Arabic Cross-dialectal Conversations with Implications for the Teaching of Arabic as a Second Language

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Dedication

To my parents

Hend El-Naggar and Kadry Soliman

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"In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful. All praise to Allah by whose grace good deeds are achieved"

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Abstract

This research is divided into two interlinked parts. The first part reviews literature on the diglossia and variability of the Arabic language and investigates how mutual intelligibility is achieved in informal conversations between speakers of different Arabic dialects. 11 conversations were recorded between speakers of 12 Arabic dialects. Instances of borrowing from Modern Standard Arabic were observed and analysed. The participants were also interviewed after the recorded conversations in order to get more insight into the listening comprehension strategies that they applied to achieve intelligibility. The results show that the native speakers tend to rely mostly on their native dialect in cross-dialectal interaction with a much smaller number of borrowings from Modern Standard Arabic in comparison with previous studies. A number of listening strategies were observed to be used in order to aid intelligibility. These strategies included making use of the context, ignoring non-content words and making use of their linguistic knowledge and the root and pattern system in Arabic as a frame of reference in comprehending unfamiliar cognates. The analysis also showed that dialect familiarity has a major role in aiding comprehension between the native speakers of different Arabic dialects.

The second part, first, examines the needs of learning Arabic as a second language in Higher Education, then presents a case study that tests the advanced Arabic learners' level of cognate recognition in unfamiliar dialects and whether explicit strategy teaching and lexical training can improve their dialectal lexical comprehension. Five final year university students of Arabic with an advanced level in MSA and exposure to a dialect participated in this study. Pre and post-tests of dialectal listening comprehension were administered. The results of a higher score in the post-test confirmed that the explicit strategy training helped the Arabic students to achieve better comprehension of cognates in unfamiliar dialects.

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List of Abbreviations

TASL	Teaching Arabic as a Second Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
H	High form in diglossia
L	Low form in diglossia
HE	Higher Education
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
CA	Classical Arabic
ESA	Educated Spoken Arabic
FSA	Formal Spoken Arabic

Transliteration Scheme

The transliteration system used throughout this thesis is mainly the DIN31635 ("Intellibe - Intellaren,") which is presented in the following table showing the Arabic letters, their equivalents in the DIN31635 system and the nearest equivalents in the IPA system. For some Arabic sounds, the IPA system is used as presented in the tables below. Some Arabic letters have different pronunciation in the dialects included in this study; these are also presented in the tables below and indicated to be dialectal. In reference to individual sounds, the IPA system is used.

Consonants

Transliteration symbols	**Arabic**	**IPA**	**Transliteration symbols**	**Arabic**	**IPA**
ʔ	ء	ʔ	ḍ	ض	ɮˤ
b	ب	b	ṭ	ط	tˤ
t	ت	t	ḏ	ظ	ðˤ
ṯ	ث	θ	ẓ (dialectal)	ظ	zˤ
s (dialectal)	ث	s	ʕ	ع	ʕ
dj / j	ج	dʒ / ʒ	ġ	غ	ɣ
g (dialectal)	ج	g	f	ف	f
y (dialectal)	ج	j	q	ق	q
ḥ	ح	ħ	ʔ (dialectal)	ق	ʔ
ḳ	خ	x	g (dialectal)	ق	g
d	د	d	k	ك	k
ḏ	ذ	ð	ch (dialectal)	ك	tʃ
z (dialectal)	ذ	z	l	ل	l
r	ر	r	m	م	m
z	ز	z	n	ن	n
s	س	s	h	ه	h
š	ش	ʃ	w	و	w
ṣ	ص	sˤ	y	ي	j

Vowels

Transliteration symbols	**Arabic long vowels**	**IPA**	**Transliteration symbols**	**Arabic short vowels**	**IPA**
ā	ا	ɑ: / a:	a	ـَ	a / ɑ
ā	ا	æ: (dialectal)	a	ـَ	æ
ī	ي	i:	i	ـِ	i
ē (dialectal)	ي	e:	e (dialectal)	ـِ	e
ū	و	u:	u	ـُ	u
ō (dialectal)	و	o:	o (dialectal)	ـُ	o

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Arabic language and its diglossic nature

A language can be briefly defined as a tool for communication (Fromkin et al., 1999). Humans need to interact with each other and language facilitates this interaction, whether it is spoken, written or signed. The interaction does not have to be only between two or more people, but also with oneself as in thinking aloud or in writing shopping lists and reminders or with other entities as in praying to God for example. The functions of a language are innumerable; we advise, inform, encourage, tell off, correspond with letters, educate, ask, enliven or even offend each other with language. Language can also be used as a type of art or for entertainment as in singing, calligraphy and poetry. Each of these functions can be achieved using different choices of words and different syntactic structures of utterances depending on the context while still considered being within one language. For example, a German recipe book would have specific words and collocations which would be considerably different from the language of the German press. This variation in the use of language is referred to as "register" (Yule, 1996). Language use can change also in achieving the same task – in the same context – but in a different social situation. For instance, the language used for asking for directions could differ in some cultures depending on the formality of the situation i.e. the age and the gender of the addressee. The latter type of language variation is referred to in sociolinguistics as a variation in the "style" (Stockwell, 2002).

When the difference in the pronunciation, vocabulary use and the grammatical structures of the varieties of the same language becomes significant in achieving different functions, this phenomenon is not referred to as a variation of register or style, but rather as "Diglossia". Although the phenomenon of diglossia has always existed in some parts of the world, the term “diglossie” itself was first used in French to describe the Arabic linguistic situation in 1930 by William Marçais. The English equivalent “diglossia” was not used until the late fifties when Charles Ferguson employed it in his famous article “Diglossia” in the journal Word (Ferguson, 1959; Kaye, 2001). One of the diglossic languages that has received a

lot of focus since Ferguson's article is Arabic. This could be due to the fact that its long history, the large number of its native speakers (NSs) and the size of the lands where it is spoken has resulted in a multi-diglossic situation with many Arabic dialectal varieties. Such variation has been stated to be problematic in Teaching Arabic as a Second Language (TASL) (Ferguson, 1963). This is because it requires the teachers and the TASL program coordinators to make decisions regarding which variety to teach and if more than one variety is to be taught, then how many of them and in what order they should be introduced to the second language (L2) learners.

The motivation behind the present research study originates from the researcher's commitment to and experience in TASL and seeks to better understand the diglossia of the Arabic language, how certain diglossic aspects are dealt with among the NSs of different Arabic dialects and how it can be efficiently incorporated into TASL. This research aims to contribute to the field of TASL by investigating pertinent language skills which take Arabic diglossia and variability into account and support learners to acquire some of the goals that they aim for. Prior to presenting the aims and the methodologies of the present study project and its research questions, it is important to review literature on diglossia in general and on Arabic diglossia in particular in order to have an understanding of its nature and its implications for communication between the Arabic NSs and TASL. Therefore, the rest of this chapter will review literature on the definition of diglossia and how it is distinguished from other sociolinguistic phenomena such as bilingualism, register and style. The chapter will also discuss Arabic diglossia, the history of its emergence and the different Arabic varieties, and will conclude with an overview of this research project.

1.1 What is Diglossia?

Diglossia is a linguistic phenomenon that exists when two different forms of the same language are used to achieve different functions within the same speech community. Diglossia has always existed in various communities but did not receive much attention from academics until 1957 when a study was undertaken

on the problem of linguistic duality in the Iraqi speaking community by Al-Toma (Ferguson, 1959, p. 326). Following this study, Ferguson investigated the phenomenon and proposed further research questions to be answered. Ferguson's coinage "diglossia" was modelled on the French word “diglossie”. Ferguson defined diglossia as:

> … one particular kind of standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play
>
> (Ferguson, 1959, p. 325)

He refers to these two varieties as the High form (H) and the Low form (L). H is considered by its NSs to be the prestigious standard language while L is the day-to-day spoken language which does not have the same prestige but is rather considered a corrupted form of H by some of its NSs. L is acquired at home and never taught in schools while H is analysed in terms of its syntax and lexicon and taught in primary and high schools. Ferguson also described H as the language of education, conference presentations, media, religious speeches and ceremonies and the language which has usually been chosen to be taught as a second language. On the other hand, L is not as prestigious; its syntax is not analysed in order to be taught in schools and usually not chosen by teachers to be taught as a second language either. Ferguson proposed three conditions in which diglossia naturally arises:

1. The availability of a sizable body of literature in a language similar to the spoken variety of a certain community and which carries fundamental values and beliefs for that community.
2. When literacy is limited to a small elite in that community
3. A long period of time having passed between the first two conditions.

In his article, Ferguson's chose four examples to describe diglossia; Arabic, Swiss German, Modern Greek and Haitian Creole and he referred to these languages to

compare the two forms in terms of: function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon and phonology. He indicated that the most important feature of diglossia is the specialization of function for H and L. Table 1.1 below illustrates a sample listing of possible situations stated by Ferguson indicating the variety normally used for each of them[1]:

Table 1.1: The functional situations for H and L in diglossic languages according to Ferguson's definition

The functional situation	**H**	**L**
Sermon in church or mosque	X	
Instructions to servants, waiters, workmen and clerks		X
Personal letter	X	
Speech in parliament and political speech	X	
University lecture	X	
Conversation with family, friends and colleagues		X
News broadcast	X	
Radio "soap opera"		X
Newspaper editorial, new story, caption on picture	X	
Caption on political cartoon		X
Poetry	X	
Folk literature		X

(Ferguson, 1959, p. 329)

In describing diglossia, Ferguson relied on his own suppositions on how a diglossic language comes into being, how it is acquired and into what direction it develops. Many papers and articles were produced afterwards analysing the phenomenon

[1] The table above is only an example of the different niches of each variety. However it is to be noted that these niches can change with time and geography and can be different from a diglossic language to another. In a more recent field study carried out in Cairo, Wilmsen (2006) observed the language use in political speeches and university lectures and concluded that Egyptian Colloquial Arabic – which would be referred to as (L) according to Ferguson – was the language used in those formal situations (Wilmsen, 2006).

more comprehensively, supporting as well as criticising Ferguson's article. The following section will illustrate briefly other descriptions and definitions of diglossia.

1.1.1 Views on diglossia

After Ferguson's seminal article, there were many attempts to analyse diglossia further and to try to search for other sociolinguistic situations that would provide a more detailed description of the phenomenon. In 1993, Fernandez produced a comprehensive bibliographical book which included almost 3000 entries of papers and articles related to diglossia between 1960 and 1990; they covered about 173 language varieties, out of these, 287 articles were on diglossia in Arabic (Fernandez, 1993). Ferguson's description of diglossia was predominant in the literature until 1967 when an extended definition of diglossia was proposed by Fishman. Fishman (1967) introduced the idea that diglossia could be extended to bilingual situations found in societies where two unrelated varieties - or at least historically distant languages - occupy the H and L roles as in the example of Latin in medieval Europe which was used for religious, educational, literacy and other such prestigious domains, while another language (in the case of medieval Europe, the vernacular languages of that era) is rarely used for such purposes, being only employed for more informal, primarily spoken domains (Fishman, 1967). Another more contemporary example that Fishman gave for a bilingual diglossic situation was in Paraguay, where Guarani and Spanish – two very distinct languages; an indigenous American language and an Indo-European language – serve different social functions. Guarani serves the L functions as assigned by Ferguson while Spanish is the formal language that serves H functions. Fishman's notion was the next step of defining diglossia after Ferguson’s and his definition is recognized as "Fishman's extended diglossia" (Fasold, 1984).

The two definitions of Ferguson and Fishman were analysed more in the seventies and eighties and more questions were raised regarding the limitations of language usage in a diglossic situation. An alternative to Fishman's view started to emerge in Fasold's review of diglossia (Fasold, 1984). He pointed out the lack of specification in Ferguson's article in terms of what "a speech community" exactly

meant. It could be presumed from Ferguson's description and the four language examples he presented that it is a community that lives within certain political borders. This lack of specification of a speech community is what led Fasold to invent the term "diglossic community" rather than "a speech community" to make it less correlated to political boundaries. By a diglossic community he meant the community that uses two different varieties to represent Ferguson's H and L's niches regardless of the geographical locations of the two varieties. In scrutinizing the three views on diglossia, it can be confirmed that all of them emphasized the functional specification in language use to be the main feature of diglossia. Ferguson proposed that the two varieties are related such as Classical Arabic and an Arabic dialect and confirming that Classical Arabic is not used for informal situations. Fishman proposed the un-relatedness of the two varieties as the example mentioned above in Paraguay of the use of Spanish and Guarani where Spanish is not used for informal situations in Paraguay, even though, it is used informally in Spain. Fasold's broad diglossia emphasized the insignificance of language relatedness and proposed the notion that diglossia can include any two different codes such as registers or sub-dialects as long as one of them is not used informally by anyone in a specified diglossic community.

The previous proposed definitions were then studied by Hudson (1994) who agreed with Fasold on the important role which formality plays in defining a diglossic language; however he pointed out that after examining the features of grammar, lexicon and phonology in Ferguson's preliminary discussion, one has to be cautious not to mix between the concepts of formality and diglossia. He points out two issues to distinguish between formality in diglossic and non-diglossic situation; these are the extent of linguistic differences between the two varieties and the level of resistance of the formal variety to influence against the informal one (Hudson, 1994). The literature on the definitions of diglossia is huge and still ongoing studies are trying to analyse the phenomenon. The details discussed in the literature are not presented in this paper as they would be outside the scope of this study; however, a detailed description of Arabic diglossia is presented later in this chapter. In the next section, and before focusing on the Arabic language, it is important to look at some sociolinguistic terms - such as standardisation,

bilingualism, code-switching, code-mixing, register and dialect - and compare them briefly with diglossia in order to provide an adequate comprehensive description of Arabic diglossia and to distinguish it from the other sociolinguistic phenomena that exist in some Arabic speaking communities and to further clarify what a diglossia is, by saying what it is not. In describing diglossia here, Ferguson's abbreviations for the two varieties – H and L – will be used regardless of the languages they refer to.

1.1.2 Diglossia versus standardisation

Diglossia can easily be confused with standardization. In most of the literature in sociolinguistics, the definition of a standard language appears identical to the H in the diglossic situation. For example, a definition of standard English was given in (Yule, 1996, p. 227) as:

> The variety which forms the basis of printed English in newspapers and books, which is used in the mass media and which is taught in schools. It is the variety we normally try to teach to those who want to learn English as a second language.

