



---

## Arabic Diglossic Switching in Radio Broadcasting: The Case of Ain Temouchent Local Radio

Horiya Amar Bekada<sup>1\*</sup>, Abdelkader Lotfi Benhattab<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Oran University 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed, ahoriya@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup>Oran University 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed, hattab-2000@yahoo.fr

*Received: 29/08/2022*

*Accepted: 16/09/2022*

*Published: 30/09/2022*

---

**Doi: 10.53284/2120-009-003-034**

### **Abstract :**

The present paper sheds light on the phenomenon of Arabic diglossic switching among radio broadcasters and examines the circumstances under which this linguistic phenomenon is adopted by Ain Temouchent radio broadcasters. Our main interest is to investigate the factors that govern this language contact situation by analysing radio broadcasters' attitudes towards the use of the two Arabic varieties namely Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Algerian Arabic (AA). The research study consists of audio taped material (recordings) for data analysis. The findings show that Arabic diglossic switching is shaped by socio-cultural circumstances which deeply influence the spread of a mixed variety termed as 'Educated Spoken Arabic'; a variety which represents a strategy of communication adopted in order to deliver a clear and easy message to the large audience.

**Keywords:** Arabic language; diglossia; code switching; Arabic diglossic switching; Modern Standard Arabic; Algerian Arabic; mixed variety; Radio broadcasting.

---

\* Corresponding author:



---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the fundamental characteristic of human species, either spoken or written, it plays a great role in our daily relationships. It is used by man to accomplish a process of communication with individuals in his environment as it performs a vital role as a means of showing identity and solidarity among individuals and groups in a given society. Regarded as one of the main languages in the world, Arabic holds distinct linguistic features which have been retained over the centuries though some salient changes which occurred due to the contact with other foreign languages, causing the emergence of new varieties. Some scholars like Al Huri (2017) attribute the emergence of a modern form of Arabic to the spread of literacy, the inception of journalism, as well as the infiltration of the Western culture into the Arab world. The use of Arabic language in Algeria, in its two forms, (Modern Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic) characterizes Algeria as a diglossic speech community.

The present paper is an attempt to see how the two varieties in contact (MSA and AA) are related linguistically and socio-culturally in the domain of media and communication. In order to do so, we have chosen the language used in the programme of Ain Temouchent radio station as a sample. Our main objective is to provide first-hand quantitative and qualitative data on the experience of radio broadcasters in relation to the issue of Arabic diglossic switching. Our research has been undertaken to highlight the different factors influencing the relationship between social-cultural circumstances and the linguistic behaviour of the community working at the local radio of Ain Temouchent. We also studied linguistic choices resulting from this mutual action. One of the reasons behind our choice to tackle the issue of Arabic diglossic switching is the limited number of practical studies carried on language contact situation taking place during radio broadcasting programmes.

## 2. Arabic Diglossia Scope

Diglossia, as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, refers to the situation in which two or more languages or language varieties co-occur throughout the same speech community, each with a distinct range of social functions. One variety reserved to the formal uses i.e. high variety (H), while the informal uses are reserved to the low variety (L), which is associated with less social prestige. Diglossia has been an interesting linguistic inquiry since it was discussed by Ferguson who is most often credited as the first to introduce the notion of a 'high' (H) and a 'low' (L) variety of language in his journal article 'Diglossia' in 1959. However, the term "diglossie" was first introduced by the French Arabist William Marçais in 1930 to describe the linguistic situation in the Arab speaking world (la diglossie arabe), specifically in three North African countries: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. In reference to Arabic diglossia, Ferguson (1959) points out:

Diglossia in Arabic refers to the phenomenon of co-existence of two distinct language varieties in the same speech community



each of which is used for specific linguistic and communicative purposes by its speakers. In the case of Arabic, the standard variety (classical Arabic) is used in formal speeches, university lectures and news media. In contrast, the colloquial variety is used in everyday speech in informal conversational situations by ordinary educated and uneducated Arabs alike. (p.245)

Diglossia may develop from various origins and eventuate in different language situations. However, Arabic diglossia is said to be an old linguistic situation in comparison to other speech communities. Blau (1977) reports that diglossia appeared in the early Muslim cities during the first century of Islam. He suggests that “Arabic diglossia arose as late as the first Islamic century (seventh century CE) in the towns of the Arabic Empire, to a great extent as a result of the great changes that affected the Arabs as consequence of the great Arab conquests” (qtd in Sayahi, 2014, p57). Al Suwaiyan (2018) puts in this way: “diglossia arose during the spread of Islam when the Arabic usage came into contact with other languages and non-Arabs began to speak Arabic” (qtd in Al Sobh et al, 2015, p275).

Nonetheless, many claims were put forward to oppose this view arguing that there was a koiné from which the dialects developed and spread before Islam and the spread of Arabic, as for Corriente (1975) who argues that “the urban colloquials, unlike the Bedouin dialects, derive from a MA (Middle Arabic) Koiné, which is essentially pre- Islamic in its main features” (qtd in Sayahi, 2014, p57). In this respect, Amer et al, (2011, p21) point out “while some scholars maintain that diglossia in Arabic emerged with the Islamic conquests of the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D, others holds that the language of Pre-Islamic poetry was radically different from that of the colloquials, and so they trace the roots of Arabic diglossia to a period predating the rise of Islam”.

