

Effect of Using the Low Variety in the Classroom on Learning MSA: A Case of Saudi Elementary Schools Pupils

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Abstract: Students' poor linguistic proficiency in using Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) among Saudi students at elementary schools is attributed to the diglossia, whereas the low variety (LV) is totally different from the MSA. The paper examines the extent of the teachers' use of low variety and the reasons behind it. Also, the study examines the impact of LV use of Arabic on students' linguistic proficiency at the elementary stage. The study concentrates on the early schooling years (pre-school and kindergarten periods) in order to emphasize the important role of parents and teachers who still believe that exposing their children to MSA is not important and; thus, has no future implications on students' linguistic proficiency. In addition, the study aims to introduce the term of diglossia and highlight such issue supported by a review of the most relevant literature. The researcher administered a questionnaire on a sample consisting of (30) teachers, randomly selected, from (3) elementary schools. The data was collected from the sample's population, then processed and analyzed by the SPSS; consequently, the results of the questionnaire were interpreted accordingly. The data analysis shows that the teachers at elementary schools always use the LV in teaching and they rarely use MSA during explaining the lessons. It also maintains that the learners' poor linguistic proficiency lies the lack of repeated MSA use in classroom instructions. Furthermore, the paper presents the importance of exposing the children to MSA from an early age.

Keywords: Diglossia, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Education policy, Pre-school.

أثر استخدام التنوع في الفصل على تعلم اللغة العربية الفصحى المعاصرة: حالة تلاميذ المدارس

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الملخص: يُعزى ضعف المهارة اللغوية في استخدام اللغة العربية الفصحى الحديثة بين الطلاب السعوديين في المدارس الابتدائية إلى الازدواجية اللغوية، في حين أن التنوع المنخفض مختلف تماماً عن اللغة العربية الفصحى الحديثة. تقوم الدراسة الحالية بدراسة مدى استخدام معلمو اللغة العربية الفصحى في الفصول الدراسية للتنوع المنخفض والأسباب وراء هذا الاستخدام. كما وتقوم بدراسة تأثير استخدام مجموعة متنوعة من اللغة العربية على الكفاءة اللغوية للطلاب في المرحلة الابتدائية. وتقوم هذه الدراسة بالتركيز على السنوات الأولى من التعليم (فترات ما قبل المدرسة ورياض الأطفال) من أجل التأكيد على الدور المهم للمعلمين وأولياء الأمور الذين ما زالوا يعتقدون أن تعرض الناطقين باللغة العربية حديثي السن للغة العربية الفصحى الحديثة أمر غير مهم وبالتالي ليس له أي آثار مستقبلية على الكفاءة اللغوية للمتعلمين. كما وتحاول هذه الدراسة أيضاً تقديم مصطلح "الازدواجية اللغوية" وتقديم تعريف للمشكلة مدعوماً بمراجعة الأدبيات الأكثر صلة. ولغرض تحقيق أهداف الدراسة، تم تقديم استبيان على عينة مكونة من ثلاثين (30) مدرساً تم اختيارهم عشوائياً من ثلاث مدارس ابتدائية. وقد تم جمع البيانات بناءً على إجابات المعلمين على بنود الاستبيان. تم جمع البيانات من العينة ومن ثم معالجتها وتحليلها باستخدام برنامج SPSS الإحصائي وقد تم تفسير نتائج بنود الاستبيان وفقاً لذلك.

يوضح تحليل البيانات أن المعلمين في المدارس الابتدائية يستخدمون اللغة منخفضة التنوع في التدريس ونادراً ما يستخدمون اللغة العربية الفصحى الحديثة أثناء شرح الدروس. كما أظهرت الدراسة- أيضاً- أن الكفاءة اللغوية الضعيفة لدى الطلاب تكمن في عدم الاستخدام المتكرر للغة العربية الحديثة الفصحى في الفصول الدراسية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كشفت الدراسة عن أهمية تعرض الأطفال للغة العربية الحديثة الفصحى من السنوات الأولى للدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الازدواجية اللغوية، اللغة العربية الفصحى الحديثة، سياسة التعليم، مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة.

