

"Exploring Language Attitudes and Identity Construction in Arabic Diglossia"

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Abstract: *This research explores the complex field of Arabic diglossia, with a particular emphasis on how language attitudes and identity formation are constructed within this framework. The research includes 26 native Arabic speakers who are studying in Indonesia, with a focus on both high (Modern Standard Arabic, MSA) and low (regional dialects) types. This study use descriptive qualitative study explores the intricate sociolinguistic dynamics of Arabic diglossia by examining the perspectives of Arabic speakers. Participants, proficient in both Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and regional dialects, revealed a prevailing positive attitude toward MSA, particularly in formal and academic contexts, underlining its perceived prestige associated with intellectual discourse, cultural preservation, and historical continuity. Contrasting attitudes toward regional dialects emerged, ranging from strong attachments to pragmatic views, underscoring the complexity of individual language attitudes. Contextual appropriateness played a crucial role in language choices, with MSA favoured in formal settings and regional dialects in informal interactions. The study unravelled the interplay between language choices and identity, highlighting varied degrees of identification with pan-Arab and local/regional identities. Zoom Meetings shed light on the difficulties in switching between MSA and regional languages and offered insights into diglossia competency. Sociocultural adaptations demonstrated how language can be flexible in response to a range of situations. This study emphasizes the intricacies of linguistic attitudes, identity development, and adaptive language usage in multilingual environments, adding nuanced views to our knowledge of Arabic diglossia.*

Keywords: *Arabic Diglossia, Language Attitudes, Identity Construction, Diglossia Competence, Sociocultural Contexts*

Introduction

Arabic, a language of immense cultural and historical significance, is spoken by millions across the Arab world. The Arabic language landscape, however, is distinguished by a distinct linguistic phenomenon called "diglossia." Two separate language variations coexist within the speaking community as a result of this linguistic diglossia: Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is a high variety used for formal, written, and religious communication, and diverse regional dialects, which are low varieties used in everyday situations. Arabic-speaking communities' language and social structures are shaped by the interaction between these high and low variations.

An interesting sociolinguistic conundrum is raised by this linguistic paradox. In the setting of diglossia, how can Arabic speakers negotiate the nuances of linguistic attitudes and identity? Diglossia is a phenomenon that goes well beyond language variance; it affects people's communication styles, sense of self, and sense of social belonging. It is crucial to comprehend the complex link that exists between linguistic attitudes and identity creation in Arabic diglossia.

Furthermore, addressing more general issues of language maintenance, language shift, and sociolinguistic diversity in multilingual cultures requires an understanding of diglossia in Arabic. Diglossia persists and how it affects language attitudes and identity is a global phenomenon of interest because it illuminates the ways in which speech societies handle linguistic variety and hierarchy. This research seeks to delve into the heart of this linguistic conundrum, exploring how Arabic speakers perceive and negotiate the use of high and low varieties and the influence of this diglossia context on their identities. By doing this, we want to further knowledge on Arabic diglossia and offer insights into the larger fields of sociolinguistics and multilingualism.

This research delves at the fundamentals of human identity and communication, rather than only studying language nuances. This study aims to investigate in detail the complex interaction between linguistic attitudes and identity creation in Arabic diglossia. Our specific goal is to learn more about how Arabic speakers understand and assess regional dialects, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), and the high diversity in the setting of diglossia. We investigate how linguistic diglossia shapes social dynamics, language ideologies, and communication practices of individuals and communities in the Arabic-speaking world. Our goal is to understand how the choice and use of language varieties affect the self-identity and group identity of Arabic speakers.

Additionally, while taking into account the many sociocultural settings in which diglossia occurs, we want to find trends, subtleties, and variances in language attitudes and identity creation across various Arabic-speaking regions. Our study aims to contribute to the larger area of sociolinguistics and multilingualism by offering a thorough and nuanced explanation of the effects of Arabic diglossia on language attitudes and identity. The research holds relevance as it has the ability to clarify the intricate relationship between linguistic attitudes and identity development in the context of Arabic diglossia. Arabic speakers' everyday life, communication styles, and self-perception are impacted by the coexistence of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and regional dialects.

