	weird	AdjP	3	5%	
		læʔ	not	NegP	3	5%	
		tæræ	I see	VP	4	6%	
		(t)has(et)	you feel	VP	4	6%	
		ænæ	I	DP	4	6%	
		leh(j)	why	DP	4	6%	
		kɪl	all	DP	5	8%	
		jæ-	O'	VocP	6	10%	
		hæð(-æ, -i)	this	DP	6	10%	
		mæ-	not	NegP	7	11%	
		wallah	by God	PP	10	16%	
				<b>Total</b>		62	100%
			Final	wallah	by God	PP	5
		<b>Total</b>		5	100%		

As shown in the Table 22, the NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates with a number of linguistic items also belong to six syntactic categories, such as *Determiner Phrase* (DP), *Advective Phrase* (AdjP), *Negative Phrase* (NegP), *Preposition Phrase* (PP), *Vocative Phrase* (VocP), as well as *Verb Phrase* (VP). The most frequent collocate of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position is the *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *wallah* appearing ten times accounting for sixteen percent of the total collocations in this position. The second most frequent collocate of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position is the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *mæ-* with seven occurrences making up eleven percent. The third most common collocate of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *hæð (-æ, -i)* and the *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) *jæ-* both appeared six times making up ten percent of the collocations in this aforementioned position. The fourth most frequent collocate of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *kɪl* appearing five times and accounting for eight percent. This is followed by the *Determiner Phrases* (DPs) *leh(f)*, and *ænæ* along with the *Verb Phrases* (VPs) *(t)has(et)*, and *tæræ* each appeared four times accounting for four percent of initial position collocations. The least common frequent collocates are the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *læ?*, the *Determiner Phrases* (DPs) *akðær* and *allah* and the *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) *γærib(æh)* each appeared three times making up five percent of the collocations in the initial position. On the other hand, the NA discourse marker *min jid* only collocates with the *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *wallah* in the final position.

The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to collocate predominantly with the *Determiner Phrases* (DPs) accounting for forty percent of the collocations in the initial position, including *hæð (-æ, -i)*(10%), *leh(f)*(6%), *akðær* (5%), *allah* (5%), *kɪl* (8%), and

*ænae* (6%). The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to collocate next with the *Negative Phrases* (NegPs) *mæ-* (11%) and *læ?* (5%) and the *Preposition Phrase* (PP) *wallah* (16%) each account for sixteen percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to collocate next with the *Verb Phrases* (VPs) *(t)has(et)* (6%), and *tæræ* (6%) accounting for twelve percent. The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to less frequently collocates with the *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) *jæ-* (10%) *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) *yærib(æh)* (5%).

The NA discourse marker *min jid* co-occur with the aforementioned linguistic items across the initial and final position communicating numerous pragmatic functions, including *showing agreement, showing seriousness, showing negative attitudes, expressing shock, expressing curiosity, asserting something is true, as conversation opener, and as an intensifier device*. The linguistic items collocate with the NA discourse marker in the initial and final position exhibit the pragmatic function of *showing agreement*. Nevertheless, some of these linguistic items co-occur with the NA discourse marker *min jid* to *show agreement*. The *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *wallah* co-occurring with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the final position solely to *show (strong) agreement* in five times accounting for a hundred percent. Similarly, The *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *wallah* co-occurring with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position shows the pragmatic function of *showing (strong) agreement* in eight times out ten accounting for eighty percent. The *Prepositional Phrase* (PP) *wallah* has also two other pragmatic functions when accompanying the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the final position, such as *to show negative attitude* (1 N, 10%) and *as intensifier device* (1 N, 10%). Along similar lines, the three following linguistic items collocated with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position solely to *show agreement*: the *Determiner*

*Phrase* (DP) *æncæ* (4 N, 100%), the *Verb Phrase* (VP) *(t)has(et)* (4 N, 100%), along with the *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) *jæ-* (6 N, 100%). The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *leh(f)* co-occurred with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position to predominately communicate the pragmatic function of *showing curiosity*. Nonetheless, there are two instances with two simultaneous pragmatic functions one of which is to *show curiosity*. In other words, the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *leh(f)* in the aforementioned position exhibited the following procedural meanings: *as a conversation opener* (along with showing curiosity) (1 N, 10%), *show agreement* (along with showing curiosity) (1 N, 10%), and *showing curiosity* (2 N, 40%). The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *allah* along with the *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) *jæ-* collocated with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position to serve two similar pragmatic functions, such as *showing agreement* and *show seriousness*. The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *allah* shows *agreement* (2 N, 66%) and *shows seriousness* (1 N, 33%) whereas *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) shows *agreement* (3 N, 60%) and *seriousness* (2 N, 40%).

The remaining linguistic items when collocating with the NA discourse marker *min jid* show more variation in terms of the pragmatic function. The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *akðar* along with the *Verb Phrase* (VP) *tæræ* once collocate with the NA discourse marker *min jid* exhibit a number of different pragmatic functions. The *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *akðar* collocates with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position to *assert that something is true* (1 N, 33%), *showing agreement* (1 N, 33%), and *show seriousness* (1 N, 33%). On the other hand, the *Verb Phrase* (VP) *tæræ* collocates with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position to *assert something is true* (1 N, 25%), *show agreement* (2 N, 50%), as well as *show negative attitude* (1 N, 25%). The

*Adjective Phrase* (AdjP) *yærib(əh)* collocates with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position to *show agreement* (2 N, 66%) and *express shock* (1 N, 33%) whereas with the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *læʔ* to *show agreement* (2 N, 66%) and *as conversation opener* (1 N, 25%).

Interestingly, the NA discourse marker *min jid* along with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tend to have some resemblance in terms of the linguistic items they collocate with across various positions, mostly in the initial position. For instance, the NA discourse markers *min jid* and the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tend to select the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *mæ-* as their second most common collocates, as shown by the *Twitter* corpus. The two *Negative Phrases* (NegPs) *mæ-* and *læʔ* in Najdi Arabic collocate with the NA discourse markers *min jid* and *elzibda* in the initial position. Nevertheless, the former seems to collocate more frequently with the NA discourse markers *min jid* and *elzibda* in the initial position. The two Najdi Arabic *Negative Phrase* (NegPs) *mæ-* along with *læʔ* are highly productive in negative constructions. The *Twitter* corpus shows the *Negative Phrase* (NegP) *læʔ* preceding imperatives whereas the *Negative Phrase* (NegPs) *mæ* mostly preceding verbs. According to Binturki (2015), the Najdi Arabic *Negative Phrase* (NegPs) *mæ-* and *læʔ* are in ‘complementary distribution’ since they appear before different verb moods, including *subjunctive* and *imperative*. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to frequently collocates with the *Conjunction Phrases* (ConjPs) whereas the NA discourse marker *min jid* mostly collocates with the *Determiner Phrases* (DPs). Surprisingly, the NA discourse marker *min jid* and the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tend to disfavor similar linguistic items in the initial position. For instance, the *Vocative Phrase* (VocP) *jæ-* tends to be among the

least frequent collocates for the NA discourse markers *min jid* and the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the initial position. On the other hand, NA discourse marker *min jid* and the NA discourse marker *elzibda* tend to differ greatly in terms of the items they collocate within the final position. For instance, the NA discourse marker *min jid* only collocates with the *Preposition phrase* (PP) *wallah* while the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocates with the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) *hæ(ði)* and the *Verb Phrase* *(jæ)ʃtʰ(ni, unæ)*.

The following table shows the emoji frequently collocate with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position.

Table 23. A List of Emoji Co-Occurred with the Discourse Marker Min Jid in the Initial Position

Discourse Marker	Syntactic Position	Collocated Emoji	Emoji	N	Percent
Min Jid	Initial	White Frowning Face	😞	2	4%
		Black Heart Suit	❤️	2	4%
		Smiling Face with Open Mouth and Cold Sweat	😓	2	4%
		Women Facepalming	🙄	2	4%
		OK Hand Sign	👌	2	4%
		Rolling on the Floor Laughing	😂	3	6%
		Loudly Crying Face	😭	4	8%
		Broken Heart	💔	5	10%
		Face with Tears of Joy	😄	29	57%
		<b>Total</b>			<b>51</b>


As shown in Table 23, there have been a number of emoji that collocate with the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the initial position. The most common emoji collocate of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is *face with tears of joy emoji* 😄 with twenty-nine





occurrences accounting for fifty-seven percent more than half of the entire collocations in the initial position. The second most common emoji collocate of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is *broken heart emoji* 📄 that occurred five times making up ten percent of the collocations in this position. The third most common emoji collocate of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is *loudly crying face emoji* 📄 with four appearances accounting for eight percent. The fourth most common emoji collocate of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is *rolling on the floor laughing* 📄 with three occurrences accounting for four percent. The rest of the emoji in the list are considered far less frequent given they only collocated with the NA discourse marker *min jid* twice each accounting for four percent of the initial position collocations, including *ok hand sign* 📄, *woman facepalming* 📄, *black heart suit* 📄, *smiling face with open mouth and cold sweat* 📄, as well as *frowning face* 📄.

