

## Diglossia in the Arabic Language

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### Abstract

*This paper synthesizes information from several resources on the Arabic language and its development from Classical Arabic to Modern standard Arabic Focusing on the main reason for changes within the Arabic language. Then it discusses the Arabic dialects focusing on the phenomenon of diglossia, which is the existence and use of two or more types of Arabic in an Arabic-speaking country, the reasons for its existence and its effect on Arab children's learning abilities. Some differences in phonology and lexicon between the Modern Standard Arabic and some Arabic dialects are represented, which may help teachers of English, obtain a general idea of these differences and to expect that there might be some differences in learning English especially in English pronunciation among Arabs. Some Arabic speakers may find difficulties in pronouncing specific sounds whereas others may not counter a similar difficulty. Finally, ending this paper with speculations regarding the future of the Arabic Language.*

**Keywords:** Diglossia, classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Dialects, code-switching

### 1. Introduction

One of the definitions of language is "the system of signs or words, their pronunciation and the methods of combining them that are used and understood by a particular group of people" (Merriam-Webster.com, 2015). Based on this definition, it may be difficult to determine the actual number of languages that exist and are used in the world; however, it has been reported that there are around 6,000 languages in the world (Comrie, 2009). This number may change in the future for several reasons. First, there are some parts of the world in which linguists have not yet studied the used languages. Therefore, these languages have not been added to this total. For example, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was discovered that 1/5 of the languages in the world are spoken in New Guinea, many of which had not yet been catalogued (Comrie, 2009).

Another reason why this number might change is because languages are born, while others die. When a language spreads, it changes and becomes a new language. As the linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt said: "There can never be a moment of true standstill in language, just as little as in the ceaseless flaming thought of men. By nature it is a continuous process of development" (Aitchison, 2001, p.3). So, languages alter over centuries causing the old languages to disappear and be replaced by new ones. In addition, dialects of a language often appear once it spreads. A dialect can be simply defined as a variety of a language, which is spoken locally and considered to be a less formal and less prestigious variety of that language (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) and has a distinctive construction and inflectional elements (Millar & Trask, 2015). Over time, these dialects gain different linguistic aspects that diverge from the mother language and from each other. Eventually, these dialects evolve to be different, independent languages (Millar & Trask, 2015). Latin is a perfect example. It was spoken during the time of the Roman Empire 26 centuries ago in West and South Europe as well as in the Balkans. During the late 400s and after the collapse of the Roman Empire in AD 476, Latin was divided into several regional dialects. These dialects grew into separated languages known as the Romance languages, which include 13 languages, such as French, Italian, Spanish and Romanian (Millar & Trask, 2015). An additional factor that has a role in determining the number of languages in the world is whether to consider the different varieties of a specific language to be different languages or different dialects (Comrie, 2009). For example, there are several varieties of the Arabic language. These varieties are usually known to be colloquial Arabic or Arabic dialects and range from languages that are mutually intelligible by Arabic speakers to being difficult to understand. However, these dialects have not been classified as different languages yet. The main reason for not considering Arabic dialects to be different languages is that these dialects are only used in informal speech in everyday communication, whereas the formal Arabic is still learned in schools and is required in formal education.

Also, reasonable groups of Arab in several Arab countries show their shared pride for the Arabic language by developing their skills in it and using it in their everyday formal and informal lives (Comrie, 2009).

The final reason is that a number of “endangered languages” (Comrie, 2009, p.4) exist in the world today. These languages are at risk of disappearing due to social and economic factors. Socially, minority groups may give up their minority language in favor of a more powerful or prestigious language. Economically, a minority group may abandon its language when economic services, such as jobs, education and health treatments, are offered in the dominant language rather than in the language spoken by the minority group. The process of abandoning a language and using a different one that appears to be more prestige or useful is called language shift (Trask & Millar, 2015). An example is the Sumerian language which is the language used around 31 centuries BC in the area known today as Iraq. The Sumer was conquered by Babylonian who was more powerful and so the Sumer gave up their language in favor of the Akkadian language which is the language of Babylonian. The Akkadian language was then abandoned for Aramaic which is the language of South-West Asia. Eventually, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Aramaic was given up in favor of the Arabic language (Trask & Millar, 2015).

## 2. The Arabic Language

“Talk like a book, much less like a newspaper or a public orator” (Mitchell, 1976, p. 1).

Language is the most effective way by which humans communicate with each other. It has been discussed that some languages can be closely related while others are not. Therefore, historical linguists have attempted to classify the world’s languages into several language families. Some language families are relatively larger than others (Millar & Trask, 2015). One language spoken by around 250 million people is Arabic (Alotaibi & Selouani, 2009). The opening quote by Mitchell (1976) could be referring to the different varieties of spoken Arabic, which range from Classical Arabic, which is the Quranic Arabic and the Arabic of literature during the six hundreds (Sabbah, 2015), to colloquial versions of the language. Therefore, this portion of the paper will focus on discussing the Arabic language’s family and stages.