Introduction

The Arabic language was the language that Ferguson (1959) used when he introduced the term diglossia to describe a situation where a couple or more varieties of the same language are applied for socially distinct functions (Haddad, 2003; p, 432). One of the most distinctive features of the Arabic language is the occurrence of diglossia (Al-Batal, 1996; Haeri, 2000 cited in Dakwar, 2005). Diglossia in the language refers to the phenomenon of co-existence of two distinct language varieties in the same community (Bani-Khaled, 2014). Diglossia refers specifically to the occurrence of low (L) and high (H) forms of a certain language, one for formal application in writing, reading and some limited contexts of formal oral language use; and spoken dialects, which also known as colloquial forms, used in the myriad informal contexts of everyday life, which vary regionally. Diglossia is a known linguistic phenomenon in which a certain language has two or more varieties. Ferguson (1959), an American linguist, was the first who introduced the term 'Diglossia' to refer to this situation; he stated that this phenomenon exists wherever two varieties of a certain language exist side by side throughout one community.

Yule (2014) states that this term has generally been used to describe a situation in which two different varieties of language co-exist in one speech community, one variety is regarded as a Low variety (L), differs significantly from its written form, which is regarded as a High variety (H). Arabic is considered one of the strongest Diglossia examples in languages. In this language, the written aspect is the high (H), while the spoken dialects or constitute the low variety (L). Thus, the written language variety, indicated as the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), is formal Arabic.

It is known by the Arab world and generally used in only formal environment and settings as education, literature, journalism, conferences, and so on. The regional dialects form the informal conversational Arabic. They are used and spoken in everyday life; as the LV varies from one Arabic state to another, which makes the wide range of the language dialects (Egyptian dialect, Libyan dialect, Saudi dialect, etc.). The general variations between the L variety and H variety are broadly clear in morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonetics (Al Zahrani, 2017).

MSA is highly used and regarded in all Arab countries as a medium of education and instructions. However, the vernacular aspect of language, which is known to occur between the daily slang and MSA, are the main varieties mostly used by the instructors in most of the schools of the region. The Arabic courses teachers are among the teachers who have the essential resource to the vernacular aspect of

Arabic under several aspects: MSA complexity, assimilation, and the unfamiliarity with using the H variety. The application of Diglossia has a considerable effect on the educational field since the colloquial Arabic forms seem to be the dominant variety used in interaction and instruction within the classrooms and as an essential communication medium between students and teachers in the several environments (Al-Huri, 2012).

The current paper examines the poor linguistic proficiency of the students in using MSA among Saudi students at elementary schools, which is mainly attributed to the diglossia. In addition, the paper examines the extent of the teachers' use of low variety and the reasons behind it. Also, the study examines the impact of LV use of Arabic on students' linguistic proficiency at the elementary stage.

Research Problem

Diglossia has a significant effect on the educational field since the low variety (L) of language seems to be the main used aspect in interaction and instruction inside and outside the school. In fact, applying the colloquial form of Arabic tends to expand the general gap between dialect and MSA in favor of the dialect, which essentially leads to crucial linguistic deficiency for the language students since they are used to one certain variety and are taught with another.

The current paper examines the effect of using a low variety of learning and teaching Arabic courses in Schools. The paper's essential problem addresses the sociolinguistic phenomenon of low variety use and its relationship to education and its influence on the educational procedure and teaching the educational courses of Arabic. Along with using many dialects, such procedure definitely complicates the duties of the teachers in improving the students' skills of language and widens the current gap between the vernacular and MSA, which is meant to be fundamentally bridged by the dominant application of MSA in the school's curriculum. It is known that obvious deficiencies and shortcomings have been noticed in the linguistic skills of the students in all schools, especially, elementary schools level. Several educationists attribute such lack of linguistic skills and performance to the used language variety by the teachers, especially, the teachers teaching the Arabic courses.

Research Questions

The study mainly seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1- To what extent do the teachers use MSA in classrooms, and what are the reasons behind their use of the low variety (LV)?
- 2- How does the use of the low variety of Arabic impact learners' linguistic proficiency at the elementary stage?