This definition can be completely applied to H in diglossia; however the main characteristic which differentiates diglossia from standardization is that H and L have limited and specified functions and neither of them can be used solely to achieve all the required communicative functions in the speech community. H is never used for day-to-day conversations by anyone in the community and if this is attempted, it is considered artificial or even unacceptable (Ferguson, 1959). On the other hand, the standard variety in a non-diglossic language is usually used fully and naturally to achieve all the communicative functions of a certain group of people within a certain speech community. Standardization can exist within the diglossic situation. There can be two standard languages for the same community; the standard written language and the standard spoken language. In Egypt, for instance, the Cairene dialect is mostly considered by its NSs to be the standard spoken variety and not the Alexandrian nor the Upper-Egyptian. Versteegh has

pointed out that there is a tendency towards the dialect of the capital city of a country to be the standard spoken variety in diglossia (Versteegh, 1997).

This distinction between standardization and diglossia is important to be recognized in teaching second languages. As it was stated above in Yule's definition of Standard English, the standard variety is usually the one chosen to be taught as a second language. This choice could mean that the learner might not be exposed to the other dialects or accents of English and could encounter difficulties in understanding them; however the Standard English learnt would enable him/her to communicate fully with the NSs. The only disadvantage in that case would be associating that learner with the group who speaks the standard language as a first language (L1). In diglossia, the situation is very different. When the H variety is the only variety taught as a second language, it will enable the learner to achieve its functions in the community, such as writing formal letters, understanding the language of newspapers and reading Arabic books. However, the learner will still need to learn an L variety in order to achieve other functions like; greeting people, booking a ticket or asking for directions.

1.1.3 Diglossia versus bilingualism

Both bilingualism and diglossia mean the existence of two fluent varieties as first languages within the same community. However, there are certain characteristics that differentiate the two phenomena. A simple differentiation is that in bilingualism, an individual is capable of using the two varieties fully to achieve all communicative functions required and the choice of which variety to use depends mainly on the addressee[2]. In diglossia, the level of proficiency in the two varieties is not equal in terms of the language skills; an individual can have a native fluency in speaking L but not in speaking H. The choice of which variety to use in diglossia does not only depend on the addressee but also on other sociolinguistic factors such as the formality of the situation or the type of the language function.

Bilingualism can be collective and can be isolated (Francescato, 1986); this means that a whole society can be bilingual such as in Canada, where English and French

[2] Although a bilingual person can be considered a NS of two varieties, usually one of them tends to be the dominant language with a slightly higher level of proficiency (Yule, 1996).

are both official languages. Isolated bilingualism refers to an individual being brought up using two different languages. Yule (1996) gives the example of a native English and French speaker, who becomes a bilingual as a result of having two parents speak the two different languages. Diglossia is not an isolated phenomenon but always a collective one that characterises a whole community. In collective bilingualism, the two varieties can be recognised as official languages of that community. In diglossia, H is recognised as the official language of the community while L does not have the same status and can even be perceived as a spoken medium in a corrupted form of H. Nevertheless, Ferguson anticipated a slow change in the stability of diglossia and suggested that different L forms can be recognised as official spoken Languages – specifically in the case of Arabic with several low forms being used in different regions. For example, MSA would be the official written language in Egypt while the Cairene dialect would be recognised as the official and standard spoken language (Ferguson, 1959). Observations of the recent linguistic situation in Egypt prove Ferguson's anticipation. Despite the fact that so far there have not been yet any national actions in the Arabic speaking countries to declare a spoken variety as an official language, the use of Cairene Arabic has gained more acceptance in recent years in use in formal situations (Wilmsen, 2006). Diglossia and bilingualism can also exist simultaneously in the same community. An example Tunisia, where the majority of literate people are NSs of Arabic and French and their Arabic is diglossic; MSA is an official language of the country while the people speak Tunisian Arabic dialect in everyday situations (Daoud, 2011).

1.1.4 Diglossia versus code-switching and code-mixing

Code-switching is defined as the shifting from one variety to another by a single speaker. It refers to a linguistic action that is recurrent in bilingualism and in diglossia. In the case of individual bilingualism, switching from one language to another depends on the addressee. For example Arabic-English bilinguals from parents who speak the two languages, would choose to speak Arabic with their Arabic speaking relatives, and would switch to English when speaking with the relatives from the other parent's side. In collective bilingualism, the code-switching is controlled by social rules and is referred to as situational code-

switching such as in the example given by Hudson (1996) of a village in north Italy where the community speaks German within their families and switches to standard Italian at work, school and churches (Hudson, 1996). According to Hudson's description of situational code switching, it can be argued that this is exactly what happens in diglossia when an individual switches from H to L depending on the situation e.g. an Imam who gives the religious ceremony in MSA would switch to his Arabic dialect when greeting people after the end of the ceremony.

This difference in the level of awareness of one's switching between varieties is clearer when comparing between “code-switching” and "code-mixing". In code mixing, the choice to use a specific variety is not necessarily based on the addressee or on the situation, but it is a phenomenon of mixing the two varieties in the same situation. This mixing is not only of the lexicon of the two varieties but can also include applying the syntactic rules of one variety to another (Hudson, 1996). The factors that cause code-mixing to occur are yet to be researched (Wardhaugh, 2006). Code-mixing can be seen in Arabic diglossia in the variety called “Educated Spoken Arabic” in which the L form is used with linguistic features borrowed from H on the phonological, lexical and syntactical levels (Agius and Shivtiel, 1992). According to Bassiouney (2009), some linguists make a distinction between code-switching and code-mixing, differentiating them by the labels “inter-sentential” and “intra-sentential” while others may regard this distinction as creating confusion.[3]

1.1.5 Diglossia versus register

The term “register” refers to a language associated with specific subject matter within the same variety (Fromkin et al., 1999). There are three dimensions that control the use of register; "the field" which means the purpose or the subject matter of the communication e.g. the language of legal documents. The second dimension is "the mode"; meaning whether the language of communication is spoken, signed or written and the last dimension is "the tenor" and this means the

[3] For more detailed discussion on the distinctions between code-switching and code-mixing see Bassiouney (2006), Myers-Scotton (1993) and Mazraani (1997).

relationship between the participants i.e. formal or informal (Hudson, 1994). A change in register does not mean a change in the language variety – as in bilingualism or diglossia - but rather in the choice of words and the grammatical features within the same variety. There is one quality that register and diglossia have in common. This is the community's awareness of the change of register or the change of forms. A register that is associated with a specific social situation is unlikely to be used in another social situation. Yule (1996) gives the example of a religious register such as in "You shall be blessed by Him in times of tribulation" as not to be found in any other non-religious situations. The same type of sociolinguistic association can be applied to diglossia. It can be unacceptable in the community to use H for situations of when L is supposed to be used.

1.1.6 Diglossia and dialects

The term "dialect" has gained a lot of focus from sociolinguists when trying to distinguish it from the term "language". The difference between language and dialect has been ambiguous. The two terms are widely and freely used by ordinary people and for most of them a dialect is a non-prestigious variety of a language (Haugen, 1966, cited in Wardhaugh, 2006 p. 28). Although it can be assumed that there is more intelligibility between dialects than between languages, there can be political and geographical factors that challenges such an assumption. Gumperz (1982) gives the example of Hindi and Urdu, which are considered "different languages" by their speakers. However, the two varieties share many linguistic features and they are mutually intelligible (Gumperz, 1982a, cited in Wardhaugh, 2006 p. 29). Hudson (1996) proposed two factors that determine whether a variety is considered a language or a dialect. These are the size; a dialect is perceived to be derived from a language and not the other way round. The other factor is the prestige that is linked with the language and not the dialect (Hudson, 1996). In diglossia, the L form refers only to the dialects of a certain language, while H refers to the standard language and not to any of the dialects.

1.2 Arabic Diglossia

Arabic is a well-known diglossic language in the field of sociolinguistics which could be due to its large number of native and second language speakers as well as its history. The popularity of the topic of "Arabic diglossia" is evident in Fernandez's bibliography book in which the diglossia of Arabic was discussed in more references than any of the other 173 diglossic languages in his book (Fernandez, 1993). One of the references which focused on the Arabic diglossia was Badawi's renowned description of the language situation in Egypt not having only two forms – H and L - but five levels of language use in a continuum starting from *ʕāmmiyyat al-ʔummiyyīn* "the dialect of the illiterate" up to *fuṣḥā at-turāṯ* "the Classical Arabic of literary texts" (Badawi, 1973). This new concept of Arabic diglossia having a range of forms that are used in an entwined way led to more research work trying to linguistically describe each of these forms and referring to Arabic sometimes as a "multiglossic" instead of a diglossic language (Hary, 1996)[4]. In this section, a brief history of Arabic diglossia and its emergence will be presented, followed by a description of the main Arabic varieties which encompass the diglossic situation of the language and which will be referred to frequently in the rest of this study .

1.2.1 Brief history of Arabic diglossia and its emergence

According to Versteegh (1997), the oldest text found to be almost identical to what is called now Classical Arabic was discovered south east of Damascus and dated 328 AD. However, the word "Arabs" – i.e. speakers of Arabic – dates back to as early as 853 BC (Versteegh, 1997). In pre-Islamic times, many varieties of Arabic existed in the Arabian Peninsula and according to Versteegh (1997), the variety of the middle of the peninsula "Najd" was regarded a poetic language, its prestige being due to the social and political power of the tribes who lived in that area. This sociolinguistic situation is very similar to the contemporary concept of "standard versus dialects" with the variety of Najd being the standard at that time. The linguistic situation then though cannot be described as diglossic because all these Arabic varieties were used by different communities in the peninsula under formal

[4] For convenience, only the term "diglossia" will be used throughout this thesis.

and informal conditions, unlike contemporary Arabic diglossia where one variety is not spoken informally by anyone. Some linguists such as Blau (1977) support the opinion that Arabic diglossia did not start until the Arab conquests of other lands with the language of the Quran being preserved while the spoken varieties were allowed to change naturally like all language varieties (Kaye, 2001). According to Versteegh (1997) also, Arabic diglossia may have started during the Islamic conquests and with the standardisation of Arabic in the occupied lands. The next section will briefly review the process of the standardisation of Arabic. I will then look at the current Arabic varieties and their usages.

1.2.2 The standardisation of Arabic

The beginning of the Islamic period shaped the Classical Arabic language as it is known at the present time and many efforts were made to make sure the language is preserved due to its religious significance and its old social prestige. There have been two original sources of literary Arabic; the Quran and pre-Islamic poems. Based on these two sources, the standardisation of Arabic began. The main reasons for standardisation according to Versteegh (1997) were:

- The divergence between the language of the Bedouin and the other varieties in the empire became a threat to communication.
- To achieve some measure of uniformity.
- To have more control on different areas of the empire.

(Versteegh, 1997, p. 53)

The first step of standardisation was to develop and standardise the Arabic script. This included important decisions which shaped the look of Arabic script until now such as the addition of the diacritic dots around 665AC to distinguish between many letters and the invention of the short vowel signs by the grammarian Abu l-Aswad Addu'ali in 688AC. These changes insured a more correct writing and pronunciation of Arabic by non-Arabs. The second step of standardisation included a detailed description of grammar and lexicon. It was Abu l-Aswad also who started writing a description of Arabic grammar based on the language of the Quran and pre-Islamic poetry and also based on liaising with trustworthy Bedouin

at that time; however, the first proper book that described and explained the grammar of Classical Arabic was written by Sibawayh in the late 700s (Bateson, 2003). He produced a detailed description of Arabic pronunciation, lexical structures and syntactic rules relying on the best sources of Classical Arabic at his time. Sibawayh's work played another important role in standardising and developing Arabic; this was through the lexical and morphological structures that he defined which helped in coining new terms from other languages and cultures. One more addition to Arabic was the loanwords from the occupied lands, particularly medical terminology and names of food and objects which the Arab Bedouin did not know before the conquests.

1.2.3 The languages of the occupied lands

Standardisation played a major role in establishing Arabic in a big region and in the gradual loss of the original languages in the occupied lands such as Aramaic, Coptic and Greek. The stages in which these languages disappeared are not fully known. However, it is found from research that a period of bilingualism existed in these lands, e.g. Coptic and Arabic were spoken in Egypt and Syriac and Arabic in the Levant (Versteegh, 1997). Chejne (1969, p. 60) lists the following to be some of the factors that are believed to have contributed to ending bilingualism in the area and in the domination of Arabic[5]:

- The strong relations and the marriages that occurred between the Arabs and the original people of the conquered lands.
- The continuous and costly wars that these lands had before the Arab conquests which brought moral, cultural and economic dislocation. This made the people welcome the new conqueror along with their language.
- The Arabs had a very strong pride in their language which gradually influenced the people of the conquered lands to aspire to speak the prestigious language of the conqueror.

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[5] It is to be noted here that the issue of the different factors that contributed to the death of the original languages in the occupied lands is considerably debated. For more details on the different scholarly opinions, see Blau (1977), Chejne (1969), Ferrando (2007) and Owens (2013).

1.2.4 The current Arabic varieties

Different Arabic varieties have always existed in the Arabian Peninsula (Versteegh, 1997). However with the Islamic conquests, the language of the Quran became the dominant variety in terms of its high status and it was considered in the Islamic empire as the correct form of Arabic or *al-fuṣḥa*. With the growth of the empire and at an early stage of its formation, different varieties started to take shape and were acknowledged by the linguists and the historians at the time. These new varieties functioned similarly to the Arabic dialects as they are referred to nowadays. While the description of *fuṣḥa at-turāṯ* - or classical Arabic - received significant attention for centuries, the documentation of how the dialects are used did not receive the same focus and until the time of the present study, there are many spoken Arabic dialects that are yet to be linguistically analysed and described (Versteegh, 1997). This section will describe briefly the contemporary varieties of Arabic, their common linguistic features and the elements and functions that distinguish between them. These varieties will be referred to frequently throughout this thesis as it will explore how the NSs deal with their morpho-phonological and lexical differences and how the L2 learners can cope with such variation.

1.2.4.1 Classical Arabic (CA)

This is the variety which is found in old Arabic texts, such as in the Quran, Hadith (the Prophet Muhammad's narrations), the Arabic translated Bible and classical poetry and literature. It is debatable whether CA was actually a spoken variety at any point for achieving the functions of the day-to-day conversations or whether it was mainly a poetic variety (Bateson, 2003). CA was the standard and became the language of administration in all central Islamic states except Iran and Turkey where it was replaced later by Persian and Turkish. Currently, CA is not the language of administration anywhere but rather this more poetic form of Arabic is limited to literature and religious texts and settings (Bateson, 2003). A detailed linguistic description of CA has been preserved since Sibawayh's 'Book' in 700AC. This includes a detailed description of the syntax, morphology and the articulation of the Arabic sounds. The latter was and still is referred to – in religious contexts -

as "*tajwīd* rules"- meaning "the perfection of pronunciation". The skill of *tajwīd* is of great significance to Muslims as it is compulsory for them to learn and apply it when reciting the Quran. The rules of *tajwīd* have been described in detail in books as well as being orally imitated and handed down from one generation to the next in order to avoid discrepancies in pronunciation (Boullata, 2013; Nelson, 2001).