The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to predominately collocate with *smiley faces emoji* in the initial position accounting for seventy-nine percent of the collocations: *face with tears of joy emoji* 📄 (57%), *loudly crying face emoji* 📄 (8%), *rolling on the floor laughing* 📄 (6%), *smiling face with open mouth and cold sweat* 📄 (4%), and *frowning face* 📄 (4%). The NA discourse marker *min jid* tends next to collocate with *heart emoji* accounting for fourteen percent, including *broken heart emoji* 📄 (10%) and *black heart suit* 📄 (4%). The *hand gesture emoji* along with *human emoji* are less frequent collocates of the NA discourse marker *min jid* with four percent each, such as *ok hand sign* 📄 (4%), *woman facepalming* 📄 (4%).

The following table shows the emoji frequently collocate with the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the initial position.

Table 24. A List of Emoji Co-Occurred with the Discourse Marker *Elzibda* in the Initial Position

Discourse Marker	Syntactic Position	Collocated Emoji	Emoji	N	Percent
Elzibda	Initial	Face with Tears of Joy Emoji		3	100%
<b>Total</b>				<b>3</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown in Table 24, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocates with a single emoji three times in the *Twitter* corpus. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* co-occurs with *face with tears of joy emoji*  in the initial position across three various contexts. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* only collocate with *face with tears of joy emoji*  in the initial position which shows the popularity and the widespread of this emoji in particular. The NA discourse marker *min jid* and the NA discourse marker *elzibda* show a tremendous preference for collocation with *face with tears of joy emoji* . The NA discourse marker *min jid* co-occurs with *face with tears of joy emoji*  fifty-seven percent of the total collocations whereas the NA discourse marker *elzibda* collocated solely with this emoji in the initial position in three times. Besides this particular emoji, the NA discourse marker *min jid* collocated with a number of other emoji as follows:



- *Smiley Faces Emoji: face with tears of joy emoji 😄 (57%), loudly crying face emoji 😭 (8%), rolling on the floor laughing 🤣 (6%), smiling face with open mouth and cold sweat 😓 (4%), and frowning face 😞 (4%). Heart emoji: broken heart emoji 💔 (10%) and black heart suit 🖤 (6%).*
- *Human Emoji: woman facepalming 🤦 (4%).*
- *Hand Gesture Emoji: ok hand sign 🙌 (4%).*

The *Twitter* corpus shows no instances of emoji collocate of either the NA discourse marker *min jid* or the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the final or medial position. Therefore, there might be a restriction on the syntactic position occupied by the aforementioned NA discourse markers once they collocate with emoji forcing them to appear initially.

### **The Sociolinguistic factors and the use of NA Discourse Markers**

The fourth section discusses the effect the sociolinguistic factors, including *gender* and *socio-economic* status, appear to have on the use of these two NA discourse markers. This section provides a preliminary discussion on the relationship between the aforementioned sociolinguistic factors and the employment of these two NA discourse markers. This section will not provide a thorough analysis of the sociolinguistic factors and discourse markers use since the primary aim is to get a broader understanding of the effect that gender and socioeconomic status appear to have on the employment of the two NA discourse markers. Therefore, the relationship between sociolinguistic factors and NA discourse markers will be dissected thoroughly in future linguistic research.

The fourth section starts with sociolinguistic information about the NA *Twitter* users as shown in the *Twitter* corpus. For instance, Table 25 shows the total number of NA *Twitter* users of the NA discourse marker *min jid* along with their socioeconomic status as inferred by their educational backgrounds, including Ph.D. degree, M.A. degree, Postgraduate degree, B.A. degree, Associate degree, as well as not mentioned. Table 26 shows a breakdown of the NA *Twitter* users of the NA discourse marker *min jid* by gender and socioeconomic status, respectively. Along similar lines, Table 27 shows the number of NA *Twitter* users of *elzibda* along with their socioeconomic status. Table 28 provides a detailed breakdown of the NA *Twitter* users of *elziba* by gender and socioeconomic status.

The fourth section then delves into a through discussion about the various intriguing pragmatic functions female and male NA *Twitter* users exhibit across numerous contexts. Figure 3 shows the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid* female and male NA *Twitter* users show. Similarly, Figure 4 shows the pragmatic functions of *elzibda* female and male NA *Twitter* users exhibit. The fourth section after that provides in-depth discussion regarding the effect the socioeconomic states appear to have on the use of the NA discourse markers *min jid* and *elzibda*. Figure 5-6 shows the effect of socioeconomic states on the NA discourse markers *min jid* and *elzibda*, respectively.

*Table 25. NA Users of the NA discourse marker Min Jid by Socioeconomic Status*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female + Male	500	100%	Ph.D. Degree	13	3%
			M.A. Degree	27	5%
			Postgraduate Diploma	1	0%
			B.A. Degree	345	69%
			Associate Degree	3	1%
			Not Mentioned	111	22%
			<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 26. NA Users of the NA discourse marker *Min Jid* by Gender and Socioeconomic Status

Gender	N	Percent	Socioeconomic Status	N	Percent
Female	324	65%	Ph.D. Degree	8	2%
			M.A. Degree	18	6%
			Postgraduate Diploma	1	0%
			B.A. Degree	236	73%
			Associate Degree	1	0%
			High School Diploma	0	0%
			Not Mentioned	60	19%
			<b>Total</b>	324	100%
Male	176	35%	Ph.D. Degree	5	3%
			M.A. Degree	9	5%
			Postgraduate Diploma	0	0%
			B.A. Degree	109	62%
			Associate Degree	2	1%
			High School Diploma	0	0%
			Not Mentioned	51	29%
<b>Total</b>	176	100%			
<b>Total</b>	500	100%	<b>Total</b>	176	100%

As shown in Table 24, the NA *Twitter* users employ the NA discourse marker *min jid* have various socioeconomic statuses given their distinctive educational backgrounds ranging from Associate Degree all the way to Ph.D. Degree. The *Twitter* corpus shows there are only three NA *Twitter* users with Associate Degree accounting for one percent. On the other hand, the vast majority of these NA *Twitter* users have B.A. Degree in a number of fields, including medicine, engineering, and education. For instance, there are three hundred and forty-five NA *Twitter* users with B.A Degree accounting for almost seventy percent of the total occurrences of NA discourse marker *min jid*. Unfortunately, there have been a number of cases in which it was extremely hard to determine the socioeconomic status of the NA *Twitter* users since it was not provided in their bios. There have been a hundred and eleven cases of NA *Twitter* users not explicitly mentioning their educational backgrounds making up twenty-two percent. Given the fact that sociolinguistic scholars along with other researchers have faced challenges during the process of gathering information about subjects in CMC in order to conduct sociolinguistic analysis (see Herring, 1998a, Mahzari, 2017), it was not surprising to find determining the socio-economic status in terms of the highest obtained degree for some of NA *Twitter* users extremely challenging. This stems from the fact that some NA *Twitter* users tend not to prefer to disclose this information in their *Twitter* profiles. Interestingly though, eight percent of NA *Twitter* users have higher degrees, including M.A. Degree and Ph.D. Degree. For instance, there are twenty-seven NA *Twitter* users with M.A. Degree accounting for five percent whereas there are thirteen NA *Twitter* with Ph.D. Degree accounting for three percent.