The Afro-Asiatic family is one of the language families that include several subfamilies, each of which contains a number of languages. One of these subfamilies is *ancient Egyptian*, which includes the *hieroglyphs* and *Coptic* languages, the latter of which is spoken in East Africa and the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt and Ethiopia. Another Afro-Asiatic subfamily contains the *Berber* languages, which are spoken in North Africa. A third subfamily is *Chadic*, which is spoken in West Africa. A fourth subfamily is *Omotiic*, which is spoken in Ethiopia. A fifth subfamily is *Cushitic*, which includes the *Somali* languages. The final subfamily is the *Semitic* subfamily, which includes Arabic, Maltese, Hebrew, Aramaic and some other languages (Millar & Trask, 2015).

Focusing on the Arabic language, in his book, Owens (2006) discusses the three stages of Arabic (i.e., Old Arabic, Middle Arabic and Neo-Arabic). According to Owens, Old Arabic is the language of the Qur’an, poetry and Old Arabic literature, as well as the language originated by early Arabic grammarians. Middle Arabic relates to the language used outside of the Arabian Peninsula in the early period of Islam. Neo-Arabic, on the other hand, is composed of the modern Arabic dialects spoken in Arab countries.

Several other divisions are used to classify the different Arabic languages. The first type, Classical Arabic (CA), is the language of the Qur’an and classical literature. As mentioned by Al-Sobh, Abu-Melhim and Bani-Hani (2015), CA was used 1,500 years ago in the area of Hijaz in the Arabian Peninsula. However, Classical Arabic can be divided into two eras: pre- and post-Islamic CA (Hetzron, 1998). Pre-Islamic CA is the Arabic used in poetry during the period from CE 501 to 600, whereas post-Islamic CA, which is the language of the Qur’an. The standardized grammar, morphology and syntax of CA were established by Arabs grammarians in the CE 800s.

The second type, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), is considered to be the modern version of CA (Al-Sobh et al., 2015) and is the language of formal speech in Arab countries, such as is used in governmental speeches, the education system and on the news. It is also the means of communication between Arabs living in different countries (Alotaibi & Selouani, 2009). According to Hetzron (1997), the MSA was developed during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to fit with civilization era by being a flexible version of CA that follows the basic syntax and morphology of CA, while, at the same time, utilizing some colloquial terms and expressions. Thus, no difference exists in the phonetics (i.e., sounds) of CA and MSA. Instead, the main differences exist in the languages’ vocabulary and syntax (i.e., the arrangement of words and phrases within Arabic sentences). The third type, Colloquial Arabic, is the language of everyday speech and conversation. There are many varieties of colloquial Arabic. Some are mutually intelligible to Arabic speakers, while others are not. The larger the physical distance between the dialects, the more a difference appears among them (Hetzron, 1997).

People from certain parts of the Arabic speaking countries have words for things that may differ from other parts, also differences in regard to the sounds of certain letters, unique pronunciation, different word endings, gender markers and basic every day words exist depending upon the region within which it is spoken.

### **3. Diglossia**

It appears that Arabic speaking countries have adopted MSA as their official language, yet dialect varieties of the language exist as well, causing the phenomena of diglossia in Arabic. Diglossia in general is “a situation in which there are two distinct codes with clear functional separation; that is one code is employed in one set of circumstances and the other is an entirely different set” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p.90). These codes are related to each other but regarded as different varieties, which each is used differently depending on the reason and situation. Thus one is high and the other is low. An example of diglossia is the Arabic language.

Diglossia in Arabic is said to be an old linguistic situation that arose during the spread of Islam, when the Arabic language came into contact with other languages and non-Arabs began to speak Arabic. It refers to the existence and use of two or more types of Arabic in an Arabic-speaking country. Of these types of Arabic, one is MSA considered to be the high variety, while the other is a colloquial variety which is the low one. Each type is used for a specific purpose (Al-Sobh et al., 2015). For example, MSA is used in formal communication, such as in the news media, educational system, religious situations and governmental speech (Al-Sobh et al., 2015), while Colloquial Arabic is the language used in everyday speech. Although the people in Arabic speaking countries acquire their local dialect first, MSA is the praised variety which is the official language of several Arab countries. It is considered the high variety because it is the “Arabism” mark of all Arabs (Comire, 2009).

### **4. Reasons for Changes within the Arabic Language**

The division of a language into several dialects may be due to several factors. One of these factors is the geographical environment of which people are living. As Halal (1990) stated, a language can be spoken in a specific land (i.e., country). This land can be divided into different geographical aspects (i.e., mountains, rivers, forests, deserts). Residents' appearances and habits, as well as their way of speaking are affected by their environment, causing for different dialects to appear.

The second factor is social status. Every society consists of several levels of social status, including the high and working class. A person's social status can affect his way of speech, causing for different dialects to appear (Halal, 1990). Social status may depend on the level of education. Educated people belong to the high class who are believed to have the skill, knowledge and logic which requires them to speak with the elegant sophisticated language to express their knowledge. As for the working class, they may have not acquired high degrees or education. However, they try to express themselves imitating the language of the high status without necessary being capable of doing so. The result will be the appearance of a dialect that is a mix between the high and the working class speech.

