L2Journal
Volume 18 Issue 2 (2026), pp. 1-25

ARTICLE

Teacher Talk in Multidialectal Classrooms

EMMA TRENTMAN

University of New Mexico
etrentman@umn.edu

As a diglossic language, Arabic has high and low varieties of the same language that are used in different contexts. Arabic classrooms traditionally focus on the acquisition of the high variety, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), with the expectation that learners can pick up local dialects abroad. This creates challenges for learners who find themselves ill-equipped to deal with everyday situations outside of the classroom. In recent years, advocates of integrated approaches have emphasized the need to teach both MSA and a dialect, whether in the same or separate classes (Al-Batal, 2018; Younes, 2014). Yet this leads to questions about which dialect to choose, as learners and teachers may come from different dialect backgrounds or have different dialect interests. Trentman & Shiri (2020) advocate for a multidialectal approach, where learners are encouraged to develop their ability to understand multiple varieties of Arabic and the meta-linguistic awareness to make intentional choices in their production.

This paper focuses on teacher talk in Novice-level classrooms following a multidialectal approach. It analyzes the teacher-led discussions of sociolinguistic variation in Arabic that occurred in these classrooms. The results identify several patterns teachers used in engaging in these discussions, such as initiating discussions based on variation in the class materials, making multidialectal and multilingual comparisons, and presenting sociolinguistic variation in a positive manner. The paper builds on this analysis to discuss pedagogical implications and opportunities for future development.

Introduction

Arabic is a key example of a diglossic language, where there are high and low varieties of the same language that are used in different contexts. In educational contexts within the Arab world, the high variety is used, with speakers picking up their regional dialects at home. For Arabic language learners, the traditional approach is also to focus on the high variety, with the expectation that learners can pick up local dialects later in their studies. However, as introductory language classes typically focus on everyday life, this results in conflict between the Arabic variety being learned and sociolinguistic appropriateness. Learners may develop the skills to engage in everyday activities in the formal variety (which is sociolinguistically inappropriate) or they may focus on higher level activities such as reading texts or political discussions, which are sociolinguistically appropriate in the higher variety, but leave students unable to engage in everyday situations. Ryding (2006) describes as this approach as "reverse privileging" (p. 16), noting that while language classrooms following a communicative approach typically privilege familiar, everyday language, Arabic classrooms have traditionally done the opposite, focusing on professional discourses and leaving Arabic students feeling they are unable to accomplish everyday tasks.

This article examines four classrooms that attempt to engage with Arabic sociolinguistic variation through a multidialectal approach, where learners focus on specific language functions and are exposed to a variety of dialects as well as MSA. It focuses specifically on teacher talk, examining how teachers present and engage with multidialectal material.

The Multilingual Turn in Language Classrooms

In recent years, there have been calls for a "multilingual turn" in Applied Linguistics (Conteh & Meier, 2014; Diao & Trentman, 2021; May, 2014; Ortega, 2013; Tullock & Ortega, 2017). This multilingual turn refers to a shift away from the monolingual language ideologies that have shaped much of the field, including in language teaching. Monolingual language ideologies have their origins in European nationalism, where linguistic and political borders were constructed as mutually-reinforcing (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; May, 2014). These ideologies were exported worldwide via colonialism, particularly in educational settings (Makalela, 2015; Makoni & Pennycook, 2005, 2012). Monolingual language ideologies are closely tied to the standardized language ideology, where one version of the language (typically that of the socially powerful) is considered "standard" or correct (Leeman & Serafini, 2021). In the field of language teaching, the assumption that languages have distinct boundaries associated with specific nations and cultures has key ramifications for teaching. This includes assuming that monolingual native speakers of the standardized variety are the ideal models for language learners, that knowledge of non-standardized varieties or other languages interferes with acquisition, and classrooms should be striving for as close to a monolingual environment as possible (Trentman, 2021).

In contrast, the multilingual turn is rooted in multilingual language ideologies, which view language boundaries as fluid, and emphasize the social, rather than linguistic nature of these boundaries (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; Mazak & Carroll, 2017; Otheguy et al., 2015). This social focus typically demonstrates that the standardized version of a language is the variety of a powerful social group, rather than a linguistic given (Leeman & Serafini, 2021). From a multilingual perspective, the focus of analysis is on individuals and their unique linguistic repertoires (Piccardo, 2013). These linguistic repertoires develop through time and lived experiences, and individuals strategically draw from their repertoires according to contextual factors, sometimes in ways that transcend expected language boundaries (Otheguy et al., 2015). Although the multilingual turn has gained prominence in recent years, it is worth noting that multilingual language ideologies are not a new development but have their origins in precolonial contexts (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012). In current research, plurilingual approaches (e.g., Piccardo, 2017), translanguaging theory (e.g., García & Li Wei, 2014), and the multilingual turn (May, 2014; Ortega, 2013) are all perspectives rooted in multilingual language ideologies.

In the context of language teaching, multilingual approaches entail strategically engaging the full linguistic repertoire to expand it. Many of these practices, such as teachers selecting cognates to provide comprehensible input, or students translanguaging to prepare a monolingual presentation, occur whether the classroom is deliberately taking a monolingual approach or not (Levine, 2011; Trentman, 2021). At the same time, multilingual approaches can also create transformative spaces by recognizing the knowledge that multilingual and multidialectal students bring to the classroom and raising critical awareness of connections between language and social inequities (Leeman & Serafini, 2021; Trentman, 2021).

