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Diglossia in Arabic Language: A Special Challenge In Medical Interpreting

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[http://www.ted.com/talks/
maz_jobrani_a_saudi_an_indian_and_an_iranian_walk_into_a_qatari_bar.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/maz_jobrani_a_saudi_an_indian_and_an_iranian_walk_into_a_qatari_bar.html)

Minute 01:53



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- The speaker attitudes in using the Standard Arabic in formal special occasions, compared to using Dialectal Arabic for less important, less serious topics, in Sudan. (Hurreiz, S.H. 1975).
- Cultural Influences on the education system and the difference in teaching of English to Arab students between public and private education in Egypt. (Ibrahim, M 1977).



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- Depriving children from using their mother language at home is leading to the loss of their language by college age within the Middle Eastern families living in UK. (Taylor et al 2003).
- Mixing duo-languages may lead to development of bilingualism, as stated in Iraqi children refugee camps on the Turkish borders. (El-Safi et al 2010).



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English entry	MSA Equivalent	Gulf area	Syro-Lebanese	Egyptian	Maghreb	Mesopotamian
throat	الحنجرة	الحلج	الزور	الحلق	القرجوطة	الحنجرة
foot	القدم	القدم	المشط	القدم	قدم gdm	القدم
leg	الرجل	الريل	الرجل	الرجل	الرجل	الساق او الرجل
knee	الركبة	الركبة	الصابونة	الركبة	الركابي	الركبة
thigh	الفخذ	الفخذ	الفخذ	الفخذ	فخض	الفخذ
basin bone (hip)	عظم الحوض	المدوّز	الجحوض	الحوض	المقعد	عظم الحوض او الورك
liver	الكبد	الجبد	الفشة	الكبد	الكبدة	الكبد
pain	الآلم	ويع	الوجع	الآلم	عوآر	الآلم
ringing ear	طنين في الأذن	طنين	رنة في الودن	طنين في الأذن	طننة في الأذن	طنين في الأذن
pin point pupils	تقبض حدقة العين	غبش في بوبو العين	غشاوة	ضيق حدقة العين	عشاوة	تقبض حدقة العين
dilated pupils	توسع حدقة العين	مجلله	اتساع حدقة العين	اتساع حدقة العين	وسعة البؤبؤ	توسع حدقة العين
nausea	غثيان	لوعة	مراجعة	غثيان	قلبي نايش	لعيان النفس
dizziness	دوّار او دوخة	دوخة	دوخة	دوخة	دوخة	دوخة
throwing up	القي	فتلان في الرأس	نتق	ترجيع	نقأف	يتقيأ (تتقيأ)
hallucination	هلوسة	هذيان	هلوسة	هلوسة	يتخربق	هلوسة
short breath	ضيق النفس	ضيق نفس	مفرط	ضيق نفس	حنقة	ضيق النفس او التنفس
cold	برد	مزجوم	رشح	زكام	ضربوه لبرد	برد
fainting	إغماء	غمرائه	إغماء	إغماء	طايح	إغماء
fever	حمى	سخونة	حرارة	حرارة	سخانة	سخونة او حمى
sweating	تعرق	عرج	عرق	عرق	عرقان	تعرق
hand	اليـد	اليـد	اليـد	اليـد	يديا	اليـد
waist	الخصر	المدور	خصر	الوسط	الوسط	الخصر او الخاصرة
elbow	المرفق	المرفق	اللوـح	الكوع	الكوع	الكوع
shoulder	الكتف	الجتف	اللوح	الكتف	لكتف	الكتف او الجتف
forehead	الجبهة	البيـهه	جبين	القورة	الفرنت	الجبين
neck	الرقبة	المنق	الرقبة	الرقبة	العنق	الرقبة او الرقبة rugba
Blurry	مشوشة	غشاوة	مغبشة	زغللة	زغللة	غير واضحة او مشوشة
Heartburn	حرقة في المعدة	صاهر	حراز	حموضة	الحرقة	حرقة في المعدة



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Transliteration Scheme of the Arabic Alphabet