The third factor is the way in which people communicate via and interact with language to exchange benefits such as business interaction or trade. In addition, people move to other places to gain better lives and job opportunities. This contact can cause people to expand their knowledge of different languages and dialects, which can affect their own language and thus causing more dialects to appear. In the gulf regions, for example, there are several job opportunities for Arabs from other parts of the Arab world to apply for. Universities and colleges have many Indian and Pakistani teachers. Also, there are many Egyptian teachers in Arab countries as well. There are a large number of teachers from Egyptian working temporary in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf and in Yemen. As Versteegh (1997) points out that in Yemen, people would consider any person who is not Yemenite and is speaking Arabic to be an Egyptian teacher. Also, since teachers possess a high position in any society as can be role models and educators, in Yemen Egyptian Arabic terms are considered to be prestigious, causing Yemenite speakers to include Egyptian colloquialism in their own speech. Thus, different Arabic dialects and other language affect each other to some extent.

The Arabic language has not been immune to the above factors. As previously mentioned, CA was the language spoken on the Arabian Peninsula about 15 centuries ago. As time passed, changes in pronunciation and vocabulary appeared, creating MSA. This evolution may have occurred for several reasons. The first reason is language contact, especially in regard to persistent contact between Arabic and non-Arabic speakers (Owens, 2006). This change, known as pidginization, began 1,000 years ago due to early Islamic conquests and continues today (Owens, 2006).

Pidginization refers to the linguistic process that occurs when people speaking different languages come into contact. Therefore, when Arabic speakers interacted with non-Arabic speakers in early Islamic era, a lingua franca appeared. This lingua franca is a simplified version of the Arabic language known for its simplified structures, expressions and linguistic features (Al-Sobh et al., 2015). One example of linguistic change is in phonology. As explained by Hetzron (1997), a shift occurs in certain letters when words are borrowed from other languages in order to simplify these words. For example /p/ becomes /f/ in words that are from Aramaic. Also, /p/ is replaced by /b/ if it is borrowed from Persian (Hetzron, 1997).

The second reason is social status. During the early period of the Islamic empire, members of high society spoke CA. As stated by one of the Arab linguists, Ibn Jinni, CA was spoken by the Quraysh tribe who is known for its powerful status and prestige (Al-Sobh et al, 2015). Therefore, members of the lower levels of society strove to speak CA in an attempt to raise their stations. Aramaic and Coptic is an example. Due to the Arabic speaking settlers in Iraq and Egyptian in early Islamic era, people who were not speaking Arabic tried to acquire which was considered the high language. This process led to the simplification of CA and paved the way for MSA (Owens, 2006).

The third reason is fashion, which is defined as a popular way of dressing during a particular time or among a particular group of people (Merriam-Webster.com, 2015). Fashion can be applied to the way in which people speak as well. Popular versions of speech, vocabulary or tone may be adopted by people to cope with modern life's requirements of being stylish and accepted. As such, people change languages in order to fit in with a particular group or time (Millar & Trask, 2015). Looking specifically at the Arabic language, Arabs moved from speaking the MSA to dialect Arabic in order to fit into the mainstream culture which is they prefer to speak in their own dialect in order not to sound different from the public. Today, most Arabs in Arabic countries speak at least one local dialect as well as use MSA for official situations. For example, Saudi Arabia has at least seven dialects, which vary in sound and vocabulary from MSA and MSA is used for education and official governmental transactions.

Arabic dialects are divided into five groups (i.e., Egyptian, Levantine, Gulf, Iraqi and Maghrebi), each of which contains dialect subgroups (Zaidan & Callison-Burc, 2013). Egyptian dialects are mainly spoken in Egypt; however, this dialect is widely known as it is often used in Arab film and television series' productions and is also the dialect used by many Egyptian teachers in Arab countries (Mitchell, 1976). The Levantine dialects are spoken in the northern portion of the Arabian Peninsula, such as in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. These dialects utilize unique intonations, which make them desirable to many Arabs. The Gulf dialects may be the closest in vocabulary and sound to MSA. The Maghrebi dialects, spoken in northern Africa such as Tunisia and Maghreb, were influenced by the French and Berber languages. As such, they are the most difficult dialects to be understood by other Arabic speakers (Zaidan & Callison-Burc, 2013).

### ***5. The Reason for the Existence of Diglossia in the Arabic Language***

While MSA is the official language of Arab countries, most Arabs converse in a regional dialect. As such, it is important to understand why these dialects exist. The first reason is the language contact within the Arabian Peninsula between Arab tribes. Each tribe has its own way of speaking that distinguishes it from other tribes. Therefore, contact between tribes has had a significant role in regard to the appearance of Arabic dialects as speakers from different tribes may catch certain words or sounds from other tribes and use these new words or sounds along with their own dialects or replace words within their dialects with these new words or sounds (Halal, 1990). One of the example can be explained in regard to the Qurayshi dialect. As mentioned previously, it is the most prestigious Arabic variety that is very similar to CA. It also differs in its phonetics and sounds from other dialects of Arabic tribes such as Tameem and Rabeeah tribe; Tameem tribe replaced the initial glottal stop of Qurayshi dialect to a voiced pharyngeal fricative and Rabeeah replaced the k sound to sh sound (/k/ to /ʃ/) when it appears before /i/ (Al-sobh et al., 2015).

