The University of Arizona

The Language Attitudes of a Saudi Arabian Woman towards Standardized and Regional Arabic

Magdalena Sammut

MENA 330: Language and Society in the Middle East

Dr. Samira Farwaneh

8 May 2024

Abstract

Diglossia, a situation in which a standardized and regional variety each serves two distinct functions in a society, has existed in Arabic-speaking societies for all of Classical Arabic's history. In Arabic's case, its standardized variety, *Al-Fuṣḥā*, is used for formal and written communication, whereas the regional varieties, the *'Āmmiyyas*, are used for informal, oral communication. The vast body of literature about Arabic diglossia emphasizes that most speakers consider *Fuṣḥā* to be superior to *'Āmmiyya* for its significance as the language of Islam. To gain more insight into one person's language attitudes towards *Fuṣḥā* and *'Āmmiyya* in the Middle East, I interviewed my friend from Saudi Arabia about her attitudes toward *Fuṣḥā* and her regional variety, *Allahjat Albayda'*, and in what situations she would use each variety. Overall, she considered *Fuṣḥā* to be superior to her regional variety and tended to use it in more formal settings. These results support the body of literature on this topic. In contrast to much of the literature, however, she exhibited an appreciation for her *'Āmmiyya*. In light of a study conducted in Egypt in 2017, this could be indicative of increasing respect for one's *'Āmmiyya* throughout the Middle East.

Literature Review

Diglossia exists in every community. A stable, diglossic society is one in which two varieties are frequently used, each serving a distinct purpose. The first variety, often a regional variety, is learned within one's community and is used for ordinary conversation. The second, a highly standardized variety acquired through formal education, is typically reserved for formal settings instead of colloquial discussions (Ferguson 1959: 336). In the Arabic-speaking world, diglossia has existed as long as Classical Arabic (Ferguson 1959: 327), where the regional variety is known as "'Al-Āmmiyya" ("اللهجة العامية") and the standardized variety is referred to as "'Al-*Fuṣḥā*" ("الفصحى") (Ferguson 1959: 327). Per Ferguson's definition of diglossia, *'Āmmiyya* is considered a mother tongue because it is informally acquired at home or within the greater community, whereas *Fuṣḥā* is learned through many years of formal schooling (Suleiman 2013: 268-269). While Suleiman holds that *Fuṣḥā* should not be considered a mother tongue, he argues, contrary to most linguists, it may instead be considered a native language for its cultural significance and status as a mother language within the education system. By ascribing it the status of a native language, *Fuṣḥā* may be considered an indigenous, official, national, or pan-national language (Suleiman 2013: 272).

Native speakers of Arabic display different language attitudes towards *Fuṣḥā* and *'Āmmiyya*. A language attitude simply refers to one's feelings, or attitude, towards a language (Bell 2014: 259), and may be obtained by observing a speaker's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors concerning the language in question (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 138). Literally translating as "the eloquent language" (Chakrani 2013: 1), *Fuṣḥā* is generally treated with a higher degree of respect than *'Āmmiyya* for its religious and cultural significance (Suleiman 2013: 274) (Yoyo et al. 2020: 27-28). As was the case with Arabic, diglossia is not considered to be problematic until

there is a desire for one unified, national language (Wardhaugh 2006: 90). Modernizing Arabic during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was met with considerable resistance because of its status as the language of Islam (Abu Absi 1986: 345). Furthermore, Classical Arabic served as, and remains, a bond among Arabs. Opponents of modernization feared implementing one of the *ʻĀmmiyyas* as a written language would fracture this bond (Abu Absi 1986: 338), while altering the language itself was also met with resistance due to fears of breaking Arabic tradition (Abu Absi 1986: 338) or losing the language's Semitic character (Abu Absi 1986: 343). Consequently, *Fuṣḥā* remains nearly identical to Classical Arabic, and mainly allowed for the introduction of new vocabulary words and changing the approach to teaching Arabic (Abu Absi 1986: 345). Even so, a loanword, albeit altered to adhere to Arabic phonology, was only used if Classical Arabic lacked an adequate word, a literal translation could not be developed, or if it was impossible to develop a new word (Abu Absi 1986: 344). The challenges faced in developing *Fuṣḥā* highlights the importance of the standardized Arabic variety in Arab society.