Arabic as a Diglossic Language

Arabic is a diglossic language, with a high variety, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), al-*fusʕhaa*, for formal occasions and low varieties (regional dialects) used for everyday interactions (Ferguson, 1959). Although the high and low varieties are typically perceived as distinct, Arabic speakers generally vary their speech along a continuum between the high and low variety based on contextual factors, such as their educational background and the formality of the situation (Bassiouney, 2009; Holes, 2004; Versteegh, 2001). Although there is regional variation in MSA, there is considerably more lexical, morphological, and phonological variation between the low varieties, the regional dialects (Sayahi, 2014). At the same time, there is also a high level of mutual intelligibility among Arabic dialects, especially in interactional situations where speakers are working to be mutually understood (Abu-Melhim, 1991; Soliman, 2014; Trentman & Shiri, 2020).

A key difference between Arabic and non-diglossic languages is that while MSA is considered the "standard" language, it is not the home language of Arabic speakers, even those from socially-prestigious groups, and thus cannot be used appropriately in all social situations. Furthermore, speakers of different regional varieties do not necessarily use MSA to interact with each other; accommodation towards MSA is simply one of a myriad of strategies they can use to ensure mutual comprehensibility (Abu-Melhim, 1991; Soliman, 2014). Finally, although MSA is considered the most prestigious variety, there are also prestige differences between and within regional dialects, with urban varieties or the dialects of powerful social groups typically carrying higher prestige. Speakers of less prestigious dialects often accommodate to the more prestigious ones, even when linguistic variants in their own dialect are closer to MSA (Al Masaeed, 2022; Holes, 2004).

For Arabic learners, it is necessary to learn both high and low varieties in order to engage in a full spectrum of activities in Arabic. While everyday interactions are likely to be at the dialect end of the continuum, news media and written resources trend towards MSA, along with more formal presentations, such as religious sermons or political speeches.

Dialects in the Arabic Classroom

Despite the clear need for Arabic learners to engage with both MSA and dialect, Arabic-as-an-additional-language classrooms have traditionally emphasized the teaching of MSA, even for contexts in which is it inappropriate, such as everyday interactions. This results in considerable frustration for learners when they desire to use Arabic outside of the classroom, such as in study abroad situations (Palmer, 2009; Trentman, 2013; 2017). Indeed, in contrast to other study abroad contexts, learners demonstrate a rapid move towards incorporating regional variants into their speech, including after only a few weeks abroad (Raish, 2015; Trentman, 2017). Learners abroad emphasize the value of learning dialects and also their openness to learning multiple dialects (Shiri, 2013). Thus, Arabic learners with experience in the Arab world overwhelmingly support the need to learn both high and low varieties.

In the 21st century, there has been a shift towards integrated approaches, where students learn both MSA and a dialect (Al-Batal, 2018; Younes, 2014). Typically, these programs follow an MSA plus one model, where learners study both MSA and a dialect, either in the same classroom or in separate classes. Research on integrated approaches demonstrates that along with their linguistic skills, students show a developmental trajectory towards using the varieties in sociolinguistically-appropriate ways (Nassif & Al Masaeed, 2020; Nassif & Basheer, 2022). Yet there are also challenges in following an MSA plus one approach, specifically in the choice of which dialect should be the focus. Teachers and heritage students may represent a variety of dialect backgrounds, not all dialects are well-represented

in teaching materials, and students may be interested in studying abroad or learning the dialects of different regions.

Multidialectal Approach

To address some of these challenges with the MSA plus one model, Trentman and Shiri (2020) propose a multidialectal approach. A multidialectal approach in the classroom attempts to deal with the reality of the Arabic sociolinguistic situation, while also recognizing that teachers and students may have preferences for particular varieties. In a multidialectal approach, students are exposed to multiple dialects, with a focus on social functions (what we do with language). There is a strong emphasis on meta-linguistic awareness, to help student develop their abilities to associate certain linguistic features with certain varieties and aid in their comprehension and productions of the language. Learners are not expected to be able to produce all varieties, but they are encouraged to develop their ability to understand variation, much as advanced speakers do. They are also encouraged to make intentional choices when it comes to production. Notably, these are abilities that take time to develop, just like grammar, vocabulary, and other traditional language skills.

Research Questions

This study focuses on teacher talk in Arabic classrooms using a multidialectal approach, looking at how teachers engage with materials in multiple dialects and present them to their students. It asks the following research question: What patterns can be identified in teacher talk in explicit discussions of sociolinguistic variation in classrooms using multidialectal approaches?

Method

Context

This study is part of a larger multi-year study on multilingual and multidialectal approaches in the language classroom supported by funding from the Qatar Foundation International. The data analyzed in this paper focuses on classroom data collected from Novice-level high school and university classes during the first year of the study (fall and spring semesters). The high school class was a second-year class, one academic year long, and offered at a private school. The university classes consisted of two sections of a first semester class (fall), and one section of a second semester class (spring). The university classes were taught by three instructors, including myself. The high school teacher also taught the university classes.