The second reason is due to language contacts outside the Arabian Peninsula, which occurred when Arabs expanded their area of geographic influence past the Arabian Peninsula, especially during the period of the Islamic Conquest. During this period, conquerors traveled as far as China in the east and Iberia in the west. Due to this spread, the Arabic language came into contact with languages in other countries (Bale, 2010). One example is the appearance of the Arabic language in India due to the contact between Arabs and Indians in early Islamic conquest, when Arabs settled in Sind and Multan in 711 CE (Mukhlesur, 2014). When the Mughal ruled in India during 1526 to 1857, the Arabic language continued to exist and develop.

But when the British ruled India, the Arabic language lost its power and was replaced with English. When India gained its independence, the Indian government tried to give the Arabic language some attention by opening Arabic departments that teach the Arabic language in many Universities in India (Mukhlesur, 2014).

Language contact between Arabic and the language of the conquered areas produced a lingua franca, which used simplified expressions, sound systems and structures. This simplified language serves as the base for the development of the colloquial dialects of Arabic (Al-Sobeh et al., 2015, p. 276).

Contact between Arabic and other languages also occur when Arabic individuals move to other countries. In such instances, it is natural for the Arabic language to become intermingled with the language of the country to which the Arabic individual moved.

A third reason is the discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula in the 1930s. This event necessitated the importation of individuals from other countries to the Arabian Peninsula to work within the new industry. As such, the Arabic language intermingled with Asian languages, producing a simplified type of Arabic (Al-Sobhet al., 2015). The simplified type of any language is known as a pidgin language which is a language variety that people of different languages use to fulfill a specific need such as a communication to complete a specific work. The pidgin language may appear in several situations such as "discovery, exploration, trade, conquest, slavery, migration, colonialism, nationalism" to facilitate communication (Gilmore, 2011, p.371). Pidgin languages may lack some features of the original language such as articles, inflection and copula (Gilmore, 2011).

The fourth reason for the existence of diglossia is globalization, which has caused an increase in the contact between Arabic and non-Arabic speakers. This contact has become easier and more frequent as the world has become more globalized. Many Arabs are traveling abroad and, as such, are exposed to different accents and languages. As a result, Arabic speakers are borrowing vocabulary and sounds from other languages. Even those individuals who cannot travel are able to communicate with people who speak different languages through modern technology, such as the Internet. Thus, CA and MSA are "endangered" due to globalization, by which regional dialects have begun taking over MSA in Arab countries (Al Allaq, 2014, p. 121). Thus, although the CA is the language of Qur'an it may become limited to representing Qur'anic language only and MSA may continue to change and diverge greatly from CA because it is a contemporary language that undergoes changes every day (Sabbah, 2015). Moreover, some of the effects of globalization are seen in how young Arabs utilize English letters and numbers to write Arabic words when communicating and texting others (Sabbah, 2015).

The final reason for the existence of diglossia is the colonialization of Arabic countries by the British and French. During this period, Arabic was often intermingled with English and French. Al Allaq (2014) stated that colonialism encouraged the use of dialect Arabic. The colonizer realized the difficulty of replacing the Arabic language of the colonialized countries with its language because Arabic countries tend to be Muslim and Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, which is the marker of their identity. Therefore, weakening the Arabic language by avoiding the use of CA or MSA and, instead, using regional dialects allowed the colonizers to achieve their goal. One of the incidents in which there was a call for replacing the CA with the local dialect took place in the 1900s when Egypt was invaded by the British. A British author named William Wilcox who lessened the importance of the CA by expressing his opinion of it as being a cause of hindering the creativity of Egyptians due to its rigid nature and weak expressions and that it should be replaced by the use of the wide range of colloquial Arabic expressions. Also, he encouraged Egyptians to borrow words and expressions from other languages. The result is what we see today. Two centuries after William Wilcox' call, colloquial Arabic is the spoken language of the majority of Arabs while CA and MSA has declined, limiting its use to formal situations (Al Allaq, 2014)

## **6. MSA vs. Arabic Dialects**

Certain Arabic dialects may outweigh others due to culture, civilization and the number of people speaking the dialects. As such, the Egyptian dialects can be regarded as the most popular of all Arabic dialects (Abu-Melhim, 2014) and is well-known throughout Arab-speaking countries as it is often utilized in Arab films (Mitchell, 1976). Therefore, the Egyptian dialect will be one the Arabic dialects that will be compared to MSA in this section.