1.2.4.2 Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

This is the variety of Arabic that is considered nowadays to be the standard language across the Arab world. It is the language of formal situations such as conferences, education, speeches and the news. The more formal a situation gets, the more MSA is to be found. MSA is the main variety of written language in the Arab world; as in school and university textbooks, manuals, instructions, street signs, books and modern novels. Both MSA and CA are varieties that were referred to as the High forms by Ferguson. MSA is not acquired by the NS but rather taught to children when they start their education and it is the main variety chosen in Arabic as a Second Language programs (Ferguson, 1959; Versteegh, 1997). According to Versteegh (1997), MSA emerged in its current form in the nineteenth century due to two factors. The first was the start of exposure to European cultures through occupation and through the increasing number of Arabic students in Europe. The other factor was the fall of the Ottoman Empire which used Turkish as the administrative language in some of its provinces. These two factors stimulated the rise of Arab nationalism and entailed a need for reviving and revitalising CA in order to incorporate new political and scientific concepts (Versteegh, 1997). Through the nineteenth century, there were debates among linguists and politicians regarding the idea of replacing CA with MSA, which led to the current co-existence of the two varieties with MSA being the standard formal language while CA is the religious literary language (Chejne, 1969).

The linguistic differences between CA and MSA are mainly lexical with few syntactic differences. New modern terms were coined and became part of MSA while some of the words and structures of CA are seldom used in MSA. They share the same script and most aspects of pronunciation as described in Sibawayh's

Book. Yet, the pronunciation of MSA is frequently influenced by the speaker's dialect. For example, when listening to an Egyptian news presenter speaking in MSA, the CA sound / dʒ / is usually replaced by /g/ as used in the Cairene dialect. Although many Arabic NSs perceive MSA to be standardised across the Arab world, linguistic variations have been observed when comparing the MSA used in the media in different – and especially in distant – Arab countries (Van Mol, 2003). MSA as well as CA are mainly written languages, even when MSA is used in presenting the news for example in a spoken form; it is usually read aloud from previously written documents. When MSA is attempted to be spoken spontaneously in a formal situation, usually an influence of the speakers' dialect is observable; however, even with this dialectal influence, many NSs may still consider it MSA and in some cases it is referred to as "the middle language". In written MSA, stricter grammatical rules tend to be applied and flexibility is seen as language error.

1.2.4.3 The Arabic dialects

The dialects are the varieties which are spoken – and infrequently written – around different parts of the Arab world. They serve the functions of the L form as referred to by Ferguson, such as day-to-day conversations at home, with family, in the streets and with friends. They are acquired as a first language and not formally taught in schools. Throughout the history of the Arab world, they did not receive much attention from the linguists as they were - and still can be - considered by their NSs as corrupted forms of Arabic. In his description of the L forms, Ferguson (1959) made an imprecise statement about their lack of prestige however in examining the Arabic dialects in sociolinguistic contexts, there are variable views regarding their prestige. According to Abd El-Jawad (1987), there are levels of prestige given to the Arabic dialects by their NSs depending on the power and the modernity of their speech communities. He also states that the Arabs have contradicting views on their varieties; they believe that CA and MSA are the only prestigious varieties, while unconsciously they would give a level of prestige to a specific dialect variety within their community for some formal situations (Abd-El-Jawad, 1987). This could be noticed in the preference given to the dialect of Nablus in Palestine over other Palestinian dialects and to Cairene over the Upper

Egyptian dialect. The usage of the dialects based on Ferguson's initial description indicates only informal situations; however it has been observed that speaking an Arabic dialect in formal and religious situations is gaining more acceptance, though this is variable depending on the Arab region. Wilmsen (2006) observed the normality of using Cairene in conferences, educational settings and religious preaching in Egypt.

Versteegh (1997) mentions that the Arabic dialects existed at a very early stage of the Islamic conquests. Although, most of the original languages of the occupied lands gradually died out, they had a phonological and a lexical influence on the spoken Arabic that has remained present in current Arabic dialects. He presented a classification of these dialects based on geographical factors as well as the stages of Arabic standardisation that took place in each region. His classification included five groups of dialects with a distinctive linguistic affinity between the dialects of each group:

1. The dialects of the Arabian peninsula
2. Mesopotamian dialects
3. Syro-Lebanese dialects
4. Egyptian dialects
5. Maghreb dialects

(Versteegh, 1997, p. 145)

There are two important points to be mentioned here. The first is that even though the classification above seems geographical, there are various Bedouin tribes who live around different areas in the Arab world and who speak distinct dialects from the urban ones. Most of these Bedouin dialects share more linguistic elements with each other and with some of the dialects of the Arabian Peninsula than with the urban dialects of their countries. The second point is that the five groups above do not cover other minority dialects spoken outside the Arab world such as Maltese, Uzbek, Afghani and other African Arabic varieties. Versteegh (1997) lists the main linguistic features that distinguish the dialects from MSA and CA which include mostly phonological, morphological and lexical features. Some of these features are for example the glottal stop sound – *hamza* - in MSA which disappears in most dialects or is replaced by a glide */j/* sound, the *qāf* sound that is

replaced in some dialects by either a /g/, /k/ or a glottal stop /ʔ/, occasional different word order and the omitting of *ʔiʕrāb* 'the case endings'[6]. According to some linguists, most of the linguistic features that distinguish between Arabic varieties are lexical and morpho-phonological, with syntactic features having more inter-dialectal similarities (Ezzat, 1974; Rosenhouse, 2007).

1.2.4.4 Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA)

In a further examination of Arabic diglossia, Badawi (1973) stated that it is not always easy to distinguish whether certain utterances belong to a specific form of Arabic and not the other – referring to the dialects versus MSA or CA. This is due to the mixing that occurs frequently – especially among educated Arabic speakers - between what is considered by their speech community as a dialect and what is considered as MSA (Badawi, 1973). In the introduction to their pioneering dictionary of Egyptian Arabic, Hinds and Badawi (1986) refer to the challenges faced in order to decide whether a certain word belongs to the Egyptian dialect or to a higher form such as MSA. Their response was to highlight in the dictionary whether a particular word is restricted to use by illiterate Egyptians or whether it is restricted to the use of the highly educated (Hinds and Badawi, 1986). This variety of mixed elements from MSA and the dialects is what Badawi (1973) referred to as *ʕāmmiyyat al-muṯaqqafīn* "the colloquial of the cultured/educated". It is also referred to in the literature as Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA) or Formal Spoken Arabic (FSA).

ESA has received a lot of attention from linguists regarding its linguistic features and the sociolinguistic situations where it is used. Some linguists devoted time in supporting its use, studying it and proposing it as an option in TASL (Agius, 1990; Agius and Shivtiel, 1992; El-Hassan, 1997; Harrell et al., 1960; Mitchell, 1978, 1986; Ryding and Mehall, 2005). However, an agreement on a linguistic description of ESA has been difficult to reach as it can vary considerably with many sociolinguistic factors such as geography, age, level of education and the situation in which it is

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[6] For a more comprehensive list of the features that distinguish the dialects from MSA and CA, see Versteegh (1997, pp.99-100).

used. Some linguists even perceive ESA as a way of legitimising the NSs' failure in speaking MSA correctly (Versteegh, 1997; Wilmsen, 2006).

In defining ESA, Mitchel (1978) referred to two different concepts of language use. The first was the pan-Arab variety which the Arabs from different regions use for spoken communication. They mix elements from their dialects and from MSA in order to reach a mutually intelligible variety. The second concept defines ESA as the variety of Arabic which is used mainly by educated speakers only in formal situations in which they attempt to speak MSA to elevate their language to correspond to the situation. However, as MSA is rarely used in the spoken form, the speakers tend to mix elements of their dialects and MSA (Mitchell, 1978). Most of the studies that tried to investigate the linguistic structure of ESA relied on the second concept given by Mitchell (1978) which refers to formal intra-dialectal situations – such as in radio and TV interviews or in political speeches - in which the educated speaker tries to elevate his/her language by borrowing elements from MSA (Albirini, 2011; Bassiouney, 2006; El-Hassan, 1997; Holes, 1993, 2004; Mazraani, 1997; Mejdell, 2006; Saeed, 1997). Most of these studies had a sociolinguistic perspective in which they aimed to investigate social and cultural factors that prompt the use of ESA while a few tried to observe the type of linguistic modifications made in ESA. The limited linguistic analysis of ESA revealed a variable level of lexical borrowing from MSA as well as some classicising instances of replacing a dialectal phoneme with its MSA equivalent. A morpho-syntactic feature observed by Holes (1993) was the occasional hybridisation of verbs in which the speaker uses an MSA verb while keeping the dialectal affixes. Yet the outcome of all these studies show an immense variability in how the speakers choose to apply these modifications with some relying mostly on their dialect even in very formal situations (Wilmsen, 2006) while others opting to approximate a pure MSA (Wilmsen, 2009).

On the other hand, the second concept of ESA by Mitchel as the pan-Arab variety used in cross-dialectal communication has received less attention from researchers with fewer studies that tried to investigate how the Arabs from different regions speak and understand each other (Abu-Haidar, 1994; Abu-Melhim, 1992; Blanc, 1960; Ezzat, 1974; Shiri, 2002). These studies aimed to observe the modifications

made by the NSs in cross-dialectal situations and some of them aimed to prove the existence of intelligibility between certain dialects; however, there has been a lack in specifying and quantifying the MSA linguistic elements that aid intelligibility. There is also a lack of research that tried to link the NSs cross-dialectal communication and the field of Arabic L2 learning and teaching. Related to this discussion, Ferguson says in his paper on the problems of teaching languages with diglossia:

> One question… is the need for facilitating the students' adaptation to a local dialect when he goes to a part of the Arab world where the people do not speak the kind of Arabic he has studied. This problem exists, of course, for native speakers of Arabic, but for them it is much less serious because of the far greater language resources at their command. It would seem that any responsible course of Arabic instruction at the college or university level should offer sufficient information on the nature and range of dialect variation, in particular lexical differences, to enable the student to make an adequate adjustment to a new dialect area within a matter of weeks, assuming he has a solid basis in one particular variety of L.
>
> (Ferguson, 1963, pp. 76-77)

1.3 Overview of this research project

The existence of various Arabic dialects as well as the diglossia of the language which entails the use of CA and MSA to serve certain functions raise questions regarding how the NSs use these varieties and cope with each other's dialectal differences, what strategies and language modifications are used by speakers of different varieties in order to reach intelligibility and how the L2 learners can cope with such variation. One of the descriptions of ESA above regarding the phenomenon of borrowing elements from MSA into the dialects in order to achieve intelligibility in cross-dialectal communication inspired the research questions of the present study. The study initially had a focus only on the NSs' diglossic use of MSA in their dialects in order to understand each other in cross-dialectal conversations and not on the comprehension aspect of these conversations and the strategies applied by the listeners. It aimed to identify and list the lexical and

morpho-phonological elements of MSA that contribute to successful comprehension and explore whether certain MSA elements are also used by L2 learners of Arabic in cross-dialectal interaction. Therefore the initial research questions aimed to explore: 1. The types of MSA borrowings made by the NSs in cross-dialectal situations and 2. The types of MSA borrowings made by L2 learners in order to aid their communication with a range of different dialect speakers.

However, as the study progressed, it showed that the listening strategies that the NSs apply in cross-dialectal interaction have a substantial role in aiding understanding and therefore a slight change to the focus of the study took place to include the following research questions: 1. Which linguistic elements are borrowed from MSA in informal cross-dialectal communication? 2. Are there any linguistic or non-linguistic variables that may influence MSA borrowings? 3. What strategies do the NSs apply in cross-dialectal communication in order to achieve comprehensibility? 4. To what extent can the advanced university Arabic students achieve successful dialectal lexical comprehension? 5. Can explicit instruction in the NSs' listening strategies affect the level of L2 dialectal lexical comprehension?

Chapter 2 will briefly review the literature on intelligibility in communication between closely related language varieties and on intelligibility in Arabic cross-dialectal conversations. It will appraise the related studies, their conclusions and their limitations. It will also review what the literature has stated about the role of variability in TASL. Due to the nature of this study focusing on both Arabic NSs and the L2 learners, the study has two interrelated parts. The first part's aim is to examine the NS's cross-dialectal communication and observe their language modification and the strategies they apply in order to achieve intelligibility, while the second part explores the possibility of training the Arabic learners to cope with the dialectal lexical variability by applying the same NS's strategies in order to strengthen their level of comprehension of a range of Arabic varieties.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 will comprise the first part of this study. Chapter 3 will list the research questions of the current study and present the methodology used in order to investigate the language modifications and the comprehension strategies applied by the NSs in cross-dialectal situations. The methodology will include how

the data was gathered and how it was analysed. The results of the analysis are presented and discussed in chapters 4 and 5; with chapter 4 being concerned with the type of language and modifications that were observed to be made by the NSs, while chapter 5 presents and discusses the results regarding the linguistic factors and strategies that aided cross-dialectal comprehension. Chapter 6 will end the first part of the study with conclusions that will lay the foundations for the second part which explores implications for TASL and whether the NS's cross-dialectal skills can be introduced to Arabic learners to enhance their ability to cope with the dialectal lexical variability.

The second part of the study will start with chapter 7 which gives an overview of the Arabic learners' needs through a brief review of previous needs analysis studies and a pilot study of the learning needs of 54 Arabic learners at the University of Manchester. The results of the needs analysis pilot-study confirms that the learners' goal is to reach a near-native level of language skills and to be able to use Arabic appropriately regardless of the settings in which it is used. In chapter 8, the methodology of a case-study is presented in which four advanced Arabic L2 learners were assessed and trained to apply the NS's cross-dialectal comprehension strategies in order to achieve a better level of lexical understanding of unfamiliar Arabic dialects. The results of the case-study are presented and discussed in chapter 9. Chapter 10 summarises the findings in the two parts of this study project. It also presents its limitations and suggests further questions for future research.

