

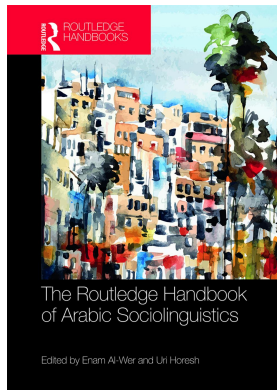
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FROM AN MSA-ONLY TO A FULLY INTEGRATED ARABIC FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

Munther Younes and Elizabeth Huntley

Arabic language instruction: 40 years with little change

In 1971, Peter Abboud published an article under the title “State of the Art IX: Arabic Language Instruction” (Abboud 1971). In the article, Abboud raises a number of issues that are as relevant today as almost a half century earlier. He writes (*ibid.*: 3):

This dichotomy between colloquial and literary raises fundamental questions for an Arabic language program. Which form of the language is to be taught? If both, should they be taught as separate and unrelated? Since there is general agreement that they should not normally be taken simultaneously, how is the proficiency in one form to be maintained while the student is concentrating on the other? Which is to be taught first, MSA¹ or a colloquial? Which dialect is to be taught? Should the student be expected to learn more than one dialect?

The solution that seems to have been widely accepted at the time was to “begin with MSA and only later, if at all, offer a colloquial” (*ibid.*: 4).

The situation does not seem to have changed significantly in the following four decades. In her book *Teaching and Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language*, Ryding (2013: 4) writes: “Of all the key issues in Arabic as a foreign language instruction, therefore, the most salient and defining one is *what* to teach. Which forms of the language – spoken or written – meet the goals of language instruction in a particular school, institute, or department?” She goes on to state that “MSA dominates as the instructional medium and instructional goal of most Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) programs” (*ibid.*: 5).

Furthermore, according to a survey of 209 Arabic college teachers in the United States, which is close to 50% of the Arabic teacher population, conducted by Abdalla & Al-Batal (2011–2012: 16), 45% of respondents “teach in programs that provide instruction in MSA without offering any dialect classes, whereas 34.5% indicated that their programs offer dialect classes and 20.4% said that these courses are offered sometimes.” Within programs that offer separate colloquial classes, 75.1% of the teachers reported that their programs require a prerequisite of MSA before taking a colloquial course.

The absence of significant change in this 40-year period is surprising. Considering the drastic changes in the Arabic student population – both in terms of numbers and personal goals – and the significant advances in foreign language pedagogy, these repeated calls for alternative methodologies have fallen on deaf ears. The traditional practice of teaching MSA followed by a dialect, or strictly only teaching MSA, still dominates the landscape of AFL instruction in the United States and abroad.

Changing student goals, stagnant methodology

The AFL curriculum traditionally sought to teach the language skills necessary to read literature or translate historical texts. For such narrowly academic purposes, an MSA-only curriculum based on reading comprehension and translation sufficed. However, as the demand for Arabic has exploded, students' goals for studying Arabic in the past four decades have expanded far beyond ivory tower tasks. A number of studies have shown that the majority of students in Arabic programs at American universities and colleges take Arabic classes not simply to access academic materials, but to interact with Arabs or travel to the Arab World (Belnap 1987, 2006; Husseinali 2006; Palmer 2007). For this majority, the traditional practice of introducing MSA only or introducing it at the lower levels of instruction has proved to be inadequate.

One of the first scholars to point out some of the problems of this traditional, MSA-dominated approach was Dilworth Parkinson, who wrote (Parkinson 1985: 11):

[T]hey (students who developed some speaking ability in MSA) have no trouble telling you about the visit of the foreign minister of Morocco to Libya, but when it comes to reserving a hotel room, or buying a train ticket or a sack of oranges they are totally lost.

Parkinson adds (*ibid.*: 26) “what is the point of learning to ask directions of a policeman, when we know from experience that if a student did ask directions of a policeman in Standard Arabic (MSA) either the policeman would not understand the question or the student would not understand the answer?” Essentially, AFL students who want to go abroad are learning a language which will not help them accomplish the very tasks essential to functioning in daily life once they get there. One need not be a highly trained linguist to realize how little sense this makes.

