



The Implications of Dialectal Differences in the Arabian Peninsula on Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language

آثار الاختلافات اللهجية في شبه الجزيرة العربية على تعليم اللغة العربية بوصفها لغةً أجنبية

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Abstract

Arabic exhibits diverse dialectal varieties shaped by geographical, social, cultural, and historical conditions. This study describes the use and characteristics of four major Arabic dialect groups: Levantine (Shāmiyyah), Egyptian, Maghrebi, and Gulf (Khalijyyah) Arabic. It examines linguistic differences among these groups and their implications for teaching Arabic as a foreign language. The study employs library research, with data collected through documentation and literature review. The data comprise studies on Arabic dialects and their implications for foreign-language teaching, while sources include books, journals, scholarly articles, previous studies, conference papers, reports, and relevant audiovisual materials. Data were analyzed through content analysis by examining, comparing, and interpreting information from various sources to identify usage characteristics and linguistic differences across the dialect groups. Findings indicate that differences are primarily evident in phonology, vocabulary, and linguistic structures. In Egyptian Arabic, the phoneme qāf (ق) may be realized as a glottal stop (ء), while in some Maghrebi varieties, particularly Moroccan Darija, qāf (ق) may be realized as /g/. Some Levantine varieties also show phonological changes, such as the realization of dhāl (ذ) as dāl (د). Despite these differences, all four groups maintain a close relationship with Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Dialectal variation is influenced by geography, society, culture, migration, language contact, and language-use patterns. Such diversity has significant implications for foreign-language teaching because differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and structures may challenge learners communicating with native speakers. Therefore, understanding MSA and dialectal variations in contextual use is essential for developing learners' Arabic communicative competence in real-life situations.

Keywords: Arabic dialects; language variation; Arabic language learning.

مستخلص البحث

تتسم اللغة العربية بتنوع لهجي واسع تشكل في ضوء عوامل جغرافية واجتماعية وثقافية وتاريخية متباينة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى وصف أنماط الاستعمال والخصائص اللغوية لأربع مجموعات رئيسة من اللهجات العربية، هي: اللهجات الشامية، واللهجة المصرية، واللهجات المغاربية، واللهجات الخليجية. كما تسعى إلى تحليل أوجه الاختلاف اللغوي بين هذه المجموعات واستجلاء دلالاتها وانعكاساتها على تعليم اللغة العربية لغةً أجنبية. اعتمدت الدراسة منهج البحث المكتبي، وجمعت البيانات من خلال التوثيق والمراجعة المنهجية للأدبيات ذات الصلة. وتمثل مادة الدراسة في البحوث والدراسات التي تناولت اللهجات العربية وتداعيات التنوع اللهجي على تعليم اللغات الأجنبية، في حين شملت مصادر البيانات الكتب، والدوريات العلمية، والمقالات المحكمة، والدراسات السابقة، وأوراق المؤتمرات، والتقارير، والمواد السمعية البصرية ذات الصلة. وحُللت

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البيانات باستخدام منهج تحليل المحتوى، من خلال فحص المعطيات الواردة في المصادر المختلفة ومقارنتها وتأويلها؛ للكشف عن خصائص الاستعمال وأوجه التباين اللغوي بين المجموعات اللهجية الأربع. أظهرت النتائج أن أبرز مظاهر التباين اللهجي تتجلى في المستويات الصوتية والمعجمية والتركيبية. ففي اللهجة المصرية، قد يتحقق الفونيم /ق/ في صورة وقفة حنجرية/7/، في حين قد يتحقق /ق/ في بعض اللهجات المغاربية، ولا سيما الدارجة المغربية، في صورة /g/. كما تكشف بعض التنوعات اللهجية الشامية عن تحولات صوتية، من بينها تحقق الصوت /ذ/ في صورة /د/. وعلى الرغم من هذه الاختلافات، تحتفظ المجموعات اللهجية الأربع بصلات وثيقة بالعربية الفصحى الحديثة، الأمر الذي يؤكد استمرارية العلاقة بين التنوع اللهجي والنظام اللغوي العربي المعياري. ويتشكل التنوع اللهجي العربي بفعل تفاعل مجموعة من العوامل، من أبرزها الجغرافيا، والبنية الاجتماعية، والثقافة، والهجرة، والاحتكاك اللغوي، وأنماط الاستخدام اللغوي. وتكتسب هذه التباينات أهمية خاصة في مجال تعليم العربية لغةً أجنبية، إذ يمكن للاختلافات في النطق والمفردات والبنى اللغوية أن تشكل تحديات أمام المتعلمين، ولا سيما عند انتقالهم من تعلم العربية الفصحى إلى التواصل الفعلي مع الناطقين الأصليين بلهجاتهم المحلية. ومن ثم، فإن الإلمام بالعربية الفصحى الحديثة والتنوعات اللهجية، وفهم وظائفها وسياقات استخدامها، يمثل عنصرًا محوريًا في تنمية الكفاءة التواصلية للمتعلمين، وتعزيز قدرتهم على استخدام اللغة العربية بفاعلية وملاءمة في مواقف التواصل الواقعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللهجات العربية؛ التنوع اللغوي؛ التباين اللهجي؛ تعلم اللغة العربية لغةً أجنبية؛ الكفاءة التواصلية.