Research Hypotheses

To answer the research questions, the following hypotheses were put forward:

- 1- There is a direct correlation between students' low linguistic level and the frequent use of LV in classrooms.
- 2- Teachers use the LV of Arabic and believe this variety may help students understand and get information thoroughly.
- 3- Parents and teachers believe that exposing children to MSA in the foundation stage is a burden for them and is not helpful.

Research Purpose

Arabic is the language in which the Holy Quran was revealed. It is the language, which Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) - the last of the prophets - spoke. For Abdelali (2004, cited in Bani-Khaled, 2014, p.184), MSA is the language of the formal media, which include both television and radio, in the Arabic environment. In addition, it's the language of newspapers, books, and most printed material in MSA. Therefore, as it is presented, MSA mainly dominates the media aspect to a great extent that any fluency lack in MSA could prevent the minimally literate individuals from accessing the daily news relevant to their livelihood. Thus, the use of MSA is important for many reasons: reading, for understanding religious texts, and for following formal procedures or watching the news and so on.

The research purposes included in the following:

- 1- Investigating the applications of MSA in the classrooms' settings.
- 2- Examining the perceptions of teachers and students in using the language dialects in classrooms and its effect on the instruction process.
- 3- Examining the educational skills when using both Arabic language forms in the classrooms' settings.

Research Significance

The significance of the papers lies in examining the LV used for instructions in teaching, particularly at the elementary stage. In addition, determine the learners' weakness points in using MSA. The paper focuses on the effect of such process on the linguistic performance in using formal Arabic. The foundation stage may not only be the elementary stage but also includes pre-school and kindergarten period. The goals of Education Policy of teaching Arabic in Saudi Arabia are focused on developing the abilities of students such as narrative, understanding expressions, vocabulary, etc. However, achieving such fundamental outcomes may be hindered due to many reasons related to diglossia. The study pays special attention to possible barriers, which could prevent achieving those major goals at elementary schools in Saudi Arabia.

Research Importance

The current section presents the theoretical and applied importance of the current paper:

- The theoretical Importance:
 - 1- Presenting the teachers and students' perceptions of using language forms.
 - 2- Presenting the importance of language vernacular and its impact.
 - 3- Presenting the students' ability to use MSA in their courses with their teachers.
- The Applied Importance:
 - 1- The results of the study will provide excellent materials for the educational field.
 - 2- The study resembles an important reference for the pedagogical aspect in providing the essential materials and students/teachers' perception of LV use.

2. Literature Review

Diglossia obviously poses huge challenges in the educational field, especially in the educational process. This issue was discussed and examined by many linguists. There has been literature and studies on the issue since the 1960s. Bani-Khaled (2014) in his paper "Standard Arabic and Diglossia - A problem for language education in the Arab world" stated that the instruction language in schools is vernacular in its many forms. Therefore, students face the issues of receiving the courses' instruction in one certain form and writing/reading in another. Bani-Khaled indicated that MSA faces several challenges, grammar's modification in formal Arabic and the vocabulary elaboration in order to cover learning in the formal Arabic language.

In this regard, the Education Policy of teaching Arabic in Saudi Arabia endeavors to achieve major goals including enabling students to read correctly and to acquire correct habits such as speed and quality of recitation and narrative. To enable students to express their own ideas clearly, and to understand expressions and vocabulary received from others. Also, to develop their ability of spelling to be able to write correctly. However, diglossia is considered as a stumbling block in front of achieving these goals.

Ayari (1996; cited in Bani-Khaled, 2014) addressed certain barriers caused by diglossia in acquiring literacy skills in formal Arabic including the behavior of teachers and parents to the standard and colloquial forms of Arabic. In addition, Ayari stated that due to the late MSA acquisition, more than 120 million individuals do not have the chance to learn the more distinguished language form, causing a high literacy rate in the Middle East and North Africa of nearly 70%. However, Maamouri (1998, p.5, cited in Bani-Khaled, 2014) stated that there are growing knowledge and awareness among the education specialists, stating that the low rates of achievement and high illiteracy in the Arabic environment are caused by the standard complexities of the language. Such standard complexities mainly relate to the diglossic aspect of the language making the reading a difficult process for most students.