As for the gender of NA *Twitter* users, Table 25 shows that females make up sixty-five percent with three hundred and twenty-four NA *Twitter* users. On the other hand, males make up only thirty-five percent with a hundred and seventy-six. The *Twitter* corpus shows both genders exhibit similar patterns regarding their gender and socioeconomic status. The overwhelming majority of female NA *Twitter* users about two hundred and thirty-six have a B.A. Degree accounting for seventy-three percent. Similarly, the majority of male NA *Twitter* users about a hundred and nine have B.A. Degree accounting for sixty two percent. The second largest percentage of female NA *Twitter* users, about sixty making up nineteen percent, have not mentioned their educational backgrounds. The second largest percent of male NA *Twitter*, about fifty-one making up twenty-nine percent, also have not mentioned their educational backgrounds. Interestingly, eight percent of females NA *Twitter* users have higher Degrees, M.A. Degree (18 N, 6%) and Ph.D. Degree (8 N, 2%). Eight percent of males NA *Twitter* also have higher Degrees, M.A. Degree (9 N, 5%) and Ph.D. Degree (5 N, 3%). Nonetheless, one female NA *Twitter* user has an Associate Degree accounting for less than one percent whereas two male NA *Twitter* users have an Associate Degree accounting for one percent. The *Twitter* corpus shows there is only one female NA *Twitter* user with Postgraduate Diploma accounting for less than one percent.

The following table shows the breakdown of the total five hundred NA *Twitter* users of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* by gender and socioeconomic status.

Table 27. NA Users of the NA discourse marker *Elzibda* by Socioeconomic Status

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female + Male	500	100%	Ph.D. Degree	5	1%
			M.A. Degree	13	3%
			Postgraduate Diploma	0	0%
			B.A. Degree	385	77%
			Associate Degree	1	0%
			High School Diploma	4	1%
			Not Mentioned	92	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 28. NA Users of the NA discourse marker *Elzibda* by Gender and Socioeconomic Status

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	231	46%	Ph.D. Degree	2	1%
			M.A. Degree	5	2%
			Postgraduate Diploma	0	0%
			B.A. Degree	186	81%
			Associate Degree	0	0%
			High School Diploma	3	1%
			Not Mentioned	35	15%
			<b>Total</b>	231	100%
Male	269	54%	Ph.D. Degree	3	1%
			M.A. Degree	8	3%
			Postgraduate Diploma	0	0%
			B.A. Degree	199	74%
			Associate Degree	1	0%
			High School Diploma	1	0%
			Not Mentioned	57	21%
			<b>Total</b>	269	100%
<b>Total</b>	500	100%	<b>Total</b>	269	100%



As shown in Table 27, the NA *Twitter* users of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* enjoys a range of socioeconomic statuses and educational backgrounds. Similarly with the NA discourse marker *min jid*, the vast majority of the NA *Twitter* users of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* have B.A. Degree. In other words, three hundred and eighty-five NA *Twitter* users have B.A. Degree accounting for seventy-seven percent. The *Twitter* corpus shows that eighteen percent of NA *Twitter* users of *elzibda* have not mentioned their educational backgrounds. The *Twitter* corpus also shows that four percent of NA *Twitter* users of *elzibda* have higher Degrees, including M.A. Degree and Ph.D. Degree. For instance, thirteen NA *Twitter* users have M.A. Degree accounting for three percent whereas only five NA *Twitter* users have a Ph.D. Degree accounting for one percent. The *Twitter* corpus shows that there are four NA *Twitter* users with High School Diplomas accounting for one percent.

As for the breakdown of the gender NA *Twitter* users of *elzibda*, Table 28 shows females are two hundred and thirty-one making forty six percent whereas males are two hundred and sixty-nine making fifty-four percent. The overwhelming majority of female and males NA *Twitter* users have B.A. Degree. Female NA *Twitter* users are hundred and eighty-six accounting for eighty-one percent whereas males NA *Twitter* users are almost two hundred accounting for seventy-four percent. There are a number of NA *Twitter* their socioeconomic status could not be determined since there was no mention of their educational backgrounds. For instance, thirty-five female NA *Twitter* users have not mentioned their educational backgrounds accounting for fifteen percent whereas fifty-seven male NA *Twitter* users have not mentioned their educational background

accounting for twenty-one percent. The *Twitter* corpus shows there is a single female NA *Twitter* user with a high school diploma and three male NA *Twitter* users with a high school diploma.

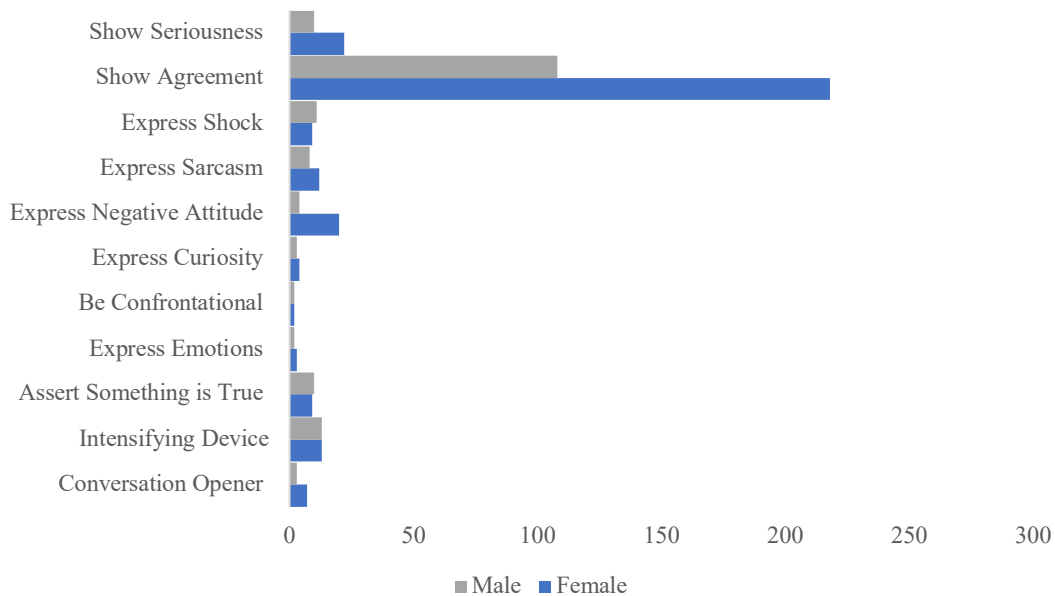


Figure 3. The Pragmatic Functions of the NA discourse Marker *Min Jid* both Genders exhibit

As shown in Figure 3, there seem to be gendered differences in terms of the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* with female NA *Twitter* users making up almost double the number of male NA *Twitter* users. For instance, male NA *Twitter* users make up thirty-five percent with a hundred and seventy-six whereas female NA *Twitter* users make up sixty-five percent with three hundred and twenty-four. Female and male NA *Twitter* users exhibit a number of pragmatic functions for the NA discourse marker *min jid* with varying degrees of frequency. Taken into consideration the difference in gender representation in terms of the use of the NA discourse marker *min jid* in the *Twitter* corpus, female and male NA *Twitter* users seem to agree on the most common frequent

pragmatic function of the NA discourse *min jid* which is to *show agreement*. In other words, the *Twitter* corpus shows that female and male NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse marker *min jid* mainly to *show agreement* making it the most frequent pragmatic function. For instance, female NA *Twitter* users used the NA discourse marker *min jid* two hundred and eighteen times to *show agreement* making up sixty seven percent of the total occurrence by females. Similarly, male NA *Twitter* users used NA discourse marker *min jid* hundred and eight times to show agreement accounting for sixty-one percent for total occurrences by male users. In other words, female NA *Twitter* users employed NA discourse marker *min jid* to *show agreement almost twice as much* the number of male NA *Twitter* users.

Nevertheless, both genders seem to have different preferences for the most frequent pragmatic functions besides the already mentioned pragmatic function. The second commonly used pragmatic function by female NA *Twitter* users is to *show seriousness* with twenty-two occurrences accounting for seven percent of total occurrences by females. The third commonly used pragmatic function is to *show negative attitude* with twenty occurrences accounting for six percent. The fourth commonly used pragmatic function is *as an intensifying device* with thirteen occurrences accounting for four percent. The fifth commonly used pragmatic function is to *express sarcasm* with twelve occurrences accounting for four percent. On the other hand, the second frequent pragmatic function by male NA *Twitter* users is *as intensifying device* with thirteen occurrences accounting for seven percent of the total occurrences by males. The third frequent pragmatic function for male NA *Twitter* users is to *express shock* with eleven occurrences accounting for six percent. The fourth frequent pragmatic function for male

NA *Twitter* NA users is *to show seriousness* (10 N, 6%) along with *to assert something is true* (10 N, 6%). The fifth frequent pragmatic function is *to express sarcasm* with seven occurrences accounting for five percent.