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a means of communication and is realized through various linguistic units, including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, which are conveyed in both spoken and written forms. Thousands of languages are spoken worldwide, and each language has its own linguistic system, commonly referred to as grammar, such as Indonesian, English, Japanese, and Arabic grammar. Language performs three primary metafunctions: the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. These three metafunctions represent different aspects of reality. The ideational metafunction enables language to construe physical and biological reality and is concerned with the interpretation and representation of experience. The interpersonal metafunction enables language to construe social reality and is concerned with interaction between speakers or writers and their listeners or readers. Meanwhile, the textual metafunction enables language to realize semiotic expression and symbolism and is concerned with how texts are organized and constructed within a particular context (Azhari et al., 2025; Budiman et al., 2024; Ningrum & Islam, 2024).

Language can also be defined as a system of sounds consisting of arbitrary symbols used by individuals or groups to exchange ideas and express feelings (Annafis, 2025; Hazizah et al., 2025; Izzanti et al., 2025; Salim, 2017). Arabic possesses distinctive characteristics that set it apart from other languages, particularly because of its rich

literary tradition and its status as the language of the Qur'an, the revealed word of Allah. The Arabic language used in the Qur'an embodies an extraordinary degree of linguistic and literary beauty that is considered inimitable by human beings (N. S. Hidayat, 2012; Salida & Zulpina, 2023; Zaenulloh et al., 2024).

There are various perspectives on the origins of the Arabic language. One view associates the emergence of Arabic with Prophet Adam, based on an interpretation of Qur'an 2:31 concerning God's teaching of the names to Prophet Adam. However, this view represents a religious interpretation and should not be equated with historical-linguistic evidence. From a linguistic perspective, Arabic is generally classified as a member of the Semitic language family, which constitutes one of the major branches of the Afroasiatic language family. The Afroasiatic family comprises several language groups, including Semitic, Egyptian, Berber, Cushitic, Omotic, and Chadic. Arabic belongs to the Semitic group alongside several other languages, such as Hebrew and Aramaic, while Akkadian is one of the Semitic languages that is now extinct (*Asal Usul Bahasa Arab*, 2016; *Asal-Usul Bahasa Arab: Analisis Sinkronik Dan Diakronik | Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Adab Dan Humaniora*, n.d.; Hassan Azhari, 2004; Jezy et al., 2025).

Within the field of historical linguistics, some scholars regard the Arabian Peninsula as one of the important regions in the early development of Semitic-speaking communities and Semitic languages. The geographical conditions of the Arabian Peninsula also influenced the patterns of settlement, mobility, and migration among its inhabitants. The region is located in Southwest Asia and is bordered by the Red Sea to the west, the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman to the east, and the Indian Ocean to the south. Much of the Arabian Peninsula consists of desert landscapes, and consequently, its communities historically developed patterns of mobility associated with the search for water sources, grazing lands, and areas more conducive to sustaining human life (Clarisa et al., 2026; *Kementerian Pertahanan Republik Indonesia*, n.d.; "Kondisi Geografis dan Struktur Masyarakat Arab," n.d.; Mahmuda & Sofa, 2025; Marsela et al., 2025).