Similarly, Bagui (2012) in his study, which titled "Aspects of MSA use in Everyday Conversation" stated that the majority of experienced teachers express a certain linguistic awareness of which varieties to use in order to express their social identity. MSA receives a positive attitude by all Arabic language

teachers of both beginners and experienced. This attitude drives them to avoid using colloquial variety even in daily conversation, showing some negative attitudes toward this variety, which is the medium of interaction between all speakers. Yet, colloquial variety can be used for clarification, by which speakers can avoid confusion and express themselves clearly.

It can be argued that teachers use MSA even in daily conversation especially beginners due to their limited experience in using MSA. Throughout his investigation "The Impact of Diglossia in Teaching the Arabic Course in Sana'a Secondary Schools" Al-Huri (2012) found out that teachers and students showed high appreciation for MSA as they were proud in using it. Yet, students' comprehension abilities in MSA language and educational skills lead them to be pleased in learning their courses in dialect. Likewise, teachers expressed that they recourse to use the dialect in teaching Arabic lessons because of several reasons: MSA complexity, unfamiliarity with the high variety, and assimilation. The study also revealed that Arabic subject teachers sometimes use MSA and other times use what is so-called middle language. Thus, they go back and forth between the middle language and the formal one and often use the dialect form. In addition, Al-Huri stated that students' insufficiency levels in MSA skills of language are a normal result output of the repeated use of the language dialect in the classroom settings.

By the same token, in her study titled "Diglossia and its Effect on Language Teaching" Almadani (2015) concluded the same deductions and added that teachers do not always use MSA in classrooms and limit using MSA in introducing the lessons, reading the passages and responding the book's questions whereas they use the colloquial in explaining some unfamiliar words, giving orders or instructions, and even in the way calling a certain pupil such as Errqya instead of Rouqaya. رقيّة. She also stated that learners make several mistakes in writings in compositions exams; they use some vernacular terms instead of the standard formal ones. In addition, teachers' repeated use of the vernacular style in instruction influences the oral abilities of the students and that is distinguished in the deficiency levels of students in the communication abilities as they cannot clearly express their thought and answer the instructors' questions in MSA. Additionally, it has been noticed that when learners are asked to recite certain texts, they presented reasonable fluency levels. Almadani asserted that this fluency deficiency is because of the scarceness of practicing the right method of language.

Abu-Rabi (2000) in his study titled "Effects of exposure to literary Arabic on reading comprehension in a diglossic situation" advocated that diglossia hinders the acquisition of language and pedagogical skills in the Arabic environment during the early levels of education (Ayari, 1996; Rosenhouse & Shehadi, 1986). He asserted also that literary Arabic differs from spoken Arabic in vocabulary, phonology, syntax, and grammar. Further, Abu-Rabi concluded that initial exposure of children to literary Arabic improves their comprehension abilities of language skills. Thus, early exposure can be implemented in kindergarten. Policymakers might combine this pedagogy in all pre-school levels as a primary aspect of the educational curriculum. It can also be promoted through educating elementary-

school and kindergarten teachers in such diglossic matters and explaining to them the rationale of exposing their pupils to literary Arabic. Also, he recommended that for teachers to use literary Arabic as the main instruction language, which will enhance students' skills in reading literary Arabic and make it close to and meaningful for students' lives.

Saudi children actually are exposed to MSA before they join school through television programs such as cartoons and other children's TV programs. As well, the tremendous development of technology in recent years makes exposure to MSA incredibly easy and accessible. However, the use of technology may be a double-edged sword, which depends basically on the behavior of teachers and parents to the standard and colloquial forms of Arabic. Therefore, the role of parents emphasized as one of the most compulsory solutions, which let children expose to MAS in kindergarten and preschool period.

3. Research Methodology

Sample

The participants in the current study included 30 teachers. Twenty teachers were females and ten were males. Among them, two were Master's degree holders and the others were Bachelor's degree holders. Ten teachers have experienced less than five years and five teachers have experience more than twenty years. The courses they teach include Islamic subjects, Arabic Language, Mathematics and Science.