Consonants			Vowels		
ء	ب	ظ	ز	اَ	ā
ب	ب	ط	ت	اُ	u
پ	پ	ظ	ز	اِ	i
ت	ت	ث	ث	اَ	a
ث	ث	ث	ج	اُ	o
ج	ج	ج	ف	اِ	e
ح	ح	ح	ق	اَ	a
خ	ح	خ	ك	اُ	ow/aw
د	د	د	گ	اِ	ey/ay
ذ	ذ	ذ	ل		
ر	ر	ر	م		
ز	ز	ز	ن		
س	س	س	و		
ش	ش	ش	ه		
ص	ص	ص	و		
ض	ض	ض	ي		
ط	ط	ط			



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Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA; Arabic: اللغة العربية الفصحى *al-lughah al-‘Arabīyah al-fuṣḥá*), **Standard Arabic**, or **Literary Arabic** is the standardized and literary variety of Arabic used in writing and in most formal speech. Most western scholars distinguish two standard varieties of the Arabic language:

- **Classical Arabic** (CA) (اللغة العربية التراثية) *al-lughah al-‘Arabīyah al-turāthīyah*) of the Quran and early Islamic (7th to 9th centuries) literature. This variety is no longer in use except in religious ceremonies and elite scholarly literature.
- **Modern Standard Arabic** (MSA) (اللغة العربية المعيارية الحديثة) *al-lughah al-‘Arabīyah al-mi‘yārīyah al-ḥadīthah*), the standard language in use today. The modern standard language is based on the Classical language. Most Arabic speakers consider the two varieties to be closely related and two registers of one language.



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Regional Dialects of the Arab World

Versteegh (2001) distinguished between five groups of regional dialects in the Arab World:

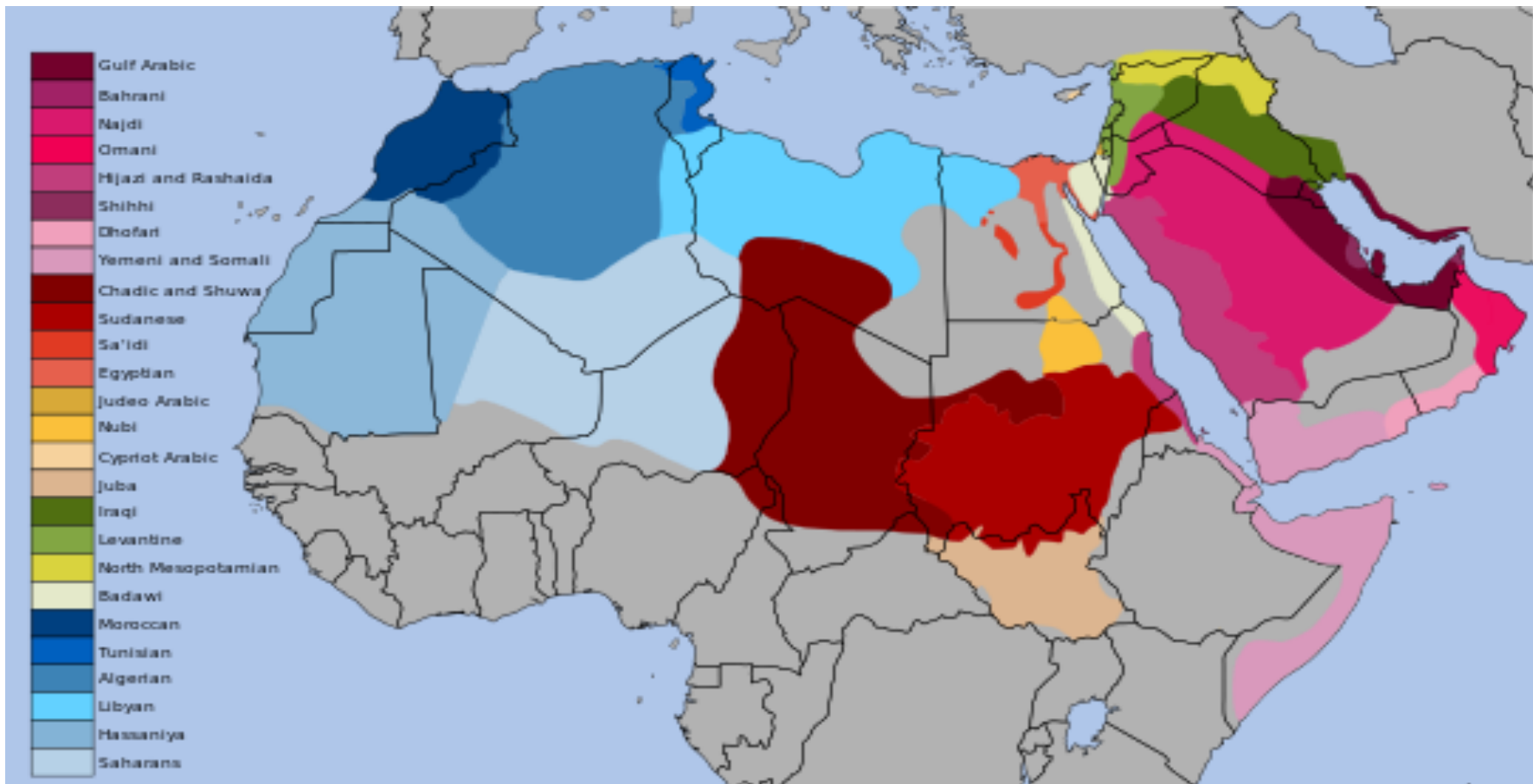
- Dialects of the Arabian peninsula, which are spoken in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf area.
- Mesopotamian dialects, which are spoken in Iraq.
- Syro-Lebanese dialects, which are spoken in Syria and Lebanon.
- Egyptian dialects, which are spoken in Egypt.
- Maghreb dialects, which are spoken in North Africa.