Saiegh-Haddad (2003) argued that a distinction exists in some linguistic aspects between MSA and Arabic dialects. One of the linguistic aspects within which MSA differs from Arabic dialects is consonant clusters. In MSA, initial consonant clusters are not likely to appear, yet they are a feature of some Arabic dialects. An example introduced by Saiegh-Haddad (2003) is the word /tura:b/, which means 'sand' in English.

In Arabic dialects, it is pronounced /trab/. On the other hand, MSA words can end with final consonant clusters, but they are rare in Arabic dialects. The MSA word /sahl/, which means ‘plain’ in English, is pronounced as /sahel/ in Arabic dialects.

Another distinction relates to syntax. The Arabic language follows the verb→ subject→ object (VSO) word order (Millar & Trask, 2015). However, spoken Arabic dialects follow a (SVO) word order. In addition, MSA person, gender, tense and numbers must be marked by inflection morphemes, while, in Arabic dialects, these inflections may not necessary appear. An additional linguistic feature is the difference that exists in the phonological system. Certain phonemes in MSA words are pronounced differently in Arabic dialects. It can be argued that the sound differences between MSA and some Arabic dialects may not be a major hindrance in regard to understanding MSA. However, differences in the vocabulary of the languages pose major problems for speakers. An example of different Arabic pronunciation of a specific sound is the voiced dental fricative [ð] as in the English word *this* → /ðɪs/ is pronounced differently in some Arabic dialects. A MSA word with this sound is the word *hatha*→ /haða/, which is pronounced as a voiced dental fricative. In the Egyptian dialect, it is pronounced as a voiced palato-alveolar sibilant fricative [z], whereas in the Palestinian dialect it is pronounced as a voiced alveolar stop [d].

An additional example can be found in Qaaf (ق), which is demonstrated as /q/ in IPA symbols. In MSA, it has one sound regardless of its position in a phrase or sentence. The description of this sound in MSA is an unvoiced, uvular stop (Alotaibi&Selouani, 2009). As such, to say it does not require a vibration of the vocal cords and the back of the tongue touches the uvular. However, this phoneme has a number of allophones in different dialects of Arabic. In the Egyptian dialect, the /q/ is pronounced as Hamza (ء), and demonstrated as [ʔ] in IPA symbols, which is a voiceless, glottal stop. An example of a word containing this glottal stop is *said* (i.e., /ʔult/). Also, /q/ in the Egyptian dialect is pronounced as [g], a voiced, velar stop. As for the Gulf dialect, the Qaaf (ق) /q/ has two allophones: the first is similar to the MSA pronunciation, which is a voiceless, uvular stop [q], while the other sound is a voiced, velar stop [g]. More examples to show the difference of Arabic dialects’ pronunciations of /q/ is presented in Appendix 1 (Hetron, 1997).

Moreover, the Arabic letter Jeem (ج), which its sound is demonstrated as /dʒ/ in IPA symbols has distinction sounds. In MSA, it is a voiced, palato-alveolar affricate. However, in the Egyptian dialect, it has three allophones. The first sound is [dʒ], similar to the MSA pronunciation. The second pronunciation is [ʒ], a voiced, palato-alveolar sibilant. The third pronunciation is [g], a voiced, velar stop. As for the Gulf dialect, it has two sounds; the first sound is [dʒ], similar to the MSA pronunciation, while the second pronunciation is [ʒ], a voiced, palato-alveolar sibilant. The difference in the phonological sounds can be related to different articulation of the sound which varies from region to region. In the case of the Egyptian dialect, /dʒ/ is pronounced as [g] in Cairo and Alexandria, whereas it is pronounced [dʒ] in rural areas such as Sinai and Upper Egypt. In Gulf dialect, Najd regions pronounce /dʒ/ as [dʒ], but Hijaz dialects pronounce it as [ʒ].

## 7. Vocabulary of Arabic Dialects

Differences exist between the basic vocabulary of MSA and the Arabic dialect, just as differences exist between the Arabic dialects. Bale (2010) argued that the Arabic dialects can be compared to the Romance languages (i.e., French, Spanish, Italian) in regard to mutual intelligibility. He explains that, while the Romance languages originated from the same language (i.e., Latin), there might be difficulty in mutual intelligibility among them; they may not be mutually understood easily. While it can be argued that mutual intelligibility exists among Arabic dialects, it is reliant upon whether the person has a familiarity with the other dialects (Zaidan & Callison-Burch, 2013). Differences in some words within different dialects may not hinder the ability of Arabs to understand each other, but, sometimes, formal words used in education or news programs may cause comprehension issues.

Loan words exist in Arabic dialects due to the language contact between Arabic and the languages of the countries that have experienced Islamic conquests. Previously, five groups of Arabic dialects were mentioned. First, the Arabic dialect spoken in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, such as Yemen and Oman, may be influenced by the South Arabian language, which was spoken 15 centuries ago. It differs from CA, which was spoken in the Arabian Peninsula and it may not be understood by Arabs. Arabic dialects spoken in Yemen and Oman may contain vocabulary from the South Arabian language (Versteegh, 1997).

