

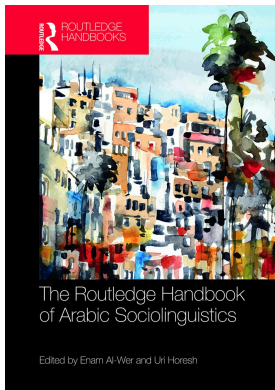
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Form and ideology revisited

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FORM AND IDEOLOGY
REVISITED*Niloofar Haeri and William M. Cotter***Introduction**

The field of Arabic sociolinguistics has been growing in a number of directions over the past two decades. The aim of this chapter is to survey published studies of Arabic since the publication of Haeri (2000), which was a review of scholarly work in the fields of dialectology, sociolinguistics, education and anthropology. Since then, there have also been other review articles by Horesh & Cotter (2016) and Owens (2011). For the present chapter, we review sociolinguistic studies that can be broadly divided into variationist and non-variationist. There have been a number of significant developments that we will discuss in the following pages. Among them are analyses of speeches by political leaders, treatments of language ideology within vernacular varieties of Arabic, such as the “Maghrebi” and “Mashreqi,” and considerations of religion as a possible social factor in governing linguistic change. We are also fortunate to have studies that combine historical depth with sociolinguistic methodology in documenting the emergence of urban dialects such as Ammani Arabic in Jordan. Palestinian varieties, in particular, have received significant attention through studies based in Jaffa and Gaza City. The former look closely at contact between Hebrew and Arabic, while the latter investigate contact between Jaffan and Gazan varieties of Palestinian Arabic. Other communities on which we had only few studies in 2000 are Maghrebi, such as Tunisian, Moroccan and Algerian. Here also, there have since been major contributions to the field. Given space constraints, the review is not exhaustive and only includes publications in English. We do not cover unpublished material such as dissertations.¹

Variationist studies of Arabic: religion, migration and contact

Variation patterns in Arabic-speaking communities are similar to those documented in other language communities. There is, however, one major difference that has to do with the *kinds* of variables one finds. Haeri (1996) argued that in such communities, there are, broadly speaking, two kinds of variables: those whose variants span the “classical/vernacular” varieties and those whose variants do not involve Classical Arabic at all, but have to do with stylistic resources belonging to variation within the vernacular proper or to other sources. The two

examples that she investigates are related to the Classical Arabic voiceless uvular stop (q), on the one hand, and palatalization of alveolar stops, on the other.

A substantial portion of variationist work conducted in recent years has examined variation of the first kind (see Table 17.1 below). Such studies have taken place within Arabic-speaking communities in the Levant: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. This area in particular has seen massive waves of migration and demographic shifts as a result of decades of political conflict and violence that have dramatically altered the social and political fabric of many countries in the region. Enam Al-Wer's (1991, 2007) now seminal work on the formation of the dialect of Amman has provided a crucial account of koinéization and dialect formation in one of the Levant's major cities as a result of contact between Palestinian and Jordanian varieties of Arabic. Al-Wer & Herin (2011) demonstrate this distinction between kinds of variables by paying close attention to both historical and sociolinguistic dynamics. Of the latter type, we now have similar examples of (de)pharyngealization by Horesh and the variable backing of /a/ among Gazans and Jaffan refugees in Gaza.

Table 17.1 Variables examined in Arabic sociolinguistic research between 2003–2016

<i>Year</i>	<i>Speech Community</i>	<i>Variable</i>
2003 (Enam al-Wer)	Jordan (Amman)	/-kum/
2007 (Enam al-Wer)	Jordan (Amman)	/q/, feminine ending /a/, /ra:/, /a:/, /-kum/
2007 (Hanadi Ismail)	Syria (Damascus)	/h/, /r/
2008 (Aziza Al Essa)	Saudi Arabia (Jeddah)	/θ, ð, ð ^s , affrication of /k, g/, 2nd sing. fem. suffix /-ik/, 3rd fem. pl. suffix /-in/, 3rd sing. masc. suffix /-ih/, 3rd pl. perfective suffix /-aw/, 3rd pl. suffix of the imperfect verb /-u:n/
2009 (Hanadi Ismail)	Syria (Damascus)	/h/
2010 (Rania Habib)	Syria (Oyoun Al-Wadi)	/q/
2011 (Andrew Hennessey)	Lebanon (Beirut)	/a:/, /u/, first person conjugation, pronominal variation
2011 (Lotfi Sayahi)	Tunisia (Tunis)	Arabic-French codeswitching
2011 (Enam al-Wer and Bruno Herin)	Jordan (Amman)	/q/
2013 (Nancy Hawker)	Palestine (West Bank)	Lexical borrowing
2013 (William M. Cotter)	Palestine (Gaza City)	feminine ending /a/, /q/
2014 (Enam al-Wer)	Jordan (Amman)	Yod dropping in the b-imperfect form
2014 (Uri Horesh)	Palestine (Jaffa)	/ʕ/, /d ^s , s ^s , t ^s /
2014 (Najla al-Ghamdi)	Saudi Arabia (Mecca)	/aw/, /ai/, /θ, ð, ð ^s /
2014 (Rania Habib)	Syria (Oyoun Al-Wadi)	/o, o:, e, e:/
2015 (Al-Wer et al)	Jordan (Sult)	feminine ending /a/, /č/, dark /l/, distribution of CaCīC/CCīC, yiCCaCi(C)
2015 (Uri Horesh)	Palestine (Jaffa)	/ʕ/, /d ^s , s ^s , t ^s /
2015 (William M. Cotter and Uri Horesh)	Palestine (Gaza City and Jaffa)	/q/, feminine ending /a/, /ʕ/
2015 (Khairia al-Qahtani)	Saudi Arabia (Asir)	/d ^s / (historic lateral fricative)
2016 (Khairia al-Qahtani and Enam al-Wer)	Saudi Arabia (Asir)	voiced pharyngealized lateral fricative
2016 (William M. Cotter)	Palestine (Gaza City)	/q/, feminine ending /a/