Instruments and Followed Procedures

This current paper was established to examine the low variety, which instructors majorly apply in the classrooms settings along with the diglossia effect in the teaching and learning process and on the learners' ability in using the formal aspect of the language. Thus, this paper is primarily based on a designed questionnaire that mainly includes the essential variables of effect on the students' progress in the MSA use. It also contains four sections ranging from closed-ended items to open-ended questions.

This is because collecting diverse types of data would provide a more complete understanding of the impact of diglossia on learning Arabic than either quantitative or qualitative data alone. Across statistical processes, the study reached to teachers' MSA use in the classroom settings (A percentage that comprises the varied level of using MSA 'always' 'sometimes' 'rarely' and 'never') and the Likert scale that ranged from Strongly disagree up to Strongly agree.

Data Collection

In this study, the data collection based on teachers' answers to the questionnaire's items through both closed-ended items and the open-ended questions. Different statistical tools have been applied to analyze the gathered data of the study. It was based mainly on the SPSS statistical program in examining the data, which will be deeply explained in the following part of the results.

4. Results

Brief Description of the Used Statistical Tools

We use (SPSS v.23) program: "Statistical Package for Social Sciences". Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in the study, such as:

- 1- Frequencies and Percentages.
- 2- Weighted Mean and Stander Division.

Inferential statistics are used to test the difference between groups in the study, and the relationship between variables, such as:

- 1- The t-test (Independent Samples), which applied to test whether gender groups and qualifications have different average values in the dimension study or not.
- 2- ANOVA test, which applied to test whether experience and subjects' groups have different average values in the dimension study or not.

Tools Reliability

We use the internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha for section 3 of the questionnaire, which is measured in 5- point Likert scale. Results showed calculated Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire.

Table (1) Cronbach's Alpha Reliability result

Questionnaire	No. of Phrase	Cronbach's Alpha
Effect of using the low variety in the classroom on learning MSA: A case of Saudi elementary schools' pupils.	12	0.712

For the final data collection, the sample size was (30) respondents, the calculated Cronbach's Alpha was (0.712) for the whole questionnaire, these results indicate a good reliability for the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha ranges from $r = 0$ to 1 , with $r = 0.7$ or greater considered as sufficiently reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

- **Section (1) Demographic Characteristics**

Table (2) presents the demographic data for participants, which shows that female had the highest percent by 66.7% of the total sample, while the male had 33.3% of the total sample. Regarding qualification, the highest percent of the sample has a Bachelor's degree by percent 93.3%, also the highest percent of the sample 33.3% has experience less than 5 years. Regarding courses, the highest percent of the sample 33.3% teaches Islamic subjects, followed by Arabic with 26.7%, followed by Science with 20%, followed by Mathematics with 13.3% and other subjects with 6.7% of the total sample.

Table (2) Distribution of sample according to demographics data

Demographics data		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	10	33.3
	Female	20	66.7
Qualification	Bachelor's degree	28	93.3
	Masters and above	2	6.7
Experience	Less than 5 years	10	33.3
	From 5 - 10 years	7	23.3
	From 10 - 15 years	2	6.7
	From 15 - 20 years	6	20.0
	20 years and above	5	16.7
Courses taught	Islamic subjects	10	33.3
	Arabic	8	26.7
	Mathematics	4	13.3
	Science	6	20.0
	Other	2	6.7

• Section 2

Table (3) the descriptive statistics of the participants' answers for section 2.

Questions	answers	Count	%
Do you speak to your students in MSA in the classroom?	Never	2	6.7
	Rarely	8	26.7
	Sometimes	11	36.7
	Always	9	30.0
Do you speak to your students in the low variety in the classroom?	Never	0	0
	Rarely	9	30.0
	Sometimes	8	26.7
	Always	13	43.3
Do you think that LV use conveys information well to the students while you explain the lesson?	Never	0	0
	Rarely	3	10.0
	Sometimes	10	33.3
	Always	17	56.7
Do you prefer mixing the low variety to MSA during explaining the lesson?	Never	4	13.3
	Rarely	4	13.3
	Sometimes	14	46.7
	Always	8	26.7

From table (3), we found that the highest percent of the total sample 36.7% speak sometimes to their students in MSA in the classroom, while 43.3% of the total sample always speak to their students in the colloquial variety in the classroom. The highest percent of the total sample by 56.7% think that the use of the colloquial variety always conveys information well to the students while they explain the lesson. The highest percent of the total sample 46.7% prefer sometimes to mix the colloquial variety with MSA during explaining the lesson. We use a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 to strongly disagree up to 5 to strongly agree, as shown in table (4).