All of the classes used materials from the We Can Learn Arabic website, a project developed by the three instructors and our research team. This website consists of nine instructional units organized by topic (e.g., introductions). Each unit on the WCLA website consists of 2-4 Can Do Statements (e.g., I can meet a new person), with example texts for each Can Do Statement in several varieties of Arabic, including both MSA and dialects. This enables a multidialectal approach, where students focus on their ability to "do" the Can-Do Statement while also gaining exposure to how this is done in different varieties of Arabic. As instructors, we focus on developing students' awareness of dialect variation but do not require students to use a specific dialect. The classes analyzed in this article covered the introductions, personal relationships, and food units in the fall, and weather, geography, and routines and plans in the spring.

Participants

Student Participants

The year-long high school class contained eight participating students, three of whom were heritage speakers. The first section of first semester Arabic at the university level contained 13 participating students, five of whom were heritage speakers. The second section of first semester Arabic contained 12 participating students, four of whom were heritage speakers. The second semester university Arabic class contained 15 students, six of whom were heritage speakers. Participating students consented to appear in video and audio recordings of the classroom. Non-consenting students were seated off camera, and their data was not analyzed.

Teacher Participants

Three teachers participated in this project, and these three teachers had worked together for seven years at the time of this data collection. Teacher 1 is originally from Yemen, has over twenty years of experience teaching Arabic in Yemen and the United States and taught both high school and university classes. Teacher 2 is originally from the United States, initially studied Arabic in the U.S. military, studied abroad in Syria, Yemen, and Egypt, and has nearly 20 years of Arabic teaching experience. Teacher 3 (also the author) is originally from the United States, initially learned Arabic in an undergraduate program, studied abroad in Egypt, and has nearly 20 years of Arabic teaching experience.

Data

The data analyzed in this article is video and audio recordings of the classes. Each class, which ranged from 50-75 minutes, was video recorded five times during the fall and spring semesters, with audio recorders placed at each student table to capture student interactions. The video and audio data was then loaded into the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program for further analysis.

Analysis

Previous analysis of teacher talk in language classrooms typically identifies a practice of interest, codes examples of that practice from video or audio-recorded data and then analyzes these segments examples for larger patterns related to language teaching. Practices of interest include the follow-up portion of Initiation/Response/Follow-up sequences (Miao & Heining-Boynton, 2011), non-verbal gestures in vocabulary explanations (Lazaraton & Ishihara, 2005), or the use of the L1 versus the target language (Kim & Elder, 2005; Levine, 2011; Macaro, 2001; Polio & Duff, 1994). For this study, the practice of interest is discussions of sociolinguistic variation in teacher talk. As I was not able to identify other studies focusing on this particular practice using classroom recordings, I used an inductive qualitative process, where the codes generated were based on sustained engagement with the data, rather than following a pre-existing framework.

To conduct this analysis, the video and audio recordings of the classroom data were loaded in the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program. A research assistant coded these recordings based on class activity and also identified segments where there was explicit discussion of sociolinguistic variation. Class activities included items such as teacher to class, group work, individual work, student to class (e.g., presentations). Segments related to explicit discussion of sociolinguistic variation

occurred during all of these activities. Following this, as the researcher, I reviewed these codings and used the MAXQDA program to select the teacher to class segments that included explicit discussion of sociolinguistic variation for further analysis. As there is not a pre-existing framework I could find for analyzing explicit discussion of sociolinguistic variation in teacher talk, I coded these segments with codes emerging from the data, such as "student question" or "eliciting from video". This resulted in a set of codes I could use to answer the research question, by describing patterns that emerged in teacher discussion of sociolinguistic variation.

Findings

From the analysis, several patterns emerged regarding how discussions of sociolinguistic variation were initiated, how teachers guided these discussions, and their overall evaluation of sociolinguistic variation. Discussions could be initiated either by students or teachers. Student-initiated discussions typically started with a question about variation which was then taken up by the teacher. Teacher-initiated discussions took a variety of forms, including using class materials (e.g., a video) to start a discussion of that variety, to discuss a variety in anticipation of a video or text in that variety, planned discussions, and commentary on student use of particular variants. During the discussion, teachers typically made comparisons between varieties, most often MSA and either a particular variety or a form shared across varieties. However, they also made cross-dialectal comparisons, comparing multiple dialects or multiple dialects and MSA, and cross-linguistic connections, comparing Arabic and English. Sometimes, they provided selective corrections to students, focusing on sociolinguistic variation. Finally, in addition to providing linguistic knowledge about variation, the teacher sometimes provided an evaluation of variation in Arabic, typically presenting it as a positive feature or making a joke. These initiations, discussions, and evaluations could be combined in different ways, as shown in the excerpts described below.

Excerpt 1

In excerpt 1, the teacher is reviewing recipe vocabulary with the first semester university students. He makes a comparison between two lexical equivalents for the word "half", one used in MSA (*nisʸf*), and one used in most dialects (*nusʸsʸ*). This excerpt is an example of when teachers make comparisons but did not specifically identify the varieties they were comparing.

Excerpt 1		
T: Teacher		
1	T1	ملعقة ملقعة ونصف نص sometimes نقول نص or نصف نص أو نصف
		A tablespoon, a tablespoon and a half [nisʸf] a half [nusʸsʸ sometimes we say a half [nusʸsʸ] or a half [nisʸf], a half [nusʸsʸ] or a half [nisʸf]

Excerpt 2

In Excerpt 2, the teacher is reviewing in class a weather report video that the second semester university class watched for homework. In lines 1 and 3, she initiates the discussion by pointing out a dialect pronunciation of the letter ظ, while a student in lines 2,4, and 6 ignores this pronunciation comparison to remain focused on the lexical meaning of the word. In line 5, the teacher makes a joke that "nobody really likes this letter", and then in line 7 expands the discussion to other pronunciation differences (the letter ق) as well as another pronunciation of the original letter of discussion ظ . Following this, she continues with the review of the video in line 9, returning to the lexical meaning the student was focusing on. Overall, this excerpt demonstrates how a teacher initiates a discussion based on class materials, makes a joke about variation, and expands from the initial comparison of MSA and Levantine pronunciations to a comparison with another dialect, Egyptian.