Female and male NA *Twitter* users show a similar pattern in terms of their preference for the pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid*. The most common pragmatic functions for both genders is *to show agreement*. The fifth common pragmatic functions both genders exhibit is *to express sarcasm*. Along similar lines, female and male NA *Twitter* users show great disfavor for some pragmatic functions, such as *be confrontational* (2 N females, 2 N males), *show emotions* ( 3 N females, 2 N males), *to express curiosity* (4 N female, 3 N males), making by the far the least frequent pragmatic functions in the *Twitter* corpus.

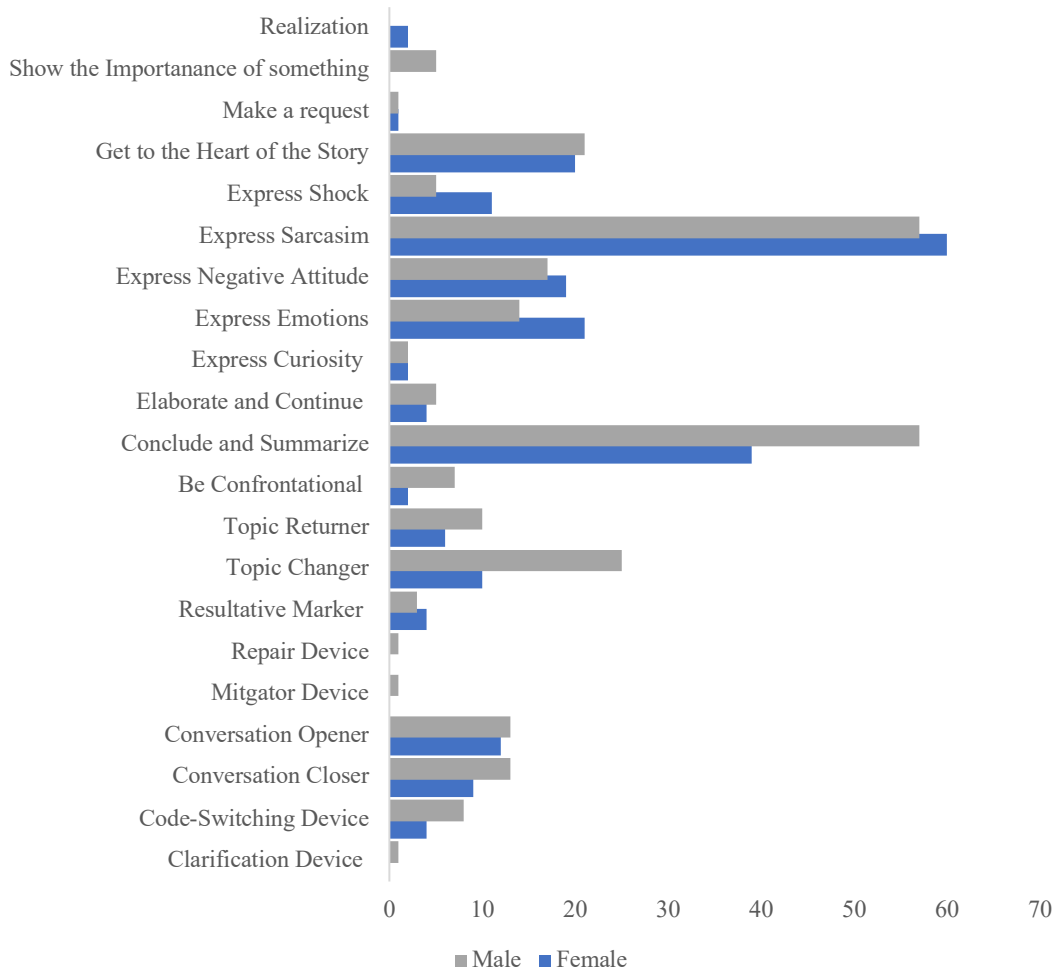


Figure 4. The Pragmatic Functions of the NA discourse Marker *elzibda* both Genders exhibit

As shown in Figure 4, there also seem to be gendered difference in terms of the employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* with the number of male NA *Twitter* users is slightly higher than female NA *Twitter* users. For instance, the male NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse marker *elzibda* fifty-four percent while the female NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in forty-six percent, making it more frequent with male NA *Twitter* users. Female NA *Twitter* users along with male NA *Twitter* users show similar pragmatic functions across numerous contexts. Similarly to the NA discourse marker *min jid*, female and male NA *Twitter* users seem to agree on the

most common pragmatic function of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* that is to *show sarcasm* despite the gender differences in the use of the discourse marker *elzibda*. Female NA *Twitter* users along with male NA *Twitter* users also show more pragmatic functions than with the NA discourse marker *min jid*. Interestingly though, there are a couple of pragmatic functions that are only unique to certain genders, as shown in the *Twitter* corpus. For instance, male NA *Twitter* users alone used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as *repair device*, as *mitigator device*, as *clarification device* each appeared once while to *show the importance of something* appeared five times. Along similar lines, female NA *Twitter* users alone used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* for *realization* in two instances. It is not clear whether or not the same pattern still holds among female and male NA *Twitter* users in spoken conversation given the scarcity of pragmatic studies on the NA discourse marker *elzibda*.

Along similar lines, female and male NA *Twitter* users seem to have a preference for some of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* pragmatic functions. For instance, female and male NA *Twitter* users employed NA discourse *elzibda* to *express attitude* (19 N females, 17 N males) and to *express emotion* (21 N females, 14 N males). Female and male NA *Twitter* users also employed NA discourse marker *elzibda* as *code-switching device* (4 N females, 8 N males), as *topic opener* (12 N females, 13 N males), as *topic closer* (9 N females, 13 N males), and as *topic changer* (10 N females, 25 N males).

Unlike with the NA discourse marker *min jid*, female and male NA *Twitter* show similar preference in terms of the most frequent pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *elzibda*. The *Twitter* corpus shows that the most commonly used pragmatic function for both genders is to *express sarcasm*. For instance, female NA *Twitter* users

*expressed sarcasm* sixty times accounting for twenty-six of the total occurrences by females whereas male NA *Twitter* users expressed sarcasm fifty-seven times accounting for twenty-one of the occurrences by males. Despite there is a gendered difference in the employment of the discourse marker *elzibda*, both female NA *Twitter* users and male NA *Twitter* users

The second commonly used pragmatic function is *to conclude and summarize*. Female NA *Twitter* users used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *conclude and summarize* thirty-nine times accounting for seventeen percent of female occurrences. Male NA *Twitter* users used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *conclude and summarize* in fifty-seven times accounting for twenty-one percent of male occurrences. Nevertheless, female and male NA *Twitter* users are not in agreement when it comes to the third most common pragmatic functions. For instance, the third most frequent pragmatic function for females NA *Twitter* users is to *express emotion* (21 N, 9%) while for male NA *Twitter* users it is as *topic changer* (25 N, 9%). The fourth commonly used pragmatic function for female and male NA *Twitter* users is *to get to the heart of the story after an introduction*. Female NA *Twitter* users used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *get to the heart of the story* twenty times accounting for nine percent of female occurrences. Male NA *Twitter* users used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *get to the heart of the story* twenty-one times accounting for eight percent of the male occurrences. The fifth commonly used pragmatic function for female and male NA *Twitter* users is *to express negative attitude*. Female NA *Twitter* users used the NA discourse marker *elzibda* to *express negative attitudes* nineteen times accounting for eight percent whereas their male counterparts expressed negative attitudes in seventeen accounting for six percent. The least common

pragmatic functions for female and male NA *Twitter* users are to *make request* (1 N females, 1 N males), *express curiosity* (2 N females, 2 N males), *resultative marker* (4 N females, 3 N males), *elaborate and continue* (4 N females, 5 N males), respectively.