Admittedly, it was Ferguson’s original formulation of diglossia that has triggered copious works in this particular sociolinguistic field of research. However, since 1959, the concept of diglossia has been widely discussed and revisited. Many linguists such as (Badawi, 1973; Sayahi, 2014; Albirini, 2016) among others suggest reformulations of Ferguson’s original work and have added several significant considerations. For what concerns Gumperz (1962) diglossia exists not only in multilingual societies which recognize several languages, and not only in societies that utilize vernacular and classical varieties, but also in societies which employ several dialects, register, or functionally differentiated varieties of whatever kind (ibid: p463). He has essentially provided the conceptual apparatus by means of which investigators of multilingual societies could discern the societal patterns that govern the use of the two varieties. For Gumperz (ibid: p464), diglossia is rather a ‘communication matrix’ i.e., a marker of functionally differentiated usage of languages, dialects or registers by speakers in the same or different communities. He suggests that the codes and sub-codes can be dialects, styles, or typologically distinct languages. In each case, a code or a sub-code can be functionally appropriate for a certain group in the community in a particular context (p.464).



Yet the most salient reconfiguration of Ferguson classical model of diglossia was presented by Albirini (2016), for whom, the context-based nature of Ferguson's model conjectured the social and historical conditions (p.17). He criticizes Ferguson's early delineation of diglossia in which "in one set of situation only the H is appropriate, and in another, only L" on the basis that the use of one of the varieties or the other depends largely on the function to be performed and its relation to the high or low code (p.20). Albirini actually studied the distribution of Standard Arabic and Colloquial Arabic in three 'monitored-speech' situations, namely religious speeches, political debates and soccer commentaries. He described the data examined in all three contexts as a mixture of two codes that is characterized by frequent switching from one variety to another (p. 20). For Albirini, speakers use Standard Arabic and Colloquial Arabic to encode and index sociolinguistic functions of varying levels of importance, complexity, and seriousness, irrespective of the context in which they occur. He states:

Speakers switch to Colloquial Arabic to simplify a preceding idea, exemplify, mark a shift in tone from serious to comic, discuss taboo or derogatory issues, introduce daily-life sayings, and scold, insult or personally attack. However, speakers switch to Standard Arabic to, for example, introduce formulaic expressions, signal a shift in tone from comic to serious, produce rhyming stretches of discourse, and take a pedantic stand (p.20).

### **3. Diglossic Switching**

Code switching (hereafter CS) refers to the process in which bilingual speakers shift back and forth between one language or dialect and another language or dialect within the same conversation. Myerhoff (2006) prefers to consider code switching as a distinct phenomenon from diglossia. She argues that code switching is not necessarily institutionalized in the way diglossia is, since there is more individual creativity and flexibility involved. Myerhoff (ibid) "speakers choose different styles of a language depending on where they are, who they are talking to and what kind of impression or persona they want to communicate to their interlocutors. The same thing holds for shifts between different language varieties when people code switch" (p.116). Nevertheless, there are some similarities between the two linguistic phenomena in a sense that CS also implies the shift between registers of the same language. It is to mention that people around the speaker, a desire to fit in, and a need for solidarity are among other social reasons influencing the process of code switching (Wardhaugh, 2006).

In her study investigating the structural constraints on diglossic switching between MSA and Tunisian Arabic, the notion of 'third language' or 'middle varieties' has been analysed by Boussofara-Omar (2003) in terms of Myers-Scotton's (1993) Matrix language frame (MLF) model. An analysis of seventeen public political speeches shows that there is no variety conventionalized as either a 'third language' or a 'middle language' but rather a



pattern of switching between two varieties of Arabic. She indicates that the dialect is the matrix language into which elements of the standard language are embedded. Moreover, she assumes that the switching patterns are systematic and predictable (p.33) i.e., the process of switching is not random and implies the combination of structures from the two varieties. For Boussofara- Omar, diglossic switching embraces all what other scholars would call: hybrids, intra phrasal code switching, or code mixing. For her, all these terms are part of the category ‘diglossic switching’. She relates this phenomenon to social circumstances which deeply influence the spread of such mixed variety, stating that:

The constant leakage and the great overlap between the two varieties spurred by the dramatic social changes (i.e., more widespread literacy and hence higher access to fusha) that took place in the Arab world seem to facilitate the flow both ways, moreover, the growing practice of switching between the two varieties of Arabic may eventually give rise to a national spoken standard that is dialectal in its underlying structure but fusha in its surface realization, in each Arab country. (Boussofara-Omar, 2003:45).

Furthermore, Boussofara-Omar (2006, p77) considers diglossic switching as “a practice that is increasingly growing in the Arab world”. Hamam (2011, p42) makes a similar point stating that “such mixed forms are easily recordable in all Arab audiovisual mass media, in university lecture halls, in national parliaments, in mosques and churches and in all those occasions in which one discusses about more or less educated topics”.