Religion as a social variable has been a focus of study in dialectological work such as the early study of Blanc (1964) where he examined Muslim, Christian and Jewish varieties of Arabic in Baghdad, and his 1953 study of the Druze dialect in what is today northern Israel (Blanc 1953). But religion as a factor in sociolinguistic variation has remained absent from many studies of Arabic (but see Abu Haidar 1991). Germanos & Miller (2014: 96) note that the connection between religious affiliation and linguistic variation is often challenging to establish:

Religious affiliation participates in the construction of social boundaries but its role varies according to each specific context and the evaluation of its sociolinguistic impact needs very careful investigation. History of migration and settlement as well as types of social contacts and networks have proved to be important factors for explaining the very diverse contemporary situations. Religious affiliation alone is not and has not been a key factor of major linguistic differentiation in the MENA area, it is always linked with other social factors.

Despite the challenges often associated with linking religious affiliation with patterns of linguistic variation, recent work by Al-Wer et al. (2015) has shown that older features of spoken Arabic varieties are retained more frequently by Christian speakers in Jordan. For example, they note (80–81) that Christian speakers showed higher rates of preservation of velarized /l/ that is a traditional feature of Horani dialects of Arabic, while Muslim speakers in the sample largely lacked this feature. For the Jordanian case, Al-Wer et al. describe the retention of traditional features as stemming from the lack of intermarriage between Muslims and Christians in Jordan as well as increasing sectarian divisions in part due to massive demographic shifts as a result of migration into the country in recent years. This work also represents a case of collaboration across disciplines, bringing together sociolinguists, dialectologists and political scientists to investigate the linguistic situation in these communities (CR Holes “Confessional dialects,” this volume).

In the last 15 years or so, political upheavals and violence have forced large populations to flee their places of residence. Displaced Palestinians comprised the largest refugee groups before the wars in Iraq in Syria started. Historic Palestine has been a site for recent sociolinguistic work on spoken Arabic varieties. Horesh (2015) illustrates how contact between Modern Hebrew and Palestinian Arabic has resulted in notable levels of phonological and structural change in the variety of Arabic spoken in the coastal city of Jaffa. Horesh’s findings are validated in two contexts. The first context involves a comparison between Palestinian Arabic speakers in Jaffa, who for the most part are bilingual, in comparison to a control group of Palestinian Arabic speakers from the West Bank, who have little to no contact with Modern Hebrew. The second context is that of the bilingual speakers separately, where it was found that nuanced assessments of speakers’ contact with Hebrew are also linked to phonological changes in their native Arabic. Horesh’s work also shows that language contact happening in historic Palestine, particularly in the areas that are today Israel, is quite profound and has had a noticeable effect on the local Palestinian varieties, a point we return to in discussing Hawker’s (2013) work below.

Cotter (2016b) has investigated sociolinguistic variation in the Gaza Strip, and specifically in Gaza City. This work looked at dialect contact taking place between indigenous Gaza City Palestinians and refugees from Jaffa. Although the dialects of Gaza City and Jaffa are mutually intelligible varieties of Palestinian Arabic, the Gaza City dialect, unlike the Jaffa dialect, lacks a number of features that are hallmarks of urban Palestinian Arabic dialects

(Bergsträßer 1915, Shahin 2008). The dialects of Gaza City and Jaffa have come into contact as a direct result of protracted political violence and forced migration since 1948; up to 80% of the current population of the Gaza Strip are refugees from other areas in historic Palestine.