Table 29. The Socioeconomic Status and the Pragmatic Functions of Min Jid

Pragmatic Functions	Socioeconomic Status					
	Ph.D. Degree	M.A. Degree	Postgraduate Degree	B.A. Degree	Associate Degree	Not Mentioned
Conversation Opener	0	1	0	9	0	0
Intensifying Device	0	1	0	21	0	4
Assert something is true	1	0	0	12	0	6
Be Confrontational	0	0	0	3	0	1
Express Emotions	1	1	0	3	0	0
Express Curiosity	0	2	0	4	0	1
Express Negative Attitude	1	5	0	12	0	6
Express Sarcasm	0	0	0	12	1	7
Express Shock	1	1	0	12	0	6
Show Agreement	5	15	1	236	3	67
Show seriousness	3	1	0	17	0	11
<b>Total</b>	12	27	1	341	4	109
<b>Percent</b>	2.4%	5.4%	0%	68.2%	1%	22%
<b>Grand total</b>	*500					

\* there are seven instances showing min jid with non-pragmatic function accounting for one percent

As shown in Table 29, the vast majority of NA *Twitter* users of the NA discourse marker *min jid* hold B.A. Degree. The most frequent pragmatic function of the NA discourse marker *min jid* is *to show agreement* that is prevalent across various socioeconomic statuses, including *B.A. Degree* (236 N), *M.A. Degree* (15 N), *Ph.D. Degree* (5 N), *Postgraduate Degree* (1 N), *Associate Degree* (3 N), as well as *Not Mentioned* (67 N). Nevertheless, the pragmatic function of *showing agreement* tends to be way more frequent with NA *Twitter* users with B.A. Degree. The NA *Twitter* users with Ph.D. Degree show six pragmatic functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid*, such as *show agreement* (5 N), *show seriousness* (3 N), *express shock* (1 N), *express attitude* (1 N), *express emotions* (1 N) and *assert something is true* (1 N). The NA *Twitter* users with M.A. Degree show eight pragmatic functions, such as *show agreement* (15 N), *show seriousness* (1 N), *express shock* (1 N), *express attitude* (5 N), *express curiosity* (2 N), *express emotions* (1 N), *as intensifying device* (1 N), and *as conversation opener* (1 N). The NA *Twitter* users with M.A. Degree show pragmatic functions not found with the NA *Twitter* users with Ph.D. Degree, including *as conversation opener*, *as intensifying device*, as well as *to express curiosity*. On the other hand, the NA *Twitter* users with Ph.D. Degree show one pragmatic function not found with the NA *Twitter* users with M.A. Degree that is *to assert something is true*. The NA *Twitter* users with postgraduate Degree show a single pragmatic function that is *to show agreement* (1 N). The NA *Twitter* with B.A. Degree are the only ones showing all of the eleven pragmatic functions: *Show agreement* (236 N), *show seriousness* (17 N), *express shock* (12 N), *express attitude* (12 N), *express sarcasm* (12 N), *express curiosity* (4 N), *express emotions* (3 N), *to be confrontational* (3 N), *as intensifying device* (21 N), *as conversation opener*

(9 N), *assert something is true* (12 N). The NA *Twitter* with Associate Degree shows two pragmatic functions, such as *express sarcasm* (1 N) and *show agreement* (3 N). NA *Twitter* with Not Mentioned show nine pragmatic functions, such as *show agreement* (66 N), *show seriousness* (11 N), *express shock* (6 N), *express attitude* (6 N), *express sarcasm* (7 N), *express curiosity* (1 N), *to be confrontational* (1 N), *assert something is true* (6 N), and *as intensifying device* (4 N). The NA *Twitter* user with Not Mentioned along with the NA *Twitter* users with B.A. Degree are the only ones exhibiting the pragmatic function of *being confrontational*.

Interestingly, the NA *Twitter* users with various socioeconomic statuses seem to agree on pragmatic function that is to *show agreement*, including *Ph.D. Degree*, *M.A. Degree*, *Postgraduate Degree*, *B.A. Degree*, *Associate Degree*, and *Not Mentioned*. On the other hand, the NA *Twitter* users with B.A Degree and below tend to be the only NA *Twitter* users to *express sarcasm*. This stems from the fact that the NA *Twitter* users with M.A. and Ph.D. Degree show no instance of the NA discourse marker *min jid* expressing *sarcasm*.

Table 30. The Socioeconomic Status and the Pragmatic Functions of Elzibda

Pragmatic Functions	Socioeconomic Status					
	Ph.D. Degree	M.A. Degree	B.A. Degree	Associate Degree	High School Diploma	Not Mentioned
Code-Switching Device	1	0	10	0	0	1
Conversation Opener	0	0	22	0	0	3
Conversation Closer	0	1	17	0	0	4
Repair Device	0	0	1	0	0	0
Topic Changer	0	1	24	0	0	9
Topic Returner	0	2	13	0	0	1
Resultative Marker	0	0	6	0	0	1
Confrontational	0	0	6	0	0	3
Conclude and Summarize	2	4	60	0	1	29
Elaborate and Continue	0	0	8	0	0	1
Express Emotions	0	0	30	1	1	4
Express Negative Attitudes	0	2	28	0	1	5
Express Sarcasm	0	2	97	0	0	17
Express Shock	2	0	12	0	1	3
Get to the heart of the story	0	0	34	0	0	7
Mitigator Device	0	0	1	0	0	0
Clarification Device	0	0	1	0	0	0
Express Curiosity	0	0	4	0	0	0
Make a request	0	0	2	0	0	0
Show the importance of something	0	0	2	0	0	3
Realization	0	0	2	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	5	12	380	1	4	91
<b>Percent</b>	1%	2%	77%	0%	1%	18%
<b>Grand total</b>	*500					

\* there are seven instances showing elzibda with non-pragmatic function accounting for one percent

As shown in Table 30, similar to NA discourse marker *min jid*, the overwhelming majority of the NA *Twitter* users of NA discourse marker *elzibda* have B.A. Degree. The most common pragmatic function of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* across most of the socioeconomic statuses is *to express sarcasm*, such as *Ph.D. Degree* (2 N) *M.A. Degree* (2 N), *B.A. Degree* (97 N), *Not Mentioned* (17 N). The second common pragmatic function of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* across almost all of the socioeconomic statuses is *to conclude and summarize*, such as *Ph.D. Degree* (2 N) *M.A. Degree* (4 N), *B.A. Degree* (60 N), *High School Diploma* (1 N), and *Not Mentioned* (29 N).

The NA *Twitter* users with Ph.D. Degree show three pragmatic functions, such as *code-switching device* (1 N), *conclude and summarize* (2 N), and *to express shock* (2 N). The NA *Twitter* users with M.A. Degree show six pragmatic functions, such as *as conversation closer* (1 N), *as topic changer* (1 N), *as topic returner* (2 N), *to conclude and summarize* (4 N), *to express negative attitude* (2 N), *to express sarcasm* (2 N). Interestingly, the NA *Twitter* users with Ph.D. Degree exhibit two pragmatic functions not found with the NA *Twitter* users with M.A. including *as a code-switching device* and *to express shock*. On the other hand, the NA *Twitter* users with M.A. show other pragmatic functions not found with the NA *Twitter* users with Ph.D. including *as conversation closer*, *as topic changer*, *as topic returner*, *to express negative attitude*, and *to express sarcasm*. The NA *Twitter* users with B.A. are the only ones showing all of the twenty one pragmatic functions: *As codeswitching device* (10 N), *as conversation closer* (17 N), *as conversation opener* (22 N), *as a mitigator device* (1 N), *as a repair device* (1 N), *as resultative marker* (6 N), *as topic changer* (24 N), *as topic returner* (13 N), *as*

*clarification device* (1 N), *for realization* (2 N), *to be confrontational* (6 N), *to conclude and summarize* (60 N), *to elaborate and continue* (8 N), *to express curiosity* (4 N), *to express emotions* (30 N), *to express negative attitude* (28 N), *to express sarcasm* (97 N), *to express shock* (12 N), *to get to the heart of the story after an introduction* (34 N), *to make a request* (2 N), and *to show the importance of somethings* (2 N). The NA *Twitter* users with Associate Degree show one pragmatic function that is to *show emotion* (1 N). The NA *Twitter* users with Associate Degree show the pragmatic function of *showing emotion* that is not found with the NA *Twitter* users with Ph.D. and M.A. The NA *Twitter* users with High School Diploma show four pragmatic functions, such as *to conclude and summarize* (1 N), *to express emotions* (1 N), *to express negative attitude* (1 N), and *to express shock* (1 N). Unlike the NA *Twitter* users with Ph.D. and M.A., the NA *Twitter* users with High School tend to show the pragmatic function of *expressing emotions*. The NA *Twitter* users with High School also show the pragmatic function of *expressing shock* unlike the NA *Twitter* users with M.A.