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Knowing the fact that literary Arabic is the official language of 27 states.





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Regional Dialects Dilute MSA Online Presence

<http://www.wikipedia.org>

1,000,000 + Documents (in more than a decade)

Arabic ا

100,000 + (in two years)

Egyptian مصري



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Regional Dialects Dilute MSA Online Presence

The screenshot shows the website www.ahram.org.eg in a Firefox browser. The main content area displays a large photograph of a crowd celebrating, with the headline: **المصريون يدقون أبواب الحرية والمستقبل الملايين احتشدت للتصويت علي الدستور بالزغاريد والأفراح**. Below the headline, the text reads: "في يوم مشهود جديد من تاريخ مصر المجيد، خرجت الملايين من جماهير الشعب أمس في جميع ربوع الوطن، لتشارك في صنع مستقبلها، وتقول نعم لدستور مصر الجديد، وتجدد تأييدها خريطة الطريق." The page also includes a search bar, a navigation menu with items like "الرئيسية", "الأخبار", "البرامج", "الكتب", "الخدمات", "التواصل", and "التبرع", and several advertisements for services like "KONOUZ" and "مبوبة".



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Points Related to Diglossia in Arabic-speaking countries

- It is historical development in Arabic-speaking countries (i.e., as resulting from geographic, socioeconomic, and religious splittings)
- Widely increased in Arabic Community
- The vernacular has a simpler grammatical structure than the Classical
- Vernacular borrows much from Classical Arabic
- It is the interplay between written Arabic and vernacular Arabic that creates and maintains Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA), both nationally and internationally.



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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrGK6oAH4xk>

At 00:10 from the Egyptian movie لا تراجع ولا استسلام



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Definition of Diglossia

- Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects (**Low = L**) of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety (**High = H**), the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (Ferguson 1972 & 1996).
- The **L** variety and the **H** variety of Arabic language are optimally distant, which makes Arabic language one of the most prominent examples of diglossia.



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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxjtsl0yb0M>

**The Ethnolinguistic Profile of My Family:
Diglossia, Pidgin, and Code changes...
Sara El Rifai (5 minutes).**



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Definition of “Register” & Interpreters Dilemma

- Register is a variety of language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. Ex: prescribed grammar, formal/informal tone/forms of address, technical terminology, and colloquial language.
- Both of the NBCMI and the CCHI in the medical/health care field on one hand and the national court certification exam on the other hand require interpreters to “**maintain**” the register while conveying messages between the Source Language (SL) and the Target Language (TL). Interpreters will be penalized, and ultimately fail, if they change the register. It is noteworthy that the passing ratio of the Arabic language national court certification exam is less than 4%, which is significantly lower than ALL other.