As for the Arabic dialect spoken in Iraq, more than 15<sup>th</sup> century ago, the Aramaic language was used along with Pahlavi, which is the Middle Persian language. Therefore, when the Arabs entered Iraq during the Islamic conquests, many Arab tribes decided to settle in Iraq, while others traveled within Iraqi lands (Versteegh, 1997).

The language contact between the Arab settlers and the languages of the country at that time resulted in the presence of some Aramaic and Persian loan words in modern Arabic Iraqi dialects. Moreover, in Syria and the surrounding areas, Greek was the language of the region. The Syriac language was also used until the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Versteegh, 1997). When Arabic spread, languages came into contact and Syriac was no longer the language of this region.

The Egyptian dialect has borrowed many words from other languages, including Coptic (i.e., the language of the Copts, who lived in the final periods of ancient Egypt), Turkish and Persian (Bishai, 1964). For example, an example of a Coptic loan word found in the Arabic Egyptian dialects, which are thought to be original Arabic words by many people is the word *halum* حلوم which means ‘cheese’ in English. In MSA, *jubnah* جبنة is the equivalent of ‘cheese’. Another example is the word *hantur*, which is حنطور in Arabic Egyptian that means ‘a horse-drawn carriage’. It is important to note that some Coptic words were introduced into Egyptian Arabic without being changed in some way.

One hundred and nine Coptic words or roots can be found in Egyptian Arabic. Although Coptic was spoken by the population of Egypt and Arabs immigrated after the spread of Islam, we realize that not many Coptic loan words are present in Egyptian Arabic. The main reason may be because the contact between the two types of languages was limited since Copts mainly dealt with Arabs for collecting taxes and classifying statistics. Then, Arab speakers became the majority and Coptic speakers became a minority in Egypt, which caused them to learn the Arabic in order to communicate with the rest population. Thus, Coptic was only spoken in monasteries by the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Bishai, 1963).

Therefore, it can be said that on the lexical level of Arabic, there are major distinctions in the everyday spoken words. The following are some examples presented by Comrie (2009) to show how a specific word may have several forms. Each form belongs to a certain Arabic dialects. One example is the word “now”. In Morocco it is pronounced /daba/, in Algeria it is /delwōq/ or /druk/, in Tunisia, it is /tawwa/, in Saudi Arabia, it is /dahhina/, and /halla?/ in Syria. Another example is the word “well”. It is pronounced as /mizyān/ in Morocco, /mlīeh/ in Algeria, /mnīh/ in Lebanon and Syria, /zēn/ or /tayyib/ in Nigeria, and /kuwayyis/ in Egypt. More examples of Arabic dialect words are presented in Appendix 2 (Hetzron, 1997).

### **8. Diglossia's Effects on Arabic Speakers**

Related studies show that diglossia negatively affects children's abilities to learn and acquire the Arabic language (Al-Azraqi, 2014). While, in schools, MSA is taught, at home, colloquial Arabic is spoken. As a result, reading and writing skills may be hindered. In addition, such diglossia may delay children's acquisitions of knowledge (Al-Azraqi, 2014) since children may be hindered in their ability to absorb MSA vocabulary and structures, which, in turn, causes them to struggle in regard to comprehending information and knowledge. As for speaking in MSA, their speech may appear distorted and hesitant with much effort put into it (Al-Sobhet al., 2015).

Diglossia can also affect the ability of Arabic speakers to understand each other. As such, they may use code-switching and alternate between Colloquial Arabic and MSA when speaking to Arab individuals from different areas. This process occurs because, while the other individual may not know the dialect of the original speaker, all Arabic speakers are taught MSA, so it is a common foundation on which they can build. Arabic speakers may utilize two ways in order to sound as an MSA speaker. The two ways are “classicizing” and “leveling” (Abu-Melhim, 2014, p.895). Classicizing is related to phonology and how sounds appear while speaking. So, an Arabic speaker may alter the sounds of words or speech to sound as MSA. As for leveling, it is related to syntax and vocabulary. Speakers may change their local dialect syntax or words to use the MSA variety. Thus, the certified reference which Arabic speakers refer to would be the MSA which to some extent they have knowledge of.

### **9. The Future of the Arabic Language**

Learning about Latin and the Romance situation, and how Latin eventually died whereas its varieties developed into distinct languages, It would cause a person to wonder whether the future of CA be similar to Latin, would the Arabic dialects develop into several languages, making the Arabic language a subfamily of the Afro-Asiatic family. While CA may not have the same path as Latin, because CA is the language of the Qur'an which is the bedrock of Islam and the ritual language of Muslims and so it will continue to be present. The Qur'an was written during the period of Prophet Mohammed and is still read today. Although CA might not be used in speech, its modern version, the MSA, is similar to CA in syntactic structure and morphology (Hetzron, 1998).

In modern Arabic countries, Arabic dialects are changing. Many foreign words, such as English terms, are used in informal speech and, as such, diglossia is not the only phenomenon that appears in the Modern spoken Arabic. Code-switching is also present.