Cotter's work has shown twin processes of morphological and phonological change in Gaza City, that have resulted in processes of intergenerational variation in the speech of both indigenous Gaza City residents and refugees originally from Jaffa. Additionally, Cotter (2016a) and Cotter & Horesh (2015) have investigated variation in the voiceless uvular stop, one of the most widely studied features in Arabic sociolinguistics, in Gaza City and Jaffa. These studies have compared the realization of this phoneme in the speech of a sample of Jaffa refugees in Gaza and among Jaffans in Jaffa. The findings of these studies indicate that in the speech of Jaffans in Gaza City, variation in (q) is realized differently along gender lines, with male speakers overwhelmingly realizing /q/ as a voiced velar [g], while female speakers have largely retained the glottal [ʔ] realization native to the Jaffa variety of Arabic. Based on interviews conducted in Gaza City, speakers in both the indigenous Gazan and Jaffa refugee community note that this variation is socially meaningful and are able to comment on the *types* of individuals whose speech is emblematic of specific forms of variation in the realization of this phoneme. Cotter & Horesh (2015) have analyzed this variation and its broader social commentary through the framework of indexicality (Eckert 2008; Silverstein 2003), emphasizing the potential links between language variation and processes of identity formation and maintenance within the Palestinian community.

Moving on to studies of Syrian Arabic, Ismail (2007, 2009) investigates several sociolinguistic variables and cases of stable variation in the Arabic variety spoken in Damascus. In doing so, Ismail views the stratification between urban and suburban areas of the city as a key social factor influencing language variation (see also Britain 2009 on the complicated application of urban-rural dichotomies in the study of Arabic). Habib (2010, 2014) investigates variation in a rural community outside of Homs. Habib's work focuses on the effects of migration and this community's relationship with the Syrian capital of Damascus on the acquisition of both vocalic and consonantal features from the local, as well as Damascene, varieties of Arabic by children in the community. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, Habib does not provide concrete examples of lexical items actually containing the features under investigation, rendering her generalizations somewhat vague.

In the Lebanese capital of Beirut, Hennessey (2011) examines variation in the speech of different Palestinian refugee communities. Hennessey's analysis represents one of the very few applications of social network analysis within the context of Arabic sociolinguistics. His study suggests that different social network structures among Palestinian refugees in Beirut result in varying degrees of retention of features of Palestinian Arabic. For example, refugees whose social networks contain primarily contacts with ethnically Lebanese residents of Beirut showed higher degrees of adoption of characteristic features of Beirut Arabic. This adoption among one sector of the Palestinian refugee population in Beirut stands in contrast to the speech of refugees whose social networks primarily consist of other Palestinians. In the speech of these speakers, Hennessey (2011: 129) describes a situation where those refugees who maintained social network structures that were largely confined to their Palestinian community showed higher levels of retention of features native to Palestinian Arabic. Hennessey analyzes these differing patterns of variation through discussions of the types of social obstacles faced by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. These obstacles include enduring social and political ideologies within Lebanese society about the Palestinian community in Lebanon. Hennessey notes that it is those Palestinian refugees who have developed strong patterns of contact with

Lebanese residents of Beirut, and navigated some of these ideologies, who are shown to have more readily adopted features of Lebanese Arabic.

Migration, accommodation and social mobility

In addition to the types of contact-induced change described by Hennessey in Beirut, Catherine Miller (2004, 2005, 2007) has examined the relationship between rural migration to cities and the subsequent “dialectal accommodation” within the context of Egypt. Miller’s work has primarily focused on rural migration from Upper Egypt to Cairo. The results of this work foreground that although Upper Egyptian migrants must navigate a myriad of social and linguistic ideologies that continually place them in less dominant positions in the context of Cairo, they do not undergo wholesale adoption of Cairene linguistic norms. Instead, Miller’s analyses highlight the fact that speakers selectively adopt some features of Cairene Arabic, while retaining features of their native Upper Egyptian varieties. This work shows that while ideology may influence language variation, it also intersects with identity projects, which are themselves ideological, resulting in the acceptance or rejection of linguistic features within a given community.

More recent anthropological work (e.g., Chakrani 2015) has further investigated language attitudes and ideologies closely tied to language accommodation across Arabic dialectal boundaries along with varied forms of mobility within migrant populations in the Arabian Gulf. In addition, Theodoropoulou (2015) has analyzed the sociolinguistics of mobility within the context of the Arabian Gulf, focusing primarily on the political economy of the Gulf labor market, which has resulted in massive waves of labor from neighboring countries. These large-scale influxes of migrant labor have complicated the linguistic, social and demographic makeup of virtually all of the Gulf states.

Theodoropoulou’s analysis brings together a diverse sample of individuals from varied social, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. In doing so, her analysis of the narratives of speakers from these varied backgrounds provides a view of the different forms of mobility made possible or constrained within Qatari society based on factors such as citizenship status or background. Theodoropoulou provides us with an interesting view of how stancetaking is employed, primarily by foreign laborers in Qatar as one means by which upward mobility can be articulated in comparing their lives in Qatar to their lives prior to their economic migration to the Gulf.

Tetreault’s (2015) recent work investigates the use of the Arabic politeness formula involving the insertion of the Arabic word *ḥašek* “hush” and the retention of this politeness formula in the French speech of Algerian teenagers living in France when interacting with members of their peer group. Tetreault finds that teens within this community use *ḥašek* as they engage in irreverent behavior, including downplaying potentially face-threatening actions. Tetreault argues that in making use of a specific Arabic formula, these North African teenagers draw on Arabic discursive norms, but reappropriate those norms to fulfill discursive needs specific to their adolescent peer group in France.