Chapter 2: Cross-dialectal conversations: Literature Review

Chapter one presented definitions of diglossia and how it is distinguished from other linguistic phenomena such as bilingualism. It also discussed the diglossia of the Arabic language and how it contributed to the presence of the contemporary Arabic varieties with each of them serving certain functions. One of the Arabic varieties that received attention from linguists in the seventies was the ESA. As presented earlier, ESA was given a definition by Mitchel (1978) which referred to the variety used by the educated speakers and which involves mixed elements from MSA and dialects but in two distinct settings; one is intra-dialectal in formal situations in which the use of MSA elevates the language to match the formality of the situation; while the other setting is cross-dialectal in which the use of MSA serves the function of facilitating comprehension.

The present study is concerned with how MSA is used in cross-dialectal communication and aims to investigate the specific borrowed MSA elements and the NS's listening strategies that contribute to successful comprehension between speakers of different dialects. The introduction of these elements and strategies to L2 learners of Arabic can subsequently be explored to examine whether this would aid their communication with speakers of unfamiliar dialects. In order to decide on the methodology and the steps to follow in conducting the present study, literature on cross-dialectal interaction in general and on Arabic in particular is first reviewed in this chapter. The chapter will also review literature on the role of Arabic language variation in TASL and will discuss the limitations and the gaps in literature which instigated the research questions of the present study.

2.1 Cross-dialectal conversations and mutual intelligibility

Mutual intelligibility is defined as the degree of understanding between speakers of different varieties; the more successful comprehension they achieve, the more intelligible their varieties are to each other (Ottenheimer, 2013). Mutual intelligibility can be used as a criterion for distinguishing between a dialect and a

language based on the assumption that there is a higher level of intelligibility between the dialects than in between the languages (Fasold and Connor-Linton, 2006; Hudson, 1996). However, this criterion is not always consistent as Chambers & Trudgill (1998) give the example of the Scandinavian languages acknowledged by their speakers of being distinct languages despite the fact that there is a high level of intelligibility between them. In contrast, Hudson (1996) gives the example of the Chinese dialects which are perceived by their speakers of not being separate languages, even though some of them are not intelligible to each other.

Intelligibility between related varieties has attracted the attention of researchers in various languages. Some examined the linguistic factors that contribute to intelligibility such as in a study on the German dialects by Klaus (1979) which states that phonetic similarities strongly influence the successful communication (Klaus, 1979). In examining intelligibility between Scandinavian languages, Gooskens (2007) adds that the clarity of pronunciation, prosody and the extent of lexical and phonological affinity have a major role in intelligibility between them. Some studies looked at the non-linguistic factors that can influence intelligibility such as attitudes towards certain varieties. Major et al (2005) examined the intelligibility of certain ethnic and regional English accents in the US to both NSs and Non-native speakers (NNSs) of the Standard American dialect and noted that negative attitudes towards certain accents can be the reason for why they are stated to be unintelligible. One of the factors that is stated to have a strong influence on intelligibility even between the geographically and linguistically distant dialects is familiarity through frequent exposure (Cutler, 2012).

Some linguists worked on tools and methods to measure the level of intelligibility between dialects such as the study by Tang & van Heuven (2009) in which they developed word and sentence recognition tests in order to measure the level of intelligibility between 15 Chinese dialects. Mutual intelligibility can also be tested subjectively as in the study by Haugen (1966, cited in Gooskens, 2011, p.3) using self-reported comprehension abilities by asking the NSs of how much they think they understand other varieties. Another method to measure intelligibility was applied by Borestam Uhlmann (1994, cited in Gooskens, 2011) in which she relied on quantifying the communication strategies that the NSs applied such as

repetitions, clarifications and paraphrasing in cross-dialectal conversations in order to achieve intelligibility. In her study, a higher number of communication strategies applied by the speaker suggested a lower level of intelligibility and vice versa.

In addition to being a method for measuring intelligibility, cross-dialectal interaction has been used as a setting for observing the types of linguistic modifications and strategies that the NSs apply in a range of varieties. One of the strategies that were observed to be applied in English cross-dialectal interaction is the mechanism of levelling which is defined as the attrition of certain linguistic elements that belong to the minority dialect of a certain region (Trudgill, 1986)[7]. In a study on the cross-dialectal interaction in Longyearbyen town in Norway, where a number of dialectal differences exist in one community, Mæhlum (1992) refers to the "Strategies of Neutrality" applied by the speakers of different dialects in order to achieve neutralised speech and successful comprehension. These strategies include code-mixing and code-switching techniques in which the speakers borrow certain phonological and lexical elements from each other's dialects and produce a spoken variety that is intelligible to all.

Reviewing these studies on cross-dialectal communication and intelligibility between different language varieties motivates similar investigations on the Arabic language with its diglossia and variability and raises questions about the extent of intelligibility between its varieties, the factors that aid or hinder intelligibility and the speakers' and the listeners' strategies that contribute to successful cross-dialectal communication.

2.2 Arabic cross-dialectal conversations

One of the motivations behind doing the present study is the fact that cross-dialectal communication in Arabic has received little attention from researchers. Holes (2004) states that it is surprising that few studies investigated how various

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[7] Dialect levelling can have social and cultural motives other than achieving intelligibility such as in converging towards the dialect of the speech community with more power or a higher status (Wolfson & Judd, 1983).

groups of Arabic speakers cope linguistically with their dialectal variation. When mutual intelligibility between the Arabic dialects was first discussed in the early sixties, it was thought by some linguists that the Arabic varieties are mutually unintelligible and as widely divergent as the European languages such as Italian and Spanish and that such divergence makes the Arabic speakers have to resort to CA or MSA in order to understand each other (Mitchell, 1962). A variable level of MSA use has been stated in various works on the Arabic language to be a characteristic feature of cross-dialectal interaction but without precisely describing the extent of that MSA use (Lyovin, 1997; Ryding and Mehall, 2005; Suleiman, 1985). In describing one of the domains of MSA use, Suleiman (1985, p. 40) claims:

> …in interdialectal situations, especially for purposes of communication amongst educated dialect speakers. It has also been maintained that MSA serves as a means of communication among educated Arabs who come from different Arab countries. In this sense, on a pan-Arab level, its unifying function is more than that of CA.
>
> (Suleiman, 1985, p. 40)

Lyovin (1997) claims in describing the varieties of Arabic and the different functions of MSA:

> Modern Arabic has a large number of dialects, many of which are not mutually intelligible…The Modern Literary Arabic [*Modern Standard Arabic*] is used for communication with speakers of other Arabic dialects [*interdialectal communications*], for formal speeches, formal documents, serious literature and so forth…
>
> (Lyovin, 1997, p. 201)

Such quotes suggest that MSA is the lingua franca and that it is fully used in cross-dialectal communication; however, the few studies that closely examined cross-dialectal interaction have stated that no specific variety, including MSA, is used as a lingua franca. The rest of this chapter will review five main studies that investigated the language of Arabic cross-dialectal conversations and which have been frequently referenced in various resources on the Arabic language. The review will discuss the objectives of each study, the methodologies and their

findings and will conclude with a summary of the main points raised in the literature and the limitations and gaps that instigated the research questions of the present study.

2.2.1 Blanc's study (1960)

Blanc's study is pioneering in examining Arabic cross-dialectal interaction and in providing data of transcribed cross-dialectal conversations (Holes, 2004; Mazraani, 1997). His study aimed to highlight the style variation in spoken Arabic and to argue that Arabic speakers do not always stick to one dialectal variety, especially educated ones who have broadened their horizons with travel, reading and the mixing with other dialect speakers. He also emphasized that such variation should be taken into consideration by linguists when teaching Arabic as a second language.

In order to demonstrate variation in spoken Arabic, Blanc used the setting of a cross-dialectal situation as the method of investigation. He recorded a conversation between a group of four Arabic NSs; two from Iraq (a Muslim and a Christian), one from Palestine and one from Syria. All of the participants were Arabic teachers and linguists in the Army Language School in Monterey, California. The conversation started with self-introductions, and then the main topic was the different Arabic dialects, their similarities and differences and what the participants thought of the dialects' future. The conversation was transcribed phonemically for analysis in order to observe instances of language modifications.

The analysis of the recorded conversation displayed two tendencies which Blanc labelled as "classicising" and "leveling". "Classicising" refers to phonologically modifying a word into a classical-like cognate or the replacing of a dialectal word with its classical equivalent from CA or MSA. Examples of phonological modifications were the use of the /q/, /k/, and / dʒ / classical sounds instead of the / ʔ/, / tʃ / and /g/ dialectal equivalents. Most of the morphology of the recorded conversation was observed to be dialectal except for the use of the possessive particles which Blanc noted were avoided, such as the Syrian possessive *tabaʕ*. Blanc also noted that the sentences were somewhat longer or more complex than in plain dialectal Arabic. He gives the example of using the classical particle *ʔan* in

introducing some subordinate clauses which causes the sentences to be longer than in pure dialects. The second tendency of "leveling" refers to the avoidance of the dialectal elements that are highly restricted to a certain dialect or community and replacing them with other dialectal equivalents that are more commonly used. For this, Blanc gives the example of the Iraqi word *aku* 'there is/are' which is not used outside Iraq and the Gulf region and which was replaced by the Iraqi speaker in his study with the more commonly used *fī* . Such modification was found to reflect the speakers' awareness of which dialectal aspects have more dominance within a certain setting.

Blanc concluded that variation was clearly present in his study and that cross-dialectal situations reveal the modifications that the speakers can make. He stated that although the classicising phenomenon was repeatedly observed in his study, it was not applied similarly by the four participants with the Levantine speakers making fewer classicising modifications than the Iraqi ones. Blanc also noted that he had anticipated much more classicising than what the results revealed. His anticipation of the domination of CA in cross-dialectal conversations could be the result of the perceived idea regarding Arabic mutual intelligibility at that time which considered CA or MSA as the lingua-franca in cross-dialectal situations (Mitchell, 1962).

2.2.2 Ezzat's study (1974)

In his study, Ezzat aimed to refute or correct the idea that the Arabic dialects are mutually unintelligible. He stated in the introduction of his study that he has observed in the non-Arab world a belief by some eminent linguists that the linguistic distance between the Arabic dialects is as wide as in between the European languages. Ezzat stated that such an idea could be due to the lack of comparative linguistic studies of the Arabic dialects. He commented that during his three-year delegation of work in an Arab University attended by students from various Arab nationalities, he observed that intelligibility was not an obstacle in the cross-dialectal communication. Ezzat's study was not intended to be comprehensive but rather exploratory of the linguistic commonalities between the distant Arabic dialects and the extent of intelligibility between their speakers.

The study comprised two parts; the first was a brief comparative description of the phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical differences between seven dialects: Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian, Palestinian, Bahraini and Algerian. The second part of his study was an analysis of a three-hour recording of a conversation between native speakers of five dialects: Egyptian (Cairene)[8], Jordanian (from Amman), Palestinian (from Al-Khalil), Bahraini (from Manama) and Algerian (from Algeria). The conversation included three topics; a description of a favourite local dish, the education system in their countries and the housing problems in their countries. All participants were chosen to be educated to university level so that they would represent the average Arabic educated speaker. Their academic background was not specified except for Ezzat himself being an Arabic linguist. In analysing the conversation, Ezzat observed the instances of code-switching to MSA or to other dialects and instances of comprehension failure.

The comparative part of Ezzat's study showed that the linguistic differences between the investigated dialects were mostly morpho-phonological and lexical with the grammar appearing to have the least variants. The analysis of the second part of his study of the recorded conversation stated that there were instances of classicising as well as borrowings from the interlocutor's dialect. He also observed – without presenting quantitative analysis - various instances of interruption in the conversation due to lack of understanding on the lexical level. Ezzat categorised the lexical items that caused comprehension breakdown into two groups: non-cognates and false cognates which are similar in form but differ in meaning. The conclusion of his study stated that the comparative description of the linguistic aspects of the investigated dialects proves that there are more commonalities than differences which therefore entail mutual intelligibility. He also concluded that the (mostly) intelligible three-hour conversation between speakers from remote Arab countries gives a miniature of a cross-dialectal situation. In the recorded conversations, both the classicising and the dialectal borrowings were factors that helped in narrowing the gap in non-reciprocal communication and aided intelligibility.

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8 This participant was Ezzat himself.

Although Ezzat's study had a different aim from Blanc's, the conclusions were very similar regarding the presence of a considerable level of intelligibility and the variation in language modification which aides this intelligibility. Both studies confirmed, but without quantitation, that borrowings from MSA were variably present in cross-dialectal conversations. Ezzat's study also added that the instances of borrowing from the interlocutor's dialect seemed to occur particularly when repeating a word in a response to the interlocutor.

2.2.3 Abu-Melhim's study (1992)

To the researcher's knowledge, no other studies on Arabic cross-dialectal interaction are found after Ezzat's until the early nineties when Abu-Melhim, in his doctoral dissertation, wanted to investigate whether the widely understood Cairene dialect is the lingua franca variety in cross-dialectal conversations between educated speakers. He also wanted to investigate factors that influence code-switching between MSA, the dialects and other second languages.

The study included ten participants, one of each gender from five countries: Jordan, Iraq, Morocco, Egypt and Saudi. All the participants were highly educated with postgraduate degrees from American universities and spoke the urban dialect of their communities as well as fluent English. Informal conversations of thirty minutes each were arranged to examine all combinations of dialect speakers. For cultural reasons, he separated the genders and for each gender, he recorded one group conversation and a one-to-one conversation between every two dialects. This made a total of eleven hours of recorded language. The participants were not given specific topics for the conversations, but these were left open for them in order to make the language as natural and informal as possible. After the recorded conversations, telephone interviews were conducted with each participant in order to collect data about their perceptions and attitudes towards different Arabic varieties and towards switching to any of them. In analysing the recorded conversations, Abu-Melhim observed the instances of code-switching between MSA, the dialects and other second languages - which were English and French in his study. He analysed how the gender and the linguistic attitudes affected the code-switching.

The analysis showed that no certain variety, including the Cairene Arabic, was used as the lingua franca. He observed that although Cairene Arabic was easily understood by all the participants, it was not necessarily used in the conversations between the non-Egyptian participants. The analysis showed that socio-cultural factors have an effect on the extent of borrowing from MSA, other dialects or other second languages in cross-dialectal conversations. According to Abu-Melhim's analysis, the males appeared to switch more to MSA than the females who spoke mainly in their own dialects or switched to each other's dialects. He identified 1031 instances of switching by the male participants and only 371 by the females. The total of these instances, which he refers to as diglossic code-switching, was 1402 i.e. 2.12 instances per minute. The instances of switching to the L2 (English and French) were 1079 by the males and 667 by the females, which makes a total of 1746 i.e. 2.65 instances per minute.

