Diglossia in Arabic TV stations

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Abstract
This study examined Arabic diglossia types and the circumstances under which they were used in some Arabic TV stations. Diglossia involves use of two varieties of the same language by the same society for different functions. To address this purpose, the study made use of a cross-sectional survey research design that involved systematic observations of filmed programs and content analysis of verbatim transcribed documents. Data analysis indicated that diglossia was found in the target channels in two varieties, high and low Arabic. Although both varieties were observed across the target channels, each variety use depended on the context of each TV station, program type and the background of each program audience. The study provides recommendations for policy-makers in regards to language planning, TV channels officials, Arabic language program education and future research.

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1. Introduction

Although language has been the object of investigation for centuries, language relation to society was studied only a few decades ago when the field of linguistics introduced the sociolinguistics sub-discipline. Sociolinguistics is “that part of linguistics which is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. It investigates the field of language and society and has close connections with the social sciences, especially social psychology, anthropology, human geography, and sociology” (Trudgill, 1995, pp. 20–21).

Sociolinguists have recently investigated new phenomena, such as language varieties, speech communities, colloquialism, vernaculars, dialects, the functions of different language varieties within communities and diglossia. Diglossia refers to “the presence of a high and a low style or standard in a language, one for formal use in writing and some speech situations and one for colloquial use” (Harris and Hodges, 1981, p. 88). Sociolinguists are now more concerned with diglossia to understand why the same speech community uses sub-varieties in the same language for different functions. Likewise, this study examined Arabic diglossia types in some Arabic TV stations to identify the circumstances under which language varieties are used in the Arabic context.

2. Conceptual framework

This section surveys the literature round diglossia in general and Arabic diglossia in particular.
2.1. Diglossia and sociolinguistics

According to Kaye (1975), the term diglossia was coined by Marcâois (1930) while brought to the attention of sociolinguists by Ferguson (1959) where two or more varieties of the same language may be used by the native speakers of that language in different circumstances for distinct functions. In other words, people in one particular speech community may sometimes speak the standard form and sometimes the regional vernacular of their language based on various factors such as the background of the speakers, the formality of the topic, and the situation. For instance, while it is acceptable to use the local vernacular at home or among family and friends (Verssteegh, 2004), it may not be so when presenting the news on TV. The standard variety is expected in such a situation. According to Ferguson (1959), diglossia is

a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or original standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, 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. (p. 336)

Ferguson (1959) names four diglossic languages: Arabic, Swiss German, Haitian (French and Creole), and Greek. He indicates that in each diglossic language there is a high (H) and low variety (L) and that each variety is employed in different circumstances for different functions. For example, H variety can be used for sermons in churches or mosques, university lectures, political speeches, broadcasting news in radio and on television. The H variety can be also used to some extent in classroom instruction, writing poetry, novels, biographies/autobiographies and editorials in newspapers and magazines. On the other hand, L variety might be used in conversations with the family, friends, household servants, in ‘folk literature’ and the like. Sometimes, however, the two varieties H and L can be used in the same context with the same audience. In a mosque sermon, for example, where the medium should be classical Arabic, sometimes the L variety is used to ensure more understanding.

Wardhaugh (1986) further identifies two varieties in each of the above-mentioned four languages. He states that: in

the Arabic situation the two varieties are Classical Arabic (H) and the various regional colloquial varieties (L). In Switzerland they are Standard German (H) and Swiss German (L). In Haiti the varieties are Standard French (H) and Haitian Creole (L). In Greece they are the Katharevousa (H) and Dhimotiki, or Demotic (L), varieties of Greek. (p. 87)

Accordingly, there are differences between the H and L variety regarding prestige. Where the H variety has prestige, the L variety lacks such prestige. In Arabic, for instance, the classical language, the H variety, is more ‘beautiful’, ‘expressive’, and ‘logical’ than the L variety. Classical Arabic is the language of the Quran some fourteen centuries old and the language of classical literature for about two centuries before the Quran. Although the H variety has superiority over the L variety, there are occasions where using the H variety may not be appropriate. Using the H variety, for instance, in an informal activity, such as conversing with family or very close friends is inappropriate. In fact, sometimes a speaker may be an object of ridicule if he/she uses the H variety in circumstances where the L variety should be used.

Furthermore, the two varieties are acquired differently. Whereas children without any formal instruction learn the L variety naturally, the H variety is learned officially in school or religious places, such as churches or mosques. In order for people in a diglossic society to acquire the H variety, they have to pursue formal language instruction, including studying grammar and using dictionaries and textbooks. Saville-Troike (1982, pp. 54–55) outlines the major differences between the H and L varieties:

1. There is a specialization of function for H and L.
2. H has a higher level of prestige than L, and is considered superior.
3. There is a literary heritage in H, but not in L.
4. There are different circumstances of acquisition; children learn L at home, and H in school.
5. The H variety is standardized, with a tradition of grammatical study and established norms and orthography.
6. The grammar of H variety is more complex, more highly inflected.
7. H and L varieties share the bulk of their vocabularies, but there is some complementary distribution of terms.
8. The phonology of H and L is a single complex system.