According to Sayahi (2014, p80) diglossic code switching refers to “the act of juxtaposing the H and L varieties of the same historical language during a communicative event”. He presupposes that the functional separation of the two codes, one for formal uses and the other for unscripted speech as defended by Ferguson does not always hold, since in many cases, both varieties overlap within the same context which leads to diglossic code switching. Contradicting Ferguson’s (1959) point of view which argued that sermons in mosques are a typical context where the H variety would be used exclusively, Sayahi (2014) analysed six sermons delivered in 2009 in Tunisia. The results show that all six sermons contained extensive diglossic code switching both at the inter-sentential and at the intra-sentential level.

Sayahi’s analysis highlights the existence of different types of inter-sentential and intra- sentential diglossic switching, where both varieties serve as base language and as language of the switch. In this respect, Sayahi (ibid:94) confirms that “the fact that diglossic code switching happens in oral and written forms and in formal and informal contexts indicates that the separation of domains, which has often been claimed as the central feature of diglossia, is not as categorical as had been thought”. Contrastingly, and following the early Fergusonian assumption for a straight forward functional distribution of the two varieties, Myers-scotton (1986, pp410-411) argues about diglossic code switching that “such switching is not possible in narrow diglossia because there are not two different sets



of role models for a given exchange. Either H gets used for all speech events under this type of exchange or L gets used”.

As for written diglossic code switching, it happens very rarely according to Sayahi (ibid: pp86-87) who states that “written diglossic code switching is relatively new phenomenon that accompanied the increasing acceptance of the writing of the vernacular...however, in electronic communication and in some types of print media, written diglossic switching is observed in an increasing fashion”. To illustrate this case where written diglossic code switching is used, Sayahi (ibid: p87) analysed sixty seven editorials published in Tunisia between July and December 2010. The data show that the author frequently uses Tunisian Arabic expressions in an attempt to better connect with his readers and to reflect the position of an informed cultural observer. Whereas in informal conversations, Sayahi realized in his semi-directed interviews with Tunisian speakers that educated Tunisian speakers code switch more often to French than to standard Arabic. He says

Diglossic switching in informal conversation is limited quantitatively and qualitatively. It is limited to noun phrases and competes with French as the speakers tend to code switch more often to French than to Standard Arabic, unless the standard Arabic term is the most commonly used, often due to its status as the official term used in administration or education. (Sayahi, ibid: p 95)

In her journal article ‘Aspects of diglossic code switching situations: a sociolinguistic interpretation’ Hayet Bagui (2014, p91) relates this phenomenon to the Algerian context, referring to diglossic switching as ‘internal’ code switching. She points out that “internal CS which occurs between two varieties of the same language is a mixture of H and L in one conversation which is called the middle variety”. Based on the fact that Algeria represents an intricate diglossic code switching situation, Bagui (ibid: p86) argues that the multilingual nature of Algeria implies the switch between not only varieties of the same language, i.e., the case of diglossic switching, but also the switch between two or more linguistic systems. This is referred to as ‘external’ code switching, one which denotes a kind of extended diglossic contexts.

As for the roles attached to the two varieties in a diglossic code switching situation, Walters (1996, p402) indicates that diglossic switching happens with the vernacular serving as the base language. He even assumes that one major difficulty in analysing diglossic code switching is the large number of lexical items and structural features shared between both varieties. Walters’ point of view on the dominance of the vernacular in diglossic code switching situations was also adopted by Sayahi (2014, p81) who argues that “a considerable amount of diglossic switching happens in contexts where MSA is the unmarked code, with the vernacular gradually encroaching upon it. These domains include



education, religion, politics and certain types of mass media programming”. In the same vein, research studies on diglossic code switching in radio and TV monologues and political discourses undertaken respectively by Eid (1982), Bassiouney (2006), Boussofara-Omar (1999, 2003, 2006) show that speakers investigated in above cited studies mixed the two varieties of Arabic, in many cases with the vernacular more often serving as the base language as in the Tunisian political discourses analysed by Boussofara-Omar. Focusing on broadcast interviews, Mejdell (1999) considered her subject’s use of SA and QA as a form of style shifting, in which the two forms of Arabic are mixed. She attributes mixed style to the ambiguity of the media situation, which combines the informality of face-to-face interactions and the formality of public performance (p.323).

#### **4. An Emerging Mixed Code**

Some linguistic research studies argue for the existence of intermediate varieties between Standard and Colloquial Arabic, others for the possibility of the coexistence of the two varieties in the same context, and still others for the existence of an Arabic continuum rather than a strict opposition between MSA and the vernaculars. All in all, a new form of widely intelligible spoken Arabic seems to be emerging in the Arab world with a rich terminology. Bouhadiba (1998, p2) assumes that “the amalgamation of the different varieties gives birth to an intermediate level of Arabic”. Along the same line, Ball (2010, p 241) reports that “the relationship between the two idealized poles (H and L) is conceptualized as a continuum with various patterns of mixing”. The change in both varieties has been a central axis of research on diglossic situations and its contribution to the linguistic theory. In fact, this line of research, which came into sight at the beginning of the 1970s, perceived the Arabic sociolinguistic situation as not only diglossic, but polyglossic and contiglossic (Albirini, 2016, p21).