The analysis presented examples of how code-switching was sometimes found to be influenced by linguistic perceptions and attitudes. He presented the example of the Moroccan female participant who stated that she purposely used only her Moroccan dialect and tried not to borrow from any other varieties in order to assert her national and personal identity. On the other hand, the Jordanian female speaker switched a number of times to the Egyptian variety of the interlocutor and stated that her reason was her preference not to sound different from the interlocutor. Other factors that influenced code-switching were the extent of familiarity with other varieties, education, ethnicity, awareness of one's own variety's intelligibility to others and familiarity with the interlocutor.

Abu-Melhim observed in his data one main grammatical modification referred to as the 'hybridisation' mechanism. Hybridisation was defined by Holes in his study of variations in Arabic political speeches as 'the matching of an MSA root with dialectal affixes' (Holes, 1993). Abu-Melhim gave an example from the conversation between the Saudi and the Jordanian female participants, in which the Saudi participant used the dialectal imperfect affix *ḥa* "will" with the MSA verb *ʔaftaqid* "to miss" instead of using the dialectal equivalent *tiwḥašnī*. Example (1) below shows what the Saudi participant said and its equivalent in the Saudi dialect

and in MSA. Abu-Melhim stated that there were a few of these hybridisation instances found in his data but he did not specify the exact number:

(1) In the data = *ʔah* ***ḥa-ʔaftaqid-ha*** *bilmarra*
Yes will-miss(1st p.)-it a lot
'Yes, I'll miss it a lot'
In Saudi = *ʔah* ***ḥa-tiwḥaš-nī*** *bilmarra*
In MSA = *naʕam* ***sa-ʔaftaqidu-ha*** *kaṯīran*

(Abu-Melhim, 1992: p.76)

2.2.4 Abu-Haidar's study (1994)

Abu-Haidar's study aimed to investigate the link between the cultural and religious background and the choice of classicising versus borrowing from other dialects in three Arabic speaking communities in the United Kingdom. The communities in Abu-Haidar's study were first and second generations of Lebanese, Iraqi and Moroccan origin who have been residents in the UK. Abu-Haidar did not specify the number of informants from each dialect community and did not mention the number and the length of the cross-dialectal conversations between them.

In the analysis of the conversations, she observed that the cultural and religious background had a role in language choice. She states that there was consistency among the Muslim Iraqis who, in interacting with other dialect speakers, switched to the Egyptian dialect which they consider a prestigious variety while the Christians switched more to the Lebanese dialect as they have more affinity with fellow Christians from Lebanon. On the other hand, the Jewish Iraqi community are the ones who mainly classicised their language by borrowing from MSA rather than other dialects. Abu-Haidar claims that the reason behind this classicisation is the fact that the Jewish Iraqis had the least exposure to other Arabic dialects as they were the first out of these three religious groups to migrate to the UK and they had the least affinity with the Arab culture and media. One of the claims in Abu-Haidar's study was the fact that the Muslim Iraqi communities resorted to the use of the Cairene dialect in conversations with non-Egyptians which differs from

what Abu-Melhim stated about the Cairene Arabic not being used as a lingua franca in his study. Abu-Haidar in her analysis focused more on the Iraqi speaking community and did not present how the other two communities modified their language.

2.2.5 Shiri's study (2002)

Switching to the interlocutor's variety was confirmed in a study by Shiri, who focused mainly on the Tunisian speakers. In her study, she observed the cross-dialectal interaction of five Tunisian speakers – two men and three women - with their work colleagues from Saudi, Egypt and Lebanon. She also conducted interviews and questionnaires with the Tunisian informants in order to investigate their perceptions and attitudes to language modification.

Shiri confirmed Abu-Melhim's findings regarding the three strategies of switching to MSA, the interlocutor's dialect and to other second languages and stated that the Tunisian speakers, as well as other North African Arabic speakers, tend to converge to their interlocutors in a unilateral process. She observed that the switching by the Tunisians was much more than their non-Tunisian counterparts. Through the analysis of the results of the interviews and the questionnaires, she concluded that code-switching in Arabic cross-dialectal interaction is not only instigated in order to aid comprehension but the choice of switching to or borrowing from another variety can be initiated by non-linguistic factors. Shiri also confirmed Abu-Haidar's statement regarding the role of the cultural factor in language choice in cross-dialectal interaction. She adds that social identity had a major role in her study regarding the Tunisians' choice of switching to other varieties and that some of the participants chose to borrow from MSA mainly to stress their identities as Arabs.

Shiri's study made a considerable contribution to the literature on cross-dialectal interaction by giving examples describing the linguistic modifications that the Tunisian speakers made in her study but yet without presenting quantifiable data. She stated that the Tunisians seemed very aware of the linguistic differences between their dialect and the other Middle Eastern varieties. They avoided non-cognates and false cognates that may cause misunderstanding and replaced them

with their equivalents from the interlocutors' dialects or from MSA. They also avoided the use of Tunisian tense prefixes that differ from the other *mašriqi* "Eastern" varieties such as the prefix *bāš* "will" used to form future tense and they replaced it with the more common non-Tunisian dialectal prefix *ḥa.* On the phonological level, she observed the insertion of a vowel after the first consonants of words to avoid the initial consonant clusters which are typical to most North African varieties. She gave an example of the Tunisian word *qbal* "before" which was pronounced in cross-dialectal interaction as *qabl*.

2.2.6 Limitations in the studies on Arabic cross-dialectal communication

As stated earlier in section 2.2, MSA is frequently stated to be a lingua franca or used to a certain extent in cross-dialectal interaction despite the fact that the number of the studies that closely examined cross-dialectal interaction is quite limited. The five studies that were reviewed in this chapter provided some insight into the language modifications that can occur in cross-dialectal communication and some of the linguistic and non-linguistic factors that initiate these modifications and contribute to intelligibility. A number of limitations in these studies are discussed in this section and will demonstrate some of the gaps that inspired the research questions of the present study.

The first study by Blanc (1960) was pioneering and did support his argument regarding the existence of variation in spoken Arabic through the mechanisms of leveling and classicising the language in certain situations. The study also shed light on some of the linguistic modifications made by the four participants which seemed to be linguistically acceptable and comprehensible in that setting. However, one of the major limitations in Blanc's study is the fact that it was conducted more than 50 years ago. Since then, so many political, cultural and social changes have occurred which suggest that these findings might not be entirely relevant to contemporary Arabic language use. The same limitation of being dated applies to the two studies by Ezzat (1974) and Abu-Melhim (1992). Although, they gave an insight into the modifications made in Arabic cross-dialectal interaction, one must not assume that the same modifications are still made in current times.

Another limitation that was observed in the reviewed studies is the number and the choice of the participants. Blanc's study was limited to four individuals with two of them being Iraqi speakers and the other two Levantine speakers (Palestinian and Syrian, which share many linguistic features). The extent of language modification could have been higher if the cross-dialectal conversation involved a bigger or a more diversified group of participants with a wider choice of dialects. They also happened to be all Arabic linguists, which are a group that is expected to be more fluent in using CA/MSA than other non-linguist educated speakers. It can be argued here that the classicising instances that they have made are due to habit or familiarity in switching to CA/MSA which might not necessarily occur between non-linguists.

Ezzat's study included participants from more distant areas than Blanc's study in order to demonstrate that intelligibility is present even between these remote dialects ; however, similarly to Blanc's, the length of the conversation and the limited number of topics and participants – which included the researcher himself - can affect the strength of the claims in his study. Ezzat's study also did not present detailed information on the participants' backgrounds, which makes it difficult to examine the factors that might have influenced their language such as their education, their familiarity with each other and with the researcher or their attitudes to the use of certain Arabic varieties.

In Abu-Melhim's study, although the number of participants was larger than in the previous two studies, they were still limited to ten speakers of five dialects who all happened to be postgraduates from universities in the United States. This level of education could be the reason behind the high rate of L2 switching (2.65 instances per minute) which was more than the instances of Arabic diglossic switching (2.12 per minute). The results might be restricted to this type of highly educated L2 speakers. The limitation in the number and type of participants also raises questions regarding the validity of his claims regarding the socio-cultural factors that were presented to be influencing the language choice. A higher number of participants has been used in similar studies that looked at attitudes and behaviours in order to present strong claims about the factors that affect language choice (Agheyisi and Fishman, 1970). In Abu-Haidar's study, the number of

informants was not specified and in Shiri's study, they were limited to five Tunisian speakers only. In her paper, Shiri states that due to the limited number of participants, her claims regarding the social factors that influence language modification should be verified through further research (Shiri, 2002, p. 172). The limitation in the number and the type of participants raises questions regarding how a larger and a more diversified group of Arabic speakers would achieve intelligible conversations; does a larger number of Arabic speakers, regardless of their backgrounds, apply the same strategies of levelling and classicising using MSA in cross-dialectal interaction?

Another limitation observed in the first two studies by Blanc and Ezzat was the main topics of the cross-dialectal conversations. In Blanc's study, it was about the different Arabic dialects and the future of the language, which is quite an academic topic that would prompt the use of features from MSA even if it was among speakers of the same dialect (Al-Wer, 2013; Mitchell, 1986). In Ezzat's study, most of the conversation was about the education system and housing problems in Arab societies. These also are not very informal topics and would instigate a serious discussion that prompts more use of MSA. It can be argued here that most of the features of MSA that were used in Blanc's and Ezzat's studies are a result of either the choice of participants or the formality of the topics and not necessarily because of the cross-dialectal setting and the achieving of mutual intelligibility.

Another limitation that was found in the reviewed studies – with the exception of Abu-Melhim's - was the lack of quantitative data. In Blanc's, the analysis did not quantify the instances of the classicising or the leveling modifications and only stated that these instances were fewer than what Blanc himself had expected. Ezzat's study presented examples of language modification but also without presenting the number of the classicising instances made by each participant in each of the three topics. A brief examination of the transcribed conversation in Ezzat's study shows that more classicising instances were made when the participants talked about the topic of the education systems than the topic of the favourite dish recipe. Quantified data would have facilitated finding links between the use of MSA and other variables such as the topics of the conversation, the participant's dialect or other participant's backgrounds.

Similarly, no quantitative results were presented regarding the instances of comprehension breakdown in any of the five studies which were only described as being various in Ezzat's study. In Abu-Melhim's study the focus was only on the language choice and so it did not refer to any instances of misunderstanding or lack of comprehension even with the Moroccan participant who spoke only in her dialect which was identified by most of the other participants to be difficult to understand. This opens the questions of how the conversation was sustained with the Moroccan speaker; which elements caused comprehension to breakdown and which elements did not affect intelligibility. There is a lack of literature on the process of Arabic cross-dialectal comprehension and a lack of studies that linguistically describe the linguistic elements that are borrowed in cross-dialectal conversations.

The last limitation in the reviewed studies – except for Shiri's study - was in describing the methodology of language analysis. They did not specify how they judged whether a certain element was borrowed from MSA or was part of the participant's dialect. Analysing the use of different forms in language variation studies requires relying on different verification methods such as the researcher's own intuition, by subjectively asking the informants whether what they said is part of their language or borrowed, or by consulting with other descriptive linguistic resources. Abu-Melhim presented results related to the instances of code-switching to MSA, other dialects and to other second languages but he did not explain, in the methodology, the tools used to determine each form. It is assumed that he, as a native educated Arabic speaker, was easily able to observe instances of English/French and MSA, but he did not explain how he managed to confirm whether these elements exist in the participants' dialects or are borrowed from another variety. Depending on the researcher's own intuition is a common method in mainstream linguistics, provided they have competent knowledge of the investigated variety; however, the use of other formal methods of verification is important in providing reliable analysis (Borsley, 2005). On the use of intuition in linguistics Wasow & Arnold quote:

> …The existence of individual and dialect variation is not incompatible with the use of primary intuitions as evidence for grammatical hypotheses. But it raises questions about the generality of some of those hypotheses. …. If linguists consult their own intuitions to test their hypotheses, they have a stake in the outcome of their introspection, which could easily sway their judgements regarding marginal examples.
>
> (Wasow and Arnold, 2005, p. 1483)

The linguistic variations among the Arabic varieties entails that the researcher either has to be very familiar with the participants' dialects, or has to rely on a number of resources in order to confirm whether the participant has borrowed an element from MSA or not. For example, someone who is familiar with the Cairene dialect would consider the use of the *q* sound instead of the glottal stop in the verb *qāl* "said" an MSA borrowing. The same verb can be considered dialectal if it is used by Tunisian speakers who use the *q* sound in their dialect the same way it is used in MSA. If the researcher is not familiar with the pronunciation rules of the Tunisian variety, s/he might categorise the use of *q* as an MSA borrowing. In the reviewed studies, there was no specification in the methodology of how the researchers verified that what they listed as MSA borrowings were not actually part of the participants' dialects. The exception was Shiri's study, in which she only focused on the Tunisian dialect of which she is a native speaker.

2.3 Language variability in TASL

The previous sections in this chapter reviewed the studies that looked at how the Arabic NSs of different dialects cope with their dialectal variability. All the studies stated that there is a considerable level of intelligibility between the Arabic dialects and that some strategies of language modification are applied in order to achieve successful communication such as borrowing from MSA. As the present study is also concerned with how to incorporate variation in TASL, it was of relevance to review what other research and literature has stated about the role of language variation in TASL.

In 1963, Ferguson discussed diglossia from a practical perspective in his article "Problems of Teaching Languages with Diglossia" with a focus on the Arabic

language (Ferguson, 1963). In his discussion, he changed his initial perception of Arabic having the two forms H and L, and acknowledged the existence of different levels between them. He also stated that the L forms refer to more than twenty Arabic dialects with a variable level of mutual intelligibility between them which imposes a problem in making a choice of which form to teach in TASL. Ferguson recommended that it is crucial for Arabic learners to study both H and L forms and suggested one of the most widely used and understood urban dialects of Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad or North Morocco as a choice for teaching the L form. He also stressed that learners must be introduced to adequate knowledge about the linguistic differences between a range of dialects in order to enable them to applicably use the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening and to cope in cross-dialectal situations. Although more than four decades have passed since Ferguson's proposal, the research work that has investigated the role of the variations in the Arabic language in TASL is relatively limited and ongoing debates are still there in Higher Education (HE) institutions on what would be the best approach to tackle language variation in TASL (Agius, 1990; Holes, 2003; Jadwat, 1987; Palmer, 2007; Wahba, 2006; Wilmsen, 2006).