It is of significance to point out here that the term diglossia, defined by Ferguson (1959), is very specific in that it requires that the High and Low varieties should belong to the same language, e.g. Literary or Classical and Colloquial Arabic. However, the term diglossia may not only include sub-varieties of one language, but rather two or more languages in the same speech community. Fishman (1967) broadened the term to include any society in which bilingual or multilingual situations exist for different functions and circumstances. Fishman provided examples for bilingual situations where the different languages have distinct functions, such as Spanish and Guarani in Paraguay, and Standard English and Caribbean Creole. However, Hudson (1980) indicated that such an extension may be “a regrettable development, as it would seem to make every society diglossic, including even English-speaking England.” (p. 55). This paper, however, adopted Ferguson’s (1959) definition of diglossia.

2.2. Diglossia in Arabic

Arabic diglossia seems to have existed in Arab communities for more than fourteen centuries. The most characterizing feature of Arabic is the existence of diglossia (Al-Batal, 1995; Haeri, 2000). The purpose of this article, though, is not to discuss changes that Arabic language has undergone. Various researchers have shed some light on changes in Arabic devel-
opment over centuries, including the possibility of diglossia existence even before Islam (see Blau, 1977). What might be needed here, thus, is to provide a general understanding of Arabic language varieties.

There is some evidence in Arabic history that there were different varieties of Arabic. It is not clear, however, at least to the researcher, which variety was used in particular circumstances for different functions. The exception, though, is the fact that Classical Arabic was used by poets when presenting their poetry. It is not also known whether there were colloquial varieties fourteen centuries ago similar to Arabic vernaculars that we see today. The researcher thinks that the only indications that Arabic history presents regarding Arabic varieties are the following:

1. The language of Quraish, a famous tribe in Mecca, was considered the standard language over other tribes' varieties, and as a result it was used for presenting poetry, and for communicating with people who come to Mecca.
2. This variety was selected by Allah, as many Arabs believe, to be the language of the Quran.
3. Other tribes had their own language varieties, but it is not known how close these language varieties were to the language of Quraish; and
4. The Arabs used to send their children from urban regions to the desert in order to acquire what is deemed to be the standard Arabic form.

There might be other language varieties, perhaps colloquial ones, since some parents tended to send their children to the desert to learn what they believed to be the standard form, the pure Arabic, as Arab linguists call it.

Moreover, Arabs believe this standard form has remained intact since there have not been any changes in the Quran for more than fourteen centuries. It is widely believed among Arabs that the Quran comprises the actual words of Allah. Although this is considered to be correct in terms of the Quran and religious practices, the contemporary use of Arabic language indicates that Arabs use a modern language, identified as Literary Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), that is, to some extent, different from Classical Arabic. In other words, Literary Arabic still holds the same Classical grammar rules as well as a large amount of vocabulary of the Classical Arabic.

Ferguson's (1959) definition of diglossia applies to the Arabic language situation because there are two coexisting varieties, each of which has a specialized function. The first variety includes the colloquial dialects, the local vernaculars, which are considered the medium of everyday communication. These vernaculars are acquired naturally by Arab children. On the contrary, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) (the term is used interchangeably with Literary Arabic and Formal Arabic) is used essentially in formal circumstances such as in religious sermons, political speeches, lectures, TV or radio news, written activities, and so on. Each variety, thus, fulfills distinct sociolinguistic functions (Boudelaa and Marslen-Wilson, 2010; Holes, 1995; Versteegh, 2004).

Literary Arabic is learned formally in schools but not spoken in everyday activities. Literary Arabic can be understood easily by educated Arabs and, to some extent, by non-educated people. For example, many illiterate people come to the mosque to attend the Friday sermon and can readily understand the language used, but that does not mean that they can produce such a language. They need formal schooling in order to actually use literary Arabic, but they can understand news and religious sermons without difficulty. It can be concluded here that for Arab children to have communicative competence in Arabic they have to learn both the local vernaculars and the literary Arabic.

Regarding prestige, Ferguson’s definition applies to the abovementioned two varieties of Arabic. Whereas the local vernacular lacks prestige, literary Arabic is considered very prestigious since it is based on classical Arabic. In fact, Arabs consider literary Arabic holy, being the language of the Quran. It is also the language of Arabic literature, which has been used for centuries. Being the language of the Quran and literature, literary Arabic, as the Arabs believe, becomes the H variety. Native speakers who know the local vernaculars only are considered illiterate and have low status in the society. When teaching Arabic for non-native speakers, teachers tend to use the H variety that has prestige, avoiding any activity that may involve the L variety. Local vernaculars are seen as incapable of expressing abstract and complex concepts, whereas literary Arabic is viewed as very capable not only in terms of expressing complex ideas and thoughts, but also regarding translation from other languages. Accordingly, literary Arabic is considered the H variety, the appropriate means of communication in situations such as education and religion, whereas local vernaculars are considered the L varieties, the appropriate medium of communication between family and friends.

As mentioned above, the language used in educational systems, for both native speakers and non-native speakers, is the formal variety of Arabic, known as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), not Spoken Arabic. For native speakers, students are taught the formal Arabic variety from kindergarten to university in Arab countries. Thus, students have two varieties of Arabic, the one they have acquired before school, the colloquial, and the one used in school, the Modern Standard Arabic. Saiegh-Haddad (2005) summarizes this by stating that children are born into a unique linguistic context where “children grow up speaking a Spoken Arabic Vernacular (SAV), which is an exclusively spoken language, but later learn to read another linguistically related form, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)” (p. 559).