The intermediate variety would consist of MSA as the standard language but with heavy influence from the L variety. Mitchell (1986) referred to such variety as Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA) arguing that “this variety of Arabic is not one of a series of separate varieties, on a par with MSA and the vernacular, but rather is created and maintained by the constant interplay of written and vernacular Arabic” (p.13). In defining this intermediate variety, Mitchell (ibid: 125) assumes that “ESA is the virtually unregistered mixed Arabic that provides the basis for the koineised Arabic of intercommunication between Arabs of different countries. It is this ‘inter-Arabic’ koine or ‘standard spoken Arabic’”. El-Hassan (1978) also used the term (ESA), for to him, is a new variety of Arabic which draws upon both the standard and the colloquial Arabic.

Thus, it is the interplay between written Arabic and dialectal Arabic that creates Educated Spoken Arabic. The intermediate spoken variety of Arabic as labeled (ESA) noticeably includes a set of specific linguistic features which incorporate elements of both standard and colloquial Arabic. These features according to Ryding (1991) comprise: lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic features in which linguistic items are largely that of



MSA, however, cover a great deal of common discourse ground, i.e. the rules are applied for the most part in keeping with the rules of MSA (p.215).

Numerous terms and taxonomies have been used by the Sociolinguistic research community to describe intermediate varieties of Arabic. These taxonomies can be regarded according to Albirini (2015, p24) as “a sign of healthy intellectual activity and development in the field of Arabic sociolinguistics and its affiliate disciplines despite apparent terminological confusion”. This mixed code of Arabic is considered by many scholars as an ‘incorrect form’ of Arabic, because of its incapacity to fully respect the standard rules. According to Al Huri (2012) for example, the dominance of colloquial Arabic in the programs of the Arab channels, on the one hand, and the marginalization of MSA, on the other, is bound to affect the Arabs’ linguistic behaviours and eventually leads to the deterioration of Arabic at all levels (p.62-63).

### **5. Ain Temouchent Local Radio: an Overview of the Setting**

The local radio of Ain Temouchent is a state-owned station, inaugurated on March 26th, 2008. It broadcasts over airwaves through its 95.9 FM frequency. It can be reached by internet and satellite. This radio channel covers daily events in many sectors and serves its listeners by offering a wide variety of content that contains news coverage and information programming. Ain Temouchent’s channel schedule is based on political events, environmental issues, and women’s concerns, and local arts, programs for youngsters, cultural and historical events, music, and sport. It mainly broadcasts in Arabic. The channel’s staff is composed of thirty one employees. We have observed that Ain Temouchent Local Radio Channel is to some extent exposed to the issue of diglossic switching. Radio broadcasters experience this sociolinguistic phenomenon as a living reality through their constant use of Arabic varieties.

### **6. Methodology and Investigation Instruments**

Direct observation is the first method used to collect the basic information about the issue. At this step, the main focus was to observe radio broadcasters attitudes towards the use of both varieties of Arabic (MSA) and (AA). The results were joined to the next tool of data collection based on tape recordings extracted from different kinds of radio programs. In analysing the radio extracts, the following steps have been taken into consideration: which variety is dominant, whether sentences start in Algerian Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic, and the differences in the grammatical and phonetic patterns between the two varieties. This procedure has helped to discover a means of communication that is specific to the radio context.

### **7. Participants’ Direct Observation Analysis**

Participants’ direct observation was used as the first instrument in this research study to gain a large amount of data by taking notes from the daily linguistic attitudes of radio broadcasters. Milroy & Gordon (2003) emphasize on the advantage of direct observation in research study by saying that: “the principal benefits of participant observation are (a) the





amount and quality of the data collected and (b) the familiarity with community practices gained by the investigators”(p.68). They support this point of view by adding: “participant observation can be an enormously fruitful method for sociolinguistic analysis. It produces a tremendous supply of high quality data and crucial insight into community dynamics” (ibid: 69). It is worth noting that the researcher is a member of the community under investigation. Therefore, it was easy for her to gather a large amount of information through direct observation of radio broadcasters’ linguistic attitudes.

We observed throughout our analysis of the corpus that radio broadcasters display some mastery of MSA and AA in addition to the use of these varieties interchangeably. In fact, the above cited varieties of Arabic are related in a natural and homogenous way. Apart from news sessions which are conducted in MSA, almost all other radio programs indicate the use of a mixture between the two varieties. What is fairly noticeable is that, when presenting news, some words which lack the exact term in MSA are replaced by AA items, in many cases; these items are related to food and traditional matters. For example: /karanti:ka/ (a traditional dish), /maqrū: t̤/ (traditional cake). This act is actually justified by the fact that MSA currently lacks the exact terms as those possessed by the AA.