The NA *Twitter* users with Not Mentioned show fifteen pragmatic functions as follows: *As codeswitching device* (1 N), *as conversation closer* (4 N), *as conversation opener* (3 N), *as resultative marker* (1 N), *as topic changer* (10 N), *as topic returner* (1 N), *to be confrontational* (3 N), *to conclude and summarize* (29 N), *to elaborate and continue* (1 N), *to express emotions* (3 N), *to express negative attitude* (5 N), *to express sarcasm* (16 N), *to express shock* (3 N), *to get to the heart of the story after an introduction* (7 N), and *to show the importance of somethings* (3 N). The NA *Twitter* users with Not Mentioned tend not to show the following pragmatic functions that are found with the NA *Twitter* users with B.A., including *as a repair device*, *as a mitigator*

*device, as a clarification device, to express curiosity, to make a request, as well as for realization.* The NA Twitter users with Ph.D. Degree, M.A. Degree, High School Diploma, and Associate Degree also tend not to show the aforementioned pragmatic functions.

## **Discussion**

The thorough and in-depth pragmatic, syntactic, and sociolinguistic analyses of the *Twitter* corpus turned out interesting results worthy of further discussion. *Pragmatically*, the NA discourse marker *min jid* and the NA discourse marker *elzibda* show a number of fascinating pragmatic functions across a variety of different contexts that were divided into three major categories, namely *textual*, *interpersonal*, and *cognitive*. Nevertheless, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* alone tends to exhibit *textual*, *interpersonal*, and *cognitive* pragmatic functions whereas the NA discourse marker *min jid* exhibits only *textual* and *interpersonal*. The aforementioned categories emerged from the current study confirms the already proposed taxonomies by linguistic scholars, including Brinton (1996) along with Ament and Parés (2018). The *textual* and *interpersonal* categories confirm Brinton's (1996) classifications. On the other hand, the *textual* and the *interpersonal* along with the *cognitive* category confirms Ament and Parés's (2018) classifications. Nevertheless, Ament and Parés's (2018) divided the textual category into two distinctive categories, namely *structural* and *referential*. Interestingly, the *Twitter* corpus shows that the NA discourse marker *min jid* predominately shows *interpersonal* pragmatic function (91%). The NA discourse marker *elzibda* mostly shows *textual* pragmatic functions (52%) followed by interpersonal pragmatic functions (44%) while *cognitive* pragmatic functions are less than five percent.

The *Twitter* corpus clearly shows that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* is more productive than the NA discourse marker *min jid* given the fact it shows almost double the number of pragmatic functions. For instance, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* exhibits twenty-one pragmatic functions whereas the NA discourse marker *min jid* exhibits eleven pragmatic functions. The NA discourse marker *min jid* has a single pragmatic function that is by far more frequent than other functions which is *to show agreement* (362 N, 65%). It came as no surprise that *showing agreement* is the most frequent in the *Twitter* corpus since it is one of the most prevalent pragmatic functions observed in spoken conversations among Najdi Arabic native speakers based on prolonged in-person observations. Along similar lines, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* has two pragmatic functions more frequent than others they are *to express sarcasm* (118 N, 24%) and *to conclude and summarize* (96 N, 19%). Even though the NA discourse marker *elzibda* was recently introduced to the Saudi community, there have been some assumptions by a number of Arab scholars and linguists that Najdi Arabic derived this discourse marker from Modern Standard Arabic. Interestingly though, the Modern Standard Arabic *elzibda* or as formally referred to *zibdat al kalam* ‘lit. in sum’ shows that MSA speakers are *concluding and summarizing*. It might be safe to suggest that NA discourse marker *elzibda* originally developed from MSA *zibdat al kalam* in which later it made its way to NA acquiring numerous procedural meanings besides its original semantic meaning. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that *to conclude and summarize* is one of the most frequent pragmatic functions for NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the *Twitter* data.



Unfortunately, the two NA discourse markers the current study thoroughly studied have not been ever studied by pragmatists, sociolinguists, or syntacticians. For this aforementioned reason, there are currently no studies to compare to the results of this study. Nevertheless, the results could be compared with a number of linguistic studies on other discourse markers across languages, including *English* and *Arabic*. Interestingly though, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* mostly show *textual, interpersonal, cognitive* pragmatic functions that were already reported in the literature on discourse markers

As for the cognitive pragmatic functions, the *Twitter* corpus shows there are only two cognitive pragmatic functions exhibited by the NA discourse marker *elzibda*, namely *as repair device* and *for realization*, which are supported by earlier studies on Arabic and English discourse markers. These two aforementioned cognitive pragmatic functions are found in the English discourse marker *oh*. According to Ajimer (2011), the English discourse marker *oh* is used to communicate ‘the realization of something’ (145). The English discourse marker *oh* is also used *as repair device* (Schiffrin, 1987). Along similar lines, the Arabic discourse marker *jaʕni* is employed in various contexts with the sole function to repair utterances (Mobarki, 2018).

As for the interpersonal function, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* share six in common, such as *to express sarcasm, to express emotions, to be confrontational, to express curiosity, to express negative attitude, and to express shock*. These interpersonal pragmatic functions were supported by a number of Arabic and English linguistic studies. Al-Azzawie (2015) found that the (Iraqi) Arabic discourse marker *ʕadi* has the function of *expressing sarcasm*. The English discourse

markers *duh* and *haha* are used to *express sarcasm* (Palacio and Gustilo, 2016). Trihartanti & Damayanti (2014) show that the English discourse marker OMG *expresses surprise and shock*. Schiffrin (1987) along with Fraser (1990) view the English discourse marker *oh* as it *expresses emotions and feelings*. Similarly, Al Rousan (2015) shows that the Saudi Arabic discourse marker *maf nafask* is employed to *express emotions* of different sorts, including anger and annoyance. Al Rousan (2015) also shows that *maf nafask* can be used to *show confrontations* during heated interactions. Al-Harashseh & Kanakri (2013) also show that the (Jordanian) Arabic discourse marker *tajib* has a number of functions, one of which is to *show confrontations*. On the other hand, there are a number of interpersonal pragmatic functions that are only found in one of the two NA discourse markers, including *to show agreement, to show seriousness, to assert something true, and as a mitigator device*. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* is used *as a mitigator device* while the NA discourse marker *min jid* is used to *show agreement, show seriousness, and assert something is true*. These interpersonal pragmatic functions were reported in the literature across a number of studies. Jucker (1993) claims that the English discourse marker *well* is used *as a mitigator device*. Al-Harashseh & Kanakri (2013) show that the (Jordanian) Arabic discourse marker *tajib* is used to *show agreement*. Jucker (1993) along with Palacio & Gustilo (2016) states that the English discourse marker *yeah* is employed with the sole goal to *show agreement*. Nevertheless, the Arabic discourse marker *tajib* along with the English discourse marker *yeah* might communicate a different pragmatic function other than *showing agreement* depending on the intonation.

As for the textual function, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* share a single textual pragmatic function, namely *as a*

*conversation opener*. The NA discourse marker *min jid* has another textual pragmatic function besides the *conversation opener* which is *as intensifying device*. On the other hand, the NA discourse marker *elzibda* has a large array of textual pragmatic functions, including *as code-switching device*, *as conversation opener*, *as conversation closer*, *as resultative marker*, *as topic changer*, *as topic returner*, *to conclude and summarize*, *to elaborate and continue*, *to get to the heart of the story after an introduction*, *to show the importance of something*, and *to make a request*. The aforementioned textual pragmatic functions were supported by numerous studies by a number of prominent scholars in the field. Brinton (1996) and Ament and Parés (2018) claim that discourse markers are employed to *open conversations*, *close conversations*, *as topic changer*, *as topic returner*, as well as *to elaborate and continue*. Ament and Parés (2018) also claim that discourse markers are used *to conclude and summarize* and *as resultative device*. Interestingly, Mobarki (2018) shows that the Saudi Arabic discourse marker *jæʕni* could be employed as a *code-switching device* giving the interlocutors the opportunity to switch from one Arabic variety to another.