Some researchers claim Arab children do not know literary Arabic until they join school (Holes, 1995; Suleiman, 1986), while some view it a second language (Ayari, 1996; Ibrahim, 1977). Children are, actually, exposed to literary Arabic before that through television programs such as cartoons and children educational programs where children are introduced to formal Arabic. One can hear children before school use phrases in Modern Standard Arabic, imitating cartoons or other children’s TV programs. However, the systematic use of formal Arabic starts with school (Abu-Rabia, 2000; Abu-Rabia et al., 2003; Eviatar and Ibrahim, 2000; Saiiegh-Haddad, 2003).

As for nonnative speakers, almost all Arabic teaching programs as a second or foreign language use the formal variety
(MSA) despite the fact that such a variety may not help them in everyday communication. Schmidt et al. (2004) indicate that they hear from both students and teachers that formal Arabic is not useful for personal communication. In fact, some researchers believe that this formal variety of Arabic “creates a fake model of oral proficiency by presenting the students with an artificial variety that is not used by the native speakers” (Al-Batal, 1995, p. 123). There has been a 92% increase in the number of Arabic programs throughout the United States (Welles, 2004). However, the focus on formal Arabic “does a disservice to students who want to learn to communicate with Arabic speakers in the language they really use” (Palmer, 2007, p. 111).

There are a few programs in American universities in which MSA and Spoken Arabic are presented together. However, this is the exception rather than the norm, since most programs teach formal Arabic only. Therefore, various researchers have raised their voices, calling for the integration of Spoken Arabic in Arabic teaching programs “in which multiple registers co-exist, as they do in real life” (Al-Batal and Belnap, 2006, p. 397). Research on this area, however, is still inadequate.

In addition to these two varieties (H and L), there is also the so-called intermediate Arabic or the middle language, a variety of spoken Arabic that is used among educated Arabs. It is also used by Arabs who come from different parts of the Arab world in order to facilitate communication, since the use of the local vernaculars may result in miscommunication. These spoken dialects vary extremely from one region to another to the extent that they are mutually unintelligible (Watson, 2002). They vary geographically from one Arab country to another and from one community to another (Holes, 1995). It is not unusual, therefore, to hear people from the Eastern Arabic region complaining that they find a Moroccan vernacular, for instance, unintelligible and difficult to understand. This is also true of other North African countries when communicating with other Arabs in other regions such as the Gulf countries. Actually, within the same region it is noted that the spoken varieties of Arabic are significantly different from each other. Therefore, speakers of Arabic tend to use a middle language, a form between vernacular and literary Arabic so that communication can take place.

This form of Arabic lies somewhere between the H and L varieties. In other words, this intermediate form or middle language (henceforth the M variety) is used among people when conversing in semiformal discussions or on other occasions when the vernaculars are deemed to be too informal or ambiguous. Ferguson (1959) characterizes this M variety as follows:

kind of spoken Arabic much used in certain semiformal or cross-dialectal situations has a highly classical vocabulary with few or no inflectional endings, with certain features of classical syntax, but with a fundamentally colloquial base in morphology and syntax, and a generous admixture of colloquial vocabulary. (p. 340)

Some researchers refer to this middle language as Spoken Arabic of the Educated (SAE) while others refer to it as Formal Spoken Arabic (FSA) (Ryding, 1991, p. 212). However, the researcher prefers using the term ‘middle language’ for various reasons. First, using the term SAE may exclude uneducated people although this variety can be used by both educated and uneducated speakers. Second, the term FSA may indicate that such a form is formal, which will consequently generate confusion about whether this form can be considered a H variety because of the use of the word formal, or can be considered an L variety because of the use of the word spoken. Therefore, the middle language, the M variety, might be the appropriate term to use in this case.

So far, it can be summarized that in Arabic we locate three varieties: (1) Literary Arabic (the H variety), (2) Middle language (the M variety) and (3) local vernaculars, (the L variety). This approach, the researcher believes, better reflects the real complexities of the Arabic situation than does the approach based on just H and L, especially on Arabic TV stations where the M variety is being frequently used. Moreover, the M variety has its own characteristics that distinguish it from both the H and L variety. Although the M variety tends to borrow words from both H and L varieties, there are essential distinctions between the H variety and the M variety that mainly take place in the area of inflectional morphology. Ryding (1991) outlines the distinctions that characterize the middle language compared to literary Arabic:

1. Omission of inflection, i.e., final short vowels on all parts of speech.
2. Consequent metathesis of vowels on pro-noun suffixes.
3. Reduction of inflectional endings in dual and sound masculine plural to the oblique or non-nominative form.
4. Elimination of the separate feminine plural categories in verbs and pronouns and reduction to one non-gender-specific plural.
5. Elimination of the dual category in verbs and pronouns, both second and third person, and merging of this category with the plural.
6. Omission of final “nuun” on inflectional suffixes for second person feminine singular and second and third person plural in the imperfect.
7. Generalization of the defective suf-fixable stem to geminate verbs in the past tense.
8. Conversion of final nunciation on indefinite defective nouns to a long vowel.
9. Creation of a category of verbs with embedded indirect object. (p. 216)