The deep incongruity between student goals and AFL methodologies is well-known but little discussed. Karin Ryding diagnoses this issue as “Reverse Privileging,” in which the teaching of formal, academic discourse strategies are privileged over everyday vernacular communicative skills (Ryding 2006, 2013).² Not only does Reverse Privileging ignore student goals, but, as Ryding suggests, it is, in part, responsible for our inability to graduate AFL students who have reached the superior and distinguished levels of communicative competence. She states that,

This reverse privileging is a central reason why the Arabic field faces complex issues in defining proficiency skill levels and how to assess them, and why Arabic students still may get discouraged early on in their coursework because they lack the tools of primary discourse that would allow them to begin to interact with Arab peers and friends on an informal level . . . The more advanced a student becomes in literary

or theoretical Arabic studies, the more he or she experiences a disjuncture between his or her classroom achievement and the lack of ability to deal with the most basic quotidian matters.

(*Ryding 2006: 16*)

Among other flaws of the traditional approach are the absence of the opportunity for meaningful reinforcement (Williams 1990 :46, Younes 2015: 29) and the violation of the basic principles of proficiency in foreign language pedagogy where “the colloquial is the variety used to perform all functions related to the ACTFL (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Novice and Intermediate levels” (Abdalla & Al-Batal 2011–2012: 16). (See also Wilmsen 2006: 130). One wonders about the wisdom of teaching students to use *Fuṣḥā* forms like ذَهَبْتُ, MSA for ‘I went,’ and ظَنَنْتُمَا, MSA for ‘you-DUAL reckoned’) for conversation, while every Arabic teacher and program director knows that no Arab uses such forms for this purpose.

The failings of the traditional approach have been highlighted by the actual experiences of students who have traveled to the Arab World on study-abroad programs. Despite years of investment in their language studies, time and time again students of MSA report that they are seriously ill-equipped to function in Arabic once abroad. One student in Egypt provided the following anecdote:

I was pretty confident with my Arabic abilities. I mean, I was top of my language class and I had a wide repertoire – like basic greetings, vocabulary to discuss the current nuclear situation in Iran, and I could tell you all about famous Arabs in history. That should have been a good start at least, right? Wrong. I was horrified when I couldn’t communicate with the cleaning ladies to tell them that Wednesday mornings worked best for them to change my sheets.

(*Trentman 2012: 171*)

This student’s experience is one of many illustrating how the traditional, MSA-only or MSA-first methods fail to prepare language learners to deal effectively with the realities of the Arabic sociolinguistic situation. Due to lack of preparation in *‘Ammiyya* at the early stages of instruction, high-achieving students of Arabic fail to communicate successfully with native speakers (Shiri 2013). Some authors report that in addition to this failure, the use of MSA for basic communication often leads to awkwardness and a sense of humiliation for students (Abd-el-Jawad 1987: 360; Palmer 2007: 112; Shiri 2013: 574–575).

Such negative encounters early on can color the entire study-abroad experience. Is it any wonder that students, after discovering that their Arabic skills are virtually useless for everyday survival in the Arab World, give up on pursuing anything beyond the intermediate and advanced levels of communicative competence?

Communities of practice and realities of experience

Merely sending students to the Arab World does not guarantee that they will be able to improve their Arabic. As Norton-Peirce demonstrated, both the ability and the opportunity for students to practice and perform their foreign language skills in the target culture, or the (imagined) “community of practice,” is determined by a complex weaving of linguistic and social factors that are often beyond their own control (Norton Peirce 1995). Norton-Peirce called upon instructors to not simply teach forms, but to furthermore train students in the social dynamics and unspoken codes of speech interactions. Equipped with this knowledge, she argued that

students would be better able to seek out their own opportunities for practice (Norton Peirce 1995: 26). Although she was addressing teachers of English as a foreign language, her call is equally suited to teachers of Arabic. Without an awareness of how and when *Fuṣḥā* and *‘Āmmiyya* are used, students will be poorly equipped to read the signals and connotations of each register as understood by native speakers. This is neatly illustrated by the following study abroad student’s experience in Egypt:

When I first got here, and I tried to use Modern Standard [i.e. *Fuṣḥā*] to speak to people, you kind of get odd reactions, like they don’t really know what you’re staying [sic] . . . they don’t respond in a way that encourages you to use it [Arabic] so it made me feel really uncomfortable when I realized I wasn’t able to communicate very well, just because I started speaking with something they aren’t used to hearing on a daily basis.