Comprehending this dynamic is essential as it has wider sociolinguistic and cultural significance, in addition to providing insights into the complex nature of language diversity and its effects on identity. By examining the social, psychological, and communicative aspects of Arabic diglossia, the research fills a crucial vacuum in the literature and clarifies how this condition affects the sociolinguistic landscape of the Arab world. Additionally, by offering a lens through which to analyse relevant linguistic occurrences throughout the world, this work may contribute to a deeper understanding of language shift, language preservation, and sociolinguistic variety in multilingual societies. As a result, by examining not just the Arabic

language but also the intricate connection between language, identity, and society, the research significantly advances the field of sociolinguistics.

The sociolinguistic consequences of diglossia have been emphasized by (Ferguson 1959), who also emphasized the significance of high and low varieties in the Arab world and their effects on language attitudes and identity. This phenomenon is most noticeable in the Arabicspeaking world, where many spoken dialects are utilized for daily communication and Modern Standard Arabic is the formal variety used in writing and formal speeches (Thalab & Alwan, 2022). The issue of identity and pride is closely related to diglossia in the Arab world. PanArab nationalists have proposed adopting a unified Arabic language as a unifying factor for all Arabic-speaking people in the Arab world (Manfredi & Istanbulu, 2019). His suggestion is predicated on the idea that, because Modern Standard Arabic is written and understandable to all Arabic speakers, it should be the only option for a single Arabic language.

This has therefore spurred discussions and arguments over the function of MSA in maintaining a single Arabic identity as well as the effects it has on linguistic attitudes among Arabic-speaking people (Perlovsky, 2016). Many academic fields have shown interest in the investigation of linguistic attitudes and identity building in Arabic diglossia. There has been much examination and discussion of Arabic diglossia from both a linguistic and educational standpoint (Harbi, 2022). Arabic diglossia's sociolinguistic features have been emphasized, highlighting how it differs from other languages (Farghaly & Shaalan, 2009). Additionally, research has focused on the effects of diglossia on students' language development and academic accomplishment, especially in the Arab world (Omar & Aldawsari, 2022). Research has also been done on the impact of diglossia on L2 Arabic learners' motivation and perception (Journal & Zahrani, 2017).

Furthermore, studies on the effects of diglossia on young sequential bilinguals have focused on how quickly words in Arabic and Hebrew can be mapped (Eviatar et al., 2018). Furthermore, research has been done on the formation of sociolinguistic diglossic knowledge in oral-literacy mismatch scenarios, with a focus on Palestinian Arabs (Makhoul et al., 2015). Empirical studies have examined the effects of diglossia on Arabic literacy and instructional strategies ("undefined", 2022). Furthermore, the ideological attitudes towards diglossia and its utility in describing language ideologies have been examined (Daniëls, 2022). Diglossia in the Arab world has been described in several dimensions, including function, prestige, literary legacy, acquisition, standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon, and phonology (Sabbah, 2020). The presence of several Arabic language variations, each with a unique role and status, is known as Arabic diglossia (Mohaidat, 2017).

The literature has examined a number of facets of language attitudes and identity creation in Arabic diglossia (Aldawsari & Omar, 2022). Ferguson, for example, used the word "diglossia" to characterize the situation in Arabic-speaking nations where Standard Arabic is taught in schools and is used in formal public settings, while a regional dialect of Arabic is spoken as a primary language at home (2020, Bentahar). Fishman went on to define diglossia as any culture that has several language varieties that are employed in different contexts (Torkia & Lees, 2022). Language attitudes regarding the several Arabic dialects are one area that has been thoroughly studied in the literature. In addition to reflecting the social and cultural processes

within Arabic-speaking groups, language attitudes regarding the many varieties of Arabic are essential in the development of identity (Dzierżawin, 2022).

The co-occurrence of multiple Arabic dialects, such as Syrian, Egyptian, and Hijazi, within a community of speakers presents a rich linguistic tapestry shaped by historical, social, and geographical factors (Khasawneh & Khasawneh, 2022). Additionally, linguistic and listener aspects in L2 Arabic dialect understanding is significantly impacted by the diglossic context and the historical history of Arabic (Bentahar, 2020).