This study investigates diglossia on three Arabic TV stations, Aljazeera, ART and LBC. The researcher thinks that such a study may, to some extent, draw some generalizations about diglossia in Arabic due to the fact that these channels present a variety of diglossic behaviors in different settings by different Arabic speakers. The speakers are from different Arab countries that have different colloquial varieties. This study examines diglossia on those TV stations by attempting to answer these research questions:

1. Is Arabic a diglossic language?
2. What Arabic language varieties do target TV stations tend to use most?
3. Under what circumstances do target TV stations use identified varieties?
Survey/descriptive research was used to describe and interpret the status of Arabic diglossia on the abovementioned TV stations because surveys are good at describing ongoing processes (Cohen et al., 2000). The study used systematic observations through videotaping to collect the research data. The author together with two other trained people observed the programs on each TV station, made tallies and counted frequencies (see Appendix A). The variety was judged as H or L based on the description of each variety detailed in the above literature survey section. The observation grid with the description of each variety was content validated by a number of experts in sociolinguistics who agreed the grid was able to address the research purpose (Bloom et al., 1995). The researcher calculated inter-rater reliability using SPSS, version 14 where the coefficient correlation was 0.89 which is high (Coakes and Steed, 2007).

The researcher collected data for almost two years from different programs, movies, serials, songs. After data was collected, the researcher transcribed relevant parts, analyzed the discourse and classified whether the variety used was H or L and specified the contexts under which it was used. The researcher analyzed the data by conducting open coding that included line-by-line, whole-paragraph and whole-document analyses (Strauss and Corbin 1998). He assigned similar phrases and sentences codes as a high or low variety. He then counted the frequencies of tallies entered into each category per page for each TV station program (see Appendix A and B). Each page percentage was then calculated followed by a calculation of percentage of the overall frequency of the whole document of each TV station. The programs for each TV station were compared to calculate an overall percentage of each variety used so that we can judge a TV station uses a high or low variety most. Finally, percentages of TV stations were compared.

It should be noted here that this study sought no generalization beyond the scope of its findings for several reasons. The study examined diglossia in just three not all Arabic TV stations. The study even examined samples rather than the whole of the programs under study. The purpose was not to present in-depth examinations of each channel but to find out whether diglossia existed in these channels and the circumstances under which it was used. Moreover, these TV stations were studied because they have a large scale of viewers in the Arab World. In addition, different kinds of programs and channels were chosen in each station, including serials, songs, children, news, dialogue, movies and sports, to address as much as possible the topics these stations cover.

4. Findings

This section presents and compares three TV stations (Aljazeera, ART, and LBC) in their high and low Arabic variety use. Quotes from these stations were not, however, embedded in this section because of the difficulty to exactly translate vernacular Arabic words into their counterparts in English. For this reason, Arabic quotes were written in the English alphabet (not translation). Although the findings are based only on descriptive statistical analysis, Arabic quotes that support the statistics of each channel and program are placed in Appendix C.

4.1. Aljazeera channels

Aljazeera broadcasts from Qatar, a Gulf State, with main focus on the news. This station presents a variety of weekly programs which include political programs, two sport programs and one weekly program for each of these categories: religion, literature, culture and animal life. The broadcasters, reporters, and correspondents are from different Arab countries.

Table 1 shows Aljazeera station made considerable use of the H variety. The overall use of the H variety across the seven programs by broadcasters was 83%. Even the overall use of the H variety across the seven programs by guests and/or audience was 76% which is not low. As for the overall percentage use of the H variety across the seven programs of both broadcasters and guests was 80%, which is high.

The news, including field reports, interviews, and Al-Qaeda messages, was broadcast 100% in the H variety. This might be because both broadcasters and correspondents were very competent in literary Arabic. In other stations, it might be an easy task for Arab audience to determine the nationality of broadcasters even when they used the H variety, due to the influence of their regional vernaculars. However, in Aljazeera station it was difficult to detect the nationality because of the broadcasters’ mastery of the H variety. The L variety, however, was used in Aljazeera news only when the correspondents interviewed people in different Arab regions. In four interviews in Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen Aljazeera correspondents asked the interviewees questions using the H variety but the interviewees responded using the L variety, the regional, Egyptian, Algerian, Moroccan, and Yemeni vernaculars (Appendix C: 1).

In a live debating political program (The Opposite Direction), the H variety was used 97% of the time by the interviewer while being used 66% by the guests (Table 1). Although it has been addressed in sociolinguistics that the H variety is usually used in politics, the two varieties were materialized in a The Opposite Direction. In all of the program series, the broadcaster used the H variety mostly, but the debaters varied considerably in their language use. For instance, in one series where the discussion was about the feasibility of the peace process in the Middle East, one of the debaters, an Egyptian scenarist, used the Egyptian vernacular (the L variety) although both the broadcaster and the other debater used the H variety. On another occasion, the broadcaster interviewed an Arab president, Gadhafi, who used the L variety during the time of the program (two hours), except when he read some paragraphs from a paper he used the H variety (Appendix C: 2). From time to time during the program, Gadhafi switched to the L variety, his local vernacular. It would have been difficult, though, for Arabs in other countries to understand him if he were only using his L variety. Thus, in a political context where the H variety is expected, the two varieties of Arabic H and L appeared.