Table (4) 5-point Likert scale

General Trend	Likert-Scale	Likert Scale interval
Strongly disagree	1	1.0 – 1.80
Disagree	2	1.81 – 2.60
Neutral	3	2.61 – 3.40
Agree	4	3.41 – 4.20
Strongly agree	5	4.21 – 5.00

- **Section 3: Using the Low Variety on Students' Linguistic Proficiency**

In this section, we show the descriptive statistics of the participants' answers for section 3 of the questionnaire.

Table (5) Using the Low Variety on Students' Linguistic Proficiency

	Strongly Agree(5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	St. D	Mean	Trend
The use of low variety has a negative effect on learning MSA in the early years of studying.	30	53.3	6.7	10	0	0.890	4.03	Agree
The low variety has a negative effect on both the writing and spelling skills of the student.	40	33.3	13.3	13.3	0	1.050	4.00	Agree
The low variety has a negative effect on the basic skills of reading, composition, and analysis.	30.0	43.3	13.3	13.3	0	0.995	3.90	Agree
The student understands everything that is said to him in MSA but he cannot respond in the same variety he hears.	23.3	53.3	13.3	10.0	0	0.885	3.90	Agree
The low variety is overlapped with MSA during the oral	30.0	66.7	0	3.3	0	0.626	4.23	Agree

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	St. D	Mean	Trend
practice.								
The low variety's vocabulary are overlapped with those of MSA during composing a text.	20.0	50.0	20.0	10.0	0	0.887	3.80	Agree
There is a direct relationship between student's weak linguistic proficiency and the frequency practice of the low variety in the classroom.	13.3	56.7	16.7	13.3	0	0.877	3.70	Agree
The use of the low variety during explaining the lesson help students understand and absorb information better.	16.7	40.0	13.3	30.0	0	1.104	3.43	Agree
At school, some cultural activities such as plays are introduced in the low variety.	23.3	40.0	13.3	20.0	3.3	1.163	3.60	Agree
Although Arabic is taught at the first level of the primary stage, the student's use of the language is not good enough even at the advanced level of this stage (grade 6).	40.0	53.3	3.3	3.3	0	0.702	4.30	Strongly agree
Mean & St. D						0.917	3.88	Agree

From table (5), it is clear that the first rank was for (Although the Arabic language is taught in the first year of primary education, the student's use of the language is not good even at the advanced level of the elementary level (grade 6) with mean (4.30) and St. D (0.702), which corresponds to (Strongly agree) according to 5-point Likert scale. Followed by (9) statements out of (10) had agreed to rank with mean score lie on the interval (3.41 to 4.20). While the last rank was for (The use of the low variety during explaining the lesson help students understand and absorb information better) with lowest mean (3.43) and St. D (1.104), which corresponds to (Agree) according to 5-point Likert scale. We noted that there were no paragraphs that were not approved with average responses, and all paragraphs were approved on average except for one statement got a neutral degree. The mean score for section (3) was (3.89) with St. D of (0.917), which corresponds to (Agree) according to the 5-point Likert scale shown in table (4). This indicates the approval of the sample study on the paragraphs of this section in general.

Section 4: Children's Exposure to MSA in Pre-School and Kindergarten Levels

In this section, we show the descriptive statistics of the participants' answers for section 4 of the questionnaire.

Table (5) Children's Exposure to MSA in Pre-School and Kindergarten Levels

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	St. D	Mean	Trend
Parents still think that exposing their children to MSA in the home environment at the foundation stage is considered a burden and is not helpful.	30.0	13.3	16.7	30.0	10.0	1.431	3.23	Neutral
Children's exposure to MSA through television programs and multi-technology tools has a great role in solving .this problem	56.7	43.3	0	0	0	0.504	4.57	Strongly agree
Mean & St. D						0.967	3.90	Agree

It is clear there were no paragraphs that were not approved with average responses, one paragraph was approved on average, while the other statement got a neutral degree. The mean score for section (4) was (3.90) with St. D of (0.967), which corresponds to (Agree) according to the 5-point Likert scale shown in table (4). This indicates the approval of the sample study on the paragraphs of this section in general.