Some researchers support the attempt to describe and teach ESA as the variety that would enable the learners to use the four language skills (Ryding and Mehall, 2005); some studies supported the teaching of both MSA and a dialect and suggested the teaching of one variety at a time starting with MSA then one dialect (Thomson, 1994); or supported first learning a dialect then learning MSA (Qafisheh, 1972) and some opted for an innovative approach by integrating the learning and the use of MSA and one dialect simultaneously (Younes, 2006)[9]. Nevertheless, the most common approach in most HE Arabic programs is still the teaching of MSA, leaving the option of learning the dialects and the other aspects of variation in the language for the year-abroad time or for the learner's own choice and effort (Dickins and Watson, 2006; Ryding, 2006). This approach has led to a degree of frustration among many Arabic learners who felt restricted in how they can use Arabic especially when compared to learning other non-diglossic languages in

9 In all these approaches, only one dialect is chosen to be taught while the variation between the urban Arabic dialects is not incorporated.

which they can use all the four language skills at an acceptable level of proficiency (Palmer, 2007; Wahba, 2006)[10]. It has also been observed that although the number of Arabic learners in HE has increased since September the 11th 2001, the graduates' level of proficiency in Arabic is not high enough for near-native level (Holes, 2003).

In noting the motives behind the dominance of MSA in Arabic programs, Badawi (2006) attributes them to a number of sociolinguistic factors such as the native teachers' attitudes towards certain varieties and the lack of well-researched pedagogical methods in TASL (Badawi, 2006). One approach in deciding on which Arabic variety and which elements of variation to teach in HE is to rely on the learners' reasons for choosing to learn Arabic. Belnap (2006) states that taking the learners' interests and goals into account is of crucial importance in facilitating L2 learning, choosing the teaching method and in designing suitable L2 curriculum including which variety to teach.

Another approach in introducing language variation to L2 learners is to investigate how the NSs deal with this variation and introduce their skills and strategies to the L2 learners. The NS being a model in L2 teaching – although it is sometimes disputed as who the NS really is and what standard skills they have[11] – has been a starting point in making pedagogical and curricular decisions in L2 teaching. In supporting the argument of the importance of teaching the two varieties L and H, Wahba (2006) proposed the NS as a target for TASL. He called this person "diglossic educated speaker". In his description of the NS as a model, Wahba

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[10] The option of introducing learners to more than one dialect or to the linguistic elements which distinguish between them is limited to a few institutions around the world. Some of these options that introduce the variability of Arabic include the "Introduction to Arabic Linguistics" course in SOAS for year 2 and 3 Arabic students. In the US more institutions are introducing the Arabic diglossia and variability through structured courses such as the comprehensive course taught at Middlebury College and similarly at the University of Arizona as well as some materials introducing the varieties of Arabic such as the Arabic Variant Identification Aid website of the University of Maryland.

[11] For a detailed discussion on the definition and the role of the NS as a model in L2 teaching see Andreou and Galantomos (2009), Bonfiglio (2010), Cook (1999) and Paikeday (1985).

highlighted their ability to use the two Arabic forms H and L appropriately with the situation noting that, regardless of their proficiency level in the H form – or MSA – the educated NS is able to switch and mix between the two forms depending on the task they want to achieve (Wahba, 2006).

In the last few decades, more Arabic linguists have been stressing that teaching one variety only is by no mean enough for providing for the learners' needs and for reaching a near-native proficiency level; furthermore, learners should be trained to select and mix between the varieties in a fashion similar to the NS's and only through such training, can they get to a level compared to the average educated NS (Wahba, 2006; Winke and Aquil, 2006). One of the missing points in Wahba's proposal for making use of the NS as a target in TASL was the lack of a linguistic description of those tasks in which the NSs mix and choose between the varieties. In describing the skills of the NSs, Wahba refers briefly to their ability also to modify their language in cross-dialectal situations and he calls for further research in that area:

> Recent sociolinguistic studies point out that native diglossic users use leveling communicative strategies to come to effective communication not only among speakers of one regional dialect, but also among speakers from different regional dialects…These communicative strategies… need to be investigated still more in the diglossic speech communities.
>
> (Wahba, 2006, p. 144)

Trentman (2011) states that there is also a need for more studies to examine how the L2 learners deal with language variation and how they can be supported to better cope with dialectal variation and in cross-dialectal situations. In Trentman's (2011) preliminary study on L2 comprehension of unfamiliar Arabic dialects, she aimed to empirically examine whether learning one dialect can assist learners to better comprehend unfamiliar Arabic dialects. In her study, she had 58 participants who were all L2 learners of Arabic at different proficiency levels. 6 of

these participants had learnt MSA only[12], while the rest had learnt MSA as well as either the Egyptian or the Levantine varieties. All the participants were given listening tests that included recorded texts in five dialects: Cairene, Lebanese, Saudi, Iraqi and Tunisian. They were asked to answer comprehension questions in order to measure how much they understood of these dialects, especially the unfamiliar ones.

Trentman concluded that the students with exposure to either Egyptian or Levantine achieved better comprehension of the unfamiliar dialects than the students who only learnt MSA and she advocated choosing these two dialects specifically as they were found in her study to be aiding comprehension of other dialects. In noting some of the limitations in Trentman's study, she explains that the different levels of proficiency could have had an influence on the participants' listening skills; especially with the ones who were reported to have achieved less in comprehension as they were exposed only to MSA and also had less exposure to Arabic in general being in their first and second years of study. In the conclusions of her paper, Trentman calls for further studies that can confirm the findings of her study and to investigate ways of supporting Arabic L2 learners to comprehend unfamiliar varieties (Trentman, 2011).

2.4 Conclusions

From the review above of the literature on Arabic cross-dialectal communication, it can be concluded that mutual intelligibility is relatively high and that the NSs do apply a number of strategies in order to achieve comprehensibility. Some of the conclusions of the previous studies were contradictory regarding the existence of a dominant variety; as some stated that Cairene Arabic was used by non-Egyptian speakers (Abu-Haidar, 1994); while others stated that no variety was dominant nor used as the lingua franca, but rather a mix of varieties (Abu-Melhim, 1992; Blanc, 1960). Most of the previous studies focused on the non-linguistic factors that influenced the language choice in cross-dialectal interaction giving examples of the

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12 In Trentman's study, these also happened to be students in their first or second year of Arabic studies.

cultural and social aspects that prompt the NS to either stick to a certain variety or to borrow from another. Less attention was given in these studies to quantified linguistic descriptions of the types of borrowing or code-switching that occurs. Although, all these studies concluded that elements from MSA were found, at various levels, to be used in cross-dialectal conversations, these elements have not been described in depth, which suggests that more research need to be conducted in order to provide a more detailed description of the function of MSA in cross-dialectal interaction and help to understand the phenomenon of MSA borrowing more clearly.

The limited number of studies on Arabic cross-dialectal interaction and the lack of quantified and descriptive data on the use of MSA in that setting raise questions on how exactly MSA can be used to aid intelligibility and whether there are specific linguistic patterns that are borrowed from MSA. As presented earlier, some of the topics that were used in the previous cross-dialectal studies were also quite academic and formal; therefore it would be useful to confirm whether MSA borrowings would also be used in informal conversations. The other aspect of cross-dialectal communication that was not investigated in the previous studies is the strategies that the native listener applied in order to comprehend other dialects, especially when the speaker chooses not to modify their dialect much. How do the native listeners cope and comprehend another dialect when the speaker chooses not to modify it? What strategies do they apply and what are the factors that aid understanding. This literature review shed light on some gaps in research and stressed the need for further studies to investigate Arabic cross-dialectal communication and intelligibility. Findings regarding the types of MSA borrowings by the NSs in cross-dialectal communication and the comprehension strategies that they apply can subsequently be introduced to the L2 learners in order to aid them to comprehend a range of dialects rather than being limited to one or two varieties which would not enable them to achieve all the tasks achieved by the NS at a near-native level of proficiency. The gaps and the limitations in the previous studies inspired the research questions of the current study which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Part I

Cross-dialectal conversations in Arabic: language choice and comprehension strategies

Chapter 3: Investigating native Arabic cross-dialectal conversations: Methodology

The literature review presented in the last chapter raised further research questions which will be discussed in this chapter. It has been agreed by all the previous studies on Arabic cross-dialectal communication that MSA variably exists in these conversations in order to aid intelligibility as well as being influenced by social and cultural motives. However, there has not been a quantified and a descriptive analysis to state the extent and the types of the linguistic elements that are borrowed from MSA into cross-dialectal conversations and whether these elements can aid L2 learners of Arabic in communication with NSs of unfamiliar dialects. Abu-Melhim's study was the only one to count the number of instances of diglossic code-switching which was in the rate of 2.12 instances per minutes. Providing the number of borrowings can assist researchers in observing links between certain variables such as the participants' dialects, ages and genders and the type of borrowings. For example, through the number of borrowings that Abu-Melhim stated in his study, he observed a difference in gender in the extent of MSA borrowings, with the men appearing to borrow more from MSA than the women. He also observed that the Cairene speakers in his study made the least number of MSA borrowing instances.

Some examples were given by Blanc (1960) of the phonological borrowings from MSA such as the *q* sound replacing the dialectal *g* or the glottal stop (Blanc, 1960); Abu-Melhim (1992) observed the hybridisation mechanism of inserting a dialectal prefix to an MSA verbal root and presented two examples but without specifying the total number of hybridisation instances in his data and whether it was a dominating feature in cross-dialectal conversations or not. Shiri (2002) gave examples of how the Tunisian informants avoided lexis that is localised to their community and replaced it with either words from MSA or from the interlocutor's dialect. However, what these results lacked are the specification and the quantification of the MSA linguistic elements; whether they were phonological, morphological or lexical and how many of each of these elements was borrowed.

Specifying the number of borrowings can shed light on the specific linguistic elements that have more dominance in cross-dialectal communication and which can be introduced to L2 learners to aid their cross-dialectal communication. The previous studies also had some limitations in their methodologies which raise questions regarding the strength of their claims. A limited number of informants – between 4 and 10 – was the basis for the conclusions regarding the social and the cultural factors that influence code-switching. Some of the conversational topics were quite formal and academic, which raises the question of whether the borrowings from MSA were instigated by the formality of the topic or by the cross-dialectal situation. In addition, some of these studies were conducted decades ago and their conclusions may not be applicable to contemporary Arabic language use by its NSs.

3.1 The research questions

In light of the conclusions drawn from the literature review on NSs Arabic cross-dialectal interaction and keeping in mind how these conclusions can have a role in TASL, the present study aims to further investigate cross-dialectal informal communication. The study will focus on the patterns of MSA borrowings and the strategies applied by the NSs in language use and language comprehension which can be introduced to the Arabic L2 learners. Therefore, the present study project has the following research questions:

1. Which linguistic elements are borrowed from MSA in informal cross-dialectal communication?
2. Are there any linguistic or non-linguistic variables that may influence MSA borrowings?
3. What strategies do the NSs apply in cross-dialectal communication in order to achieve lexical comprehensibility?

The above research questions are investigated in the first part of this thesis which includes the methodology presented in the current chapter, the results and the discussion of results as well as conclusions in chapters 4 to 6. Based on the

conclusions from part 1 of the thesis, the following research questions are investigated in part 2 in chapters 7 to 10:

4. To what extent can advanced university Arabic students achieve successful dialectal lexical comprehension?
5. Can explicit instruction of the NSs' listening strategies affect the level of L2 dialectal lexical comprehension?

3.2 Methodology

This chapter will present the methodology applied in order to explore answers to the first three research questions above which suggest a need for recorded language between NSs of different Arabic dialects. The language was then to be linguistically analysed with all the instances of MSA borrowings being observed. There was the option of analysing the recorded conversations already transcribed in the previous studies of Ezzat (1974) and Blanc (1960); but the results of analysing them may provide outdated conclusions as, for sure, dialectal Arabic use must have gone through changes in the last few decades. There were also the limitations in the data of these studies regarding the number and the choice of the informants as was explained in the last chapter. Therefore, it was essential to obtain more recent and more diverse cross-dialectal informal conversations in order to reach conclusions that are relevant to the date of this thesis.

Opportunely, the city of Leeds in the UK, where this study has been done, has a large Arab diaspora from numerous Arabic speaking countries with first-generation residents in the UK as well as a large number of Arabic speaking students and professionals who come to live in the UK for a few years. This diversity made it possible to have speakers of 12 Arabic dialects to participate in the study. An adequate and a diverse number of participants was needed to test the claims in the past studies regarding the borrowing from MSA in cross-dialectal communication and to provide more diversified language data to analyse which would not be restricted to a certain type of participant. 11 conversations were recorded between 21 NSs of Arabic. Most of the conversations were between two participants at a time, except for one conversation which was between three

participants. The length of the conversations was an average of 18 minutes each. The participants were given a short questionnaire to collect basic demographic information about them and they were also interviewed after the recording of the conversations in order to collect data about how they managed to understand the lexis that differ from their own dialects. The following sections will present the details of the methodology in terms of who the participants were, the instructions given to them prior the conversations and how the recorded language was analysed.

3.2.1 The participants

Finding the participants was through personal contacts, an advert put in the local Arab mosque and through an email sent to Arabic speakers in the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics at the University of Leeds. 21 NSs of 12 Arabic dialects agreed and committed to participate in the study. These dialects were: Saudi (Hijazi), Saudi (Najdi), Jordanian (from Amman), Egyptian (Cairene), Libyan (Eastern), Algerian (from Algiers), Eritrean, Kuwaiti, Tunisian, Omani (Muscat), Syrian (Damascene) and Iraqi (Baghdadi). These were all urban varieties from the capital or other big cities in these countries. It was intended to include a diversity of urban dialects in order to avoid limiting the results to specific regions. For some dialects, it was possible to have multiple participants such as for Libyan, Saudi and Egyptian while for other dialects, one speaker only participated such as for Tunisian and Omani. This was not intended but it was simply because of the availability of certain dialect speakers rather than others.

A short questionnaire (See Appendix A) was given to the participants after the recording of their conversations in order to collect some demographic information about them which would be of relevance to the data analysis. In the questionnaire, they were also asked about their level of exposure to MSA and other dialects in order to investigate whether that exposure has an influence on the language they use and the level of comprehension they achieve in cross-dialectal communication. Only 1 participant – the Kuwaiti speaker - was not educated in Arabic and she was the only participant to state having difficulty occasionally in understanding MSA. 7 out of the 21 said that they use (speak or

write) MSA in their daily life whether at work or in other settings while the majority said they do not use MSA except for reciting the Quran and in other religious rituals.