In another political program (Without Boundaries), the broadcaster used mostly the H variety 98% but the guests used the H variety 68% of the program time (Table 1). For instance, there was an interview with a Saudi prince, discussing political issues, in which he used both the H and L variety, Saudi vernacular, while the broadcaster used only the H variety (Appendix C: 3). In a religious program (Religion and Life),
the broadcaster used the H variety 100% while the guest used it 91% of the program time (Table 1). The H variety was the typical medium of discussion, though. Usually the guest of this program was an Egyptian religious scholar (Alqaradhawi) who received questions from both the broadcaster and audience from all over the world. The broadcaster, the scholar, and the very educated audience often used the H variety. On the other hand, other audiences used the L variety when posting their questions (Appendix C: 4).

In a documentary program (Hot Spot) the H variety was entirely used (100%) by both the broadcaster and guests (Table 1). The program presented various issues related to culture and history. When interviewing nonnative speakers of Arabic, the translation was done in the H variety, too (Appendix C: 5). Moreover, Aljazeera presented a sport program (Discussions on Sport), where the two Arabic varieties varied considerably. The broadcaster and the guests discussed issues on sports and received relevant calls from the audience. The broadcaster used the H variety 92% whereas the guest used it 40% of the program time (Table 1). While the L variety was commonly used by some guests and callers, the H variety was used by both the broadcaster and the well-educated participants, including professors and surgeons specialized in sports (Appendix C: 6). The program also reported results of games showing short parts of them. The H variety was used by the broadcaster when announcing the results. In contrast, both the H and the L variety were used by commentators when presenting selected parts of a game, such as football goals (Appendix C: 6).

In one of Aljazeera children’s program (On Air), the H variety was exclusively used. The broadcaster used the H variety 96% while the contributors used it 92% of the observed time (Table 1). The program presents reports on children’s activities and receives calls from Arab children. Although they are still very young, the broadcaster, correspondents, and callers are competent in the use of the H variety (Appendix C: 7).

### 4.2. ART channels

The ART (Arab Radio and Television) station made considerable use of the L variety. ART channels offered various programs, including Friday sermons, songs, serials, and movies. As shown in Table 2, the overall percentage of the H variety use in this station was just 17%. Not only was the overall use of the H variety across the seven programs by broadcasters just 23%, but also the overall use of the H variety across the seven programs by guests and/or audience was 10% which is very low.

In the Hour of Directness program that was dedicated to interviewing actors and actresses, broadcasters used the H variety 14% whereas guests used it 13% of the program time (Table 2). This was a considerable use of the L variety. As the examples indicate (Appendix C: 8), the local Egyptian vernacular, the L variety, was the only variety used in this program. In another program (The Best of Talks), which presents public folklore across all Arab countries, broadcasters used the H variety 12% whereas guests used it 8% of the program time (Table 2). In this program, audience could hear different local Arabic vernaculars, the L varieties (Appendix C: 9). Moreover, the L variety was used in a third program (Let it Out), broadcasters used the H variety 10% whereas guests used it 8% of the program time (also Table 2). In this program a Lebanese broadcaster talks to and receives calls live from the audience. She used the Lebanese vernacular, the L variety, frequently whereas the callers used their local vernaculars (Appendix C: 10). In contrast to the use of the L variety in these three programs, the H variety was the only variety used in Friday sermon, which broadcast weekly from Mecca, Saudi Arabia (Appendix C: 11). The H variety was used 100% of the program time, which indicates no use of any other varieties.

### Table 2  ART station use of varieties in target programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Overall percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Hour of directness</td>
<td>Best of talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (%)</td>
<td>H (%)</td>
<td>H (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcaster frequency percentage</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest and/or audience frequency percentage</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall TV station percentage of the H variety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3  LBC station use of varieties on target programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Overall percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News</td>
<td>Brides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcaster frequency percentage</td>
<td>H (%)</td>
<td>H (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest and/ or audience frequency percentage</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall TV station percentage of the H variety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for songs, most songs were presented through the L variety where the H variety was used just 4% (Table 2). However, some songs used the H variety only when the songs were literary Arabic poems (Appendix C: 12). Likewise, the H variety was used just 9% in all shown serials. Most serials used the L variety except for historical ones. In such a case, the H variety was always used (Appendix C: 13). Concerning movies, ART typically displayed Egyptian movies using the L variety, the local Egyptian vernacular. There were, however, different circumstances where the H variety was used 15% of the observed movies (Table 2). As shown in Appendix C: 14, these involved court and terrorists scenes, for instance. In court scenes, lawyers often used the H variety whereas the witnesses or the defendants used the L variety when they spoke. Regarding terrorists scenes, actors used the H variety. The H variety was also used with historical movies, such as Umar Almukhtar (Appendix C: 14).

4.3. LBC channel

LBC (Lebanon Broadcasting Company) channel broadcasts from Lebanon. The station presents various programs including news, children program, social programs, and serials. Table 3 shows the Lebanese vernacular (the L variety) was considerably used in all programs since overall use of the H variety was just 15%. The overall use of the H variety across the seven programs by broadcasters was just 22%, whereas the overall use of the H variety across the seven programs by guests and/or audience was 7% which is very low. Table 3 shows that in the news both broadcasters and correspondents used the H variety 100% of the observed news bulletin (Appendix C: 15). On the contrary, the rest of the observed programs typically used the L variety.