Tetreault highlights a case of how Arabic is used by North African migrants in predominantly French-speaking contexts. Lamrani and Angermeyer examine language contact and the co-existence of languages within North Africa itself, in relation to the socio-political consequences of the co-existence of Arabic, Tamazight and French in Morocco. Fatima Zahra Lamrani (2012) has carried out a detailed ethnography of court proceedings in Morocco. She shows how Tamazight speakers who are not bilingual are “disempowered” in the legal system because anyone from the audience can be chosen at random by the judge to translate for them.

The translators have no legal training and can hardly be expected to understand the stakes of the case for the defendant who is a stranger to them. She shows a great deal of tension between the judges and monolingual Amazigh defendants (see also Angermeyer 2009, 2014).

Katherine Hoffman (2008a: 725) has carried out a historical examination of language ideologies in French colonial native policy, the codification of “political, linguistic, and legal practices particular to different tribes and tribal sections” in Morocco. Her research on language and gender in Morocco focuses on Tamazight-speaking communities. She provides a crucial window into the effects of language contact in North Africa and the role of language in maintaining aspects of Amazigh identity in the face of serious pressure from Arabic and the dominance of the Arabic-speaking groups (Hoffman 2008b). On the whole, sociolinguists have not examined non-Arabic but long co-existing languages such as Tamazight, nor have they carried out research among ethnic and religious minorities such as Copts, Armenians and Kurds. Here, the main contribution comes from other social sciences. Sayahi (2011, 2014) has also provided insightful discussions of language contact taking place across North Africa and the relationship between contact and diglossia. Sayahi has situated lexical and structural changes in Arabic varieties spoken in North Africa within the broader context of diglossia to highlight the interplay between how language is used in speakers’ daily lives and classical understandings of Arabic diglossia and more recent discussions of widespread bilingualism in the region.

Adding to Sayahi’s discussion of diglossia, Daniëls’ (2018) analysis of how Arabic varieties came to take on labels (e.g., ‘*āmmīya* and *fuṣḥā*) stresses the connections between this process of naming and labeling varieties and the construction of diglossia as a concept rooted in deep-seated language ideologies. This recent work foregrounds how Arabic diglossia provides a window into understanding metalinguistic norms and ideologies about language use that exist in the Arab World, although not actually reflecting how language is used in speakers’ daily lives. This work adds to earlier discussions (see Caton 1991, Haeri 2000) which have stressed the distinction between ideology and practice in the Arabic-speaking world. This work shows the utility of the concept, even if its applicability has been tenuous from the perspective of many variationist sociolinguists, who have focused primarily on spoken varieties and the multiplicity of variation within and between them.

Arabic in the media

One of the most interesting contributions to understanding the multiple roles that media and language choices therein have played in shaping Egyptian nationalism and a national culture in late 19th- and early 20th-century Egypt is offered by historian Ziad Fahmy (2010, 2011). Fahmy explores early Egyptian nationalism by examining “previously neglected audiovisual colloquial Egyptian sources” (2010: 83). In Figure 17.1, taken from Fahmy’s article on media capitalism, we see the variety of sources that sociolinguists can use to give historical depth to their synchronic studies. As Fahmy argues, “Writing a history of modern Egypt without taking into account colloquial Egyptian sources at best provides only a partial understanding of Egyptian society” (86).

Fahmy points out that the study of nationalism in Egypt, as in most of the Arab World, has been dominated by the study of intellectuals and elites, neglecting sources in vernacular Arabic. Unfortunately, this trend has not changed markedly in recent years. Of the many interesting findings and insights of Fahmy’s work, the one that is perhaps most relevant to sociolinguists is the importance of non-print media relative to books, newspapers and the like. We should note, however, that even in print media, one can carry out useful historical work,

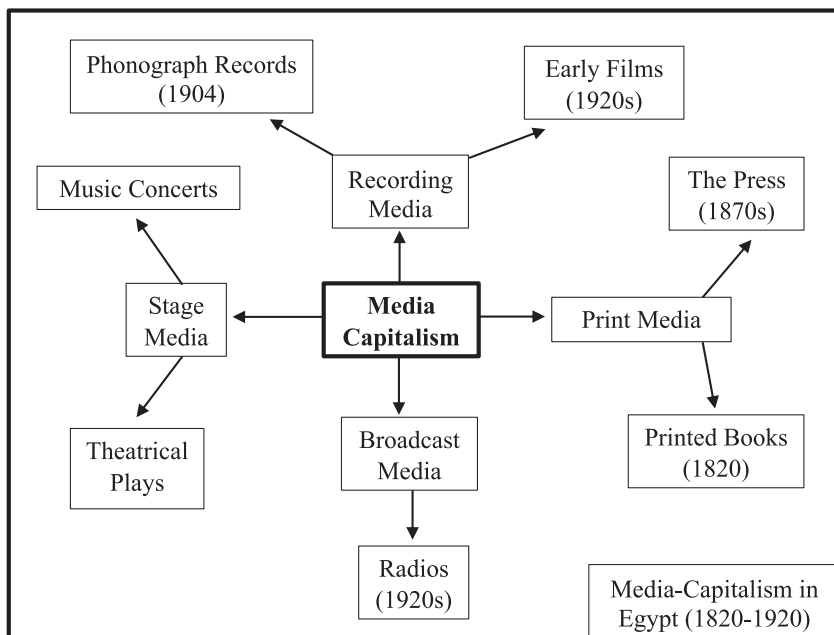


Figure 17.1 Useful Historical Sources for Sociolinguistic Research (reproduced from Fahmy 2010)