Fuṣḥā continues to be used for formal situations such as visual media, literature, religious and educational lectures, and government affairs (Ferguson 1959: 329) (Husein 2017: 87) (Morsly 1980: 255). By virtue of being the language of the Qur'an, Muslims consider *Fuṣḥā* to be the language of God (Ferguson 1959: 300), and, thus, is treated with a high degree of respect and veneration (Suleiman 2013: 274). The importance of *Fuṣḥā* however, is evident outside the religious sphere. Maintaining a standardized variety of Arabic allows for the unity of Arabs, past and present (Chakrani 2013: 1-2) with a common language, thus making it essential to Middle Eastern identity (Yoyo *et al.* 2020: 27). Today, *Fuṣḥā* serves as the official language of more than 20 countries and their governments (Ferguson 1959: 329) (Yoyo 2020: 27-28).

The Arabic varieties constituting the second main half of Arabic diglossia are the regional *ʿĀmmiyyas*. An *ʿĀmmiyya* is mainly used for informal, oral communications with confidants and colleagues (Ferguson 1959: 329). Despite *Fuṣḥā's* importance, it continues to be reserved for formal occasions, as using *Fuṣḥā* for casual discussion would feel "pedantic and artificial" (Ferguson 1959: 337). According to a study done by Alhassan Abdur-Rahim Husein, the majority of Egyptian university students surveyed agreed they wish they could speak *Fuṣḥā* perfectly, but would not use *Fuṣḥā* outside the university given the opportunity to use it (Husein 2017: 96). Furthermore, slightly over half of the same students agreed *Fuṣḥā* remains more important than dialect (Husein 2017: 93). *Fuṣḥā* was important to most of these students for its cultural and religious value (Husein 2017: 98). In general, *ʿĀmmiyya* serves as a source of regional identity and pride where it is spoken (Yoyo et al. 2020: 29), and an Arab will insist the his or her regional variety of Arabic is the best of the *ʿĀmmiyyas* (Wardhaugh 2006: 93).

Not everyone overtly expresses affection towards their *ʿĀmmiyya*. Despite the fact *ʿĀmmiyya* is their mother tongue, the majority of Arabs consider it inferior to *Fuṣḥā* (Suleiman 2013: 268). This is because, outside of folk literature, *ʿAl-Āmmiyya* is not the written medium of Arabic (Abu Absi 1986: 342) (Ferguson 1959: 329). In turn, one is considered illiterate until learning *Fuṣḥā* (Suleiman 2013: 269). The high degree of respect placed on *Fuṣḥā* has often resulted in discrimination towards *ʿĀmmiyya*, with some associating it with ignorance and vulgarity (Yoyo et al. 2020: 29). Although there is a possibility the *ʿĀmmiyyas* and Classical Arabic descended from one, extinct Old Arabic language (Retsö 2013: 443-44), many continue to view the *ʿĀmmiyyas* as corrupted forms of *Fuṣḥā* (Suleiman 2013: 269). For example, while speaking in his or her *ʿĀmmiyya*, a speaker may state someone else doesn't speak Arabic (*Fuṣḥā*), yet the referenced individual may effectively be able to speak his or her own *ʿĀmmiyya*

(Ferguson 1959: 330). This highlights the fact that, despite using it all the time, many educated Arabs will often insist they never speak *ʿĀmmiyya* (Ferguson 1959: 330). Though there have been attempts to elevate *ʿĀmmiyyas* to the status of a national language within some nations, such as during the 1930s in Egypt (Chakrani 2013: 2), these attempts have all failed (Suleiman 2013: 269).

Methodology

To ascertain an enhanced understanding of attitudes towards *Fuṣḥā* and *ʿĀmmiyya*, I interviewed a native speaker of Arabic. In addition to directly asking her about her thoughts and feelings towards *Fuṣḥā* and her *ʿĀmmiyya*, I also asked about which variety of Arabic she would use in different locations, and while thinking. Additionally, I inquired about her views on language planning and education in Saudi Arabia, and her attitudes towards Arabic varieties in different literary formats.

The audio-recorded interview was conducted in English, and in person at a local mosque. She was aware her identity would remain anonymous, she could withdraw from the interview at any time, and the audio recording would not be shared with anyone. She had no prior knowledge of the interview's subject matter. These steps were taken to ensure her comfort and transparency throughout the interview. The questions posed during this interview may be under Appendix A.