(Trentman 2012: 173)

It is apparent from this student’s comments that, prior to going to the Arab World, she was unaware of how and when to use *Fuṣḥā* and *‘Āmmiyya*, as well as unaware of what the usage connotations of both are in a given situation. Oblivious that her usage of *Fuṣḥā* for informal interactions violated the unspoken social codes of speech, she was unwittingly ending any conversation before it had even begun. Why was she, or any student of Arabic for that matter, solely taught *Fuṣḥā* to the exclusion of all forms that are actually used in conversational Arabic?

What many native-speaker teachers of Arabic avoid acknowledging is that students do not perceive these botched attempts at communication as they do equivalent mistakes in their home classroom. Indeed, the degree of shock and humiliation reported by study-abroad students reveals just how deeply such systematic failures are felt. Here again, the concept of “communities of practice” sheds light on why learners internalize these disappointments so strongly. As Emma Trentman illustrated, many students who choose to travel to the Arab World see themselves as dedicated language learners whose personal and professional goals require high levels of language fluency (Trentman 2012). For them, studying abroad is “a step towards imagined future selves participating in careers requiring competency in Arabic and an understanding of the Middle East” (Trentman 2012: 89). The ability to participate in daily life in the Arab World is thus an important milestone on their future professional paths and, to a great extent, to their future selves as successful intercultural navigators. In simpler terms, students invest a lot of time into language study with the expectation that their classroom communication skills will allow them to build relationships once they travel to the Arab World. Successful participation in these imagined communities both validates and verifies for students that they will have achieved what it took to embark on their future lives.

Students are learning foreign languages not merely to survive, but, as demonstrated above, to gain meaningful access to the “community of practice” of native speakers who use Arabic as their primary means of communication. Unfortunately, the imagined relationships that students anticipate often do not materialize once abroad. As Ryding suggested above, this is due to the lack of primary discourse skills in most Arabic foreign language curricula. While Ryding’s analysis is correct, it fails to explain why the lack of these skills leads to such high rates of attrition and repeated stories of shock and humiliation by study-abroad students. Most language teachers accept that students experience a surface-level shock of not being able to perform basic language functions. What is harder for them to grasp is that such systematic failures lead to a secondary shock to the learner’s self-confidence, as illustrated by

the student's experience quoted above (Trentman 2012: 171). For many students of Arabic, their achievements in the classroom were a source of pride and a confidence-booster. To have those hard-won skills suddenly demoted, if not entirely negated, upon actually traveling to the Arab World and attempting to communicate with native speakers, is extremely jarring. Lastly, once confronted with the reality that their Arabic skills will not allow them to participate in the "community of practice," of native speakers, students call into question the utility of their studies and whether or not it is worth continuing. The inability to participate in daily life once abroad causes students to question whether or not the rest of their Arabic-related goals are achievable. Trentman, in analyzing Arabic Foreign Language students at the American University of Cairo, summarizes the situation as follows:

There was often a mismatch between the reality of their study abroad experience and their imagined community of study abroad to the Middle East as a result of the difficulties they encountered in gaining access to Egyptians and using Arabic and thus performing the identities of cross-cultural mediator and dedicated language learner necessary to access their imagined community. Faced with this mismatch, some students became less invested in their sojourn abroad as a language learning context, and engaged in behavior detrimental to their language learning such as pursuing friendships in English, stopping Arabic classes, or changing their majors from Arabic.

(cited in Trentman 2012: 137–138)

While there are many factors beyond control that determine opportunities for language practice, it seems clear that the traditional method of avoiding or delaying *'Āmmiyya* seems to be consistently setting students up for failure. This failure is not limited to the duration of study abroad, but has repercussions for how students perceive themselves, their abilities, and their own opportunities for the future. Lastly, it strongly impacts whether or not students continue to study Arabic, or give it up in pursuit of seemingly more attainable goals.

Calls for change

As a result of the problems resulting from this traditional practice, a number of publications have appeared calling for an alternative approach to Arabic instruction, one that does not follow the standard model of *Fuṣḥā* exclusively or *Fuṣḥā* first with a dialect later. One of the first calls to introduce *'Āmmiyya* before *Fuṣḥā* came in a short paper by Michel Nicola (Nicola 1990). He advocates starting "with Educated Spoken Arabic, then proceed[ing] with the written language while using ESA for speaking all the time" (ibid.: 42).