In a program (Brides) brings together three women from different walks of life and discusses their wedding preparation in an attempt to realize their dream wedding, the L variety, the Lebanese vernacular, was used throughout by both broadcasters and guests (Appendix C: 16). The broadcaster used the H variety 9% and the guests used it 7%. Table 3 shows that in another program (Bittersweet) where the broadcaster and guests discuss different aspects of everyday life, the L variety was typically used. The broadcaster used the H variety only 8% while the guests used it 6% (Appendix C: 17).

In a third program (Akhbar.com), the L variety was frequently used where the broadcaster used the H variety only 10% whereas the guests used it 8%. In this comic show, the broadcaster and guests satirically discuss Lebanese and inter-national political affairs (Appendix C: 18). The In-touch program presents news about cinema, movie stars, and movie-makers. Although the program falls within the news category which always uses the H variety, the L variety was 13% of the observed program time (Appendix C: 19). In the Kids Power program, the H variety was used only 8% by both the broadcaster and children (Appendix C: 20). Almost all the observed serials in this station were in the L variety (94%). Even translated serials were translated into the L variety. For example, the Turkish serial (Al-Eshq Al-Mamnou) was translated into the Syrian vernacular (Appendix C: 21).

5. Discussion

We come back to answer our research questions. The study answers this first research question in positive: Is Arabic a diglossic language? The findings indicated that diglossia did exist in the three Arabic TV stations. These findings agreed with Al-Batal (1995), Ferguson (1959) and Haeri (2000) who indicated that Arabic is a diglossic language. The findings, however, answered this second research question partly in positive and partly in negative: What Arabic language varieties do target TV stations tend to use most? The two varieties were used across the three target TV stations: literary Arabic (H variety) and local vernacular (L variety). However, the extent and context in which diglossia occurred varied noticeably. These Arabic TV stations fluctuated in their use of the two varieties. These findings agreed with Wardhaugh (1986) who identified two Arabic varieties, Classical Arabic (H) and many regional colloquial varieties (L). The findings showed some extreme variation in the use of Arabic varieties in target TV stations. While one TV station (Aljazeera) typically used the H variety, the other TV stations (ART and LBC) consistently used the L variety.

The findings provided divergent answers to this third research question: Under what circumstances do target TV stations use identified varieties? The findings showed that in political and religious contexts, particularly dialogue programs, the two varieties were used despite the expectation of sole use of the H variety. The exception is Al-Qaeda messages where the H variety was exclusively used. A possible explanation is that the messages are political and contain a great deal of religious phrases. In sporting programs, the L variety was frequently used by some guests whereas the H variety was used by both the broadcaster and the well-educated participants. The findings also indicated that in news bulletins, the H variety...
was entirely used because the broadcasters read written literary Arabic. Overall, the findings indicated that Aljazeera broadcasters and reporters generally used the H variety while their audience mixed the two varieties and that depended on the level of education of the audience. Highly-educated people tended to use the H variety.

Moreover, the findings indicated that Aljazeera encouraged the use of H variety in the children’s programs. It was a surprise to see very competent children in the Literary Arabic (the H variety) in one of these programs. They all, the broadcaster, correspondents, and callers, exclusively used the H variety. The reason for such a competent use of the H variety by the children would probably be that language planners, media policy makers, and families prefer to have children learn the standard form of Arabic, the H variety.

In contrast, the findings indicated that ART channels typically used the L variety because of the nature of the programs that are confined to movies, songs, folklore and serials. The context of these programs differs from Aljazeera station in that Aljazeera programs focus exclusively on formal topics such as the news, documentaries and political issues while these programs are more concerned with informal and everyday topics. These programs were broadcast in Egyptian vernacular, being one of the most recognized varieties in the Arab world. For more than fifty years, Egypt has been one of the most popular producers of Arabic movies, songs and serials. Consequently, Egyptian vernacular, the L variety, got popular and widespread among Arabs and, therefore, it is widely understood by Arabs everywhere. While this is true for the Egyptian vernacular, other L varieties of Arabic still cause communication problems among Arabs.

The findings showed, however, that ART channels used the H variety exclusively in Friday sermons, historical serials or movies, and court or terrorist scenes. In contrast, the L variety was used in songs and serials. The H variety was used in songs only when the song was a literary Arabic poem. Moreover, the L variety of Arabic was used in other programs, such as the Hour of Directness, the Best of Talks, and the Let it Out programs. These findings together indicated that the ART channels used each variety exclusively and that depended on the particular program.

Different from both Aljazeera and ART stations, the LBC channel predominantly used the L variety. Almost all programs typically used the Lebanese vernacular except in the news, where the H variety was used. Discussion programs, comic programs, kids programs, and serials were all in the L variety. Contrary to Aljazeera where the H variety was exclusively used in the children’s programs, the L variety was exclusively used in the LBC children’s programs. Foreign serials were also translated into the vernacular variety, such as the Syrian vernacular. Although it might be difficult to understand Lebanese vernacular by other Arab audience, this vernacular became easier because of the wide spreading of the Lebanese channels. Similar to the Egyptian vernacular, the Lebanese vernacular is getting popular due to the fact that it has been the medium of the LBC station for more than two decades.