From a linguistic perspective, code-switching can be defined as the alternation between two languages in a discourse (Molinsky, 2007, p. 623). Therefore, it is simply the use of two or more languages at the same time (Nashef, 2013). The alternation between Arabic and English in one's speech is the most obvious form in Arabic speaking countries.

In addition to code-switching, other linguistic features that may have crucial roles in the future of the Arabic language are translationese and linguistic recycling. Izwani (2014) discusses the phenomenon of linguistic recycling and how it is affecting spoken and written Arabic. Translationese is the process of borrowing words and structures of a language and using them in Arabic speech and writing. Linguistic recycling is the process of adopting borrowed expressions and their structures and applying them to original Arabic words and structures. The result is foreign words and structures in the Arabic language that cannot be determined as non-Arabic due to the common structure between them and the Arabic language. An example is the recycling of English morphology. Plural nouns in the Arabic linguistic system are formed by adding /at/→ /ات/ to feminine nouns and /un/→ /ون/ to masculine nouns and so the English plural endings /s/ or /z/ do not exist in the Arabic linguistic system, yet, recently, many borrowed words have been made plural using the English plural ending instead of the Arabic plural endings, such as Maldives and Chilies (Izwani, 2014). So, Maldives at first was pronounced in Arabic as Maldiva Islands /dʒʊzrɑlmældɑf/ (جزر المالديف) with islands in plural and singular Maldiva, then people started to omit islands and turn Maldiva into plural by adding the plural 's' /mældɑfz/.

Also, as introduced by Sabbah (2015), there are two other phenomenon that are emerging into the Arabic speaking countries. Englishization refers to the recent attempt of some Arabic countries to utilize English for instructions especially in higher education institutions, which may lead to replacing MSA by English. As for Arabization, it is a developed writing system used by young Arabic speakers when chatting with each other via technology such as texting. It is the use of Latin scripts for Arabic sounds and additional 7 numbers to represent the Arabic sounds that do not exist in English. For example, if a person wants to write العربية which means 'Arabic' in English, العربية→ /alʕrbiɑh/, the pharyngeal approximant sound /ʕ/ will be replaced by the number 3 and the remaining Arabic letters will be replaced with English letters →al3rbiɑh.

Upon seeing the effect of the English language on Arabic, one of the speculations of the future of spoken Arabic is that it may diverge into an Arabic-English dialect. The speaker of such a new dialect would easily be able to understand English due to the large number of English words in the dialect. Moreover, it can be argued that the phenomenon of diglossia, code-switching, Englishization and Arabization may be a serious problem in regard to the future of the Arabic language (Sabbah, 2015). Therefore, the use of MSA beyond its present status as a lingua franca should be promoted, starting from the educational system, MSA should be utilized as the language of education and students should be encouraged to master the MSA by requiring standardized Arabic tests for university acceptance (Sabbah, 2015).

## 9. Conclusion

Changes in languages cannot be avoided. Throughout history, languages have evolved or disappeared as new languages have been born. In fact, languages undergo changes every day. As introduced in this paper, Classical Arabic (CA) underwent changes to become Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is still changing today. Colloquial Arabic is different from Modern Standard Arabic and it is the variety used by Arabic speakers in their everyday, informal interactions, causing the existence of diglossia, which is using two or more varieties of the same language, each for different reasons.

Several reasons for the causes of diglossia in Arabic speaking countries were discussed. One of the most important reasons was language contact. As has been shown, Arabs differ in how they produce sounds and words, each according to which dialect they use. In addition, Arabic dialects differ from MSA to which all Arabs are exposed in their educational contexts and formal speech. One may argue that, since Arabic speakers master their local dialects and feel more comfortable speaking and communicating with it, the use MSA in schools hinders children's learning and comprehension and causes the speech to sound distorted and hesitant when others speak MSA. Therefore, why shouldn't these dialects be recognized as individual languages.

One reason why these dialects are not recognized as individual languages could be due to their association with the Qur'an, which is the bedrock upon which Muslim Arabic speakers refer to and rely upon. Reading about the evolution of Arabic and how, in modern life, each Arabic speaker differs in terms of linguistic features and pronunciation, makes a better understanding of the challenges of learning a foreign language, such as English, faced by these speakers. However, it also helps to understand that not all Arabic speakers will face the same issues when learning a new language. Many linguists have explored Arabic speakers and many have generalized their results to all speakers of Arabic. In future research on Arabic, it would be helpful for the researchers to concentrate on certain regions, such as Egyptian, Levantine, Gulf, Iraqi and Maghrebi, since Egyptian learners, for example, differ from Gulf or Maghrebi Arabic speakers in the way in which they acquire and the challenges faced when acquiring certain English sounds. In addition, it is important to introduce the phenomenon of diglossia to people who wish to learn the Arabic language. Explaining it will allow them to decide which variety they wish to learn depending on their goal behind learning it. If their goal is to become fluent in Arabic, then non-Arabic learner should strive to learn MSA as well as at least one dialect.