Moreover, the specificity of Ain Temouchent local radio is that the situation involves the use of different regional dialects conterminously i.e. other national dialects are not excluded. In fact, radio broadcasters interact with the population of Ain Temouchent with the local dialect they share together, whereas they use other national dialects to communicate with speakers and audience of other dialects. It also has been noticed that some radio broadcasters’ idiolect is influenced by contact with other Algerian regional dialects. These broadcasters eventually, use a mixture of Algerian dialects for example /jhab/ (to love) (Algiers’ dialect) instead of /jaḅyi/. Sometimes, the use of /q/ instead of /g/. They seem to identify with a different speech style and from which they seek closeness with the large audience. As noted in S’hiri (2002) “During situations of Arabic dialect intra lingual contact, speakers of different Arabic dialects tend to modify their speech styles to adapt to each other’s dialect. This process is referred to as convergent accommodation” (quoted in Alsaḥafi, 2016, p.9).

We have eventually noticed that in many cases, MSA presents a problem of correctness in elocution (As Salama Fi Nutq). In presenting the news for instance, it has been perceived that some journalists find it difficult to pronounce some phonemes in MSA such as /ḍ/ and /ṭ/ , they even confuse sometimes between /ḍ̣/ and /ḍ̣̣/. It should also be noted that in some cases; MSA is not employed in spontaneous speech situations apart from AA. For that matter, some programs which are broadcasted only in this variety are generally not live or interactive. The choice of the right vocabulary is intensely important and no mistake is tolerated. Another attitude which caught our attention is that some radio broadcasters often shift from one language to another generally from Arabic to French when they interact especially with high educated guests. This may indicate, in some sort, the prestige still attributed to this foreign language.



### 8. Recordings' Analysis

Tape recordings have been used as an alternative elicitation procedure. This method was used to have concrete examples and real situations that show the use of Arabic with its different varieties. The table below consists of five audio tape recordings extracted from Ain Temouchent radio programmes.

**Table 1.** Recordings

Examples	Original passage	Transcription	English	Comments
(1)	يجب الوالدين باش ما يكونش عندهم هاذ الارتباط الوثيق بالاجهزة الذكية.	/jaʒib lwa:ldi:n ba:ʃ ma:jku:nʃ ʃandhu:m ha:ð lʔirtiba:tʃ lwaθi :q bil ʔaʒhiza ððakijja/	Parents should not have this close connection to smart devices.	* The preposition /ʃala:/ is omitted. The correct form is /jajib ʃala : alwa :lidajn/.  *The AA /lwa :ldi :n/ is adapted from the MSA noun /al wa:lidajn/  *The MSA item /likaj/ is replaced by the AA item /ba: ʃ/  *The MSA /la: jaku:n/ is replaced by the AA /ma:jku:nʃ/  *The AA/ʃandhu:m/ is adapted from the MSA /ʃindahum/, the MSA/i/ is replaced by /a/ in



				<p>AA.</p> <p>*In the first syllable and the MSA /a/ in the second syllable is omitted in AA.</p>
(2)	<p>مساحة معتبرة جدا... و لكن هاذ المساحة اذا تم العناية بها عناية كافية.. لانو تغرس شجرة و من بعد ما تبعهاش كلي ما درت والو.</p>	<p>/misa: <u>h</u>a mu<u>ʃ</u>tabara zidda:n wala:kkin ha:ð lmisa:<u>h</u>a iða: tam ʔal <u>ʃ</u>ina:ja biha: <u>ʃ</u>ina:ja ka:fia: liʔannu: tayras <u>ʃ</u>azra: wmanba:<u>ʃ</u>d ma:ttaba<u>h</u>ha :<u>ʃ</u> kalli: ma:dart wa:lu:/</p>	<p>A very large space, but if this space is taken into consideration, because planting a tree and you do not care about it, as if you did not do anything.</p>	<p>*The sentence begins in MSA and ends in AA.</p> <p>* The AA/ ha:ð / is adapted from the MSA preposition /ha: ðihi /.</p> <p>*The AA / liʔannu:/ is adapted from the MSA /liʔannahu/.</p> <p>*The AA / tayras/ is adapted from the</p>

**Arabic Diglossic Switching in Radio Broadcasting**  
**The Case of Ain Temouchent Local Radio**



				<p>MSA verb /tayrisu/, the MSA /i/ is replaced by /a/in AA and the final MSA /u/ omitted in AA.</p> <p>*The AA /ʃazra/ is adapted from the MSA noun /ʃazara/ ,the vowel /a/ is omitted in AA.</p> <p>*The AA /ma:ttabaḥḥa :ʃ/ is adapted from the MSA verb/la: tuta :biʃuḥa :/.</p> <p>*The AA phrase /kalli: ma:da :rt wa:lu:/ has no existence in MSA , its equivalence is /kaʔannaka lam taffʃal ʃajʔan/.</p>
--	--	--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