Table 3.1 below lists the demographic information on the participants including the languages of their education. In referring to the participants, abbreviations of their mother tongue dialects will be used. The participants included 6 males and 15 females, of different ages from 16 to over 50 and different levels of education from high school level up to PhD holders. This variability in the age and the education level provided diversity and meant that if certain linguistic patterns were observed to be used by all/most of these participants, then it would be rational to relate them to the factor of the cross-dialectal situation rather than due to other non-linguistic factors such as age and education. Some of the participants knew each other, while most did not. Some of them specialised – or had an interest – in linguistics and the Arabic language, but most of them were not linguists.

Table 3.1: The participants

participant		**Mother tongue**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Highest degree obtained and field**	**Language of school education**	**Language of university education**
1	Jrd1	Jordanian	M	30+ [13]	MA (science)	Arabic	Mostly English + Arabic
2	SdiH1	Saudi (Hijazi)	F	30+	MA (science)	Arabic	Mostly English + Arabic
3	SdiN1	Saudi (Najdi)	F	30+	MA (science)	Arabic	Mostly English + Arabic
4	Jrd2	Jordanian	F	16	High School	Arabic + English	*Not Applicable*
5	Egy1	Egyptian	F	30+	PhD (dentistry)	English	English
6	Lib1	Libyan	F	44	PhD (Psychology)	Arabic	English

[13] Some participants preferred not to declare their exact age and to only state that they were over 30 years old.

participant		Mother tongue	Gender	Age	Highest degree obtained and field	Language of school education	Language of university education
7	Egy2	Egyptian	F	26	BA (linguistics)	Arabic	English
8	Lib2	Libyan	M	44	MA (linguistics)	Arabic	English
9	Egy3	Egyptian	M	28	MA (IT)	Arabic	English
10	Alg1	Algerian	M	47	High school	Arabic	*Not Applicable*
11	Lib3	Libyan	F	20	High school	Arabic	*Not Applicable*
12	SdiH2	Saudi (Hijazi)	F	29	MA (Public Health)	Arabic	English
13	Alg2	Algerian	F	37	BA (dentistry)	Arabic	French
14	SdiH3	Saudi (Hijazi)	F	25	BA (English)	Arabic	English
15	Ert1	Eritrean	F	35	High School	Arabic +Tigrinya	*Not Applicable*
16	Kwt1	Kuwaiti	F	25	BA (English)	English	English
17	Lib4	Libyan	F	29	BA (Arabic linguistics)	Arabic + French	English
18	Omn1	Omani	M	24	BA (Education)	Arabic	English
19	Tns1	Tunisian	M	40	High School	Arabic + French	*Not Applicable*
20	Irq1	Iraqi	F	44	MA (Education)	Arabic	English
21	Syr1	Syrian	F	30+	BA (psychology)	Arabic	Arabic

3.2.2 The settings and instructions given to the participants

The participants were given a brief introduction to the study without stating precisely what the researcher will be looking for in these conversations. They were asked to read and sign the consent form presented in Appendix A. A recorder was placed within reach of the researcher and close enough to – but not distracting - the participants. They were asked to converse as naturally as possible and they were given cards with some informal topics as suggestions for the conversations such as: describing a favourite meal, what are you going to do at the weekend? where do you usually go shopping? Something great happened to you recently. The language written on these cards was English and not any Arabic varieties so not to influence their language choice in the conversations. They had the option to

choose any of these topics as well as any other informal topics. Sometimes the researcher got involved in the conversation in order to encourage the participants to talk more or to try to make it as informal as possible by either giving some comments or even light jokes as ice breakers. However, the researcher's language was not included in the analysis.

The data comprised 11 conversations with a total of approximately 193 minutes of language. Each conversation lasted between 14 and 24 minutes. Based on the rate of 2.12 per minute for the borrowings that was observed in Abu-Melhim's (1992) study, and if the technique of borrowing from MSA is still applied in contemporary Arabic cross-dialectal interaction, it is speculated by the researcher that the 193 minutes recorded in the present study would yield hundreds of borrowing instances to analyse. The recording of conversations was conducted in different places according to the convenience of the participants with some of them preferring it to be at home and others preferring public places such as the local mosque and the university foyer. Table 3.2 lists the details of the conversations showing which participants were involved in each conversation and whether they knew each other prior the conversation or not, the length of each and the topics discussed.

Table 3.2: The conversations

	The participants	**length in minutes**	**Topics involved**
1	Jrd1, SdiH1 and SdiN1 (University colleagues)	24	The different Arabic dialects and how similar or different they are - Description of a favourite meal - Women driving in the Middle East and road accidents
2	Jrd2 and Egy1 (neighbours)	16	Shopping for food and clothes - Plans for the summer holiday – Homesickness - Helping in household chores - A recipe

	The participants	**length in minutes**	**Topics involved**
3	Lib1 and Egy1 (neighbours)	20	The Libyan dialects - Words that are taboo in some dialects - The children's Arabic language when living abroad – the influence of education.
4	Egy2 and Lib2	18	Movies - Outings with the children - The effects of British and French occupation on Arab countries - Life in Leeds compared to London and other UK cities - A funny story in a holiday
5	Egy3 and Alg1	14	Football and Sports - Personal information i.e. marriage and children
6	Lib3 and SdiH2	15	Their studies - Cities they lived in - Libyan food – friends from different cultures
7	SdiH3 and Alg2	17	Life and study away from home - Bringing up children - Egyptian movies
8	SdiH3 and Ert1	14	Daily routine - Children's education - A Saudi meal
9	Lib4 and Kwt1	18	Their studies - Kuwaiti food - shopping
10	Omn1 and Tns1	23	Their studies – the North African cuisine - Teaching Islam to children in a non-Muslim country – the cultural shock and home sickness
11	Irq1 and Syr1	14	Personal information - Activities in the mosque - Favourite food and recipes – celebrating Ramadan

3.2.3 The data collection and analysis

During each conversation, the researcher was present; observing and writing down notes and questions related to specific language modifications. These included any instances of using MSA whether they were phonological, lexical or morpho-

phonological borrowings. They also included the lexis that differs in the participating dialects in each conversation, as well as the lexical items that were not understood. At the end of the recording, the researcher checked with the participants whether they thought that certain MSA words or sounds in their conversations are commonly used in their own dialects in informal situations or they were purely borrowed from MSA. This validation was only one of the methods in deciding whether a specific element was borrowed or not. The participants were also asked about how they think they managed to understand the sentences and words that differ in each other's dialects.

The recorded conversations were then analysed after listening to them several times and a list of possible borrowings from MSA was made. Also another list of the cognates and non-cognates was made highlighting the words that were and were not comprehended and what the listeners stated about how they understood them. Their answers regarding how they comprehended the lexis will be discussed in chapter 5. In order to linguistically analyse the list of MSA borrowings, two challenging points had to be addressed; the first was how to distinguish between the varieties and confirm whether a certain linguistic element was borrowed from MSA or was part of the participant's dialect, and the second challenge was in classifying the borrowings linguistically as phonological, lexical or under another category.

In order to address the first challenge of determining whether a certain linguistic element belongs to the dialect of the participant or borrowed, different methods were applied. Firstly, it was through relying on the researcher's intuition and knowledge of MSA and the Egyptian dialect as a native speaker. Then, as discussed above, by enquiring from the participants themselves after the conversation whether certain elements are usually used in their own dialects. Finally, and in order to further verify that a certain element was a borrowing, the researcher enquired from individuals other than the participants who are NSs of these dialects and looked at some academic resources on these dialects. The resources used are listed in Appendix B. They included textbooks introducing certain dialects, comparative linguistic studies, dictionaries of dialects and online

references describing the lexis, phonology and syntax of some of the urban Arabic dialects.

Obviously, there were instances of different views regarding whether a word or even a sound is borrowed or not and for these instances, more verification was needed. An example of such discrepancy occurred in analysing the conversation between the Omani and the Tunisian speakers whose dialects are not very familiar to the researcher. The Tunisian speaker used the MSA word *kaṯīr* "many" in the conversation and when he was asked whether they would use that word in the Tunisian dialect or whether there was another dialectal equivalent, he stated that it was dialectal; however, referring to references on the Tunisian dialect – listed in Appendix B - revealed that there is the Tunisian dialectal equivalent *barša.* In order to make a final decision of whether to classify this instance as a borrowing, an email was sent to L-Arabic, which is a mailing list for Arabic linguists, asking for Tunisian linguists to volunteer translating from English to the Tunisian dialect some sentences which included the word "many" as well as other words to verify. A total of six respondents all used the word *barša* in their translations and not the word *kaṯīr*. On that basis, this instance was classified as a lexical borrowing as there was a dialectal equivalent that is more commonly used and which was avoided by the participant in his conversation with the Omani speaker. All the MSA instances for which there were other more common dialectal equivalents were classified as borrowings.

One important point to mention here is that although it was feasible to detect the MSA borrowed elements and to check that they are not used in the speaker's dialect through the verification methods mentioned above, not all the MSA borrowings can be surely stated to exist in MSA only and purely and not in any dialects. For example certain sounds can be perceived by a Syrian speaker to be from MSA such as the /*q*/ instead of /ʔ/ in pronouncing the Syrian word *ʔarāba* "similarity" as *qarāba* which can be classified as the MSA equivalent. However, *qarāba* can also be considered dialectal as it is used dialects other than Syrian such as in the Tunisian dialect. It is not simple to state when a Syrian speaker says *qarāba* instead of *ʔarāba* whether s/he was influenced by MSA or by another dialect. In addition, stating that certain linguistic elements exist only in MSA and

not in any other spoken Arabic dialects would require a whole study with many methods of verification due to the vast common features as well as the variation among the Arabic varieties. Despite not knowing for sure whether the source of a borrowing was from MSA or was influenced by another dialect, they will be referred to throughout the thesis as 'MSA borrowings' for convenience. All these borrowings would include elements which definitely exist in MSA and not in the speaker's dialect; while the question of whether these elements exist also in other dialects would fall outside the scope of this study. The second challenge in the analysis was in determining whether a borrowing was mainly phonological, lexical or can be classified under another linguistic category. The lexical borrowings were easy to classify as they comprised the non-cognates in these verities such as in the Tunisian example above of the two non-cognates for the word "many" *barša* (Tunisian) and *kaṯīr* (MSA). Most of the phonological borrowings in which the speaker substituted a dialectal sound with a sound from MSA were not only phonological borrowings, but phono-lexical because these modifications were what distinguished between the dialectal and the MSA cognates. An example of a phono-lexical borrowing is the Saudi-Najdi word *ṭarīga* "way/method" which differs from its MSA cognate *ṭarīqa* by replacing only one phoneme *g* with *q*.

There were also morpho-phonological borrowings such as when a speaker borrowed the negation morpheme from MSA as in the MSA phrase *lā tasmaḥ* "does not allow" instead of the Libyan dialectal equivalent *ma-tismaḥ-š*. There were other instances that included morpho-phonological as well as phono-lexical borrowings which made it difficult to classify. Due to this variability in the linguistic modifications, all the borrowing instances were not classified separately as only phonological, lexical or morphological but classified as either cognates or non-cognates. The cognates included all the phonological and morpho-phonological borrowings such as the examples above of *ṭarīga* /*ṭarīqa* and *lā tasmaḥ* / *ma-tismaḥ-š* while the non-cognates included all the purely lexical borrowings such as *barša* / *kaṯīr.* The classification of the MSA borrowings into cognates and non-cognates formed lists of instances to analyse and to observe whether certain linguistic elements were more dominant than others and to observe whether the types of borrowing were influenced by any linguistic or non-linguistic variables.

The results of the analysis will be presented and discussed in chapter four highlighting the observations regarding how MSA was used in these cross-dialectal conversations and to what extent in comparison with the previous studies which were reviewed in chapter 2.

In order to analyse how comprehension was achieved or failed, and as mentioned earlier in this chapter, all the dialectal elements that differed considerably between the participating dialects in each conversation were listed during the recordings. In addition, all the elements that caused misunderstanding or hindered comprehension were listed. After the recordings, the participants were asked about whether they knew these different elements in each other's dialects already, and if they were unfamiliar, then how did they think they managed to understand them. The participants' answers were later analysed and listed into themes of reasons and strategies which aided their understanding. All the elements that hindered comprehension were also linguistically analysed in order to observe any common features among them. Chapter five will present and discuss the results regarding how the comprehension was successful and how it failed and will look at the strategies and the factors that aided comprehension and how the participants dealt with the instances of unintelligibility.

Chapter 4: The language of cross-dialectal conversations: Results and Discussion

The last chapter presented the methodology of this part of the study which focused on cross-dialectal informal conversations between 21 NSs of 12 Arabic dialects and aimed to investigate answers for the following questions: 1. Which linguistic elements are borrowed from MSA in informal cross-dialectal communication? 2. Are there any linguistic or non-linguistic variables that may influence MSA borrowings? 3. What strategies do the NSs apply in cross-dialectal communication in order to achieve comprehensibility? Both this chapter and the next will present and discuss the results after the conversations were analysed in relation to these research questions. The results presented in this chapter will focus only on how the participants conversed in cross-dialectal conversations and not on the comprehension aspect which will be discussed later in chapter five. Therefore, the next sections will deal with the first two research questions about the MSA borrowings that the participants made and identify factors that may have influenced these linguistic modifications.

4.1 Results

The first research question regarding the number and type of MSA elements borrowed in cross-dialectal interaction aimed to investigate whether certain phonological, morphological or lexical elements are borrowed from MSA in view of what was stated in previous studies regarding the common use of MSA in cross-dialectal communication. As was discussed in the last chapter on the methodology, defining and classifying MSA borrowings required a number of verification techniques in order to determine whether certain MSA linguistic elements are used in the speaker's dialect or borrowed. Through this validation process, only the MSA elements that were used in the recorded conversations and which had dialectal equivalents that were more commonly used in the speaker's dialect were considered as borrowings. This section will present the number of MSA borrowings by each participant, the linguistic classification of these

borrowings as cognates and non-cognates and the observed factors that may have initiated borrowing them.

4.1.1 Borrowings from MSA by participant and by conversation

A total of 53 instances of borrowings were observed in the 193 minutes of all the recorded language which is a rate of approximately 0.3 borrowing per minute. Table 4.1 presents the number of borrowings by each participant and by each conversation and it shows that 7 out of the 21 participants did not borrow any elements from MSA. The highest numbers of borrowings were made by the speakers of Tunisian – 11 (21%), Algerian – 9 (17%) and Libyan – 17 (32%) and out of the total of 53, these three North African dialect speakers made 37 borrowings (70%) although they in total comprised 7 (33%) participants out of the 21. The highest number of borrowings by conversation was between Tns1 and Omn1. This was 13 borrowings (25%) with Tns1 making 11 instances of them.