as demonstrated in the work of Haeri (2003a), who examined issues of *al-Ahram* since its first appearance up to the mid 1990s, in roughly five-year intervals, and found a great deal of debate and discussion on questions of language (see also den Heijer 2012; Doss 1995).

We have a number of fairly recent studies of the uses of varieties of Arabic on the radio by Van Mol (2003), and on television by Eid (2007) and Doss (2010). Van Mol is a book-length study of news broadcasts in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Algeria. The study is based on a corpus of 80,000 words from news broadcasts from each country, and on an additional “control corpus” of 80,000 words that has commentaries, reviews and sports. Van Mol focuses on the use of complementary particles, although it contains a wealth of information on and analysis of other morphosyntactic and lexical features as well. He finds that there is variation in the Standard Arabic of news broadcasts in the three countries on many levels: phonological, morphological and syntactic, though there are also shared standard forms. Eid (2007) is also a careful examination of the speech of two cultural figures being interviewed on a television program at the phonological, morphological and syntactic levels. She explores style, topic, voice (“the language that expresses the persona”) and projections of identity, among other factors. She finds that there is a great deal of “hybridity” as a “global feature of text and discourse” (410) and that while there is much similarity across these factors, the personalities are very different and hence one uses Standard Arabic far more while the other’s language is dominated by ‘ammiyya (the vernacular).

Doss (2010) examines the news program *Hal id-Dunya* (ḥāl id-dunyā), delivered in the vernacular on a satellite television station called OTV, established in 2006. As news programs have always been broadcast in Standard Arabic all over the Arab World, the choice of language here proved to be highly controversial. Doss offers a useful review of previous literature on non-print media Arabic. She found that news dispatches are taken from the Associated Press and then translated directly into vernacular Arabic. One of her most interesting observations

was the response to her questioning why there was only a voice-over (by both male and female broadcasters): “speakers would have felt and seemed awkward in reading the news in ‘ammiyya [vernacular/colloquial]. How was a speaker to dress, and what physical attitude would s/he have to use, while reading the news broadcast in colloquial Arabic?” (Doss 2010: 130).

An important area of recent anthropological research focuses on how language intersects with the spread of newer forms of media, particularly given the dramatic rise in popularity of pan-Arab television programs that are broadcast across the Arab World and feature individuals of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Schulthies (2014, 2015) has looked at how the strategies employed by producers on pan-Arab television programs to manage or constrain the linguistic diversity present in the speech of participants on these programs have changed from the early 2000s to the present day. At the same time, her work on heterogeneous ways of writing online Arabic based on comments posted on YouTube highlights varied language ideologies, including beliefs about the link between Arabic orthographic representations and a written standard (namely Modern Standard Arabic), along with media ideologies that allow for broader forms of diversity in contextual environments like chat conversations, or YouTube commentary.

The long-standing and dominant language ideology that elevates the classical language (and all its versions) and treats the vernaculars as inferior varieties has certainly been increasingly challenged in recent years in many countries in the Arab World. The decrease in the dominance of Classical Arabic is especially apparent in communication among users of social media (Abboud-Haggag 2010; Doss 2010; Samin 2010), which have resulted in the rise of the written use of Arabic dialects across various media platforms.

Before concluding this section, we note briefly that painstaking empirical investigations and the reading and acknowledgement of work that has been done in the past are two essential hallmarks of good scholarship. We find it unfortunate that Arabic sociolinguistics has been treated by some as the occasion to dismiss or negate other scholars’ work without in fact reading them, engaging with what they have to say, and building upon their insights. In this vein, Bassiouney (2014) and Suleiman (2013) have offered a largely dismissive view of variationist approaches to Arabic sociolinguistics. Both publications have been reviewed elsewhere (Cotter 2016c; Holes 2015; Horesh 2016), but it is important to highlight the fact that while other studies within sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (e.g., Eckert 2018) have engaged productively with quantitative research, the approaches taken by Bassiouney and Suleiman have largely denied the achievements of variationist approaches outright without addressing their content in a scholarly manner. We believe that cross-disciplinary engagement may ultimately provide one of the best opportunities for new forms of theoretical or methodological advancement in the study of Arabic and from that perspective should be welcomed.