Geographically, the Arabian Peninsula encompasses the territories that now comprise Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and

Bahrain (Ghazanfar, 2024). Its strategic geographical position has made the region a space for interaction among diverse communities as well as an important trade route connecting different regions. Population mobility and intergroup contact subsequently contributed to the development and diversification of the Arabic language (Fajri et al., 2026; Febrina Dwi Cahyani Febri & Fadli, 2025; Hamzah et al., 2023). Therefore, discussions of the origins and development of Arabic should take into account the interrelationship between linguistic classification, geographical conditions, migration, and social interaction among its speech communities.

The diversity of Arabic dialects has a significant impact on communicative competence (Ming et al., 2025; Utami et al., 2024), particularly among Arabic language learners who interact directly with communities in the Arabian Peninsula (Ainur Rofiq Sofa & Ayun Febrianti, 2025). In formal educational settings, the variety of Arabic generally taught to foreign learners is fushā, or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). MSA is used in education, written communication, formal media, and various official contexts. However, in everyday communication, Arab communities predominantly use dialects, or ‘ammiyyah, which vary according to geographical region, social environment, and cultural background. This distinction between MSA and regional dialects may present challenges for foreign learners, particularly when they engage in spontaneous, everyday communication with native speakers (Sudrajat et al., 2025).

The differences between fushā and Arabic dialects encompass phonological features, vocabulary, and linguistic structures (Munib et al., 2023). For example, the phoneme qāf (ق) may be realized as a glottal stop (ء) in some Egyptian Arabic dialects, whereas in certain varieties of Gulf Arabic, it may be realized as /g/. Such differences may make it difficult for learners to comprehend native speakers’ speech, even when they have already acquired proficiency in fushā or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) (Nyssa’ et al., 2019; Pancarani et al., 2017).

This situation highlights a gap between the variety of Arabic taught in the classroom and the language used in everyday communication. Therefore, Arabic language instruction should not focus exclusively on fushā but should also introduce

relevant dialectal varieties according to learners' communicative needs and contexts. Mastery of fushā as the foundation of formal Arabic, combined with an understanding of dialects as forms of everyday communication, can help learners communicate more effectively in the Arabian Peninsula.

Based on the foregoing discussion, knowledge of the various Arabic dialects spoken across the Arabian Peninsula is essential. The diversity of Arabic dialects may affect the communicative competence of Arabic language learners in the Arabian Peninsula. Accordingly, this study examines how the four dialect groups are used in communicative interactions and identifies the differences among them. This focus is based on the assumption that dialectal differences have significant implications for learners' communicative competence, particularly given that effective communication is a fundamental objective of learning Arabic as a foreign language.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a library research (George, 2008; Zed, 2008) design aimed at examining theories and information relevant to the research topic. Data were collected through documentation by reviewing various sources, including books, previous studies, conference papers, journal articles, research reports, magazines, and audiovisual materials related to Arabic dialects in the Arabian Peninsula. The data sources comprised relevant journal and scholarly articles, books, and audiovisual materials. In addition, several blog sources were consulted as supplementary references, taking into consideration the authors' expertise and credibility. These sources were included due to the limited availability of references that comprehensively address the development and use of contemporary Arabic dialects within a single source. The data were analyzed using a content analysis approach (Komaruddin, 2000).

The research procedure involved data collection, followed by data selection, categorization, analysis, and interpretation of textual, visual, and audiovisual data relevant to the research focus. Data analysis also employed a triangulation strategy by examining the characteristics of dialect use, identifying similarities and differences

among the dialects, and analyzing their implications for teaching Arabic as a foreign language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

a. Linguistic Variations in Selected Arabic Dialects

The data obtained from the selected Arabic dialects demonstrate several forms of linguistic variation. The variations can be identified at different linguistic levels, including lexical, phonological, morphological and morphophonological, as well as syntactic and grammatical levels. The following sections discuss each type of variation based on the dialectal data collected by the researcher.

1) Lexical Variation

Lexical variation refers to differences in the words or lexical items used to express the same meaning across different dialects. The data show that speakers of different Arabic dialects may employ different lexical forms even when referring to the same concept or communicative function.