The interviewee, a close friend, is a twenty-year-old Muslim woman who is ethnically and geographically from Saudi Arabia currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in geology in Arizona. She was born in the *Al-Qassim* province in the center of Saudi Arabia, but lived her entire life in the Eastern Province, where she received private schooling. Her parents are also native Arabic speakers who completed their studies in Saudi Arabia.

Results

After she verbally consented to the interview, I asked her which variety of Arabic she speaks, to which she informed me she considers herself fluent in *Fuṣḥā* and her *ʻĀmmiyya*, *Allahjat Albayda'* ("اللهجة البيضاء"), known in English as "The White Accent." Occasionally, however, she will sometimes use words from other *ʻĀmmiyyas* such as *Masry* ("المصرى"), the Egyptian dialect, and *Shami* ("شامي"), the Levantine dialect. Her answer to this question did not immediately indicate any preference for *Fuṣḥā* or *ʻĀmmiyya*.

Direct Inquiry

After ascertaining her Arabic varieties, I asked if she considered any of these to be the "best". Overall she considered it to be *Fuṣḥā* because it is the language of the Qur'an and highlighted the importance of viewing her life through the lens of Islam. She also noted that she considers *Allahjat Albayda'* to be the best of the *ʻĀmmiyyas* for its simplicity and versatility. While other *ʻĀmmiyya* add different sounds to the end of different words to denote possession, for example, the endings for words in *Allahjat Albayda'* are fairly consistent with those of *Fuṣḥā*, and, for this reason, it is the *ʻĀmmiyya* most similar to *Fuṣḥā*.

Contrastingly, when asked to describe *Fuṣḥā*, she spoke of its majesty, beauty, and the great power it holds. Its power, however, does not make it inherently violent. Nevertheless, it has had violent effects as a written language: poetry would sometimes incite wars against tribes during the pre-Islamic era. Overall, however, she continues to emphasize that *Fuṣḥā* thoroughly conjures powerful, beautiful emotions.

These responses demonstrate that she exhibits positive attitudes towards both *Fuṣḥā* and *Allahjat Albayda'*, but gives preference to *Fuṣḥā*. Additionally, she emphasizes *Fuṣḥā's* power.

Location and Audience

The questions aiming to ascertain information regarding which variety of Arabic she chooses to use in different settings were inspired by a study comparing language attitudes towards Mazandarani and Farsi in northern Iran (Mirhosseini 2015: 161). Each of the four questions was adapted to relate to Arabic. She indicated that when she is at the store, school, and home, she will generally speak in *Allahjat Albayda'*. She has noticed she will occasionally use some *Fuṣḥā* vocabulary people do not use at the store. Moreover, her mother is aware she enjoys studying languages, so she always emphasizes learning Arabic first. My friend subsequently switches to *Fuṣḥā* although her mother was referring to *Allahjat Albayda'*. If my friend were to work, she would prefer to use *Fuṣḥā*, but would probably speak in *Allahjat Albayda'*. She elaborates on this, saying she would use *Fuṣḥā* for presentation or interviews, while reserving *Allahjat Albayda'* for colleagues if she worked an office job.

I next investigated her choice of variety when speaking to children. Generally, she will speak to children in *Allahjat Albayda'*. In the situation that a child is neither able to speak nor understand *Allahjat Albayda'*, she will switch to *Fuṣḥā*. If she were to have children of her own, she would elect to use *Fuṣḥā* for its cultural significance and importance to their identity. She once again iterates the importance of religion in her life: by learning *Fuṣḥā*, one can read the Qur'an, and, in turn, learn and live Islam. Additionally, she recognizes that *Fuṣḥā* will provide a strong linguistic base upon which to learn more languages.

These responses insinuate that speaking Arabic equates to speaking *Fuṣḥā*, and *Fuṣḥā* constitutes part of her Muslim and Saudi identities. Moreover, her responses indicate that she does give preference to using *'Āmmiyya* in her daily life, albeit often in combination with *Fuṣḥā* vocabulary.

Thoughts

Next, I sought to gain insight into which variety she uses to think. Surprisingly, she thinks neither in *Fuṣḥā* nor *Allahjat Albayda'*, but in English. If there is an instance, however, where she thinks in Arabic, she uses *Allahjat Albayda'*. She goes on to describe Arabic as "so beautiful, so artistic, [and] so delicate, while "all [she] has is just [her] basic dialect". She expressed her desire to enroll in Arabic classes to expand her command of *Fuṣḥā*:

"There's so many [Fuṣḥā] words that I still don't know to this day, and that bothers *me."*

I followed up with her, asking whether or not she also dreamed in English. She indicated she never really thought about it before, but dreams in both English and Arabic.