- **Differences in Responses According to the Demographic Characteristics**

Next, we will view the differences in the respondents' opinions regarding the impact of diglossia on the linguistic proficiency of the students between groups according to qualifications, gender, experience or curriculum. We use T-test to find a difference in the respondents' opinions about the effect of diglossia on the students' linguistic proficiency according to gender and qualification of the respondents, result shown in the next table.

Table (6) T-Test Results

Respondents' opinions about the effect of diglossia on the students' linguistic proficiency		N	Mean	Std. D	T-Value	P-Value
Gender	Male	10	3.9000	.45440	0.068	0.946

Respondents' opinions about the effect of diglossia on the students' linguistic proficiency		N	Mean	Std. D	T-Value	P-Value
	Female	20	3.8875	.48687		
Qualification	Bachelor's degree	28	3.8690	.46615	0.989	0.331
	Masters and above	2	4.2083	.53033		

Table (6) shows that there is no statistically significant difference in Respondents' opinions about the effect of diglossia on the students' linguistic proficiency according to their gender or qualification; since p-value = (0.946, 0.331) > 0.05; This is due to the convergence of averages for all categories, which had (Agree) trend with a mean score between (3.41 – 4.20).

In terms of experience and Courses taught, we use ANOVA test, to find difference according to groups, result shown in the next table.

Table (9) ANOVA test results

Respondents' opinions about effect of diglossia on the students' linguistic proficiency		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Experience	Less than 5 years	10	3.8000	0.34066	1.130	0.365
	From 5 - 9 years	7	4.0952	0.51467		
	From 10 - 14 years	2	4.0833	0.94281		
	From 15 - 19 years	6	3.6250	0.52639		
	20 years and above	5	4.0333	0.34661		
Courses taught	Islamic subjects	10	3.9583	0.51408	0.157	0.958
	Arabic	8	3.8021	0.40074		
	Mathematics	4	3.8333	0.68718		
	Science	6	3.9583	0.46173		
	Other	2	3.8333	0.47140		

Table (9) shows that there is no statistically significant difference between groups in opinions about the effect of using the low variety on the students' linguistic proficiency according to experience or courses taught; since p-value of ANOVA test for experience or courses groups were (0.365, 0.958) respectively > 0.05. This is due to the convergence of averages for all categories, with the value of mean score (3.41 - 4.20), which corresponds to (Agree) as a general trend of 5- point Likert scale. Regarding data collected from the open-ended questions, we can indicate that a large number of teachers prefer to use the LV for many reasons that will be discussed in more details in the part of the discussion. As well, teachers' recourse to the LV during explaining the lesson because they are not well qualified to use MSA and so they find it difficult to speak and explain lessons in MSA. On the other hand, students cannot understand the information easily unless the teacher explains in the LV, which is widely used in their society.

Discussion

This part provides a detailed analysis of results presented in the previous part, with reference to each of the research questions. The results of the study are also discussed in relation to previous research studies.

- **Question 1. To what extent do the teachers use MSA in classrooms, and what are the reasons behind their use of the low variety (LV)?**

The study's conclusions revealed that the majority of teachers always use the LV and they sometimes mix MSA to the LV during explaining lessons. Though the teachers indicated the importance of MSA use in classrooms and expressed their positive attitudes toward MSA, they prefer the use of the LV. This drew our attention that the use of MSA can be remarkably rare in elementary classrooms. The reasons have been revealed by the teachers are that they are not competent enough to explain and communicate in MSA. Other teachers said they are not accustomed to using MSA. They also stated that students find it difficult to understand lessons in MSA. Furthermore, teachers attributed their frequent use of the LV in the classroom to students' disability to express their idea and answering questions in MSA as well as they feel more confident to speak in the LV.