Studies have indicated that the selection and fluctuation of language in Arabic diglossia have a role in the formation of personal and collective identities. For instance, research has demonstrated that, in multilingual cultures, language choice frequently plays a significant role in the formation of identity (Fuller, 2007). Language preferences and attitudes toward various Arabic dialects within Arabic-speaking populations can serve as indicators of power relations and social hierarchies (Arts et al., 2014).

Through the lenses of colonialism and decolonization, it is also possible to study the evolution of linguistic attitudes and identity creation in Arabic diglossia. European languages were forced upon Arabic throughout the colonial era, undermining Arabic's standing as the official language of the state (Al-Amr, 2022). In response, proponents of Arab nationalism suggested implementing Modern Standard Arabic as a means of bringing all Arabic-speaking individuals in the Arab world together (Mohaidat, 2017). But in addition to maintaining hierarchies and outlawing the usage of dialectal Arabic, this standardization effort also fueled linguistic attitudes and identity conflicts (Qudissya, 2022). The literature on linguistic attitudes and identity building in Arabic diglossia is becoming more and more abundant (Layes & Torkia, 2022).

Ferguson introduced the term "diglossia," which describes the situation in Arabic-speaking nations where students learn a regional dialect of the language as their first language while studying Standard Arabic, which is used in formal contexts like public discourse, media, and education (Tarone & Swain, 1995). Because it presents issues about linguistic attitudes, identity creation, and the effects of diglossia on language learning and literacy development, this diglossic scenario has been the focus of research (Ibrahim, 2011).

In one research, diglossia's effect on reading challenges in Arabic-speaking primary school pupils was investigated by Abu-Rabia (n.d.). Abu-Rabia discovered that the learning of Arabic literacy is hampered by the diglossic scenario, in which the language of books and school teaching differs from the spoken dialect at home (Jaradat & Al-Khawaldeh, 2015). According to Ayari's research, the diglossic condition significantly affects literacy and education, especially in elementary schools where pupils find it difficult to go from speaking a colloquial dialect to Standard Arabic (Hamdan & Amayreh, 2007).

It is crucial to investigate language attitudes and identity construction in Arabic diglossia in order to comprehend the intricate interplay between language, identity, and power in these contexts as well as the dynamics of linguistic variation in Arabic-speaking communities (Tibi et al., 2021). In addition, Bassiouney (n.d.) makes the case that academics have questioned the

validity and application of the Arabic notion of diglossia to various sociolinguistic situations (Asadi et al., 2023). According to these academics, the distinction between dialectal and Standard Arabic may not adequately capture the richness and variety of language seen in Arabic-speaking societies (Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010).

This study makes the hypothesis that, in the setting of Arabic diglossia, linguistic attitudes toward regional dialects and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) have a major impact on how Arabic speakers create their identities as individuals and as a collective. In particular, we anticipate that good views toward regional dialects may be connected to a greater feeling of local identification and cultural belonging, whereas positive attitudes regarding MSA may be associated with a perception of better social standing and closer alignment with pan-Arab identity. The Variables Investigated of this study are Independent Variable which is the Language attitudes, measured as favorable attitudes toward Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and regional dialects. furthermore, Dependent Variable which is identity construction, including individual identity (e.g., self-perception) and group identity (e.g., affiliation with a specific linguistic community or broader pan-Arab identity).

We used qualitative descriptive approaches, to investigate the link between linguistic attitudes and identity development in Arabic diglossia. We use particular terminology and acronyms in our study on Arabic diglossia that are essential to comprehending the linguistic and sociolinguistic components of our research. A primary concentration is on Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), a highly standardized version of Arabic that is utilized for formal, written, and official communication. Our investigation is based on diglossia, which is the coexistence of two different language varieties inside a speech community. Sociolinguistics, the study of the relationship between language and society, is the foundation of our methodology. We also examine linguistic identity, which is influenced by language attitudes and encompasses both self- and group-identification. Language attitudes, a central variable in our study, are people's or groups' subjective assessments of a language variety.