Wilmsen (2006: 134) advocates an Arabic program in which "the default should be to begin with the vernacular, ideally two full years, with the instruction in the formal written code (*Fuṣḥā*) beginning to be worked into the curriculum at the start of the second year."

Al-Batal (1992: 298–302) proposes what he calls "a modification of the simultaneous approach," one which:

should reflect in the classroom the diglossic situation . . . as it exists in the Arab world today. It should introduce MSA as a variety that is mainly written but that is also spoken in a multitude of situations. It should also introduce an Arabic dialect as a variety that is used mainly for daily life communications but also as a vehicle for forms of literary expression.

(ibid.: 298)

Al-Batal (ibid.) adds, “The proposed approach does not treat these varieties of Arabic (*Fuṣḥā* and *‘Āmmiyya*) as discrete and separate entities . . . but as components of one integrated linguistic system.” Despite the new and different student goals, despite the negative experiences of students in study-abroad programs and despite the calls for change, the old pattern of *Fuṣḥā* exclusively or *Fuṣḥā* first with a dialect later persists. Why?

Some of the reasons typically given are the disagreement over which colloquial variety to teach, fear of confusing students if the two varieties are offered simultaneously or the absence of suitable instructional materials in *‘Āmmiyya* and the relative abundance of *Fuṣḥā* materials. We believe that the real problem is deeper than that: it is the result of misconceptions and misguided attitudes towards *‘Āmmiyya* among Arabic teachers and program directors, especially when these are native speakers of Arabic. In the following paragraphs we will discuss these misconceptions and misguided attitudes and show how a fully integrated approach to instruction that truly reflects the Arabic sociolinguistic realities and does not leave room for privileging one Arabic variety over another is the only way to achieve equal treatment of both. Such equal treatment is the key to preparing the foreign language learner to deal successfully with the realities of Arabic as they will live it abroad.

Misconceptions and misguided attitudes

The misconceptions range from the naïve to the irrational. Among the misconceptions that result in negative attitudes towards *‘Āmmiyya* is that it is a danger to Arab unity. At the extreme end of these attitudes is the naïve and unfounded belief that the dialects are promoted by colonial powers to weaken the Arab nation (Suleiman 2004: Chapter 3). One often hears these views expressed openly at professional gatherings such as the Middle East Studies Association meetings and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages conventions. For a discussion of these attitudes and a response, the reader is referred to Younes (2015: Chapter 3).

The sources of misconceptions and negative attitudes towards *‘Āmmiyya* are manifold. Native-speaker teachers of Arabic often fail to see the difference between the way it is learned and taught as a first language and the way it is learned and taught as a second or foreign language. When Arab schoolchildren start learning Arabic, they have already mastered a colloquial dialect. Learning Arabic to them means learning to read and write *Fuṣḥā* and to master its grammar, particularly those aspects not found in *‘Āmmiyya*, such as *‘i‘rāb* (the case and mood system). In fact, many Arabs will argue, incorrectly, that *‘Āmmiyya* has no grammar because they do not study it in school.³ The *‘Āmmiyya* component is there, in the spontaneous conversations, discussions and explanations, but it is invisible in the school’s Arabic curriculum and never constitutes a formal part of it. Consequently, it is easy for teachers trained in the Arabic school system and in university Arabic departments, in which *‘Āmmiyya* is also invisible, to overlook the importance of including it in the Arabic as foreign language curriculum. It is not surprising if those teachers did not have realistic views on the relevance of the *‘Āmmiyya* component in an Arabic as a foreign language program.

This is not to say that all native-speaker teachers of Arabic as a foreign language fail to recognize the grammatical components of the dialects, nor that misinformation is the sole purpose for avoiding the teaching of *‘Āmmiyya*. Many others argue for the perceived cultural superiority and sophistication of *Fuṣḥā* over the dialects. One instructor asserted that *‘Āmmiyya* “is not viewed as a ‘scholarly medium’ . . . of scholarship or literature. . . [so] academia is not the place for it” (Hashem-Aramouni 2011: 91).⁴ This bias is implicit even in the way we discuss the nature of the Arabic language: the ‘high’ registers are more *Fuṣḥā*-like, and one descends (*yanzil*) to lower his level to *‘Āmmiyya*. The attitudes of these instructors often filter through

to their students, affecting their own choice of study and pursuit of opportunities beyond the classroom. Students learn that they should focus their efforts on the language of scholarship and not worry about speaking ‘street slang.’