Table 1. Lexical Variation across Selected Arabic Dialects

No.	Meaning	Egyptian Arabic	Levantine Arabic (Syrian)	Maghrebi Arabic (Moroccan Darija)	Gulf Arabic (Emirati)	Saudi Arabic
1	Why	ليه (Leih)	—	—	ليش (Laisy)	لماذا (Lima>z \ a>)
2	Who	مين (Mein)	—	—	—	من (Man)
3	Where	فين (Fein)	—	—	—	أين ('Ayn)
4	Corn	—	درة (Derah)	—	—	ذرة (*Z
5	Ear	—	أذن (Iden)	—	—	أذن (Uz \ un)
6	Eyeglasses	—	نضارة (Nad}d{a>rah)	—	—	نظارة (Naz}a>rah)
7	My heart	—	—	—	غلبي (Galby>)	قلبي (Qalbi>)

No.	Meaning	Egyptian Arabic	Levantine Arabic (Syrian)	Maghrebi Arabic (Moroccan Darija)	Gulf Arabic (Emirati)	Saudi Arabic
8	Chicken	—	—	—	دياية (Daya>ya)	دجاجة (Dajjajah)
9	Good	—	—	مزيان (Mzya>n)	—	جيد (Jayyid)
10	Thank you very much	—	—	شكرا بزاف (Choukron Bezza>f)	—	شكرا جزيل (Syukran jazi>lan)

The table demonstrates that lexical variation is one of the most observable forms of variation among the selected Arabic dialects. For example, the interrogative meaning “why” is expressed by *Leih* in Egyptian Arabic, *Laisy* in Emirati Arabic, and *Lima>z\ a>* in Saudi Arabic. Although these forms have the same basic communicative function, their lexical realizations differ.

Another example can be seen in the word meaning “chicken.” Emirati Arabic uses *Daya>ya*, whereas Saudi Arabic uses *Dajjajah*. Similarly, the Maghrebi form *Mzya>n* corresponds to the Saudi Arabic form *Jayyid* for the meaning “good.” These differences indicate that Arabic dialects have developed distinctive lexical inventories while retaining mutual connections with the broader Arabic language.

2) Phonological Variation

Phonological variation refers to differences in the pronunciation or realization of particular sounds across dialects. Such differences may involve consonants, vowels, or other phonological features. In the collected data, several examples demonstrate differences in pronunciation between Levantine and Saudi Arabic.

Table 2. Phonological Variation across Selected Arabic Dialects

No.	Meaning	Levantine Arabic (Syrian)	Saudi Arabic	Observed Variation
1	Corn	درة (<i>Derah</i>)	ذرة	(*Z urrah*)
2	Ear	أذن (<i>Iden</i>)	أذن (<i>Uz\un</i>)	Difference in consonantal and vocalic realization
3	Intelligence	ذكاء (*Z	aka>*)	ذكاء (*Z
4	Envelope	ظرف (<i>Z{aref</i>)	ظرف (<i>Z{araf</i>)	Difference in vowel realization
5	Eyeglasses	نضارة (<i>Nad}d{a>rah</i>)	نظارة (<i>Naz}a>rah</i>)	Difference in consonantal realization

The examples above indicate that phonological variation can occur even when two dialects use related or identical lexical items. For instance, *Z{aref* and *Z{araf* have the same written form, ظرف, but differ in their vowel realization. This suggests that dialectal differences are not necessarily reflected in orthography but may become more apparent in actual pronunciation.

The forms *Nad}d{a>rah* and *Naz}a>rah* also demonstrate consonantal variation. Therefore, pronunciation is an important feature for distinguishing one Arabic dialect from another, particularly when the written forms remain similar.

3) Morphological and Morphophonological Variation

Morphological variation concerns differences in the form of words associated with grammatical categories or word formation. In dialectal Arabic, however, some differences that appear morphological may also involve phonological realization. Therefore, the term “morphological and morphophonological variation” is appropriate for the following data.