Politics, ideology and education

In all Arab states, citizenship is defined, in part, on the basis of “the Arabic Language” along with Islam as the national religion and *shari‘a* as the basis of law. This tri-partite definition has remained intact in the last constitution written in Egypt *after* the revolution. The question was posed in Haeri (2003b) about the meaning and ramifications of defining citizenship on the basis of a language that is no one’s mother tongue. As vernacular forms of Arabic are not referred to with this term unless one is opposing “Arabic” to foreign languages such as English, that term generally refers to *al-luġa al-‘arabiyya al-fuṣṣa*. Yet, as was argued in Haeri (2003a), the state has been using the multiple ambiguities of this term for its own purposes. Most notably, the term can refer to that kind of “Arabic” that is associated with Islam, the Qur’an and Islamic civilization, and simultaneously, it can refer to the “secularized” and

“modernized” versions of “Arabic” that are to be found in print media such as newspapers and contemporary literature. Among the many cultural and political dilemmas posed by the complexity of the language situation in the Arab World is the fact that unless the sacred status of Classical Arabic is given up, the right to change it and “modernize” it will always remain precarious. Increasingly in the last few decades, vernacular forms of Arabic, in particular in a country like Egypt where its national standard is also a form of lingua franca in the Arab World, are being used not just in speech but also in publications as well as online writing. In effect, this usage is almost bypassing the seemingly irresolvable dilemmas with respect to profoundly entrenched ideologies guarding Classical Arabic.

Educational institutions appear to ignore this trend. Insofar as we can tell from available literature, little has changed in the language of textbooks or in language ideology. To be able to delve into the many important aspects of education, we need basic ethnographic studies of educational institutions, and especially longitudinal studies of classrooms, to better understand what happens over time to the linguistic competencies of pupils, and how beyond school years, they are able (or not) to use and perhaps supplement the competencies they have acquired. As Herrera and Torres put it in their volume *Cultures of Arab schooling: Critical ethnographies from Egypt* (2006: 1): “Despite the centrality of formal education to Arab societies, little is known empirically about learning processes, the cultural, political and social formation of individuals who pass through the education system, and the everyday life of schools.” To our knowledge, exactly why particular educational policies are followed and what the long-term vision is as reflected, for example, in the choice of language variety and topic in textbooks have not been studied (but see Haeri 2009).

At the same time, public educational institutions often do not allow methodic observation by social scientists, hence there is a problem of access. As Ahmad Youssef Saad explains in his brief classroom ethnography in a popular neighborhood in Cairo, “ethnography is not customary in Egyptian schools” (Saad 2006:89). One of his observations is quite notable with respect to choice of language variety and topic. In a mandatory class called “library,” where students were obliged to sit and read, their teacher chose *Sahih al-Bukhari* (ṣaḥīḥ al-buxārī):² “When I asked the teacher if his choice was based on student interest, his reply was that he was the one who made decisions, adding that the name Bukhari was mentioned in their Arabic readers and Islamic religion textbooks” (104). There is certainly nothing wrong with reading this very important text, but one wonders, among other things, whether the students are so proficient in that variety of Classical Arabic as to be able to read it and follow it. Farag (2006) asked a number of public school teachers about state textbooks in Egypt: “When it comes to the curriculum, teachers have little flexibility and are obliged to teach the official textbooks which they describe as ‘uninspiring’, ‘of low quality’, and ‘not interesting’” (Farag 2006: 124). One wishes for studies where those responsible for such texts were interviewed to find out more about their ideas and the goals they are trying to achieve. Haeri (2009: 420) posed the question, without offering an answer: who is the pupil imagined to be in public schools, and what kind of citizen do the curricula envision her to become as an adult? It is difficult to answer this question without delving both historically and ethnographically into various aspects of public education in the past century, including contents of textbooks, the particularities of the language varieties they used (if more than one), the ideologies of the kinds of people tasked with writing textbooks and other similar questions.

Beyond Egypt, studies of education with many different foci have been published. Boutier (2016) conducted two years of ethnographic fieldwork between 2007–2009 in public schools in Rabat, Morocco. Her book, entitled *Learning in Morocco: Language politics and the abandoned educational dream*, traces the consequences of state policies to Arabize the educational

curriculum after independence from France in 1956 (see also Boutieri 2013). Boutieri was in fact given formal permission to carry out her fieldwork. Facing a series of street protests from the beginning of her fieldwork, she began asking students in their teens what the problems they were facing were. A main slogan in the protests was “work, dignity, social justice” [*ʕuġl, karāma, ‘adāla ijtimā’iyya*]. Boutieri finds that “while Arabic literacy inside the Moroccan public school has provided the means for religious debate, the lack of resources and efforts for harmonization of school and the job market continues to exclude arabophone graduates from many domains of academic and professional engagement” (Boutieri 2013: 373). She notes that the nationalist/Islamist project of Arabization, implemented half-heartedly and ambivalently, has not succeeded in raising literacy rates and offering valued skills in the job market, despite two large educational grants from the World Bank.