<p>(3)</p>	<p>حقيقة الامر اننا نقولو بزاف صوالح و لكن ما نديرو همش.</p>	<p>/ħa:qi:kat lʔamr annana: ngu:lu: bazza:f swa:laħ wa lakkin ma: ndi:ru:hu:m ʃ/</p>	<p>Actually, we say a lot of things, but we do not do them.mmmmmm</p>	<p>*The sentence begins with MSA and ends with AA.  *The AA /ngu:lu: / is adapted from the MSA verb /naqu:lu/ , MSA /q/ is replaced by AA/g/.  *No existence of the AA/ bazza:f/ in MSA, its equivalence is /kaθi: ran/  *No existence of the AA /swa:laħ/ in MSA ,its equivalence is /aʃja :ʔ/  *No existence of the AA / ma: ndi:ru:hu:m ʃ/ ,its equivalence is /la : nafʃaluha:/</p>
<p>(4)</p>	<p>هكذا تنقضي الحلقة... اذا نسينا صوالح اكيد نتوما رايحين تنبهونا عليها من خلال مداخلاتكم.</p>	<p>/ ha:kaða: tanqadʕi: ʔl ħalaqa iða: nsi:na: swa:laħ ʔki:d ntu:ma: rajħi :n tnabhu:na: ʃli:ha: min xila:l</p>	<p>We have ended the programme, if we have forgotten something; surely you will remember us through your</p>	<p>*The sentence begins with MSA and ends with MSA  *The AA /ntu:ma: / is adapted from the MSA antu:m/</p>

**Arabic Diglossic Switching in Radio Broadcasting**  
**The Case of Ain Temouchent Local Radio**



		muda:xala:tiku:m/	interventions.	*The AA /tnabhu:na:/ is adapted from the MSA /tunabbihunana:/
(5)	الطامة الكبرى انو نديرو صوالح سيئة سلبية امام ابناءنا و نقولولهم هادي ما ديرو هاش.	/ʔtʔa:mmatu lkubra: annu: ndi:ru: swa:lah sajjiʔa silbijja ʔma:m ʔbna:ʔna: wangu:lu:lhum ha:ði: ma:ddi :ru:ha:f/	The great disaster is that we do bad and negative things in front of our children, and then we ask them not to do these things.	*The sentence begins with MSA and ends with AA.  *The MSA /annana:/ is replaced by the AA / annu:/.  *The MSA symbol /q/ is pronounced /g/ in AA as in /ngu:lu:lhum/ instead of /naqu:lu lahum/. *The MSA negation /la:/ is replaced by the AA /ma:/ as in / ma:ddi :ru:ha:f/ instead of /la : tafʔalu :ha:/

The data gathered from the table indicate that in radio broadcasters' utterances, the two varieties of Arabic (MSA and AA) come together. Some utterances begin and end in the H variety (MSA). The L variety (AA) predominates in some other utterances. This might probably indicate the use of this variety as a marker of solidarity with the audience. The mixture between the two varieties (H and L) takes place at the intrasentential and/or intrasentential levels. As for the word order, it often does not follow MSA syntactic specification (VSO), but rather (SVO). It is of significance to mention that most of the



words used in the AA variety are adapted from MSA with some differences in pronunciation.

The recorded corpus that we have analysed reveals that the Arabic varieties under study keep their distinct phonological and morphological functioning. We have also observed that some MSA complex grammatical items are deleted or replaced by simplified AA items. At the phonological level, MSA vowels are deleted or reduced in AA as in the AA /ʃaʒra/ (he exploded) instead of /ʃaʒara/ in MSA, the AA /jfu:z/ (he won) instead of the MSA /jafu:zu/, the AA /təʔrəs/ (she planted) instead of the MSA /tayrisu/. Consonant addition is another phenomenon that has been observed in our informants' utterances. An example of that would be the addition of the consonant /ʃ/ at the end of some (AA) words as in: /ba: ʃ/ (in order to) and /ma: ttabbaʃha: ʃ/ (he did not follow it) where /ʃ/ is used as a negative particle. It has been also noticed from the analysis of the radio extracts that one verb can adjoin another as in /rajhi:n ttabhu:na: ʃ/ (you will warn us). This connection between two verbs is not common in MSA.

Algerian Arabic Morphological simplification has been observed by many scholars working on diglossic switching involving modern and colloquial Arabic. We have similarly observed some cases of this simplification in the language of Ain Temouchent broadcasters. An example of that would be the absence of verb objet inflectional case-marking and plural inflectional marking as in AA /ta:baʃtu:ha: ʃ/ (you followed them) instead of the MSA /ta:baʃtumu :ha: ʃ/ (you followed them), the AA /stfadi:tu: ʃ/ (you benefited) instead of the MSA /istafadtum/ (you benefited).

The analysis of our corpus has revealed instances of fusion between Modern and Colloquial Arabic. This intermediate variety has been called: Allugha Al Wusta: the Middle variety. It is known in the media field as: colloquial educated variety (Addaridja Al Muhaddaba). One of the characteristics of this variety is that its basic features are predominantly standard, with some phonological, morphological and syntactic colloquial adaptations. This variety combines features from MSA and AA. This forms a linguistic continuum involving the two Arabic varieties.

This Arabic intermediate variety, which has been observed in the speech of radio broadcasters, is characterized by a flexible phonetic system. The data under light in the present study reveal a process of substitution or omission of phonemes at different levels. This variety is a simplified form of MSA adopted by Ain Temouchent radio broadcasters as a strategy of communication. It should be noted that in spite of the omission or reduction of vowels and sometimes the whole syllable in this intermediate variety, the meaning remains the same as in MSA.