The teachers added that the limited use of MSA in students' society can be one of the reasons. These results accord with previous findings conducted in Al-Huri's (2012) study that found out teachers use the dialect in teaching Arabic lessons because of several reasons: MSA complexity, unfamiliarity with the high variety, and assimilation. These results are also in accord with Bagui's (2012) statements that MSA receives a positive attitude by all teachers of both beginners and experienced. Also, the results confirm the previous hypothesis that suggests teachers use the LV of Arabic and believe this variety may help students understand and get information perfectly.

- **Question 2. How does the use of the low variety of Arabic impact learners' linguistic proficiency at the elementary stage?**

The findings that have been obtained from teachers' responses about students' weak linguistic skills revealed that the student understands everything said to him in MSA but he cannot respond in the same variety he hears. The students' disability is clear in the communicative abilities because they cannot clearly express their answers in MSA and during instructions. In addition, the students' basic language skills such as writing and spelling can be the most sensitive to the LV use in which the low variety's vocabulary are overlapped with those of MSA during composing a text. Likewise, the LV has a negative effect on the basic skills of oral practices due to the overlap of vocabulary. The results also discovered that the teachers have negative attitudes towards using the LV in classrooms and they acknowledge the negative effect of the LV using on learning MSA especially in the early years of studying. The results show

also that although MSA is taught at the first level of primary stage, the students' use of the language is not good enough even at the advanced level of this stage (grade 6). In this regard, the teachers support our hypothesis that there is a direct relationship between student's weak linguistic proficiency and the frequency practice of the LV in the classroom. Accordingly, we can determine some possible limitations. The lack of recurring practice in schooling environment can be essential limitations. In this regard, the study found that the cultural activities at schools tend to be conducted by the LV. Besides, the home environment plays a great role especially in the period of pre-school and kindergarten. Thus, the study emphasizes the necessity of children's exposure to MSA through television programs and multi-technology tools and that has a great role in solving this problem.

These results accord with previous findings shown in Al-huri's (2012) study in which he concluded the insufficiency and low linguistic levels in the skills of communication for students is a normal outcome of the instructors' repeated use of the language dialect in classrooms. In addition, Almadani's (2015) study that states that instructors' repeated use of the language dialect heavily affects the oral abilities of the students and that is greatly noticeable in the communication deficiency. As well, the study of Abu-Rabi (2000) that decided that initial exposure of children to literary Arabic improves their comprehension abilities of language skills. Therefore, early exposure can be implemented in kindergarten. Policymakers might combine this pedagogy in all pre-school levels as a primary aspect of the educational curriculum. It can also be promoted through educating elementary- school and kindergarten teachers in theses diglossic issues.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings, we can conclude that there are many causes, which make diglossia a serious issue in education field such as the linguistic context at classrooms in which students learn, whether all teachers of the different subjects explain their lessons in the LV. In addition, the extensive gap between MSA and the LV, which increases constantly due to the LV dominance in many fields such as the media, meetings, and the official speeches of the politicians and so on. Considerable neglect of using MSA from the part of teachers at the elementary stage was really noticeable.

Although the teachers have a high appreciation of MSA, they often use the LV for many reasons. The most prominent reason is their low competence in using MSA and they are not accustomed to using MSA. The teachers believed that the LV use helps the assimilation of their students; while the students believe that they comprehend better when attending their lessons in the low variety and cannot fluently speak in formal Arabic and easily express their thoughts in such dialect. The poor proficiency of the students in applying MSA is a normal outcome due to the teachers' repeating application of the LV. For such an aspect, the application of LV in teaching affects the linguistic attainment negatively and presents the major aspect for the weakness of students' skills to efficiently apply MSA.

Therefore, we can mention some serious suggestions can be taken into consideration by the Education Policy in Saudi Arabia and by the teachers themselves to overcome diglossia impact on teaching: properly trained and well-qualified teachers, adequate teaching methodology, and the students receive enough exposure to use MSA. Moreover, we can state that children's exposure to MSA in the home environment is a significant solution in order to overwhelm such a serious issue. These results have implications regarding didactic methods of teaching of MSA in early childhood and should be adopted by the education system of Saudi Arabia. Hence, this is an important fact requires in-depth discussion by decision-makers who must suggest suitable solutions that will help Saudi Students at the elementary stage in the future.

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