A substantial portion of work on education in recent years has focused on Arabic within the Israeli educational system. Israel, and the complex Hebrew-dominant bureaucracy that forms the backbone of the Arabic language experience inside Israel, has served as a major site of research within this context. Beckerman (2003) has investigated Arabic in ceremonial events held in coeducational contexts with both Palestinian and Israeli students. More recently, Yemini & Bar-Netz (2015) looked at the use of both Arabic and French within the Israeli educational system. They argue that the choice of studying either French or Arabic results in an increase in cultural and cosmopolitan capital. The choice of studying these languages serves pragmatic purposes as well, with parents considering proficiency in Arabic to be an economic resource on the job market, given how important the language is throughout the Middle East, along with its potential import as part of Israel’s compulsory military service (see also Mendel 2014). Yet for Egypt, as it was argued in Haeri 1997, knowledge of Classical Arabic is not a requirement for many of the highest-paying jobs in the more modern sectors of the economy such as banking, finance, technology and even research, where English and other European languages dominate. Obtaining jobs in state bureaucracies, however, does require certain levels of proficiency in Classical Arabic.

Inmaculada (2010) looks at the political side of Arabic language education for Moroccan immigrant children living in the diaspora in Spain. Inmaculada examines Arabic language education within the context of Arabic classes in a Spanish public school and in a community mosque. Looking at education within these two contexts allows Inmaculada to highlight differing practices utilized by educators across these contexts. Specifically, Inmaculada notes how within the secularized context of the school system, the use of Arabic provides access to literacy and education while maintaining forms of cultural authenticity and identity. Simultaneously, the data provided in Inmaculada’s work from religious contexts like the mosque are focused more heavily on an ideological and religious link between Arabic and Islamic practices or beliefs. Within the United States, Zakharia (2016) has looked at bilingual Arabic-English communication outside of the Arabic-speaking world. Zakharia situates education within the broader context of conflict and migration, highlighting how it has become embedded into larger identity projects for bilingual Arabic speakers in the United States, allowing them to better negotiate attachments to multiple political and historical origins.

Hawker’s (2013) analysis of Hebrew borrowings into Palestinian Arabic in three refugee camps in the West Bank represents an interesting contribution because it draws not only on principles of sociolinguistic theory, but also systemic functional linguistics and discourse analysis. Hawker’s focus on larger ideological issues in Palestinian society and their relationship to the use of Hebrew makes it possible to see more clearly some of the social outcomes of language contact in an environment as socio-politically charged as the Israel-Palestine conflict. In addition, Hawker also provides a discussion of the different ways in which contact between

Arabic and Hebrew takes place in the context of these three West Bank camps. Notable in this respect is the influence of the Israeli military in the West Bank and Palestinian labor inside of Israel, along with Palestinian consumption of Israeli products and access to Israeli state services as significant motivating factors for language contact.

In recent years, a number of works have examined issues of language ideologies and the connections between ideology, nationalism and politics. Atiq Hachimi (2012, 2013) has investigated the relationship between language ideologies and manifestations of globalization such as urbanization and the spread of pan-Arab media outlets across the Arab World, with a particular emphasis on the Maghreb and in particular Morocco. In her 2013 study, she examines the Maghreb/Mashreq language ideology based on a detailed analysis of a reality/talent television show broadcast by a pan-Arab satellite channel, and on “lighthearted” clips posted on YouTube. She argues that the “valorization” of Mashreqi varieties manifests itself in three ways: “Maghreb speakers bear the ‘communicative burden,’” “Maghreb varieties are objects of mockery” and “Mashreq varieties are objects of adulation” (Hachimi 2013: 270). As she points out, studies of language ideology in the Arab World have mostly concentrated on the vernacular/Classical dimension, but of course there are co-existing and related ideologies that bear empirical examination.

In a series of articles, Naima Boussofara addresses questions of ideology as traced and analyzed in political speeches and communiqués (2006, 2011). In one essay, she takes a communiqué [*bayān*] that was delivered in 1987 by Ben Ali to announce the deposing of President Bourghiba’s 30-year reign and, using the concept of text regulation, shows how a corrector changes the text prepared by Ben Ali, shuffling word order, changing lexical items, lengthening phrases and so on: “Ben Ali’s attempt to insert a different reading of the history of the national movement” through his own linguistic manipulations was deemed inappropriate by the correctors (Boussofara, 2006: 341). His “new, discordant voice . . . was edited to carry the then-Prime Minister’s public voice rather than his own opinion”. Taking a text as a site of ideology is investigated in Haeri (2003a), where she examines texts that are corrected by Egyptian *muṣaḥḥiḥīn* who have different language ideologies. She calls such practices of correction “text regulation,” showing how Classical Arabic bestows more authority on the language and the corrector than the author even if the latter may enjoy a high political or literary status. Written documents are regulated from the moment they are handed over by an author to publishers, going through corrections, translations, copyediting and so on. They are rarely the result of a single author’s work.