Though noteworthy she thinks in English instead of Arabic, her overall response again highlights her love for *Fuṣḥā* while degrading *Allahjat Albayda'*. Her phrasing of "just [her] basic dialect" does give the impression she considers *Allahjat Albayda'* inferior to *Fuṣḥā*.

Language Planning and Education

I gathered my friend's opinion on what she believes the official language of Saudi Arabia ought to be. This particular question was inspired by Abu Absi's paper discussing the modernization of Arabic. As discussed in the literature, debates as to whether a modified Classical Arabic, or *'Āmmiyya* would serve as the Arabic standard arose during modernization (Abu Absi 1986: 338), so I was interested to see my friend's position on the matter. To her, the official language does not matter as long as *Fuṣḥā* is taught in the classroom. There are many dialects throughout Saudi Arabia, so, whether the official language continues to be *Fuṣḥā* or an *'Āmmiyya* is implemented, everyone is still going to continue to use their own *'Āmmiyya*. Dialects constitute a part of Saudis' national identity and diversify their society:

"The north has a different accent from the south, from the east, from the west. It's a part of who we are and it creates a bit of diversity.."

I had initially planned to ask whether or not the education system should focus its efforts on teaching *Fuṣḥā*, *Allahjat Albayda'*, or another variety. This question was adapted from the aforementioned Mazandarani paper, where the author sought to learn whether or not participants held Mazandarani should be taught to the coming generations (Mirhosseini 2015: 159). Ultimately, I did not ask this because in answering the previous question, she answered this one. I did, however, ask about which variety of Arabic foreigners should learn. Generally, she would always say *Fuṣḥā*, but it depends on their purpose. If the student is Muslim or is learning more about Islam, she would say *Fuṣḥā* because its grammatical rules are taken from the Qur'an. Learning the language of the Qur'an would facilitate abiding by Islam in one's everyday life. If the student is only interested in traveling or living in an Arab country, however, she says it is better to learn that *'Āmmiyya*. If the student is only learning Arabic for enjoyment, then she, again, encourages *Fuṣḥā* because more people understand it.

Her responses again emphasize the importance of *Fuṣḥā* in her life. Furthermore, she displays a positive attitude towards *Allahjat Albayda'*, viewing it as a key facet of Saudi identity. Furthermore, her opinion that foreigners should choose the variety of Arabic they wish to learn based on their own language goals, and doesn't discourage learning *'Āmmiyya*.

Literature

To gain her perspective on what variety of Arabic should be used for literary media, I adapted a question from Agheyisi and Fishman's paper describing various techniques for

conducting attitude research. One question they posed was, “How would you react if it was suggested that more textbooks be written in the vernacular?” (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 147). I instead asked which variety of Arabic should be used for textbooks, novels, poetry, and periodicals.

My friend held that textbooks should be written in *Fuṣḥā* and that there is no reason for a textbook to include any *ʻĀmmiyya*. Solely using *Fuṣḥā* will allow literature to spread to as many regions as possible, and ensure *Fuṣḥā’s* preservation now and in the future. In general, she hates reading a book that is written in *Fuṣḥā* until she sees a word written in *ʻĀmmiyya*, even if it is in *Allahjat Albayda’*:

“It’s so annoying…if you want to use a dialect, write the entire thing in a dialect, do not start with this beautiful language and then put weird words in it.”

She holds a similar opinion for novels: if the story is set in a certain region and the author wants to incorporate *ʻĀmmiyya*, she maintains the author should write the entire book in that *ʻĀmmiyya*. She finds it unnecessary to mix *Fuṣḥā* and dialect. Moreover, she took the stance that periodicals must be published in *Fuṣḥā* without exception.

While she still maintains that it should either be written in *Fuṣḥā* or *ʻĀmmiyya*, my friend takes less issue with poetry being written in *ʻĀmmiyya* because of their personal nature. Shedding light on Saudi poetry, there are many poems in Saudi Arabia written about a specific family or tribe usually sung or written in their dialect. However, she emphasizes poetry written in *ʻĀmmiyya* is incomparable to those written in *Fuṣḥā*. If a poem is written in *ʻĀmmiyya* she would

neither buy it nor prefer it, but states she has no anger, hate, or authority to ban people from using their dialects.