Ryding (2013: 9) refers to one of these views as “the acquisition fallacy,” i.e. “that spoken or vernacular Arabic is easy to acquire once a student is in an Arab country, and that it is not a complex or demanding linguistic task.” Some Arabic teachers argue that the language taught should reflect the language that students hear on the streets. Thus, they conclude, ‘*Āmmiyya* should only be taught once students are abroad and living in such an environment. The bizarre converse of this argument would state that *Fuṣḥā* should be taught when in America, although neither in America, nor in any other country in the world, does one find *Fuṣḥā* spoken in the streets. Such logic is flawed and places personal politics above student needs.

Ideology and reality

The negative attitudes towards ‘*Āmmiyya* or the failure to see its relevance to the foreign learner result in the routine privileging of *Fuṣḥā* over ‘*Āmmiyya* in all aspects of Arabic instruction. This privileging ranges from complete exclusion of ‘*Āmmiyya*, to introducing it for a limited number of hours after *Fuṣḥā*, or introducing it simultaneously in a separate track as a result of pressure to better meet student needs. The introduction of ‘*Āmmiyya* is often done grudgingly and without the type of commitment given to *Fuṣḥā*.

When resources are limited, or when there is pressure to eliminate one variety from the Arabic curriculum, the obvious variety to be sacrificed is ‘*Āmmiyya*. As an illustration, a common practice among many Arabic teachers using *al-Kitaab* (Brustad, Al-Batal, Al-Tonsi, various editions), the most widely used Arabic textbook, which includes a colloquial component, is to ignore that component and teach only the *Fuṣḥā* part, citing pressures of time as an excuse. In terms of resources and the setting of priorities, *Fuṣḥā* takes absolute precedence.

Some programs choose to offer *Fuṣḥā* and ‘*Āmmiyya* in two separate tracks. While it is theoretically possible to allocate resources equitably between the two tracks, in reality the strong bias in favor of *Fuṣḥā* means that less time, effort, and emphasis is put into the ‘*Āmmiyya* track. Likewise, it places unreasonable requirements on the AFL student, who must now pay twice as much in course fees and materials, as well as committing double the amount of time to learning one language. This is a sure way to increase attrition rates among students, further reducing our ability to produce distinguished and superior-level Arabic speakers.

Furthermore, separating the two registers completely creates a false dichotomy between them. In reality, native speakers constantly switch back and forth between *Fuṣḥā* and ‘*Āmmiyya*. These speakers watch the news on TV in *Fuṣḥā* and discuss it with their family and friends in ‘*Āmmiyya*. A conversation between a traveler and a passport employee at an airport takes place in ‘*Āmmiyya*, but writing an entry in a diary describing that experience generally requires *Fuṣḥā*. A university professor writes their lecture in *Fuṣḥā* but delivers it in ‘*Āmmiyya* (Badawi 1973: 150). In reality, neither side of this language system is sufficient without the other, and to artificially separate them is to knowingly distort the realities of the Arabic language for students.

Integration: an effective way to end the privileging of one Arabic variety over another

In the following paragraphs we will demonstrate how a fully integrated approach (IA) to Arabic instruction may be the only effective way to end the privileging of *Fuṣḥā* in the Arabic

curriculum while helping to prepare students to deal more effectively with the realities of the Arabic sociolinguistic situation. The key features of the IA are discussed in detail in Younes (2015, Chapter 4) and Younes (2018). Here we will focus on those aspects that in our view are directly related to the privileging phenomenon.