Table 3. Morphological and Morphophonological Variation

No.	Meaning / Function	Gulf Arabic (Emirati)	Saudi Arabic	Observed Variation
1	My name is	اسمي (<i>Esimy</i> >)	اسمي (<i>Ismi</i> >)	Difference in vowel realization
2	My age is	عمري (<i>Omray</i>)	عمري (' <i>Umri</i> >)	Difference in vowel realization
3	I work	أشتغل (<i>Asytagul</i>)	أشتغل (<i>Asytagil</i>)	Difference in vowel realization
4	To read	يقرأ (<i>Ya'ra'</i>)	يقرأ (<i>Yaqra'</i>)	Difference in verbal form and pronunciation

The data indicate that Gulf and Saudi Arabic may share the same written form while differing in pronunciation. For example, the expression *Esimy*> in Emirati Arabic and *Ismi*> in Saudi Arabic both express the meaning “my name,” but their vowel realizations differ. Similarly, *Asytagul* and *Asytagil* represent different phonological realizations of the verb أشتغل.

The contrast between *Ya'ra'* in Egyptian Arabic and *Yaqra'* in Saudi Arabic is particularly noteworthy because it demonstrates a difference in the realization of the consonant represented by ق. This type of variation can be discussed as a dialectal phonological or morphophonological feature rather than simply as a difference in vocabulary.

4) Syntactic and Grammatical Variation

Syntactic and grammatical variation refers to differences in the way words are organized into phrases, expressions, and sentences to convey a particular meaning. The collected data show that some dialects employ distinct constructions for everyday communicative functions.

Table 4. Syntactic and Grammatical Variation across Selected Arabic Dialects

No.	Meaning / Function	Dialect	Dialectal Form	Saudi/Reference Form
1	How are you?	Egyptian Arabic	إزيك (Izayyak)	كيف حالك (Kayfa H{a>luk)
2	What is your name?	Maghrebi Arabic	شنو سميتك؟ (Cnou Smi>tik?)	ما اسمك؟ (Ma> asmuk)
3	How are you?	Maghrebi Arabic	لا بأس عليك؟ (La> Basalik?)	كيف حالك؟ (Kayfa H{a>luk)
4	Now	Levantine Arabic	هَلَّا (Halla'a)	الآن (Al-a>na)
5	Good	Maghrebi Arabic	مزيان (Mzya>n)	جيد (Jayyid)
6	Okay / Alright	Maghrebi Arabic	وخا (Wakha>)	حسنا (H{asanan)
7	Thank you very much	Maghrebi Arabic	شكرا بزاف (Choukron Bezza>f)	شكرا جزيلا (Syukran jazi>lan)

The examples illustrate that dialectal variation may extend beyond individual words to the construction of everyday expressions. For example, the Maghrebi expression *Cnou Smi>tik?* is used to ask “What is your name?”, whereas the Saudi/reference expression *Ma> asmuk?* employs a different syntactic and lexical construction.

Another example is the Levantine expression *Halla'a*, which corresponds to *Al-a>na* in Saudi Arabic for the meaning “now.” These differences demonstrate that dialects may develop distinct conventionalized expressions for the same communicative function (Nyssa' dkk., 2019).

Based on the analysis above, the selected Arabic dialects exhibit variation at several linguistic levels. Lexical variation is particularly evident in the use of different words for the same meaning, as observed in expressions such as “why,” “where,” “good,” and “chicken.” Phonological variation is demonstrated through differences in consonant and vowel realization, while

morphological and morphophonological variation can be observed in the realization of possessive and verbal forms (*Levantine Arabic Letters Pronunciation (Syrian Arabic) - YouTube*, n.d.; S et al., 2024).

Furthermore, syntactic and grammatical variation appears in everyday expressions and sentence constructions. These findings suggest that Arabic dialectal variation is multidimensional and cannot be explained solely through differences in vocabulary or pronunciation. Instead, the differences involve several interconnected linguistic levels (Pabbajah et al., 2024).

Therefore, the comparison of Egyptian, Levantine, Maghrebi, Gulf, and Saudi Arabic provides evidence that Arabic functions as a language with substantial internal dialectal diversity. The variations identified in the data reflect differences in lexical choice, phonological realization, word formation, and grammatical expression among the selected dialects.