*Syntactically*, this dissertation offered a preliminary analysis of the syntactic behavior of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* in terms of their syntactic positions without looking at their syntactic trees since this will be an interesting topic for future research. The preliminary analysis shows that the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* tend to occur in various syntactic positions, such as *initial*, *medial*, *final*, and *alone* position. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to appear initially in four hundred and thirty-nine instances accounting for eighty-eight percent whereas the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to

appear initially in two hundred and seventy-four instances accounting for fifty-five percent. The NA discourse markers' occurrence in the initial position supports the results of the earlier studies carried out by Schourup (1999), Brinton (2017), and Mobarki (2018). The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to occur in the medial position in thirty-seven times accounting for seven percent while the NA discourse marker *min jid* tend to appear in the medial position in ninety-four times accounting for nineteen percent. The occurrence of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in the medial position supports the results of Mobarki's (2018) study in which emphatic *jaʕni* occurred in the medial position besides the initial position. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to appear in the final position in twenty-three times accounting for five percent whereas the NA discourse marker *min jid* tends to appear in the final position in thirty-six times accounting for seven percent. In other words, there are so many fewer occurrences of the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* in the final position. The occurrence of these two NA discourse markers in the medial and final position supports the findings of Tottie's (2011) study on the English discourse marker *like* in which it occurs finally in Irish English and medially in British English. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* also tend to appear alone without any lexical items. The NA discourse marker *elzibda* tends to appear alone only once which is quite rare. On the other hand. the NA discourse marker *min jid* appeared ninety-six times alone accounting for nineteen percent. The occurrence of NA discourse markers in the alone position supports Al-Harashseh & Kanakri's (2013) findings on the (Jordanian) Arabic discourse marker *tajib*.

The NA discourse markers *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* collocate with various syntactic categories across different contexts, including *Determiner Phrase*

(DP), *Adjective Phrase* (AdjP), *Negative Phrase* (NegP), and *Verb Phrase* (VP). The NA discourse marker *elzibda* is most frequent with the *Verb Phrase* (VP) in the initial position with a hundred and thirty-three accounting for thirty percent. The second most frequent syntactic category the NA discourse marker *elzibda* co-occur within this position is the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) with a hundred and fifteen occurrences accounting for twenty-six percent. On the other hand, the NA discourse marker *min jid* collocates with most frequently with *Determiner Phrase* (DP) in hundred and seventeen times accounting for forty-three percent. The second most frequent syntactic category collocating with *min jid* is the *Verb Phrase* (VP) with sixty-one times accounting for twenty-two percent. The preference for the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) and the *Verb Phrase* (VP) provides support for Tagliamonte's (2005) study on the English discourse markers *like* and *just* in which they most frequently collocate with these two aforementioned syntactic categories in the initial position. Tagliamonte (2005) shows that the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) and the *Verb Phrase* (VP) are among the top three most frequent syntactic categories appearing with the discourse markers *like* and *just* initially. According to Tagliamonte (2005), the English discourse marker *like* tends to collocate mostly with *Determiner Phrase* (DP) (30%) and *Verb Phrase* (VP) (9%) in the initial position, respectively. On the other hand, the English discourse marker *just* collocates with the *Verb Phrase* (VP) (46%) and *Determiner Phrase* (DP) (7%), respectively. The NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* show resemblance to the English discourse markers *like* and *just* in terms of the syntactic categories they collocate within the initial position. For instance, the NA discourse marker *min jid* shows a great preference for the *Determiner Phrase* (DP) as

with the English discourse marker *like* whereas the NA discourse marker *elzibda* has an immense preference for the *Verb Phrase* (VP) like the English discourse marker *just*.

*Sociolinguistically*, this dissertation offered a preliminary analysis of the relationship between sociolinguistic factors and the employment of the NA discourse markers with the goal to get a sense of the effect that *socioeconomic status* and *gender* appear to have on the use of these NA discourse markers. Therefore, the effects of sociolinguistic factors on NA discourse markers use will be looked at in more depth in future research. The preliminary analysis shows that the employment of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* and the NA discourse marker *min jid* is highly associated with NA *Twitter* users with a B.A. Degree. It is safe to say that NA *Twitter* users with a B.A. Degree are more likely to use *Twitter* than other groups that explain their higher representation in the *Twitter* corpus. Interestingly though, the *Twitter* corpus clearly shows that the overwhelming majority of NA *Twitter* users using the two aforementioned NA discourse markers are B.A. holders. For instance, the NA *Twitter* users of the NA discourse marker *elzibda* are predominately B.A. holders accounting for seventy-seven percent. Along similar lines, the vast majority of the NA *Twitter* users of *min jid* have B.A. degree accounting for about seventy percent. Nevertheless, the high frequency of the NA discourse markers in the utterance of NA *Twitter* users with B.A. Degree not necessarily mean that these two NA discourse markers are less standard or stigmatized linguistic items. The utterances included in the *Twitter* corpus reflect the differences in the numbers of NA *Twitter* users with B.A. degrees and other NA *Twitter* users with higher degrees, including *M.A.* and *Ph.D.* Therefore, having an equal number of NA *Twitter* users with

various degrees in future studies will provide better insights into the effect of socioeconomic status on discourse markers employment.

As for the effect of gender on the employment of these NA discourse markers, the preliminary analysis shows that female and male NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse markers *elzibda* and *min jid* in varying degrees of frequencies. To better capture the relation between gender and discourse markers' employment, there should be equal gender representation. The *Twitter* corpus shows there is unequal gender representation when it comes to use of the NA discourse markers *min jid* along with *elzibda*. For instance, female NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse *min jid* in sixty-five percent of the time while the male NA *Twitter* user employed the NA discourse marker *min jid* in thirty-five percent of the time. In other words, the female NA *Twitter* users used the NA discourse marker *min jid* almost twice the times of male NA *Twitter* users. On the other hand, the female NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in forty-six percent of the time whereas male NA *Twitter* users employed the NA discourse marker *elzibda* in fifty-four percent of the time, making it slightly more frequent with male NA *Twitter* users. Female and male NA *Twitter* users show similar pragmatic functions across numerous contexts. However, there are a number of pragmatic functions that are only communicated by either gender. Interestingly though, female and male NA *Twitter* users have exhibited all of the major functions of the NA discourse marker *min jid*. Nevertheless, female and male NA *Twitter* users express procedural meanings that are unique to a certain gender when using the NA discourse marker *elzibda*. For instance, female *Twitter* users employ the NA discourse marker *elzibda* for

*realization*. On the other hand, male *Twitter* users use the NA discourse marker *elzibda* as *clarification device*, as *mitigator device*, as well as *repair device*.



## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

This chapter offers concluding remarks for the dissertation summarizing the previous chapters. It also provides new directions and recommendations for pragmatic and (socio)linguistic scholars along with other researchers interested in studying the (socio)pragmatic and syntactic behavior of discourse markers in general and Najdi Arabic discourse markers in particular. The chapter also offers a concise discussion on some of the significant implications of studying discourse markers in computer-mediated communications for various fields, including *translations*, *lexigraphy*, as well as *(applied)linguistics*.

This dissertation aimed at scrutinizing and thoroughly dissecting the pragmatic, discourse, interpersonal, cognitive, and syntactic functions of two of the most widely employed Najdi Arabic discourse markers in *Twitter*, *elzibda* and *min jid*. The objective of the current dissertation was threefold and can be summarized as follows. First, the dissertation aimed at contributing to the scarce literature on Arabic discourse markers in general and Najdi Arabic discourse markers in particular. Second, the dissertation wished to encourage Arabic scholars along with other linguists interested in the Arabic language varieties to indulge in the new emerging Computer-Mediated Communications research territory. Third, the dissertation aimed at providing scholars with fresh perspectives on exploring and approaching discourse markers from a different angle.

Chapter 1 offered a brief snapshot of the history of discourse markers providing a short timeline to the beginning of linguistic scholars' immense interest in discourse markers functions. It also offered a summary of the major frameworks and approaches

along with the classic and recent scholarly studies on discourse markers introducing the noticeable gap in the literature. Chapter 1 discussed the significance of the dissertation, the goals of the dissertation, as well as the dissertation questions.

Chapter 2 provided a general and holistic overview of the classical and modern literature on the Najdi Arabic variety, discourse markers, computer-mediated communications, along with emoji. It introduced a number of theoretical frameworks, concepts, linguistic features and functions, and cross-linguistic studies, and also provided an overview of computer-mediated communication's major theoretical background and empirical studies. Chapter 2 offered a snapshot of the history of emoji touching on their evolution along with some of their major functions reported in the literature.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed discussion on the processes of data collection and data analysis of the Najdi Arabic discourse markers along with the faced key challenges and obstacles throughout the aforementioned stage. Chapter 3 discussed thoroughly the collection of *Twitter* data and the stages involved to build the *Twitter* corpus. It also thoroughly discussed the processes of data handling and storing, avoiding some of the unforeseen issues in terms of data loss or damage. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the major steps taken to transcribe the *Twitter* data.