Arabic as a unified system of communication

The basic philosophy of the IA is that the AFL classroom and instructional materials should be a true reflection of the Arabic sociolinguistic situation: native speakers of Arabic use *‘Āmmiyya* for ordinary conversation and *Fuṣḥā* for reading, writing and scripted speech (Younes 1990, 1995, 2006, 2015, 2018). Although they are exposed to *‘Āmmiyya* as a first language, throughout school, elements of *Fuṣḥā* are integrated into the educated Arabic speaker’s linguistic repertoire such that the transition from one variety to the other is generally spontaneous and effortless. These speakers treat the two varieties of the language as two interconnected components of one communication system. This makes sense, given that *‘Āmmiyya* and *Fuṣḥā* share most of their vocabulary and grammatical structures, to the point where it is often impossible to tell whether a certain word or a grammar rule belongs to one or the other of the two varieties. Think of words like *sayyāra* ‘car,’ *ṭālib* ‘student,’ *bint* ‘girl,’ *walad* ‘boy,’ *jāmi‘a* ‘university,’ *muhandis* ‘engineer,’ *tuffāḥ* ‘apples’ and thousands of other words, as well as structures like the *iḍāfa* ‘construct state’ construction, possession and pluralization.⁵

It should be emphasized that the difference between the two types of varieties of Arabic, particularly as used by educated native speakers, is radically different from that between two relatively closely related languages like Spanish and French.⁶ While in the latter case similarities and correspondences abound between them, enough phonological, morphological and syntactic differences set them apart as two different languages which are not mutually intelligible, unlike *‘Āmmiyya* and *Fuṣḥā* (see also Cadora 1976, 1979; Trentman 2011; Younes 2015: Chapter 1).

To sum up, one can safely say that in the linguistic life of Arabic speakers, particularly educated native speakers, *Fuṣḥā* and *‘Āmmiyya* are both indispensable and inseparable. Assuming that the educated native speaker is taken as the model of the AFL program, both *Fuṣḥā* and *‘Āmmiyya* should be considered both indispensable and inseparable. Such a program would treat *Fuṣḥā* and *‘Āmmiyya* as two sides of one communication system, not two.

The complementary roles of *‘Āmmiyya* and *Fuṣḥā*

According to the IA, *‘Āmmiyya* and *Fuṣḥā*, complement each other. The set of functions requiring the use of *Fuṣḥā* is typically different from that requiring the use of *‘Āmmiyya*, but, as was pointed out above, the two together form one unified and complete system of communication.

Ferguson’s study of Arabic diglossia (Ferguson 1959) describes the distinct functions of each variety in great detail. In spite of the commonly expressed reservations about Ferguson’s analysis and the existence of numerous counter-examples, the basic pattern of linguistic behavior among Arabic speakers still holds: *‘Āmmiyya* for ordinary conversation and *Fuṣḥā* for reading, writing and scripted speech (see also Badawi 1973: 148–151, 1985: 20).

Giving equal weight to both varieties

While it is theoretically possible to treat *‘Āmmiyya* and *Fuṣḥā* equally in an Arabic program that introduces both but as two separate systems, the general practice in programs which

separate the two language varieties clearly favors *Fuṣḥā*. There are practical, historical and ideological reasons for such discrimination (see Younes 2015, Chapter 3). In an integrated program, which distributes language tasks in a way that truly reflects actual usage of the language, there would be no favoring of one variety over another. A textbook that aims to equip learners to deal with the language the way it is actually used would have to focus on the four language skills⁷ equally and distribute the learning material between the two language varieties according to the function or task to be mastered. A truly integrated program would maintain a healthy balance between the two language varieties, since discussions of all materials, both written and spoken, whether uttered in *‘Āmmiyya* or read or written *Fuṣḥā*, would take place in *‘Āmmiyya*. Likewise, formal situations such as writing reports take place *Fuṣḥā*. The simultaneous presence and opportunities for reinforcement are assured for the two varieties, just as the two varieties are found side by side in a complementary and mutually reinforcing relationship in the Arabic-speaking world.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that progress has been made in the field of teaching Arabic as a foreign language since the publication of Abboud’s 1971 article. There is more awareness of the problems and challenges facing the field, a wider variety of instructional materials is now available to teachers and students, there are more opportunities for students to travel and live in the Arab World and develop their language skills by interacting with native speakers on the ground, and a larger pool of better trained and more qualified language teachers have entered the field. One of the main positive developments is the recognition of the essential role that *‘Āmmiyya* should play in the Arabic curriculum as reported in the Abdalla and Al-Batal survey referred to above (Abdalla & Al-Batal 2011–2012: 16), where the majority of Arabic teachers “(over 65%) strongly agree or agree that training in a dialect should start at the early stages of instruction.” No less important is the acceptance by increasing numbers of teachers of the inclusion of the two language varieties in the same textbook, which is anathema to many native Arabic speakers concerned about the ‘purity’ of *Fuṣḥā* and worried about its ‘contamination’ by *‘Āmmiyya*.