Excerpt 2		
T: Teacher, S: Student		
1	T2	She says ضهر [dˠohr, noon]
2	S1	Like lunchtime
3	T2	عندنا بالضا ضهر For us, it is with the dˠaa, dˠohr [noon]
4	S1	afternoon
5	T2	yeah ظهر [ðˠohr, noon] nobody really likes this letter
6	S1	Lunchtime, that's what I was trying to say
7	T2	يا شباب الظا والقاف Guys, the ðˠaa and the qaaf
8	T2	these are ways like you see in different dialects, they're probably pronounced differently, like ah, I can't think of, ʔ'iraaʔa for instead of qiraaʔa [reading], dˠohr instead of ðˠohr [afternoon], sometimes you hear zˠohr like in Egypt, but we have dˠohr, that's another one she says for ðˠohr
9	T2	وعصر اليوم

		and the late afternoon
10	T2	so she's saying it's good, it's especially nice in the afternoon today

Excerpt 3

Excerpt 3 provides an example of a student-initiated discussion in the second semester university class, where the teacher was reviewing weather vocabulary items with the students using an online game (Quizlet). In line 1, the teacher presents a vocabulary item, "snowy" in MSA (*muθliʒ*) , and in line 2 a student asks for its equivalent in Egyptian Arabic. The teacher provides this in line 3 and then expands on the differences in line 4, as well as making a joke about snow not being common in Egypt. This excerpt demonstrates how students could initiate discussions of variation, and how the teacher also made comparisons between the Egyptian and MSA lexical items.

Excerpt 3		
T: Teacher, S: Student		
1	T3	مثلج نعم هنا الطقس مثلج[muθliʒ]
		Snowy, yes, here the weather is snowy
2	S1	How would you say that like in the Egyptian accent, like with the letters, how would you say the letters?
3	T3	تلج [talg]
		snow
4	T3	so they actually drop the م [miim] and so they say الجو تلج [al-gaw talg, the weather is snowy], not very common but تلج [talg, snow]

Excerpt 4

In this excerpt, the high school class is working with a video of a Jordanian speaker describing her family. In lines 1-6, the teacher initiates the discussion of sociolinguistic variation by pointing out a dialect element at the beginning of the video (b- prefix for the verb) and comparing this to MSA. In lines 7-9, the students respond positively to this comparison, commenting "cool" and "very cool." In lines 11-18, the teacher guides the discussion by eliciting the MSA variants of the Levantine lexical items in the video from a student. In lines 19-22, the teacher uses the video to highlight another Levantine element (the verb "to work"), elicit the MSA equivalent from the student in line 23, and then connect it back to the original discussion of the verbal prefix in the dialect in line 24.

As the teacher guides these Novice-level students through identifying key lexical items in Levantine dialect, he is also selective. For example, when a student provides an MSA equivalent with the correct meaning, but the wrong gender, in line 17, the teacher focuses on the meaning. Similarly, although there are small phonological differences between the dialect and MSA versions of the verb *yiʃtaɣil* [he works], the teacher focuses on the lexical items and the similarities between the varieties. Overall, this excerpt provides an example of a teacher-initiated discussion based on class materials, comparisons between MSA and one dialect (Levantine) and selective correction focused on variation.

Excerpt 4		
T: Teacher, V: Video (played by teacher), S: Student		
1	T1	أوكي بعيش بعيش is
		Okay, I live [baʕiiʃ], I live [baʕiiʃ] is
2	V	ب- ب-
		b- b-
3	Ss	Ooh
4	V	ب-
		b-
5	T1	أسكن أو أعيش بس بالفصحى نقول أنا أعيش في ألباكركي أسكن
		I live [askun] or I live [aʕiiʃ] but in MSA we say I live [aʕiiʃ] in Albuquerque I live [askun]
6	T1	ولكن في Jordan في سوريا نقول بعيش ب- أنا بعيش أنا بأكل أنا بشرب مهمم
		But in Jordan, in Syria, we say I live [baʕiiʃ] b- I live [baʕiiʃ], I eat [baakul], I drink [baʃrab], mhmm
7	S1	That's cool
8	S2	Very cool
9	S3	Very cool
10	V	عمان. أنا لجين أنا أردنية وبعيش بعمان. أنا هلق طالبة

		Amman. I'm Lujean I'm Jordanian and I live in Amman. Right now I'm a student.
11	T1	Oh, now we have two هلق إثنين سوري
		Oh now we have *two two Syrian now [* halaʔ]
12	V	هلق
		Now [halaʔ]
13	T1	What's هلق [Student 1], what's هلق in Arabic فصحى؟
		What's now [halaʔ], [Student 1], what's now [halaʔ] in MSA?
14	S1	الآن
		Now [alʔaan]
15	T1	الآن ممتاز
		Now [alʔaan] wonderful
16	V	هاي
		This [haay,feminine singular]
17	S1	هذا This [haaða, masculine singular]
18	T1	هذا look now عندنا بعيش هلق هاي
		This [haaða] look now we have I live [baʕiiʃ], now [halaʔ], this [haay]
19	V	وهاي عائلتي. هاي أختي الكبيرة وهاي أختبي الصغيرة وهذا أخوي وهاي أمي. أختي الكبيرة تالة ماما فضاء أخوي محمد وأختي الصغيرة سوسو سارة وأمي بتشتغل صيدلانية.