Chapter 4 offered a through qualitative and quantitative analyses of the *Twitter* corpus discussing the textual, interpersonal, and cognitive pragmatic functions along with the syntactic or sentential positions of NA discourse markers. *Quantitatively*, chapter 4 provided a number of lists showing the syntactic positions occupied by the Najdi Arabic discourse markers and the linguistic items collocated with these NA discourse markers. *Qualitatively*, chapter 4 thoroughly discussed the textual, interpersonal, and cognitive

functions of the Najdi Arabic discourse markers across a variety of different contexts, also shedding light on the effect of sociolinguistic factors, including gender, and socioeconomic status on the use of Najdi Arabic discourse markers.

### **Study implications**

The dissertation has a number of significant implications for (i) (socio)linguists, pragmatists, and discourse analysts interested in CMC research, (ii) Arabic translators, modern-day syntacticians, and lexicographers as well as (iii) for the linguistic study in general. These significant implications of the dissertation should be taken into consideration through serious implementation to further develop the linguistic scholarship and contribute greatly to various linguistic subfields and other related fields.

The current dissertation guide scholars through the rigorous process of building a massive corpus from the *Twitter* social media platform using analytical tools, data mining tools, as well as discourse analysis tools to conduct various linguistic analyses. The current dissertation also familiarizes scholars with some of the most significant challenges for conducting (socio)linguistic study given the available information. Therefore, the dissertation motivates linguistic scholars to take the recommendations seriously to adopt the analytical and mining tools that are needed to build a massive corpus and to avoid the encountered issues in data gathering and analysis.

The dissertation has other interesting implications for Arabic translators, modern-day syntacticians, and lexicographers. The dissertation provides scholars of the Arabic language in the aforementioned linguistics and linguistic related fields a general synopsis of the various pragmatic, syntactic, textual, interpersonal, cognitive functions of the two NA discourse markers. The dissertation also shows translators and lexicographers along

with syntacticians that the two Najdi Arabic discourse markers occupy different syntactic positions and communicate various procedural meanings based on the context. For this aforementioned reason, the dissertation encourages Arabic scholars to adapt a variety of different theoretical and analytical approaches to document NA discourse markers' procedural meanings and syntactic rules.

The dissertation also has another implication for the linguistic research on discourse markers in general and Najdi Arabic discourse markers in particular. The dissertation offers a new perspective on exploring discourse markers in a new emerging medium that has much to offer linguistic scholars including pragmatists, sociolinguists, as well as discourse analysts. The dissertation also gives scholars an overview of the significant differences the discourse markers in question exhibit in terms of their textual, interpersonal, and cognitive pragmatic functions across face-to-face and computer-mediated communications. The dissertation revisited and challenged some of the proposed taxonomies by a number of prominent scholars in the field. For this aforementioned reason, this dissertation highly encourages scholars to indulge in this fascinating emerging medium and revisit the proposed taxonomies in the classic and contemporary literature on discourse markers.

### **Future direction**

The Arabic contemporary literature on discourse markers shows there remains a real need for linguistic studies exploring the functions of discourse markers in Modern Standard Arabic along with other regional Arabic dialects. Unfortunately, the linguistic behavior of discourse markers has been only investigated in few Arabic dialects including *Libyan Arabic*, *Egyptian Arabic*, *Iraqi Arabic*, and *Najdi Arabic*. For this aforementioned

reason, there has been a conspicuous gap in Arabic literature with more linguistic research greatly needed to expand the literature. The Arabic literature on discourse markers clearly shows there have been a large number of discourse markers in Modern Standard Arabic in general and in Arabic varieties in particular, including Najdi Arabic, that remain unexplored.

A comparative pragmatic study on a number of Arabic discourse markers that are functional cross-dialectally might bring new insights into the understanding of the pragmatic functions of discourse markers. Interestingly, there have been a handful of Arabic discourse markers that are found across numerous Arabic varieties, such as *Najdi Arabic* and *Levantine Arabic*. For instance, the NA discourse marker *min jid* has another fascinating variant that is frequent in Levantine Arabic formally referred to as *'an jad*. Linguistic scholars along with other researchers interested in studying Arabic discourse markers are highly encouraged to dissect the pragmatic functions of these two variants to have a better understanding of their pragmatic behavior.

Along similar lines, a pragmatic and syntactic study on the employment of NA discourse markers in general and the NA discourse markers *min jid* and *elzibda* in particular across spoken and written contexts would further inform scholars' and linguists' understanding of the pragmatic and syntactic behavior of these linguistic items. The literature shows that there has been a plethora of studies conducted on other Arabic discourse markers in spoken conversations, including *jaʕni* (Mobarki, 2018) *bahi* (Ahamd, 2013), and *Tayyib* (Al-Harashseh & Kanakri, 2013). Nevertheless, there is a growing body of literature which explores discourse markers in written contexts. For this aforementioned reason, a comparative pragmatic and syntactic study that dissects

discourse markers in spoken and written contexts would fill the void in the literature and yield interesting results.

A longitudinal diachronic study on the employment of the NA discourse markers *min jid* and *elzibda* would shed light on the various adapted grammaticalization pathways, the newly emerged textual, interpersonal, and cognitive pragmatic functions, along with the recently preferred syntactic positions. Studies of this nature would provide linguistic scholars and discourse analysts with the opportunity to have a better understanding and grasp of the pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic developments of NA discourse markers during the past few decades. The literature on discourse markers clearly shows that there has been a dearth of diachronic pragmatic and discourse analysis studies on discourse markers across numerous languages as scholars tend to conduct studies that are synchronic in nature.

### **Study Limitations**

This dissertation has a number of limitations that must be pointed out. A major limitation of the dissertation is that the *Twitter* corpus built for the current study is considered not as relatively massive as other prominent linguistic corpora, including *Contemporary Corpus of American English (COCA)* and *British National Corpus (BNC)*. The former corpus contains more than a hundred million words whereas the latter corpus has five hundred and sixty million words. On the other hand, the *Twitter* corpus here has roughly around forty-one thousand and five hundred and two words.

Another major limitation of the dissertation is the *Twitter* limit constraint that might have an influence on the NA *Twitter* users' discourse markers' employment. The initial *Twitter* limit constraint was a 140-character tweet which was later doubled to 280

characters. Nevertheless, the utter existence of the character limit might not give NA *Twitter* users the opportunity to employ NA discourse markers with no restrictions as in their face-to-face communications. The *Twitter* limit constraint might have pushed NA *Twitter* users to cram the tweets with NA discourse markers that might not accurately and precisely capture NA *Twitter* users' use of discourse markers in another communication context.

Another significant limitation of the dissertation is the timeframe given the fact that the data collection along with the *Twitter* corpus construction processes took place during a short span of time that was in less than six months. The time constrain imposed on the construction of the *Twitter* corpus might hinder the capturing of other significant textual, interpersonal, cognitive, and syntactic roles of the NA discourse markers. The time constraint on the *Twitter* corpus construction might have also hindered the understanding of the adapted grammatical pathways since many pieces of the puzzle are still missing. The grammaticalization of NA discourse markers could only be thoroughly explored through a longitudinal diachronic historical linguistic study.

A major limitation of the dissertation is the transcription of the *Twitter* written discourse since many pieces of information that are crucial in order to completely understand the NA discourse markers' pragmatic and syntactic roles within the utterances were missing, such as *intonation, pauses, lengthening, and pitch*. Besides the aforementioned paralinguistic cues, there have also been other extralinguistic cues missing from the *Twitter* written discourse that might further the understanding of discourse markers functions in conversational interaction, including but not limited to, *gestures, facial expressions, as well as body postures*.

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APPENDIX A  
IRB APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Karen Adams  
English  
480/965-3013  
KLAAdams@asu.edu

Dear Karen Adams:

On 2/16/2018 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	The Pragmatic Functions of Discourse Markers in Twitter Communications among Najdi Arabic Speakers
Investigator:	Karen Adams
IRB ID:	STUDY00007728
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Updated Version , Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 2/16/2018.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Ibrahim Alaswad  
Ibrahim Alaswad