## 9. Results' Discussion

We have observed that Ain Temouchent radio broadcasters switch between MSA and AA in what plainly brings forth an intermediate level of Arabic. We may hypothesize that these middle varieties are used to diminish the gap between MSA and AA. MSA does not seem to be used a lot in programs broadcasted in the radio station of Ain Temouchent

## Arabic Diglossic Switching in Radio Broadcasting The Case of Ain Temouchent Local Radio



because of its status as an H variety and because of its apparent complexity. The middle varieties of Arabic used instead might be considered as a code which has the capacity of being understood by all people from various social and instructive backgrounds. We may therefore hypothesize that Arabic diglossic switching is an alternative process adopted and adapted by radio broadcasters in order to deliver and convey a clear and easy message.

Taking into account that code's intelligibility is a crucial factor in social contact, Arabic diglossic switching between the two varieties enables radio broadcasters to interact more effectively with auditors from different backgrounds. Diglossic switching becomes a communicative strategy used to reach a wider audience as a consequence to that.

In spite of the systemic linguistic independence of AA and MSA, these two varieties cannot be kept apart for sociolinguistic and communicative reasons. Radio broadcasters do not use MSA or AA in an exclusive manner as this would certainly prevent a large number of audience to react to the different topics being discussed on Temouchent Radio. Indeed, the coexistence of the two varieties side by side allows the local dialect i.e. Temouchent Arabic to be in contact with MSA.

In the light of what has been mentioned in the practical side of this paper, we may assume that the two varieties of Arabic (MSA and AA) are related in their context of use to the extent that many radio broadcasters do not use Standard Arabic solely. They rather use an intermediate level of Arabic i.e. Educated Spoken Arabic which represents the first medium of communication adopted and adapted by Ain Temouchent radio broadcasters. Therefore, maintaining a cleavage between H and L is quite impossible at this local radio. It is worth mentioning that switching between MSA and Ain Temouchent AA takes place spontaneously. This reflects to some extent Ain Temouchent radio broadcasters' sociolinguistic and communicative linguistic competence to conform to a more context-appropriate style of speech. Consequently, this resulting mixed variety, as an effective strategy of communication, is supposed to lessen the linguistic tension between people having different educational backgrounds.

Notwithstanding its being a spoken variety, we may argue that Temouchent AA remains a variety which fulfils a communicative function in Ain Temouchent radio broadcasting. It is assumed that the association of AA with MSA, could affect some undesirable AA items to become more appropriate and suitable. It should also be noted that the use of AA items does not always mean that they have no equivalence in MSA, it seems that radio presenters prefer these terms to distinguish their own register.

It has been as well realized that while addressing audience, many mechanisms affect language use and contribute in the process of Arabic diglossic switching at the local radio of Ain Temouchent. The factors that actually govern this linguistic attitude are generally related to social aspects. Actually, language use in the local radio accordingly has as much to do with society as with language in the sense that radio broadcasters cannot interact only in MSA due to the fact that illiteracy still exists because of the colonialism negative effects.





For such a reason, radio broadcasters adopt an intermediate level of Arabic in order to be in touch with the large population. Thus, the local identity and the specificity of Ain Temouchent region, shape the way language is used among radio presenters.

The analysis of the corpus leads the researcher to these considerations:

- The idea of a distinct MSA and a distinct AA is not always reliable in radio broadcasting of Ain Temouchent, since a mixture of AA and MSA takes place: a mixed code represents the first medium of communication with the audience.
- A process of speech accommodation is adopted by radio presenters in a way that this mixed variety can allow the local vernacular items to be adopted and adapted.

It is important as well to mention in this respect that changes in pronunciation and vocabulary take place in time and space, which affirms that language, is never static. As a result of modernization, and the impact of rapidly-spreading communication technology, the attitudes and perceptions of Arabic language mainly dialectal variety (AA) may change. One may easily notice that AA is in a state of constant change because of world-wide globalization and openness to social networks; it now becomes unstable and faces real challenges. As for standard Arabic, the researcher assumes that the danger is far away because the language is associated with the religion of Islam and the Holy Qu'ran.

On the basis that dialectal language (in our case AA) is regarded as an expression of culture and identity, it is considered necessary to maintain and promote AA in the local radio, since the radio broadcasting has a great impact on language users through its constant contact with them. In this sense, It seems to be that AA which has a higher rate of frequency among people; if it is associated with MSA, it can meet social and linguistic needs, as it can become more appropriate and suitable to compete MSA which is noticeably evaluated on the basis of its long literary and religious heritage.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The linguistic situation in radio broadcasting does not match with Fergusons' H and L dichotomy since H and L are not always kept separate in radio broadcasters' daily interaction with the audience. These two varieties (H and L) are, from a socio-communicative point of view, in more or less complementary distribution. The coexistence of the two varieties at the same time is largely noticeable. In their daily interaction with audience, radio broadcasters seem to have a tendency towards the use of an intermediate variety of Arabic .A variety that is codified to the extent that it can be easily understood by different radio listeners. Arabic diglossic switching is a very common practice among radio broadcasters. In fact, this linguistic process is adopted by radio broadcasters not only for filling linguistic gaps in one of the varieties, but often used as a communicative strategy to convey linguistic and social information. Thus, the intention, in most of time, is to deliver the right and the better meaning related to the society radio broadcasters belong to. Accordingly, it has its own set of intricate rules and actually adds much more to

## Arabic Diglossic Switching in Radio Broadcasting The Case of Ain Temouchent Local Radio



---

communication than just switching to another variety. Therefore, Arabic diglossic switching among radio broadcasters can emphasize one's identity as belonging to a certain group, as it can be a tool for expressing solidarity.