		And this is my family. This is my older sister, and this is my younger sister, and this is my brother, and this is my mother. My older sister is Tala, Mama is Fida, my brother is Mohammed, and my little sister is Susu, Sara. And my mother works as a pharmacist.
20	T1	Okay. What is Shami dialect here? تشتغل
		Okay. What is Shami dialect here? She works [tiʃtaʁil]
21	V	بتشتغل أو بتشتغل
		She works [bitiʃtaʁil] or she works [bitiʃtaʁil]
22	T1	Because يشتغل or
		Because he works [yiʃtaʁil] or
23	S1	أعمل
		I work [aʕmal]
24	T1	يعمل برافو يعمل أو يشتغل ولكن in dialect he said بيشتغل بيعمل or بيشتغل وماما بتشتغل
		He works [yaʕmal] bravo, he works [yaʕmal] or he works [yaʃtaʁil] but in dialect he said he works [biyiʃtaʁil] he works [biyaʕmal] or [biyiʃtaʁil] and Mama she works [bitaʃtaʁil]

Excerpt 5

In Excerpt 5, the teacher initiates a discussion of Iraqi dialect with the high school class in anticipation of watching a video about a daily routine in this dialect. In lines 1-5, he asks students if they remember anything from this dialect. When a student replies that they don't remember anything in Line 6, the teacher asks for the Iraqi equivalent of "How are you?" in line 7. When a student provides the Levantine equivalent in line 8, the teacher identifies this as Levantine in line 9. In line 12, a student remembers the English translation of the Iraqi equivalent, and the teacher then provides the Arabic in line 15, while another student repeats it in English in line 16. In line 18, the teacher explains that they will learn more Iraqi words today and starts playing the video. In line 22, the teacher initiates a discussion of the word "*agʕad*" (to sit) based on the presence of this word in the video. He elicits it in Arabic from a student in line 22 and then in line 24 confirms that both this word, as well as an MSA variant (*adʒlis*) are correct before asking for the Arabic translation of "wake up." When a student provides this translation in line 26, the teacher connects the two lexical items he's elicited to present the Iraqi equivalent of "wake up" in line 27, which a student translates literally as "I sit up from sleep"

in line 28, and the teacher confirms in line 29. This elicits a variety of student reactions, with one student saying "that makes sense, kind of weird" in line 30, another saying "that's not a language" in line 21, and a third student making comparisons between the English equivalent in lines 33-35. The teacher also provides a positive evaluation in line 32, describing it as "beautiful". Overall, this excerpt provides an example of a teacher-initiated discussion in anticipation of encountering a particular dialect in the materials, shows how he guided the students through comparisons between MSA, Levantine and Iraqi dialects, and English, and provided a positive evaluation of variation.

Excerpt 5		
T: Teacher, V: Video (played by teacher), S: Student		
1	T1	أوكي يا شباب اليوم ندرس who remembers لهجة عراقية ?what
		Okay guys, today we are studying, who remembers Iraqi dialect? What?
2	S1	الطقس The weather
3	T1	عراقي لهجة عراقية لهجة عراقية who remembers لهجة عراقية what؟
		Iraqi, Iraqi dialect, who remembers what is Iraqi dialect?
4	S2	Dialect, Iraqi dialect
5	T1	anything from لهجة عراقية [Iraqi dialect]?
6	S1	No I don't remember it
7	T1	how we said كيف الحال في العراقية؟
		How we said how are you in Iraqi?
8	S3	كيفك
		How are you [keefak]
9	T1	كيفك في سورية ولبنان وفلسطين والأردن
		How are you [keefak] in Syria and Lebanon and Palestine and Jordan
10	S3	كيف الحال؟
		How are you [kayf al-Haal]?

11	S4	كيف
		How
12	S5	Well I remember colors, it's like what's your color
13	T1	oh
14	S1	oh
15	T1	ايش لونك
		What's your color
16	S5	What's the color
17	S3	That is, that is
18	T1	اليوم سنعرف كلمات أكثر أوكي
		Today we will know more words okay
19	V	مرحبا راح أشارك روتيني يوم الجمعة. أقعد من النوم الساعة ٦. أغسل وجهي وأفرش أسناني . أتريق لفة وأشرب شاي الساعة ١٢ أروح للجامع أصلي. أرجع للبيت الساعة ٢ أتغدى ويا أخي . الساعة ٤:٣٠ أروح للجيم وبعدين أطلع ويا صديقتي ونروح للمول أرجع بالبيت الساعة ٩ أتعشى وأنام الساعة ١٠:٣٠
		Hello, I'm going to share my Friday routine. I wake up at 6:00, I wash my face and brush my teeth. I eat a wrap and I drink tea. At 12:00 I go to the mosque and pray. I return home at 2:00 and eat with my brother. At 4:30 I go to the gym and then I go out with my friend and we go to the mall. I return home at 9:00 and eat dinner and I go to sleep at 10:30.
20	T1	ممتاز
		Excellent
21	S3	Mumtaztic [traditional Arabic student combo of mumtaz (excellent) and fantastic]