My friend's strong opinions on the use of Arabic in literature give clear preference to *Fuṣḥā* as a written medium while heavily discouraging *ʻĀmmiyya* except in very specific situations. She views poetry containing *ʻĀmmiyya* inherently inferior to those written purely in *Fuṣḥā*.

Final Remarks

I asked if she had anything that she wanted to add, to which she stated:

"Arabic is the best language in the world. It is superior, and I will not take any other opinions on that. I think everyone should learn Arabic—Fuṣḥā—*and read the Qur'an, and learn about the culture it's attached to. Specifically Saudi culture."*

In doing so, she again emphasizes the importance of *Fuṣḥā*, Islam, and her Saudi ethnicity to her identity.

Discussion

Overall there was a very clear preference given towards *Fuṣḥā*. Given that it was a recurring theme throughout the interview, the primary reason for her choice of *Fuṣḥā* as the best variety of Arabic is its status in Islam. She constantly holds that by learning *Fuṣḥā*, one can learn the Qur'an and Islam. For this reason, she supports Suleiman's observation that a high degree of respect is placed on *Fuṣḥā* for its religious significance (Suleiman 2013: 274). Furthermore, her desire to one day teach *Fuṣḥā* to her children supports Yoyo *et al.'s* argument that *Fuṣḥā* is important to Arab identity (Yoyo *et al.* 2020: 27). Additionally, given that she would use *Fuṣḥā* for presentations, and interviews, this illustrates a preference given to *Fuṣḥā* in formal settings. Moreover, her preference towards *Fuṣḥā* as the language for textbooks, novels,

poetry, and periodicals indicates she is partial towards *Fuṣḥā* remaining the written medium for Arabic. The observations concur with Ferguson's paper where he outlines the environments in which the standardized such as in poetry, editorials, and university lectures (Ferguson 1959: 329).

My friend's love for *Fuṣḥā* does not mean she exhibits animosity towards *Allahjat Albayda'* or any *'Āmmiyyas*. On the contrary, she considers Saudi Arabia's regional varieties to be a part of Saudi identity, thus supporting Yoyo *et al.*'s statement that *'Āmmiyya* is a cause for regional identity (Yoyo *et al.* 2020: 29). Furthermore, contrary to Ferguson's claim that some educated Arabs will claim to not speak *'Āmmiyya* (Ferguson 1959: 300), my friend admits to using the regional variety and is transparent about the situations in which she does so. Furthermore, unlike opponents of standarding one of the *'Āmmiyya* during the Arabic modernization (Abu Absi 1986: 338), she expresses no fear that implementing an *'Āmmiyya* would alienate Saudi Arabia from the rest of the Middle East. Although she did not exhibit a dislike towards *'Āmmiyya*, she did occasionally show a negative attitude towards *'Āmmiyya*. For example, when discussing poetry, she referred to *'Āmmiyya* vocabulary as "weird words" when used with *Fuṣḥā*. Moreover, she refers to *Allahjat Albayda'* as "just [her] basic dialect." These phrases corroborate her belief in the superiority of *Fuṣḥā* while belittling *Allahjat Albayda'*.

Conclusions

Upon analyzing her responses to this interview, it may be deduced that my friend displays positive attitudes towards both *Fuṣḥā* and *Allahjat Albayda'*, but considers *Fuṣḥā* superior to her *'Āmmiyya*. She considers *Fuṣḥā* to be a language of power and beauty, whereas her *'Āmmiyya* is a variety that is simple but still a point of pride. The main reason, in addition to it being a source of national pride, for this preference may be attributed to her strong faith and love for Islam.

Though one individual does not represent a nation numbering more than 33 million, 90% of whom are Muslim (Ochsenwald 2024), her responses to each of the interview questions are generally consistent with the large body of literature describing language attitudes towards *Fuṣḥā* and *ʿĀmmiyya*, so this love of *Fuṣḥā* in Saudi Arabian society can be expected to hold stable in the years to come.