We explore regional dialects, which are the many local linguistic variants spoken throughout the Arabic-speaking globe and which frequently deviate greatly from MSA while also fostering a sense of regional identity. Lastly, we look at pan-Arab identity, which can be impacted by the usage of Modern Standard Arabic. Pan-Arab identity is a feeling of belonging to a larger Arab identity that transcends regional or national boundaries. Our research attempts to ensure readers have a thorough knowledge of the sociolinguistic intricacies associated with Arabic diglossia by providing definitions for these terminology and acronyms.

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach of 26 Arabic native speakers from different countries which they are studying in Indonesia of both high (e.g., Modern Standard Arabic) and low (e.g., a specific dialect) varieties to comprehensively investigate the relationship between language attitudes and identity construction in the context of Arabic diglossia. the aim is to provide a holistic understanding of the intricate sociolinguistic dynamics at play.

Data Collection

The researcher Develops two ways the first is a survey or questionnaire consists of closedended and open-ended questions which was designed by Google Form that were prepared to answer the research questions to obtain and achieve the study aims, Furthermore the collect data on language attitudes and identity assess Arabic speakers' perceptions of high and low varieties, their usage, and how this relates to their self-identity and group affiliation. Second, the researcher uses an online data collection tool which was designed by Zoom meetings, On the other hand, the open-ended questions were set via zoom meetings is in order to give the participants more space to talk about the impact of Arabic diglossia phenomena.

The population of the current study consists of 26 Arabic native students who are studying in Indonesia. They are from different Arabic countries which they are Egypt, Yemen, Palestine, Sudan, and Syria.

Tabel 1.

Participants	Gender	Nationality
26	Males= 17 Femalse=9	17Egypt4 9Yemen 1Palestine

Findings and Discussion

In order to capture a wide range of linguistic and social circumstances, a varied sample of Arabic speakers from various Arabic-speaking regions was specifically chosen for this study. People who spoke both regional dialects and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) fluently were included in the sample. Participants generally held a positive attitude toward MSA, emphasizing its importance in formal, academic, and religious contexts. The consistent expression of a high regard for Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in formal and academic settings reveals a deeply ingrained perception of MSA as a prestigious variety. The in-depth interviews illuminated the nuanced reasons behind this prestige, emphasizing the association of MSA with intellectual discourse, cultural preservation, and historical continuity.

The visual and auditory cues captured during online interviews added layers of understanding, showcasing the significance participants attribute to MSA through their tones and expressions. The average rating was 4.3 out of 5 and the responses indicated a negative perception of regional dialects, especially in informal settings, with an average rating of 4.6 out of 5. The divergence in participants' attitudes toward regional dialects emerged as a multifaceted aspect of Arabic diglossia. The interviews exposed a spectrum of perspectives, from strong attachments to dialects as carriers of authentic local identity to a more pragmatic view, considering dialects as effective tools for everyday communication. These varied attitudes underscore the complexity of individual language attitudes, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding beyond quantitative measures. MSA was deemed most appropriate in

formal and academic settings (average rating of 4.5), while regional dialects received a higher rating for informal interactions (average rating of 4.8).

Furthermore, Participants exhibited varying degrees of identification with a pan-Arab identity when using MSA, underscoring the complex interplay between language and broader cultural affiliations and Strong identification with local or regional identity was reported when using dialects, emphasizing the role of language in shaping individual and group identities. Also, the influence of Language Choice on Identity where the participants shared experiences where language choice significantly influenced their sense of identity, highlighting the nuanced relationship between language and self-perception. Diglossia competence was examined in depth thanks to the Zoom Meetings.

The participants spoke about how comfortable they were communicating complicated concepts in MSA and shared the difficulties they encountered switching between MSA and regional languages. The virtual platform emphasizes the fluidity and agility needed in multilingual contexts, capturing the subtleties of language mastery. Examples of the prevalent practice of code-switching appear in the language that individuals use on a regular basis. Where the interviews clarified how adaptable the participants' language use was in various sociocultural contexts. Religious ceremonies and family get-togethers have evolved as settings where people are adept at navigating linguistic variance by changing their language to fit the appropriate level of formality or informality.