22	T1	[Student name] you write I sit, how we say I sit
23	S3	أقعد
		I sit [agʕad]
24	T1	how we say I is right too اجلس أجلس what do you put أقعد you don't put أقعد wake up, [Student Name]
		I sit [agʕad] you don't put I sit [agʕad] what do you put I sit [aʒlis]? I sit [aʒlis] is right too. How we say I wake up, [Student Name]?
25	S6	الصباح
		Morning
26	S7	أصحى
		I wake up
27	T1	You أقعد من النوم أقعد من النوم they say أصحى أو أصحو أصحى أوكي أصحى في العراق know what that means
		I wake up [asˠħaa] or I wake up [asˠħuu] I wake up [asˠħaa] Okay, I wake up [asˠħaa] in Iraq they say I wake up [aqʕad min an-noom] I wake up [aqʕad min an-noom] you know what that means
28	S3	You sit from the sleep
29	T1	That means I wake up, I sit, like I sit up from sleep أقعد من النوم [aqʕad min an-noom, I sit up from sleep]
30	S4	That makes sense, kind of weird
31	T1	but هذا اللهجة dialect ممتاز جميل
		But this is the dialect excellent beautiful
32	S6	That's not a language

33	S5	but I guess we say wake up, like
34	T1	نسمع مرة ثانية
		Let's listen again
35	S5	They say wake down

Excerpt 6

Excerpt 6 shows another teacher-initiated discussion of variation, where in line 1 the teacher uses an example of a verb with a b-prefix to make a comparison between dialects that have this prefix and MSA (which doesn't), and then asking students if they know examples of the prefix in other dialects. She also evaluates this variation positively as a "fun thing." In line 2, a student provides an example from Moroccan, which the teacher validates in line 3 as an alternative conjugation for the first-person verb before asking again for the prefix and then providing it (k-) in line 4 when no students answer. In line 4, the teacher also mentions adding a different prefix (d-) in Iraqi dialect, which is confirmed in line 5 and expanded upon in line 7 by a student of Iraqi descent. In line 8, the teacher provides one more prefix option (ʕam b-), and then in line 9 a comment of b- being "lots of places, lots of places, but then you can sometimes hear the other ones too". In line 10, as a student asks why there is a prefix. The teacher responds in line 11 with the simplified explanation that the prefix is a progressive marker, and also makes a comparison with English.

Excerpt 6		
T: Teacher, S: Student		
1	T3	Yeah, so the b is like for the verb, if you think about it for هي [hiyya, she] you would still have the ta but the ba is for the verb but yes, ف والمهم [so and the important thing], and the fun thing about the ba, you have it in a lot of dialects, like مصري شامي إلخ [Egyptian, Levantine, etc.] but some dialects add something but they add something different so we have بيحب [biyiħibb, he loves], anyone know other things you could add on the front in other dialects?
2	S1	I know in Morocco you do the ن [nuun] instead of the ب [b], so they say نيحب [niyuHibb] instead of بيحب [biyuħibb]

3	T3	So they use the ن [nuun] for أنا [I], but they do add a different letter, does anyone know what it is in Morocco?
4	T3	The k, so they might say كيبب [kayuħibb] و [and] any other letters that can be added. I think, أنا سمعت في العراق [I heard in Iraq] they sometimes add a d-
5	S2	Oh, ديحب [dayuħibb, he loves] so this is kind of like a continuous
6	T3	yeah, mmhmm, kind of the بيحب [biyuħibb]
7	S2	ديحب [dayaħibb, he loves], ديشوف [dayashuuf, he sees], [ديتفرج] dayatafarraʒ, he watches]
8	T3	yeah, so في العراق [in Iraq] sometimes you can have d ديشوف [dayashuuf, he sees]. What other one can I think of, so sometimes you'll have like عم بيحب [ʕam biyiħibb, he loves]
[Discussion of an unrelated dialect element with non-participant]		
9	T3	so نفس الشيء [the same thing] so ب ممكن في مصر ممكن في السعودية ممكن في الأردن [so b- maybe in Egypt, maybe in Saudi Arabia, maybe in Jordan] so lots of places, but then you can sometimes hear the other ones too
10	S3	So why do we use those in front of the nouns or verbs, so why do you say بحب [biyuħibb] instead of just يحب [yuħibb]
11	T3	يحب [yuħiib], so يحب [yuħibb] would be فصحى [fusʕħaa], the formal, and then b, all of these are giving it like a progressive it's ongoing, happening right now, like right now, I'm liking, I'm loving
12	S3	I'm watching
13	T3	I'm watching

Excerpt 7

In Excerpt 7, the teacher initiates the discussion in a second semester university class by writing a chart on the board with Yemeni, Saudi, Iraqi, and Egyptian at the top. In lines, 1-7, he elicits from students the lexical equivalents of "How are you?" in each of these dialects, highlighting a similarity between Saudi and Iraqi dialects in line 5. In lines 7-13 he elicits the equivalents for "now," and then in lines 14-21 the equivalents for "I want." In line 17, when a student produces the Levantine, rather than Iraqi variant of I want, the teacher doesn't issue a correction but waits for another student to provide the variant he is looking for. He also makes a joke in line 14 about knowing the variant in Yemeni (a less prestigious, less commonly studied dialect, and also his own dialect). In lines 21-28, he switches gears to discuss a common pronunciation difference in the letter ق. Overall, this excerpt shows how the teacher initiates a discussion that leads students through a review of several common words they have studied in different varieties and also makes a joke about his own less prestigious variety.