## 5. Bibliography List:

### 1. Books :

Albirini, A. (2016). *Modern Arabic Sociolinguistics: Diglossia, code switching, attitudes and identity*. London: Routledge.

Badawi, S. M. (1973). *Mustawaya:t al-‘arabi:ya al-mu’a:sira fi: Misr*. Cairo: Da:r al-Ma’a:rif.

Ball, M.J. (2010). *The Routledge Handbook of Sociolinguistics around the World*. London: Routledge.

Bassiouney, R. (2017). *Functions of code switching in Egypt: Evidence from monologues*. Brill.

Eerdmans, S., Prevignano, C., & Thibault, P. J. (Eds.). (2003). *Language and interaction: discussions with John J. Gumperz*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Mejdell, G. (1999). Switching, Mixing-Code Interaction in Spoken Arabic. In. B. Brendemoen., E. Lanza., & E. Ryen (Eds.), *Language Encounters across Time and Space, Oslo:Novus*, 225-241.

Meyerhoff, M. (2006). *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. London: Routledge.

Milroy, L and Gordon, M (2003). *Sociolinguistics: Method and Interpretation*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Sayahi, L. (2014). *Diglossia and Language Contact. Language Variation and Change in North Africa*. Cambridge University Press.

S'hiri, S. (2002). Speak Arabic please: Tunisian Arabic speakers' linguistic accommodation to Middle Easterners. In. A. Rouchdy (Ed.), *Language Contact and Language Conflict in Arabic Variations on a Sociolinguistic Theme*. New York: Curzon.

Wardhaugh, R. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. (5th ed.). Blackwell.

### 2. Theses:

Al Huri, I.H (2012). *The Impact of Diglossia in Teaching/Learning the Arabic Course in Sana'a Secondary school* [Unpublished Thesis]. University of Tlemcen.

### 3. Journal article

Alsahafi, M. (2016). Diglossia: An Overview of the Arabic Situation. *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research*, 4(4), 1-11.



- 
- Al-Sobh, M. A., Abu-Melhim, A. R. H., & Bani-Hani, N. A. (2015). Diglossia as a result of language variation in Arabic: Possible solutions in light of language planning. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(2), 274-279.
- Al Suwaiyan, L. A. (2018). Diglossia in the Arabic language. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 5(3), 228-238.
- Amer, F. H., Adaileh, B. A., & Rakhieh, B. A. (2011). Arabic diglossia. *Argumentum*, 7, 19-36.
- Bagui, H. (2014). Aspects of diglossic code switching situations: A Sociolinguistic Interpretation. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 2(2), 86-92.
- Blau, J. (1977). The beginnings of the Arabic diglossia: A study of the origins of NeoArabic. *Monographic Journals of the Near East*, 4(4).
- Bouhadiba, F. (1998). Continuum linguistique ou alternance des codes?: essai d'analyse dynamique des faits : états des lieux. *Cahier de linguistique et de didactique*, 1, ILE, Oran.
- Boussofara-Omar, N. (2003). Revisiting Arabic diglossic switching in light of the MLF model and its sub-models: the 4-M model and the Abstract Level model. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 6(1), 33-46.
- Boussofara, N. (2006). Learning the 'linguistic habitus' of a politician: A presidential authoritative voice in the making. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 5(3), 325-358.
- Eid, M. (1982). The non-randomness of diglossic variation in Arabic. *GLOSSA-AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS*, 16(1), 54-84.
- El-Hassan, S. A. (1978). Variation in the demonstrative system in educated spoken Arabic. *Archivum Linguisticum Leeds*, 9(1), 32-57.
- Ferguson, C. A. (1959). Diglossia. *word*, 15(2), 325-340.
- Fishman, J.A. (1965). Who speaks what language to whom and when. *La linguistique*, 2, 7-88.
- Hamam, M. (2011). Text vs. Comment: Some examples of the rhetorical value of the Diglossic code-switching in Arabic—a Gumperzian approach. *Pragmatics*, 21(1), 41-67.
- Mitchell, T, F. (1986). What is educated spoken Arabic? *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 61, 7-32.



---

Myers-Scotton, C., & Jake, J. L. (2001). Explaining aspects of code-switching and their implications. *One mind, two languages: Bilingual language processing*, Oxford: Blackwell, 84-116.

Ryding, K. C. (1991). Proficiency despite diglossia: A new approach for Arabic. *The Modern Language Journal*, 75(2), 212-218.

Walters, K. (1996). Diglossia, linguistic variation, and language change in Arabic. *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics*, 10, 134-157.