My friend's responses to the interview could potentially be indicative of a wider shift of language attitudes towards *ʿĀmmiyya*. In his paper published sixty-five years ago, Ferguson stated that many educated Arabs will deny speaking *ʿĀmmiyya* (Ferguson 1959: 330). Only seven years ago, however, Husein found that only 52% of surveyed Egyptian university students agreed *Fuṣḥā* was more important than Masry (Husein 2017: 93), was only important to them for its cultural and religious significance (Husein 2017: 98), and would likely use *Masry* even when they had the opportunity to use *Fuṣḥā* (Husein 2017: 96). While highly unlikely that *Fuṣḥā* will lose its social status in the foreseeable future, this interview and the results of Husein's study could indicate more positive and accepting attitudes towards *ʿĀmmiyya* are in development.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of modern language attitudes towards *Fuṣḥā* and *ʿĀmmiyya*, and to investigate whether or not their attitudes towards *ʿĀmmiyya* are changing, it would be beneficial to repeat this interview on a larger scale with a variety of interviewees across the Middle East. To determine the existence of any trends, it would be wise to choose a sample composed of men and women over a wide age range, who come from a variety of religious backgrounds, with different levels of education. Regardless of language attitudes, the rich, viable *Fuṣḥā* and *ʿĀmmiyya* varieties will continue to thrive.

Appendix A

1. What variety of Arabic do you speak?
   Considers herself fluent in *Fuṣḥā* and *Allahjat Albayda'*, but will occasionally use a word from the Egyptian or Levantine dialects.
   a. Do you consider any of these to be the "best" variety of Arabic?
      Considers *Fuṣḥā* to be the best variety because it is used to read and understand Qur'an. Although not all Arabs are Muslims, most Arabs are Muslims, so "we need to view our lives through the lens of Islam." She does consider *Allahjat Albayda'* to be the best of the *'Āmmiyya* for its simplicity.
2. What variety of Arabic do you speak at the store? (Mirhosseini 2015: 161)
   Regional, but will occasionally use *Fuṣḥā* words others do not necessarily use in this setting.
3. What variety of Arabic do you speak at school? (Mirhosseini 2015: 161)
   Regional
4. What variety of Arabic do you speak at home? (Mirhosseini 2015: 161)
   Regional, but occasionally uses *Fuṣḥā*. She enjoys learning languages. Her mother knows this, and always tells her it is best to learn Arabic first, so my friend switches to *Fuṣḥā* although her mother meant *Allahjat Albayda'*.
5. What variety of Arabic do you speak at work? (Mirhosseini 2015: 161)
   She has never worked, but if she were to get a job, she would prefer to use *Fuṣḥā*. Realistically, she thinks she would use *Allahjat Albayda'*. If she were to give a presentation or give an interview, it would be in *Fuṣḥā*. If she was talking to colleagues, she would use *Allahjat Albayda'*.
6. What variety of Arabic do you use to think?
   Instead of thinking in Arabic, she uses English
   a. Follow up: Since you think in English, do you dream in English?
      She's never thought of it before, but she dreams in both English and Arabic
7. Do you think the official language of your country of origin should be *Fuṣḥā*, the dialect endemic to your region, or another variety (Abu Absi 1986: 338)
   The official language does not matter as long as *Fuṣḥā* is taught. Every region of Saudi Arabia has its own *'Āmmiyya*. Even if one of the *'Āmmiyya* were made official, people will still use their own *'Āmmiyya* in their daily lives. The *'Āmmiyya* are part of who they are and creates diversity.
8. Should the education system spend more time trying to educate the coming generations in *Fuṣḥā*, the dialect endemic to your region, or another variety? (Mirhosseini 2015: 159)
   As indicated in the results section, this question was not asked because she answered it in the previous section.

9. Should foreigners trying to learn Arabic focus more on learning *Fuṣḥā*, the dialect from your region, or another variety of Arabic.

    Generally speaking, *Fuṣḥā*, but it really depends on their purpose. If he or she is Muslim or looking into Islam, it would be best to study *Fuṣḥā* because those rules are from the Qur'an. Likewise, if someone is learning it for their own pleasure, then it would be best to learn *Fuṣḥā*. If the individual is looking to move or travel to an Arabic-speaking country, then learn the *'Āmmiyya*.

10. What variety of Arabic should be used for textbooks? (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 147)

    There is no reason for *'Āmmiyya* to include a dialect, especially since you want literature to spread to many regions. Using *Fuṣḥā* facilitates its maintenance now and in the future. She hates reading books that use a combination of *Fuṣḥā* and *'Āmmiyya*, even if it is her own dialect.