Excerpt 7		
T: Teacher, S: Student		
1	T1	نحن درسنا يمني يمني سعودي عراقي ومصري كيف الحال في السعودي؟
		We studied Yemeni, Yemeni, Saudi, Iraqi, and Egyptian. How are you [kayf al-Haal] in Saudi?
2	S1	ايش لونك؟
		How are you [eeʃ loonak]?
3	T1	عراقي؟
		Iraqi?
4	Ss	شلونك
		How are you [ʃloonak]?
5	T1	نفس الشيء بس سعودي للبنت for women شلونك في عراقي شلونتش. مصري؟
		The same thing but in Saudi for women for women how are you [ʃloonik] in Iraqi how are you [ʃlonitʃ]
6	S2	ازيك

		How are you [izzayak]?
7	T1	ازيك ازيك الآن in يمني ذالحين ذالحين in Saudi?
		How are you [izzayak], now in Yemeni now [ðalḥeen] now [ðalḥeen] in Saudi?
8	S3	دالحين
		Now [dalḥeen]
9	T1	عراقي
		Iraqi
10	S2	هسا
		Now [hassaa]
11	T1	مصر
		Egypt
12	Ss	دالوقتي
		Now [dilwaʔti]
13	T1	دالوقتي
		Now [dilwaʔti]
14	T1	If you know this you going to win a lot of money how we say I want in Yemen
15	S2	اشتي
		I want [ishti]
16	T1	أشتي أشتي we don't study this in سعودي ولكن العراقي
		I want [ishti] I want [ishti] we don't study this in Saudi but Iraqi
17	S3	بدي
		I want [biddi]
18	T1	بدي

		I want [biddi]
19	S3	أريد
		I want [ariid]
20	T1	أو or أريد like فصحى بالمصري؟
		Or or I want [ariid] like MSA, in Egyptian?
21	Ss	عايز
		I want [ʕaayiz]
22	T1	عايز ممتاز and then you know this قلم قلم is
		I want [ʕaayiz] excellent, and then you know this, pen [qalam], pen [aalam] is
23	S4	pen
24	T1	In Egypt?
25	S	قلم
		Pen [galam]
26	T1	They say ʔalam [pen]
27	S	ʔalam
28	T1	ألف they say you say it with an القاهرة they say ʔ but not all like مصر in القا
		The qaa in Egypt they say ʔ but not all like Cairo [al-qaahira] they say you say it with an ʔ

Excerpt 8

In excerpt 8, the teacher is leading a discussion related to the grammar of the MSA interrogatives *maaðaa* [what (before a verb)] and *maa* [what (before a noun)]. In line 1, she introduces the word *maaðaa* and elicits a translation which a student provides in line 2. In line 3, she initiates a discussion of sociolinguistic variation by asking if this word in in MSA or dialect, and a student confirms it is MSA in line 4. In line 5, the teacher goes on to discuss a grammar rule related to the word *maaðaa* (it

has to be followed by a verb), and then expands that to a discussion of verb conjugations in lines 7-13. When a student provides a dialect verb conjugation in line 14, the teacher returns to a discussion of sociolinguistic variation in line 15, suggesting that the student should use the MSA verb form with the MSA interrogative.

Excerpt 8		
T: Teacher, S: Student		
1	T3	Okay, so how do you know it's what and not who?نعم ماذا تحبين
		Yes, what do you love? Okay, so how do you know it's what and not who?
2	S1	means what ماذا
		What [maaðaa] means what
3	T3	ماذا ممهمم so ماذا,means what, dialect فصحى؟
		What [maaðaa], mmhmm, so what [maaðaa] means what, dialect, MSA?
4	S2	فصحى
		MSA
5	T3	and then it has another special rule, so if you say ماذا [maaðaa, what], what does the next word have to be?
6	Ss	a verb
7	T3	a verb, okay, so MSA distinguishes between ما [maa, what] and ماذا [maaðaa] what, so ماذا [maaðaa] what you have to have a verb, ما [maa, what] noun or اسم [noun] وتحبين [and you love] how do you know it's you and not she?
8	S1	because of the ending?
9	T3	Yeah, the ending, so تحبيين [you love], you male or female
10	S1	wouldn't it be plural
11	T3	you

12	S4	to a female
13	T3	so what would you plural be?
14	Ss	تحبوا
		you (pl.) love [tuħibbuu]
15	T3	ماذا so تحبون you would want to stick with فصحى is ماذا probably because تحبون or تحبوا you female تحبين all of you و with a تحبون
		You love [tuħibbuu] or you love [tuħibuun], probably because what [maaðaa] is MSA, you would want to stick with you love [tuħibbuun], so what do you love [maaðaa tuħibuun] with a waw [Arabic letter that makes uu], all of you, you love [tuħibiin], you female

Excerpt 9

As shown in some earlier excerpts, teachers often portrayed variation in a positive light, or made jokes about it (a common occurrence among Arabic speakers). Excerpt 9 provides an example of a teacher commenting on language ideologies in Arabic following reviewing a weather report with second semester university students that mixed MSA and Levantine dialect. She explains that "we like to pretend there are strict differences", "but it's always a sliding scale." This aligns with a common distinction between language ideologies in Arabic, and the practices of Arabic speakers, which are typically on a continuum between MSA and dialect (Holes, 2004). The teacher goes on to expand this to English and Arabic (alluding to translanguaging practices common in some of the other videos) and presents this as the reality of learning Arabic. Her final message to students is "let's embrace it", once more a positive portrayal of the Arabic sociolinguistic situation. This excerpt demonstrates how teachers sometimes took their discussions of sociolinguistic variation beyond simple comparisons to a more critical level.