The qualitative observations highlighted the dynamic nature of linguistic choices in response to diverse cultural and social circumstances, which increased our understanding of the sociolinguistic elements driving adaptive language usage. where the using of the language in online e written communication the participants preferences for either MSA or regional dialects, influenced by the formality or informality of the context. The reasons behind language choices in the online sphere are multifaceted, reflecting participants' awareness of the social dynamics embedded in online interactions.

The results of this study provide insight into the complex and varied aspects of language attitudes among speakers of Arabic, with a focus on the interactions between regional dialects and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The sample is heterogeneous, including members of different Arabic-speaking areas who speak both MSA and local dialects. This diversity has allowed for a thorough grasp of the sociolinguistic environment.

The favourable perception of MSA among participants is bolstered by the positive attitude toward it, especially in formal, academic, and religious situations. This ingrained belief is consistent with its links to scholarship, cultural conservation, and historical continuity. The fact that MSA is seen as a highly esteemed linguistic variant in the larger Arabic-speaking world is highlighted by the sample's continual high admiration for it.

Fascinatingly, the unfavourable opinion of local dialects—particularly in casual contexts—highlights how intricate Arabic diglossia is. The range of opinions—from fervent devotion to dialects as symbols of regional identity to a practical perspective that sees dialects as

instruments for daily communication—highlights the necessity for a comprehensive knowledge that goes beyond quantitative assessments. This attitude variety calls into question oversimplified descriptions of linguistic preferences and emphasizes how important it is to take into account individual viewpoints.

The study also shows that language and identity have a dynamic relationship. When speaking MSA, the participants showed varied degrees of affiliation with a pan-Arab identity; but, when using dialects, more identification with a local or regional identity was evident. This complicated interaction highlights how language shapes group and individual identities and offers important insights into the complex relationships that exist between language and cultural affiliations.

Diglossia competence was investigated using in-depth Zoom Meetings, which revealed participants' comfort levels when expressing complex ideas in MSA as well as the difficulties they have when alternating between MSA and regional languages. The virtual platform demonstrated the nuances of language proficiency while highlighting the fluidity and agility needed in multilingual situations. These revelations advance our knowledge of the useful consequences of diglossia in authentic communication contexts.

Furthermore, the qualitative findings of language preferences in many sociocultural contexts—like religious rituals and family get-togethers—highlight the fluidity of linguistic preferences. The ability of the participants to navigate linguistic variation according to formality or informality highlights the sociolinguistic factors that influence the use of adaptive language.

Participants showed preferences for either MSA or regional dialects in online written communication, depending on how official or informal the environment was. The complex motivations underlying these linguistic decisions reveal participants' cognizance of the social dynamics inherent in virtual communication, offering insightful information on the relationship between language and virtual communication.

In conclusion, this study greatly advances our knowledge of the attitudes toward language, the construction of identities, and the diglossia competence of Arabic speakers. The study of language preferences and their wider consequences for people and societies requires a sophisticated approach, as demonstrated by the many views and dynamic nature of language usage presented in this research.

Conclusion

In conclusion this research explores the complex sociolinguistic dynamics of Arabic diglossia. The results highlight Modern Standard Arabic's (MSA) deeply rooted esteem, especially in formal, academic, and religious contexts, and highlight the language's importance for historical continuity, cultural preservation, and intellectual debate. A complicated interaction between attachments to dialects as transmitters of real local identity and a pragmatic view of dialects as useful instruments for everyday communication is shown by the varied views toward regional dialects. Language selection heavily depends on context; regional

dialects are chosen for casual conversations, whereas MSA is considered suited for official contexts. As identity dynamics emerge, different levels of identification with local/regional and pan-Arab identities are displayed, highlighting the significant influence of language on the formation of personal and social bonds. Sociocultural adaptations show how language choices may be flexible in response to a variety of social and cultural contexts, particularly in religious rituals and family get-togethers. Participants in the digital realm use subtle language, demonstrating a keen understanding of the social dynamics present in online interactions. All things considered, the study adds to our knowledge of Arabic diglossia and highlights the need for sophisticated methods to fully appreciate the nuances of language attitudes, identity, and flexible language use in the Arab world.

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