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Language Vitality





Language Death

In his book titled “Language Death” (2000), David Crystal uses the five-level classification of language endangerment developed by Stephen Wurm as follows:

- **Potentially endangered**: are socially and economically disadvantaged, under heavy pressure from larger language, and beginning to lose child speakers.
- **Endangered**: have few or no children learning the language, and the youngest good speakers are young adults.
- **Seriously endangered**: have the youngest good speakers age 50 or older.
- **Moribund**: have only a handful of good speakers left, mostly very old.
- **Extinct**: have no speakers left.



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Why Do Languages Die?

- **Because of factors that put people in physical danger:**
 - Catastrophic natural causes.
 - Famine.
 - Diseases.
 - Exploitation.
 - Massacres.

- **Because of factors that change the people's culture:**
 - Culture assimilation: top down (incentives, recommendations, or laws) or bottom up (fashionable trends, peer group pressure, or a mix of socio-economic factors).

Bilingualism → semilingualism → monolingualism

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Why Should We care?

- Because we need diversity.
- Because languages express identity.
- Because languages are repositories of history.
- Because languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge.
- Because languages are interesting in themselves



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Points Related to Diglossia in Arabic-speaking countries

- Very frequent in some Arabic countries like Egypt
- The label Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is commonly applied to the written language of contemporary literature, journalism, television and radio news broadcasts, scientific and technological writing, administration and diplomacy
- The lexicogrammatical regularities of ESA, national or international, are not those of MSA
- There is the social functions of code switching between ESA and MSA
- The CS patterns therefore reproduce the unequal social values and distribution of ESA and MSA in the Arabic landscaping and simultaneously may lead to reconceptualization of the notion of diglossia



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The Idea of Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA)

- According to Mitchell (1986), ESA is not a separate variety but is created and maintained by the interaction between the written language and the vernacular.
- Mitchell argues that the need for ESA is maintained by necessity of educated Arab population to converse on subjects beyond the scope of their regional vernacular. Also, they need to share and commune with other educated Arabs in other regions.
- The ESA is not a form of “spoken MSA”. Rather, it is mix of element from the MSA and from the vernacular.
- The importance of the adopting the ESA comes primarily from its inherent definition that implies that educated Arabs can use it to communicate with one another across regions.



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The Idea of Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA) - Continued

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Concerns regarding the adoption of ESA

- Definition of “Educated Arabs” is vague. Does it mean “literate”, or “cultured”?
- It is very hard for linguists to clearly describe the rules of this inter-communal variety?
Bassiouney (2009) suggests that we can **start by identifying the linguistics rules used within each region first.** Then, **we can work our way up for shared rules of the ESA across the Arab World.**
- Mitchell, did not clearly describe, from a linguistic point of view, what people do when they **switch** from their regional dialect in ESA and back (language forms, nouns, adjectives, singular, dual, plural,...etc.).
- Parkinson (2003) argues that because of the **lack of established rules that governs the ESA, it does not exist.**



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Suggested Recommendations by Experts

- Need for the development of a standardized language (Unified Language) that would dissolve the diglossic split in Arabic.
- Unified Grammatical Structure.



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Where are we heading?

- **What role does the MSA play in the Arab World today?**
- **Is the challenge different from one region to another in the Arab World?**
- **Can the MSA survive?**

Recently, the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) started testing Arabic language proficiency in MSA and regional dialects as well.

It is very likely that, in few decades, the MSA will be extinct leaving Classical Arabic (CA) in use in religious and elite scholarly studies the way Latin is in law today! (Discussion).



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What can we do?

- Staying course (status quo) is not an option. MSA is dying!
- Reviving, or trying to revive, MSA requires massive collective effort throughout the Arab World. Both of top-down and bottom-up approaches seem doomed considering the socio-economical and political situations in the Arab World today.
- Shall we accept the extinction of MSA?
- Shall we start working on and accepting ESA as a **more modern** standard Arabic?
- Is ESA reliable enough? (coding, grammar,...etc.)
- If so, who will lead the way?
- Grass root effort to communicate with national and international association to recognize the ESA as a replacement of MSA. Hence, interpreters will be tested and rated accordingly! Will this solution be the final word that resolves the register issue?



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Questions?