Moreover, according to Ferguson’s definition of diglossia, there are two varieties in diglossic languages, one of which is H and the other is L. However, what has been noticed about Arabic diglossia in the three TV stations is that a Middle language, a form between vernacular and literary Arabic as discussed in the literature review, was frequently used, especially in dialogue programs. Although this variety was used, the study adhered to Ferguson’s definition of diglossia, being well-established and recognized in the sociolinguistics literature. Accordingly, the study was concerned with examining only the H and L varieties of Arabic in these stations, leaving the door open for future research on the use of the Middle language in Arabic TV stations.

6. Conclusion, recommendations and caveats

This study concluded that diglossia exists in the Arabic TV stations under investigation in two varieties, high and low. The circumstances in which the varieties were used significantly varied in the target channels due to the context of the TV station, topic and the background of guests. The H variety was used in the news, religious sermons, political programs, historical serials or movies, literary Arabic songs, Al-Qaeda messages, and terrorist or court scenes in movies. On the other hand, the L variety was frequently used in serials, movies and songs. Broadcasters and guests in various programs switched between the H and L varieties of Arabic, which calls for research on the reasons behind that.

The study recommends incorporating children’s programs which use the H variety into the Kindergarten and Elementary school courses of first, second and foreign language learners. Children’s programs such as those of Aljazeera would provide those children with interesting extracurricular opportunities to acquire Literary Arabic, the H variety.

The study further recommends integrating the L variety into extracurricular activities in language education programs. This would allow foreign and second language learners to be able to communicate with native speakers of Arabic, or at least improve understanding of local vernaculars. Incorporation of the L variety into extracurricular activities should, however, be more appropriate to advanced learners who have already mastered Standard Arabic to facilitate communication and make language education programs more relevant to language learners. On the other hand, having the dramatic rise in the L variety, policy-makers should increase the H variety in TV stations programs to avoid further deterioration of Standard Arabic since such programs very much influence different kinds of viewers.

This study, however, did not seek generalization beyond the scope of the observed TV stations and their programs to other contexts. The study did not even seek generalization to all the contents of the programs observed. The study just reported the findings of the samples of content that were observed. Other content of the same observed programs has not been studied. As a result, caution should be taken with regard to any generalization to other contexts before other in-depth studies take place to confirm or disprove the current findings.