2. Discussion

a. Linguistic Findings

Based on the theory above, researchers will discuss 4 modern Arabic dialects. It can be seen as follows:

1) Egyptian dialect

In Egyptian dialect on the phonological aspect, the letter Qaf ق is pronounced as *hamzah*. For example قهوة in fusha, the letter *qaf* is pronounced *a* and then it becomes *ahwah*. The characteristics of Egyptian dialect are as follows : 1. Most Egyptian dialects lost the ancient Arabic sounds, such as : *Tsa*, *Dza*, *Dho* and *Qaf* and replace them with sounds: *ta*, *dal*, *dhod*, *hamzah* or *jim*. This happens to most of the words that cause generalized changes. It is due to the displacement of some soft sounds, which are less common in fushah. 2 Leaning the *ithbaq* sound to the *istifal* sound in Egyptian kalam. Egyptians pronounce *shod* to *sin*, *tho* to *ta*, and *dho* to *dal* or thick *zhay*. 3. Egyptian dialects are also formed from childhood speech disorders that have developed into part of their dialect,

such as the letter *ba* being replaced by *mim*. For example *متاع* is pronounced *بتاع* which means pleasure 4. Foreign language adaptation. For example, the word police is pronounced *بوليس* (Nyssa' dkk., 2019).

However, there is still much debate among linguists whether the language used in Egypt is a dialect or is the Egyptian language. In this paper, researchers will explain some of the rules of the Egyptian Amiyah language by Ahmad Akram Malibari quoted by Afridesy et al in his journal as follows 1. The Egyptian Amiyah language was devoid of harakat from the beginning. All sentences are required to be pronounced off (*harakat sukun*). In the context of speaking, it would be weird if someone continued to use the harakat as if speaking formal Arabic. In some cases, there are also sentences that require harakat in pronunciation. The aim is to differentiate between the pronouns you (male) and you (female), I, him (male) and her (female). 2. There is an additional letter (ب) at the beginning of the verb which helps to distinguish verbs that have a present meaning (ongoing). While verbs that do not have the letter (ب) added at the beginning have a future meaning ('not ongoing'). 3. There is the addition of the letter (ح) at the beginning of verbs that have a future meaning. 4. The letter (ش) is added to the end of past or present verbs. If it starts with a negative word (ما) then the verb must end with the letter (ش) (Hamzah et al., 2023; Pancarani et al., 2017). Researchers analyzed using audio visuals with YouTube where the Egyptian dialect sounds the letter ث as ت. For example, the pronunciation of some of the following vocabulary: ثلاثة in formal language, ثلاثة in Egyptian pronunciation. There is also the addition of the letter (ش) to the word (مالنافية). The way to add the letter (ش) is by deleting the letter (ل) found in the letter ما and changing the harakat م to dhommah. This will produce in the letter (مش). This negative expression replaces the position of formal Arabic negative letters such as: ليس، لا، ما، غير. (Pancarani et al., 2017).

2) The levantine dialect

The Levantine dialect is mostly spoken in Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. In MSA it is known as the syami dialect. (Abu Kwaik et al., 2018) Referring to the previous table, we already known that the Palestinian dialect is one of the levantine dialects that differs from MSA Arabic. For example, the word (شي) means "a thing" in the Shiri dialect, and in MSA (شيء) means "a thing". In addition, there are also greeting sentences with the following dialects: مساء الخير / good afternoon. This dialect omits the letter hamzah in the word مساء. Furthermore, there is an English word 'bye' used باي which means goodbye or see you again. Some phonemes also have letter changes such as the letter ذ into د, ظ into ذ, ز into ق, ز into (hamzah) ث, ء into ت. It can be seen that the change of the letter ق to hamzah ء and ث to ت is similar to the Egyptian dialect. Therefore, we can recognize that there are some similarities in phonemes from these two countries. The change in phonemes is intended to make it easier for users to pronounce in everyday life (*Levantine Arabic Letters Pronunciation (Syrian Arabic) - YouTube*, n.d.).

3) Maghribi dialect

In Egypt, Arabic is divided into formal Arabic (فصحى) and non-formal Arabic called 'Amiyah (عامية). In Morocco, it is called Moroccan Darija (دارجة مغربية), Moroccan dialect (اللهجة المغربية) or Darija Arabic (العربية الدارجة المغربية). This non-formal language is significantly different from the Fusha form of Arabic. Moroccan Darija Arabic consists of various dialects or accents that vary from one city to another in Morocco. The names of Moroccan cities include Casablanca, Rabat, Fes, Marrakech, Settat, Oujda, Tangier, Tetouan and others. In general, the accents and dialects that dominate in Morocco are those of the cities of Fes, Rabat and Casablanca. These three cities are the largest and most famous cities in Morocco. Further details will be presented in the following table: (Holilulloh, 2024).