Excerpt 9		
T: Teacher		
1	T2	Yeah, I mean we like to pretend that there's like strict differences, like here's MSA and here's لهجة [dialect] and never the twain shall meet but it's always a sliding scale, it's, we, things we think that are شامي [Levantine] or whatever, there's some فصحى [MSA] mixed

		in and people are trying desperately to speak in فصحى [MSA] have some you know dialect mixed in, so, yeah, we want things to be in nice boxes just one or the other, it's English or Arabic, and stay in their boxes, this doesn't happen and so let's embrace it.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that teachers initiated discussions of sociolinguistic variation in a variety of ways and that discussions were also initiated by students. During the discussion, teachers typically made comparisons between dialects and MSA, a particular variety and MSA, or across multiple dialects, or even with English. They also provided sociolinguistic guidance with respect to the use of different varieties. Finally, they typically portrayed variation in a positive manner or made jokes about it.

Discussion

By analyzing patterns in teacher talk during explicit discussions of sociolinguistic variation in multidialectal classrooms, this study provides insights into how multidialectal approaches can be incorporated into the Arabic classroom. As discussed in the literature review, Arabic classrooms have typically only taught one variety, usually MSA. In recent years, there have been increased calls to integrate MSA and dialect in Arabic language teaching (Al-Batal, 2018), but limited research on actual classroom practices in integrating Arabic varieties. As a result, questions remain about how exactly this can occur in a classroom, especially at Novice levels. This study provides concrete examples of how teachers initiate, guide, and evaluate discussions of sociolinguistic variation in the classroom.

In terms of the initiation of discussions about sociolinguistic variation, this study shows that teachers typically used the multidialectal resources students engaged with for homework and in the classroom to initiate these discussions. Sometimes, this was based on a review of a particular video in class, while at other times the teachers began the discussion in expectation of variation within a particular text. Teachers also planned activities that reviewed the variation students had encountered and took up student questions about variation. During the discussion, teachers typically made comparisons between Arabic varieties, either MSA and a dialect, or between dialects, emphasizing common and predictable variations, such as the pronunciation of letter ق or the verb "to want". At times, they made comparisons with English, to help students understand a particular meaning or grammatical point. They also guided students towards choosing appropriate variants in their production. These patterns demonstrate activities that can be incorporated into lesson planning in a multidialectal classroom—anticipating the types of variation that will occur based on the resources students will encounter, designing activities to activate this variation, interpreting it with students during class, and reviewing it in subsequent lessons.

This study also highlights ways in which the multidialectal practices reported in this research could be enhanced. Although all teachers engaged with variation and made comparisons across dialects, this often seemed dependent on student questions or teacher uptake at a particular time. Incorporating a more structured analysis of dialect comparisons, including through specific homework and class activities, could improve students' abilities to retain and consolidate their understanding of Arabic sociolinguistic variation, while at the same time keeping a clear focus on the linguistic functions they are trying to accomplish in Arabic, such as describing the weather. Furthermore, some varieties, such as Levantine, were more strongly represented in the materials than others, such as North African.

Continuing to develop the materials to ensure more equal representation of major varieties would be beneficial.

Another key pedagogical implication from this study relates to the teachers' portrayal of sociolinguistic variation in Arabic, which was typically positive. Research demonstrates that students often take up the language ideologies their teachers share in class, including ideologies that present certain Arabic varieties as inferior (Soulaimani, 2019). By presenting sociolinguistic variation as a positive feature of the Arabic language, teachers can potentially help counter language ideologies that denigrate particular varieties and encourage students to engage with this variation, even if it seems confusing or overwhelming (a common fear about teaching variation in the Arabic classroom). Although the focus in this paper is on the teachers, several of these excerpts demonstrate positive responses from students, which is an aspect future studies can examine.

There are several limitations to this study. As classroom discussions of sociolinguistic variation are understudied, this analysis focuses on exploring and identifying patterns, rather than testing an existing theory. It only examines classroom data, and future studies that add interview and student assessment data may shed more light on students' abilities to engage with sociolinguistic variation throughout their studies. In addition, examining learners' ability to engage with multidialectal materials and sociolinguistic variation as they move beyond the Novice level would be insightful. It also focuses on contexts in which teachers have the freedom to create their own multidialectal materials, a situation that is not the case in many Arabic teaching situations.

Overall, this analysis demonstrates the various ways in which teachers initiate, lead, and evaluate discussions of sociolinguistic variation in Novice-level classrooms using a multidialectal approach. Using materials that focus on particular linguistic functions, such as describing a family or understanding a weather report, teachers draw from the variation in these materials to present Arabic sociolinguistic variation in a structured and positive manner. While more research on this topic is certainly needed, this study presents pedagogical examples that can serve Arabic programs interested in multidialectal approaches.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the teachers and research team for their input and support, as well as Qatar Foundation International for funding the research.

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