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Appendix 1: Pronunciation of /q/ in some Arabic dialects (Hetzron, 1997, p. 269)

*Table 14.2 Reflexes of Classical Arabic q in some dialects (continued)*

Place	CA	qalb 'heart'	baqara 'cow'	waqt 'time'	qaal 'said'	qamar 'moon'	qahwa 'coffee'	quddaam 'in front of'
Beirut		'alb	ba'ara	wa't	'aal	'amar	'ahwe	'addaam
NW Jordan		galib	bagara	wagət	gaal	gamar	gahwah	giddaam
Druze		qalb	baqara		qaal	qamar	qahwe	
Nazareth		kalb	bakara	wakt	kaal	kamar	kahwe	kuddaam
Jerusalem		'alb	ba'ara	wa't	'aal	'amar	'ahwe	'uddaam
Birr Zeet		kalb	bakara	wakt	kaal	kamar	kahwe	kuddaam
Yemen (Şan'ā')		galb	bagara	wagt	gaal	gamar	gahweh	guddaam
Cairo		'alb	ba'ara	wa't	'aal	'amar	'ahwa	'uddaam
Sudan		galib	bagara	wagt	gaal	gamra	gahwa/gahawa	giddaam
Ouaday (Chad)			beger	waqt	gaal	gamar	gahwa	
E. Libyan (Benghazi)		galəb	əbgəra	wagət	gaal	gəmar	gahawa	giddaam
Tunis		qalb	'bagra	waqt				quddaam
El Hamma de Gabes		gal'ab			gal			
Marazig		galab			gal			
J. Algiers		'alb		wə't		'əmr	gahwa/qahwa	geddaam
Bou Saada			bigar			gimar		'əddam
Djidjelli		qəlb		wəqt		qmər		
Casablanca		qəlb	bqar/bgər	wəqt		qəmr		qəddam
N. Taza				wəqt		gəmrə		qoddam
Maltese		qalp		wəqt				
Andalusian (low register)		kalb	bakar	wakt	qaal	qamar kamar		quddiēm kuddīm

## Appendix2: Comparison of Arabic words in 14 dialects (Hetzron, 1997, p. 309)

Table 14.12 Comparison of glosses in Nigerian, Cairene, Damascene, Iraqi, Meccan, Maltese and Lebanese dialects

Gloss	Nigerian	Cairene	Damascene	Iraqi	Meccan	Maltese	Lebanese
now	hatta/hassadug(g)ut	dilwa't(i)	halla'	hassa	daḥḥiin	issa	halla'
good	zeen	kuwayyis	mniih	xooš/zeen	zeen	tajjeb	mliih/mniih
bad	fasil/maknuushawaan	wiḥiš	'aatel	muuzeenmuu-maaleḥ		mhux tajjeb	manno mniih
there is	fi	fii	fii	'aku	fii	(h)emm	fii
there is not	ma fii/mifi	mafiiš	maa fii	maaku	maafiiš	ma-emm-x	maa fii
how much	kam	kam	'addees	čam	kam	kemm	'addees/kam
much/many	bil(h)eenkatiir	kitiir	ktiir	hwaayakθiir/r	waajid	ḥafna	ktiir
very	bil(h)een	'awi	ktiir	kulliš	katiir	ḥafna	ktiir
to do	amal/xadam	'amal	'amel/saawa	sawwa/'amal	sawwa	hadem/ghamel	sawwa/'imel
eggs	beed/š/dahii	beed	beed	beed	beed	bajdiet	beed
rain	almatara	maṭar	maṭar	muṭar	maṭara	xita	šita
nothing	ma-še	wala ḥaaga	maa-ši	wala šii	walašay	ma ... xajj	wala šii

Table 14.13 Comparison of glosses in Anatolian, Israeli, Mauritanian, Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian and Libyan dialects

Gloss	Anatolian	Israeli	Mauritanian	Moroccan	Algerian	Tunisian	Libyan
now	issaa'/hassaa'	'essa/halla'hal'eet	dark	daba	delwoq druk	tawwa	alaan
good	baas (Kurd.)	mniih	zeen	mezyan/waxxa	(a)mliih	baahi	ṭayyeb
bad		'aatel		'atel/xayeb			šeen
there is	aku/kooku	fii	xalag	kayn	kan	famma	fiih
there is not	maaku	maa fii(š)	maxalagši	makanš	makaanš	mafammaš	mafiiš
how much	kam	'addees/kam	kamm	(a)šḥal	gaddaaš	qaddaaš	kam
much/many	kəθiir	ktiir		bezzaf			
very	kəθiir/booš	ktiir	ḥatta	bezzaf	bezzaaf	barša	yaaser
to do	sawwa	saawa/'imel	waasa	ḍar	xdam	'mal	sawa
eggs	bayz/bayd	beed	beez	awlad žaaž	biid	'daam	deḥii
rain	maṭar	šita	šhaab	naw/nu	šhab/naw	štaa	mṭar
nothing	laa še	wala 'iši	ši	walu	ši	šay	kaan-l-barka