4) Gulf dialect

Gulf Arabic is spoken in the Gulf countries of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman. The language has a unique linguistic fascination that reflects cultural richness and economic excellence. Originating in the UAE, Emirati Arabic is influenced by Bedouin culture and trade interactions. It is a combination of traditional Arabic and modern expressions. The dialect reflects the rapid development of the country and the preservation of cultural essence.(Team, 2023) The Bedouin dialect is also known as the Gulf dialect stretching from Libya to southern Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Saudi and the Gulf countries which include Iraq, parts of Jordan to eastern Syria. The Bedouin dialect is known for its characteristic three-letter pronunciation قك and ض. The first two letters are pronounced with the non-Semitic phonetics "ch" and "g" (this is a Persian influence). Gulf Arabic is spoken by the permanent residents of the Persian Gulf coast who are mostly descendants of the Bedouin tribe.(Ni'mah, 2019) The ancient Arab tribes living in the coastal region of the Arabian Gulf for more than 15 centuries changed the letter Jim (جيم) to Yā (ياء), such as the word "chicken" (دجاجة), pronounced "Diyya" (دياية), and the word "riyal" (رجال) for "rejal" (رجال) which means male. Furthermore, the letters Yā (ياء) and Hā (هاء) can be added to certain words.(Elbadawy, 2020a) Today, this dialect is spoken by the people of Al Dhafra in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The phoneme Qa (ق) is pronounced with Ga (غ) as an example Qalbi to Galbi. It is also mentioned by M. Fauzan Aziman that some dialects have phoneme changes, such as the Qatari dialect where the phoneme /q/ is always pronounced /g/.(Fauzan Aziman, 2022) Faisal Mubarak et al. also stated in their writing that the Kuwaiti people use the letters "ج" as "يا" such as the word Jamiah to become Yamiah.(Mubarak et al., 2021) The diversity of dialects is due to the diversity of mountainous, marine, and agricultural environments. Dialects in the same environment

will be different from one emirate to another. For example, the dialect of the Al Dhafra community in Abu Dhabi is different from the Badia dialect in the northern emirates (Elbadawy, 2020)

The Emirati dialect is currently considered as combination of archaic and foreign vocabulary. The main factor that led to the fusion of Emirati dialects was the strategic location on the coast. This facilitated the process of mixing meanings, words and diversity. The travel of traders also added to the new vocabulary they brought from neighboring countries, such as India and Persia.(Elbadawy, 2020).

b. Pedagogical Implications

The existence of the four Arabic dialects mentioned above—Egyptian, Levantine, Maghrebi, and Gulf—has significant implications for the process of teaching Arabic as a foreign language (Pabbajah et al., 2024). The diversity of these dialects indicates that Arabic does not exist solely in a single standardized form, but has developed into various spoken varieties used in everyday communication across different regions of the Arab world (Fajri et al., 2026). Therefore, understanding these dialects becomes an important aspect of learning Arabic, particularly for learners who intend to use the language in real-life communication. Some of the main implications include the following:

- 1) The distinction between Fusha (Classical or Modern Standard Arabic) and Ammiyah (colloquial Arabic dialects) used in everyday communication is highly evident (Rahma & Aqmal, 2024). In the context of teaching Arabic as a foreign language, the variety most commonly taught to non-native speakers is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), as it possesses a standardized grammatical structure and is widely used in written discourse, formal education, official media, and institutional communication. However, in everyday social interactions, Arabic speakers generally rely on regional dialects or Ammiyah as their primary means of communication. These dialects often differ significantly from Modern Standard Arabic in terms of

phonology, vocabulary, and grammatical structure. Consequently, this situation frequently poses challenges for learners of Arabic as a foreign language when interacting with native speakers, since the linguistic forms acquired in formal classroom settings do not always correspond to those used in natural daily conversations.