The study of poetry in dialectology and anthropology

Beyond variationist studies that generally do not examine literary sources, we should briefly note a growing body of work on poetry in dialectology and anthropology. We have chosen to focus on poetry as most other anthropological studies that have appeared recently do not focus on linguistic matters. It may be that the study of poetry in its historical, social and cultural contexts can offer a distinct set of possibilities for the study of Arabic. After all, it is one of the most important if not the most important genre (closely linked to songs) in the Arab World.

Following Abu-Lughod (1986) and Caton’s (1990) early accounts of oral poetic production in the Arab World and its centrality to social life and community, an interest in oral art forms has endured in more recent anthropological work on Arabic. This interest includes Hirschkind’s influential work on audiocassette recordings which emphasizes “ethical listening” (rather than production), as well as Miller’s (2005, 2007) examination of audiocassette poetry in Yemen.

More recently, Deubel (2010) has investigated the significance of poetry to social memory and community identity in Sahrawi communities of North Africa, while Holes & Abu Athera (2009, 2011) examine traditional Nabati poetry as a form of social commentary and reflection. Within the Levant, Furani (2012) has provided an important ethnographic account of Palestinian poetry, primarily written as opposed to spoken, which has highlighted the perspectives, experiences and viewpoints of poets from across the West Bank, Gaza and in the Palestinian diaspora. Although focusing on written, as opposed to oral, poetic production, Furani's work and its ethnographic focus represent a significant addition to the long history of Palestinian poetry and its relationship to themes of justice, identity and loss.

Conclusion and directions for research

Variationist studies of Arabic have become a part of mainstream sociolinguistics, in particular, in the United States and the United Kingdom. Arabic sociolinguistics also appears to be moving toward a more holistic integration of sociolinguistics with description and documentation of understudied Arabic varieties. One of the best results of the engagement with variationist work on the part of linguists who work on Arabic is the commitment to empirical research and the patient building of findings based on relevant previous investigations. We should note that by the time variationist studies came around in the 1960s in New York, English was already one of the best studied languages in the world. Although Arabic dialectology and sociolinguistics provide a wealth of material, there are areas where our knowledge of this language remain quite limited. On the one hand, we have very few studies of the social history of Arabic in any given historical period or location: to our knowledge, the 1969 study by Anwar Chejne has not been followed up in the same scope. On the other hand, a number of basic questions with regard to any particular Arabic-speaking community remain unasked, let alone answered. Using Monaghan's (2011) valuable review of linguistic anthropology and its recent developments, we note that we have no studies that examine "speech events" in Arabic-speaking communities, following Hymes' original 1974 suggestion to examine such events. For any given speech community or group (stratified by class, gender, education, urban/rural and/or other markers), what are the particular speech events that speakers routinely engage in, recognize and name? What ideas of language use govern such speech events? What kinds of genres of speaking are there in the communities that we study?

As we noted above, while a number of insightful educational ethnographies have been carried out across the Arab World, there is still not a great deal on literacy practices – first the question of how literacy is defined (perhaps in multiple ways), and then what kinds of practices educational institutions foster (or not) and how are these in turn followed (or not) by those who are being taught. What has happened to the long-standing effort to create "modernized" versions of Classical Arabic within the educational curricula? Are these varieties reflected in the texts and taught to students?

One area that has remained underdeveloped within Arabic sociolinguistics is engaging with the theoretical and methodological tools of Third Wave sociolinguistics, although we do see conference presentations (e.g., Al-Shihry 2015) that suggest that perhaps the field is moving in that direction. However, there may in fact not be any reason why this development must be taken up in Arabic sociolinguistics. What is perhaps most necessary is for Arabic sociolinguists to think seriously about the ways that their work can contribute to developing sociolinguistic theory. Many of the communities in which Arabic sociolinguists work are living through increasing authoritarianism, curtailment of freedoms, daily violence and mass displacement that have uprooted millions of people. How do these conditions map onto the dynamics for

language variation and change? If language is one of the primary means by which individuals experience the world, how are ways of speaking being affected by these factors? How these questions may be ultimately answered remains unclear. They may move Arabic sociolinguistics away from the now heavily quantitative bent of variationist sociolinguistics. The result may be that Arabic sociolinguistics must, by necessity, drift closer to related disciplines such as anthropology, a field which has better dealt with and investigated some of the forces in question. Both variationist and non-variationist approaches are forms of sociolinguistics that contribute to different ways of understanding the dynamics of languages and the societies in which they are used. We look forward to the continuation of empirical studies that increasingly expand their horizons for research.

Notes

- 1 In a number of recent doctoral theses, we see attempts at integrating sociolinguistic studies with dialectological and descriptive ones (e.g., Al Essa 2008, Al-Ghamdi 2014, Al-Hawamdeh 2016, Al-Qahtani 2015). These works include dialectal descriptions as a key component of the sociolinguistic enterprise. In doing so, recent variationist treatments of understudied Arabic varieties nudge the two subdisciplines of Arabic linguistics ever-so-slightly closer together.
- 2 Sahih al-Bukhari is one of the most authoritative sources of Hadith (collections of the prophet Muhammad's sayings) among Muslims that was written in the ninth century.

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