11. What variety of Arabic should be used for novels? (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 147)

    Fuṣḥā, if the author wants a novel taking place in a certain region and wants to use *'Āmmiyya* vocabulary, then write it all in *'Āmmiyya*. Do not mix *Fuṣḥā* and *'Āmmiyya*.

12. What variety of Arabic should be used for poetry? (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 147)

    Poetry is very personal, so there are poems written in dialects. She doesn't mind it at all as long as it is written or said in that dialect. She hopes that people don't compare these new writings or poems to classics. She describes poems written in Classical Arabic to the point where, in pre-Islamic times, people would hang the nine or ten specific, well known poems on the Kaaba. There are a lot of poems in Saudi Arabia written about a specific family or tribe usually sung or written in their dialect, but she does not mind this. She would, however, prefer to read *Fuṣḥā* poetry.

13. What variety of Arabic should be used for periodicals? (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 147)

    Fuṣḥā, no exceptions.

14. What variety of Arabic would you use when speaking to children?

    Would use regional, unless they didn't understand regional. In this case she would use *Fuṣḥā*. If it were her children, however, she would use *Fuṣḥā* for its religious and cultural significance.

15. How would you describe *Fusha*?

    "Majestic, beautiful, powerful—it holds so much power. And yet, not really violence, not the way people assume it to be, they fear some rough sounds that come out of our throats such as 'kha', 'ghain', or 'ayn'. It's powerful, but not violent. It could be used for violence, especially through poems. It could cause wars against tribes. It's powerful, and yet it holds so much beauty, so much emotion. It's just a mix of powerful, beautiful emotions. Through, and through"

16. How would you describe the dialect of Arabic native to your region?

"Easy, simplified, understandable, not too complicated because it doesn't really add sounds that much. Other dialects add different sounds that sound nice to the end of words (example, your bag in her dialect vs other dialects), but aren't from the original *Fuṣḥā*. She says her dialect refers back to standard Arabic the most. It is easy to comprehend"

17. Anything else you want to add?

"Arabic is the best language in the world. It is superior, and I will not take any other opinions on that. I think everyone should learn Arabic—*Fuṣḥā*—and read the Qur'an, and learn about the culture it's attached to. Specifically the Saudi culture"

Bibliography

Abu-Absi, Samit. 1986. “The Modernization of Arabic: Problems and Prospects”. *Anthropological Linguistics*. 28(3).337-348.

Agheyisi, Rebecca and Joshua A. Fishman. 1970. “Language Attitude Studies: A Brief Survey of Methodological Approaches”. *Anthropological Linguistic*s. 12(5). 137-157.

Bell, Allan. 2014. “Valuing Language”. *The Guidebook to Sociolinguistics.* 255-287.

Chakrani, Brahim. 2013. “Arabic Standardization”. *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics.* 1-3

Ochsenwald, William L., St. John Bridger Philby, H., Teitelbaum, J., The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Saudi Arabia.” *Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 13 April 2024, https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia. Accessed 8 May 2024.

Ferguson, Charles A. 1959 “Diglossia”. *WORD*. 15(2). 325-340.

Husein, Alhassan Abdur-Rahim. 2017. “Students’ Attitude Towards Arabic Language Varieties: The Case of the *Fuṣḥā* Arabic”. *Practice and Theory in Systems of Education*. 12(2). 86-99.

Mirhosseini, Seyyed-Abdolhamid. 2015. “Loving but not living the vernacular: A glimpse of Mazandarani-Farsi linguistic culture in northern Iran”. *Language Problems & Language Planning* 39(2).154-170.

Morsly, Dalila. 1980. “Multilingualism in Algeria”. *The Fergusonian Impact*. 253-263.

Retsö, Jan. 2013. “What is Arabic?”. *The Oxford Handbook of Arabic Linguistics.* 433-450.

Suleiman, Yasir. 2013. “Arabic Folk Linguistics: Between Mother Tongue and Native Language”. *The Oxford Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*. 264-280.

Wardhaugh, Ronald. 2006. “Codes.” *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics — 5th ed.* . 90-98

Yoyo, Y., Mukhlis, A., Thonthowi, T., and Ferawati, F. 2020. “High Variety vs Low Variety Culture in the Arabic Language: The Tensions between *Fushâ* and *‘Âmiyya* in the Contemporary Arab World”. *Arabi: Journal of Arabic Studies.* 5(1). 25-32.