- 2) Dialectal variation also creates noticeable differences in the phonological aspect, particularly in the pronunciation of speech sounds. In several dialects, certain letters are pronounced differently from their forms in Standard Arabic. For example, the letter qāf (ق) in Standard Arabic may be pronounced as a hamza (glottal stop) in the Egyptian dialect or as the sound “g” in the Gulf dialect. Likewise, the letter thā’ (ث) in some dialects is pronounced as tā’ (ت) (Pancarani et al., 2017; Saputra et al., 2026). Such phonological differences can create difficulties for learners, especially in listening skills, because words spoken by native speakers often sound different from the forms that students learn in Standard Arabic.
- 3) Another implication can be seen in the differences in vocabulary used in each dialect. Every region has its own distinctive lexical choices, and some of these differ significantly from those found in Standard Arabic. For example, in the Levantine dialect, the word شئ is commonly used to mean “something,” whereas in Standard Arabic the form شيء is used. Meanwhile, in the Maghrebi dialect, a considerable amount of vocabulary has been influenced by foreign languages such as French, Spanish, and Berber, (A. Hidayat, 2025; Holilulloh, n.d.) due to the region’s colonial history and long-standing cultural interactions. This diversity of vocabulary requires learners to acquire additional knowledge if they wish to communicate effectively with people from particular regions.
- 4) The linguistic structure of Arabic dialects also tends to have a simpler grammatical system compared to Standard Arabic. In the Egyptian dialect, for example, the use of vowel markings (ḥarakāt) in pronunciation is often

omitted, resulting in words being spoken in a more concise form. In addition, certain letters are added to indicate tense or aspect in verbs. For instance, the letter ب(b-) is used to indicate the present tense or ongoing actions, while the letter ح(ha-) is used to mark the future tense. These differences demonstrate that the linguistic structures used in everyday conversation do not always follow the formal grammatical rules taught in the learning of Standard Arabic.

- 5) The cultural, historical, and social contexts of Arab societies (Pabbajah et al., 2024) and their diversity also play an important role in shaping dialectal variation. Each dialect develops through the interaction of communities with their geographical environment, economic activities, and contact with other languages and cultures. For example, the Gulf dialect has been greatly influenced by trade activities with regions such as Persia and India, while the Maghrebi dialect has been shaped by interactions with European cultures and the local languages of North Africa. Therefore, learning Arabic as a foreign language is not only related to mastering linguistic structures, but is also closely connected to understanding the cultural and social backgrounds of the communities that use the language.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the existence of various dialects in Arabic requires a more flexible and contextual approach to language learning, the learning objectives should also be clearly incorporated into the curriculum that will be implemented (Fatwiah Noor, 2022; Maulida, 2026; Noor, 2018). Standard Arabic remains important as an academic foundation and as a medium for formal communication in the Arab world. However, familiarity with certain dialects is also essential, particularly for learners who aim to interact directly with communities in specific regions (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2024) Such an approach can help learners not only understand Arabic theoretically but also use it effectively in real-life communicative situations.

CONCLUSION

There are about 30 varieties of modern Arabic. They are divided into four main dialect groups: Levantine (Shamiah), Egyptian, Maghrebi, and Gulf. Among the four dialects, Egyptian Arabic is the most widely understood, as Egypt is the main producer of movies and TV in the Arab world. The Egyptian dialect is mostly spoken in Egypt. Meanwhile, the people of Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine use the Levantine variety, while the people around the Arabian Gulf use the Gulf dialect. These include the countries of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen and Iraq. People from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya speak the Maghrebi dialect.

The differences between the four dialects and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) are differences in vocabulary, structure, and pronunciation. This is influenced by political, social, geographical and cultural factors. In addition, immigrants and colonization factors that led to acculturation also affected aspects of the language. However, there are some similarities between the four dialects such as the phonology of *t* which changes to *ta*, morphemes that change such as *عائلة* in MSA, in Egyptian and Syrian to *عيلة* *eilleh*. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the Arabic language is the same, but there are several pronunciations and several factors that make the Arabic language has its own dialect. Therefore, the implications of dialectal differences in Arabic create challenges in the learning of Arabic as a foreign language, particularly when learners encounter difficulties in communicating directly with native speakers. This situation highlights the need for a more flexible and contextualized pedagogical approach in the teaching and learning process.

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