Acknowledgment

The authors extend their appreciation to the deanship of scientific research at King Saud University for funding the work through the research group project no, RGP-VPP-094.
### Appendix A. Observation frequency sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TV station:</th>
<th>Object of observation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H variety frequency</th>
<th>L variety frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total frequency:</th>
<th>Total frequency:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage:</th>
<th>Percentage:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = frequency.
C = the context in which the variety was used (p = personal/F = formal/M = mixed). Codes for context included: R = religion D = documentary P = politics N = news S = sports SE = serials, M = movie F = folklore C = children EP = educated person LE = less educated.
## Appendix B. Analysis sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TV station: e.g. ART</th>
<th>Object of observation: e.g. Movies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H variety</td>
<td>L variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total frequency of all pages</td>
<td>Total frequency of all pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole document percentage</td>
<td>Whole document percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV station uses the H variety most</td>
<td>TV station uses the H variety most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendix C. Examples of the H and L varieties across channels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aljazeera Channel</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Variety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. News</td>
<td>Maa heyaa matalebokom? Maza toreedooin? Besheta al jaw barid we kahrabah makoo wallahi khroojnah… matabeebna kaleelah, alkahrabah, elmay, elmajaree kafee aaad tereedeh.</td>
<td>Correspondent Iraqui interviewee</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hal estatatoom al husool ala tzaker limubaharah? Men setah essoebe lehad delwaty mafeesh tzaker khaless. Jayeen men elaskandiaryeh hadretak mareeflash neejeb wala tzakarah… sooa (sooq) soodah!</td>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ebanah mesh handereroo shaghaab. Almenasreen joo bar we jaw…</td>
<td>Algerian interviewee</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ma rayak behaza alfilm… hejahl alhoob Dayrah alhejab bash tetzaweyj dayrah alhejab bash teghaty alaa hajah akhraa. Bayeen lee elhejooom alaa alhejaab… Meshee maakool!</td>
<td>Correspondent Moroccan interviewee</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maza yoataber alkaat belnestah lleyamaneyeen?</td>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al-Jazeera message (Bin Laden)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Opposite Direction</td>
<td>Maza yakool haza albabyan? Mahowa alaham feehaza albbayann wabraz fakarathe. Tabann tareekh 21/22 leesah mawasaalsh, welbayan ahoojahez… shoof shoof, wana akraa alaa alaan khealoomoon yeaksoony woykooloo elbabyan elkaraha elgzaal laysaas saheeh!</td>
<td>Broadcaster</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>President Gadhafi</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Without Boundaries</td>
<td>Ayooh… anah hajeelak… hajeelak …bass akamel kalaamyawaal. Anaa saabak wezzakart fee edat munasaabat, anaa deeda tadaakhooh alamerikan fee aleraaak, walaken madam boom dakhaloow, wesfaaft aleeha almanozamah addawleeyah-wefeeha mandoob arabeey-arashayeh, shareyah elehtelal, faasbaahaa amraa wekeeu amammanaa, alaan kayfa nehel mushkelat aleraak alkaemah? (the underlined words are in the L variety)</td>
<td>Saudi prince</td>
<td>H &amp; L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Religion and Life</td>
<td>Saael yasaal ann mawkeef ashaaare menzeekr mowasaafat shaab takadam lekhetyat fataah yasaal alaaha ann deeyeh wakholokeh, hall yajooz ann nakkor sefattoo agssayeey? Wehal yoetabar zaleek meen alqheebah almoharamah?</td>
<td>Broadcaster</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Religion and Life</td>
<td>Algiebah heya anya ann tazkor alensaen bema yakrah, Kaloom ya rasool Allah araaytaa enn kaana feeh maakool? Kaal enn kaana feeh mataakool faakkad eghtabtah, waa enn lamming feeh mataakool faakkad bahataa, yanee ertakaba bohtaan feeh hakeh</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Discussion on Sport</td>
<td>Jaat almusharakah alarabeyah fee betoolat kaas alkaraat lekorat alkadam walaty ookeemat fee almekseek momasalah belfareekayn almasry wasaadii bataly efrekia wa assyyaa, wal fareekk assyyaa Lam ykoon ghreeba ann betoolat alkaraat, fahowah saaheb fekratehaa, lakeenamoom lam yohakeek fehah nataej toozkar. Wafee almusharakh alaalo ilmtakhab almesry fee kaas alkaraat kaan wake enataaj altay kharaj beha alfarrseek aksar taseeran waddasheen, wadat elaa ehdass enklaab ahyadd feeh alkorah almamasreyaah, bekararaat sareyah addat ella hal etehad alkorah almamasreyas alaizi kaddama estekalatah</td>
<td>Broadcaster</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hour of Directness</td>
<td>Azeeyy elmasihaleed fee kol marah benralaabeen benrahb benegm (nejem) aw benegmah (nejemah) deef aw deefahh feeh halataen (halatetnah) laken enhardah aalmaa mokhtalef bad ashyayee. Leanen lazen aarabhh feeh halatena belhayah kolaha baatat alb ... belhob ... esmaahoo lee aarabhh belhob besabooha. Kayfa yastatee alensaen enoh yekhlak alsafa feeh hayatoh mahma taaradda lezaamah?</td>
<td>Broadcaster</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Best of Talks</td>
<td>Nesmaoo shataa men altarbeej fee Libya Da kdyan yaa dekdayn ... rak tekber tensaany ... Da kdyan yaa dekdayn takhuu klam umm ahanan Da kdyan yaa dekdayn etjeeb elmahm fee komak ... wehdeed allaa dar umak wetamaal rohee barany</td>
<td>Broadcaster</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Let it Out</td>
<td>Heyadee men mehabatekon ... feeh eram (erakaam) elbaraeedy wefeem raam (raakaam) elflu ezay brydak ... ezay eleefoon namesheer elhaal wefekh elemil kamaan shoob betekhberenah ann elka? Ehaal heneel beheeboonj wayeed ... weradddeelnaa shaar bernmajai: helween benhelkoon</td>
<td>Broadcaster</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Friday Sermon


Friday preacher


12. Songs


Mohammed Abdu singer


13. Serials


Esmaee ya bent ee weheyah...eyakoo tentakoo meahah noss kelmah...fahmeen?


from Zohrah wa Azwajha Alkhmsa) serial


Umar Almukhtar and an investigator


In this historical movie (Umar Almukhtar), the H variety is (use)


14. Movies


Lawyer


from the movie: min fina Alharami)


An actor and an actress


A group of “terrorists”


Brides


Hala mehadarah honeek beljeneeneh...


Guests


17. Bittersweet


Guest L


18. Akhbar.com


Guest L


We bass teseree meneeyah tahee abkee alaa keefee...Yeslam albak...


LBC Lebanese Broadcasting corporation


Broadcaster H


Broadcaster L


Broadcaster L


Broadcaster L


15. News


Broadcaster H


Lawyer H


An actor and an actress L


Guest L


16. Brides


Guest L


Guest L


Guest L


Guest L


Guest L


Guest L


We bass teseree meneeyah tahee abkee alaa keefee...Yeslam albak...
LBC Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Variety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. In Touch</td>
<td>Shareekat elentaj bethalesh tehadar halhaha leaaridd akheer entajhaha waa maalhaha. Shoo fee eeesheh kedeed haza eselesbooa? Khaloona netabee sawa... webadaha nerooh doghree aal film</td>
<td>Broadcaster</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Kids Power</td>
<td>Hala wasalhlan feekom all halah ejdeedah min kids power. Essa shoo rah neme? Mesh mazboot abadaa... rah netsallah we nooraoss (noorkoss) Shoo eesm eshakhseyah yalee betdahakna keteer?</td>
<td>Broadcaster &amp; children</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Harris, T.L., Hodges, R.E., 1981. A Dictionary of Reading and Related Terms. International Reading Association, Newark, DE.