However, despite the progress that has been made, a major problem still remains, i.e. the fact that *Fuṣḥā* still dominates the Arabic curriculum and is used to teach all skills, including speaking as shown by the Abdalla and Al-Batal survey (ibid.) and as pointed out by Ryding (2013: 5).

It would be presumptuous and also inaccurate to claim that the IA is the one and only successful approach to Arabic language instruction. People have been learning Arabic successfully for a long time, and they will continue to do so using a variety of approaches. But we believe that it makes good pedagogical sense, saves on resources and better prepares the typical learner of Arabic to deal with the challenge of learning and using Arabic more effectively and successfully.

There is clear evidence that integration will be the norm in AFL programs in a matter of a few years. Strong indications of that are the well-attended workshops on integration that have taken place in the past few years and are becoming more popular, the planned publication of a book on the same topic with contributions from more than 20 teachers and program directors at a number of leading universities and colleges in the United States, Europe and the Arab World (Al-Batal 2018) and the establishment of a language center (al-Mashriq) in Amman, Jordan, that has adopted the IA.

We would like to conclude by pointing out that integration means different things to different people. For some practitioners, the mere introduction of *‘Āmmiyya* in an Arabic program

where *Fuṣḥā* is taught is viewed as integration. For us, integration is not just a sound curriculum and solid classroom pedagogy; it furthermore encompasses the resulting knowledge both acquired and practiced by students. It means that Arabic 101 at a college or university would automatically include both language varieties, where each variety is used in the way it is used by native speakers and where the role of *‘Āmmiyya* is of equal relevance and importance to that of *Fuṣḥā*. Moreover, it means that students are properly prepared with an accurate understanding of the sociolinguistic realities of Arabic such that they are able to live and practice it themselves once abroad. On the broadest level, integration means that we are preparing our students for success rather than setting them up for failure. We are giving them the necessary tools to flourish in the Arab World so that they may engage in meaningful interactions with native speakers that encourage further growth and study.

Notes

- 1 A word about terminology is in order. We prefer to use the terms *Fuṣḥā* and *‘Āmmiyya* to refer to the two varieties of Arabic for reasons explained in Younes (2015: Chapter 1). The terms MSA and the colloquial or dialect will be used when works of other authors are cited.
- 2 This is in opposition to the critique of “Privileging” in the methodologies for teaching European languages, which tend to privilege the teaching of familiar, vernacular conversational topics over the development of academic and literary discourse.
- 3 It is well-known that the Arabic dialects, like any other natural language, have their own grammars. While many shared features exist between the grammars of different dialects and *Fuṣḥā*, there are also significant divergences between them. Consider the patterns of quasiverbal prepositional phrases in Levantine Arabic such as *‘aind* (with) and *bidd* (want or desire), which can be moved to the simple past tense by either conjugating the auxiliary verb *kān* for the subject (*kunt biddī*, “I wanted”) or for the preposition (*kān ‘indī* “I had”). Differences such as this justify the explicit teaching of these forms through active classroom engagement.
- 4 It is likely not mere coincidence that the majority of the Ivy League institutions have yet to adopt dialect materials into their Arabic foreign language programs (the authors would like to thank Uri Horesh for pointing this trend out).
- 5 We are of course aware of the differences in some of these constructions and lexical items, both between *Fuṣḥā* and *‘Āmmiyya* in general and among different *‘Āmmiyya* varieties. For more on the issue, see Younes (2015: Chapter 4) and Trentman (2011).
- 6 While it is true that “an Omani nomad” may have difficulty communicating with a “townsman from Marrakesh” (Holes 2004: 3–4), Arabic speakers generally have at their disposal a variety of “leveling” and “classicizing” devices that enable them to accommodate speakers of other dialects (Blanc 1960: 81–82).
- 7 The four language skills are traditionally considered to be reading, writing, speaking and listening. They are distinct from, but related to the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive and presentational).

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