Table 4.1: The number of MSA borrowings by participant and by conversation

The participant	**MSA borrowings by participant**	**The conversation**	**MSA borrowings by conversation**
Jrd1	**1**	Jrd1, SdiH1 and SdiN1	**7**
SdiH1	**0**		
SdiN1	**6**		
Jrd2	**0**	Jrd2 and Egy1	**2**
Egy1	**2**	Lib1 and Egy1	**2**
Lib1	**2**		
Egy2	**1**	Egy2 and Lib2	**8**
Lib2	**7**		
Egy3	**0**	Egy3 and Alg1	**8**
Alg1	**8**		

The participant	**MSA borrowings by participant**	**The conversation**	**MSA borrowings by conversation**
Lib3	**1**	Lib3 and SdiH2	**1**
SdiH2	**0**		
Alg2	**1**	SdiH3 and Alg2	**1**
SdiH3	**0**	SdiH3 and Ert1	**0**
Ert1	**0**		
Kwt1	**0**	Lib4 and Kwt1	**7**
Lib4	**7**		
Omn1	**2**	Omn1 and Tns1	**13**
Tns1	**11**		
Irq1	**2**	Irq1 and Syr1	**4**
Syr1	**2**		
Total	**53**		

The list of borrowings was then analysed further in order to classify them linguistically as phonological, morphological or lexical[14]. The process of the linguistic classification showed that it was not always easy to distinguish whether some borrowings were purely phonological, morphological or lexical due to the vast variability in the linguistic differences between the dialectal and the MSA lexis which in many cases included more than one linguistic feature. On that basis and as it was discussed in chapter 3, the borrowings were classified as cognates and non-cognates. The cognates were all the words that differed phonologically or morpho-phonologically, while the non-cognates were the words that do not share the same lexical form.

[14] Syntactic differences were outside the scope of this study for the reasons explained in chapter one earlier.

4.1.2 Cognate borrowings

The cognate borrowings included lexical items that originated from the same root but encompassed linguistic differences ranging from one phoneme to complex cognates with multiple morpho-phonological differences. The analysis showed that 24 (45%) out of the 53 instances of borrowings were categorised as cognates borrowed from MSA. All the cognates are presented in table 4.2 showing which participants made them, their dialectal equivalents, their meanings in English and the topics of the conversations in which they occurred.

Table 4.2: The borrowed MSA cognates, their dialectal equivalents and the topics in which they occurred

The participant		**Their MSA borrowing**	**The dialectal equivalent**	**Meaning in English**	**The topic**
1	SdiN1	*ṭarīqat*	*ṭarīgat*	way/method	Dialectal differences
2		*nuṭq*	*nuṭg*	pronunciation	
3		*ʕāʔila*	*ʕāyla*	family	
4		*dāʔiman*	*dāyman*	always	local dishes
5		*mustaqbalan*	*fi-l-mustagbal*	in the future	women driving in Saudi
6	Jrd1	*dāʔira*	*dāyra/ duwwēra*	circle	recipe
7	Egy1	*ʔasnān*	*sinān*	teeth	topic of study
8	Lib1	*lā yamnaʕ*	*ma-yimnaʕ-š*	does not prohibit	difference in social classes
9	Egy2	*mutaʕallima*	*mitʕallima*	educated	change in the education system

The participant		Their MSA borrowing	The dialectal equivalent	Meaning in English	The topic
10	Lib2	*ḏālika*	*hadāka*	that (demonstrative)	change in social classes
11		*lā tasmaḥ*	*ma-tismaḥ-š*	does not allow	life expenses in London
12		*fī-ššitāʔ*	*fī-ššita*	in winter	last holiday
13	Alg1	*ism-i*	*wsimni*	my name	introduction
14		*al-ʔaḥad*	*lḥad*	Sunday	A friend's work life
15		*al-iṯnayn*	*ittinēn*	Monday	
16	Alg2	*ka-marʔa*	*ka-mara*	as a woman	raising Muslim children
17	Lib4	*al-ʕāʔila*	*al-ʕāyla*	the family	a popular Libyan dish
18		*tubāʕ*	*tinbāʕ*	to be sold	
19		*waqqafat*	*waggafat*	stopped	holiday problem
20	Tns1	*ʔaʕjabat-ak*	*ʕijbit-ik*	impressed you (you liked it)	life in Leeds
21		*aṯ-ṯulaṯāʔ*	*iṯlāṯa*	Tuesday	breaking the fasting in the mosque
22	Omn1	*miʔa*	*miyya*	hundred	differences in faith and beliefs
23	Syr1	*qarāba*	*ʔarābe*	closeness	dialectal similarities
24	Irq1	*salaṭa*	*zalaṭa*	salad	recipes

The analysis of these cognates showed that 9 of them included the use of the *hamza* sound which made 17% of all the borrowings and 38% of the total of the

cognate borrowings[15]. Example (1) below was from the conversation between Jrd1, SdiH1 and SdiN1 when Jrd1 was describing a recipe and replaced the dialectal word *dāyra/duwwēra* "circle" with its MSA cognate *dāʔira* using the *hamza* sound instead of the dialectal glide *y*.

(1) Jrd1: *btiṭlaʕ* ***dāʔira*** *kbīre b-ṣīniyye*
(it)comes out circle big in-tray
'It comes out as a big circle in a tray'

Another noted feature in the borrowed cognates was the use of the MSA *q* sound instead of the *g, k* or the glottal stop which are used in some dialects and which were also mentioned in Blanc's (1960) study. These were 5 (9%) instances of the total of the borrowings and made 21% of the cognates. Example (2) shows a cognate borrowing in the same conversation with Jrd1 and SdiH1 about the topic of language differences when SdiN1 replaced the dialectal *g* sound with the *q* sound in MSA in the two words in her Najdi dialect *ṭarīgat* "way" and *nuṭg* "pronouncing".

(2) SdiN1: *bass* ***ṭarīqat nuṭq****-aha* *tṣīr* *meḳtelfa*
But way pronouncing-it become different
'But the way it is pronounced becomes different'

These two sounds – the *hamza* and the *q* – were the most noticeable phonological features in the borrowed cognates and together they make 14 (58%) instances out of the 24 cognate borrowings. Other cognates included words with variable phonological differences such as the deletion or the insertion of a vowel, the use of different short vowels and the deletion or insertion of consonants. Example (3) has a cognate borrowing from the conversation between Egy1 and Jrd2, when Egy1 was talking about her research in dentistry and she replaced the Egyptian word

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15 The deletion of the middle and final glottal stop in MSA words or replacing it with vowels is a common feature in most urban Arabic dialects (Versteegh, 1997).

sinān “teeth” with the MSA equivalent *ʔasnān.* In this example the cognates have two phonological differences; the initial *hamza* in the MSA word and the insertion of a short vowel after the first consonant in the dialectal word.

(3) Egy1: *bastaḳdim ḥagāt fi-l-**ʔasnān** wi baṭallaʕ minn-aha ḳalāya*
(I)use things in-the-teeth and (I)get out from-it cells
‘I use things (parts) in the teeth and I bring out cells from them’

Another example of a cognate borrowing with multiple phonological differences is in example (4) in which Lib2 in his conversation with Egy2 about the change in social classes in Egypt; he used the MSA demonstrative *ḏālika* “that” instead of the Libyan equivalent *hadāka* which are likely to be etymologically related but they have multiple phonological differences.

(4) Lib2: *eṭ-ṭabaqa-l-ġaniyya fī maṣr fī **ḏālika**-l-waqt…*
The-class -the-rich in Egypt in that-the-time…
‘The rich (social) class in Egypt at that time…’

Out of the 24 cognate borrowings, there were 5 instances of complex cognates that incorporate multiple morpho-phonological differences. Example (5) from the conversation between Lib2 and Egy2 shows how Lib2 used the MSA negated verbal phrase *lā tasmaḥ* “does not allow” instead of the equivalent Libyan multi-morphemic word *ma-tismaḥ-š* with the negation prefix *ma* and the suffix *š*.

(5) Lib2: *minḥit-na **lā tasmaḥ** bi-l-maʕīša f-landan*
Bursary-our not allow for/by-the-living in-London
‘Our bursary does not allow for the living in London’

4.1.3 Non-cognate borrowings

Out of the 53 borrowings, there were 29 (55%) non-cognate instances in which the speakers replaced their dialectal words with MSA equivalents that do not share the

same lexical root. Some of these were considered MSA because they are used in elevated speech such as the verb *bastaḳdim* "I use" in example (3) above which according to Hinds & Badawi - in their dictionary of Egyptian Arabic - is used mainly in formal and elevated speech rather than the more common Egyptian equivalent *bastaʕmil* (Hinds and Badawi, 1986). This was also the only example observed in this study of the hybridisation mechanism of using a dialectal affix with an MSA verb, as the initial *b* in the word *bastaḳdim* is used only in dialectal present tense and not in MSA. Table 4.3 below presents all the non-cognate borrowings, the equivalents in the speakers' dialects, their English meanings and the topics in which they occurred.

Table 4.3: The borrowed MSA non-cognates, their dialectal equivalents and the topics in which they occurred

The participant		**Their MSA borrowing**	**The dialectal equivalent**	**Meaning in English**	**The topic**
1	SdiN1	*nanḏur ʔilā*	*nšūf*	we see/look at	dialectal differences
2	Egy1	*b-astaḳdim*	*b-astaʕmil*	I use	topic of PhD study
3	Lib1	*baʕḍ*	*šwayya*	some	dialectal differences
4	Lib2	*alʔān*	*tawwa*	now	place of study
5		*ʔaṣbaḥat*	*gaʕadit*	became	how they like Leeds
6		*bāhiḍat al-maṣārīf*	*ġālya*	expensive	life in London
7		*lā tuqfal*	*ma-tsakkir-š*	does not close	holiday story
8	Alg1	*ʔumm-i*	*yammāt-i*	my mother	introducing oneself
9		*ʔaḏhab*	*ʔarūḥ*	I go	plans for the day
10		*yaštaġil*	*yaḳdim*	He works	A friend's work
11		*yaḏhab*	*yrūḥ*	He goes	
12		*al-ʔusbūʕ*	*as-simān*	the week	

The participant		Their MSA borrowing	The dialectal equivalent	Meaning in English	The topic
13	Lib3	*alʔān*	*tawwa*	now	current colleagues
14	Lib4	*yarawna*	*yšūfu*	they see	Topic of MA study
15		*ṣaḥn*	*ṣūniyya*	plate	recipe
16		*faqaṭ*	*bass*	only	holiday story
17		*wajadna*	*lagēna*	we found	weekly shopping
18	Tns1	*alʔān*	*tawwa*	now	(Throughout the conversation)
19		*liʔann*	*ʕala ḳāṭir*	because	tickets for holiday
20		*kaḏālik*	*zāda*	also	Other Omani students in Leeds
21		*kaṯīr*	*barša*	many	
22		*yaʕmal*	*yaḳdim*	he works	
23		*faqaṭ*	*bark*	only	(Throughout the conversation)
24		*intaqalt*	*jīt*	came	Introduction
25		*itnaqalt*	*durt*	went/moved	places to visit in UK
26		*laysa*	*ma-huwwā-ši*	he is not	Perception of Jesus in Islam
27	Omn1	*faqaṭ*	*bass*	only	Different faith perceptions
28	Irq1	*alʔān*	*hassa*	now	A new Imam
29	Syr1	*muftiqda*	*mištāʔa*	missing	Ramadan rituals

The analysis of the non-cognates presented in table 4.3 showed that 14 (48%) out of their total of 29 instances were MSA words that replaced dialectal words that can be considered very localised to a certain Arabic speaking community and not

very common in other Arabic speaking communities. These 14 localised words included 13 from the North African dialects of Algeria, Tunisia and Libya and 1 word from the Iraqi dialect which is presented in example (6) below. In this Example, Irq1 was talking to Syr1 about the local mosque and Ramadan rituals when she used the MSA word *alʔān* "now" instead of the equivalent Iraqi word *hassa*.

(6) Irq1: *fīh ʕid-na imām lībī w-**alʔān** ʔimām ʕrāqi*
There is at-us Imam Libyan and-now Imam Iraqi
'We have a Libyan Imam and now an Iraqi Imam'

Example (7) shows an instance from the conversation with Omn1 talking about other Omani people coming to study in Leeds when Tns1 used the MSA word *kaḏālik* "also" instead of the Tunisian equivalent *zāda* which is not commonly used in the more eastern Arabic dialects.

(7) Tns1: *kan ʕan-na ʔaḳḳ yaʕmal f-id-dukturāh **kaḏālik***
Was at-us brother does/works in-the-doctorate also
'We had a brother working on the doctorate also'

One observable feature in all the MSA cognate and non-cognate borrowings – which has been also observed in previous studies, was the total absence of the use of the MSA case endings - *al-ʔiʕrāb* - which according to the prescriptive resources on MSA, are to be used at the end of most nouns, verbs and adjectives[16]. This can be considered one of the dialectal influences on the MSA borrowings. There were 4 other instances in which the speakers made an MSA borrowing but it was influenced phonologically or morphologically by the dialects. The first was the hybridisation instance mentioned above in example (1) of the use of the dialectal

16 Not using the case endings has become more accepted by some linguists in the last few decades and is not considered an ungrammatical way of speaking MSA in certain settings (Brustad et al., 2004)(Brustad et al., 2004).

prefix *b* with the MSA verb (*b-astaḳdim*). The following three examples show how the MSA borrowings had dialectal influence on them which resulted in words that cannot be totally classified as either MSA or dialect. Example (8) was from the conversation between Syr1 and Irq1 talking about the Ramadan religious rituals that they miss in the UK. Syr1 replaced the Syrian dialectal word *mištāʔa* "missing" with the MSA equivalent *muftaqida* but with a couple of changes in the middle vowels giving *muftiqda.* With the dropping of a vowel, the syllables of the word decreased from four to three. The deletion of a middle vowel and the decrease of the number of syllables is a dialectal feature (Versteegh, 1997). The word *muftiqda* is not considered a correct MSA adjective, neither is it commonly used in the Syrian dialect of Damascus.

(8) Syr1: *fa-ʔana* ***muftiqda*** *ṭabaʕan ha-šši. mā-ʕin-na hōn*
So-I missing of course this-thing. not-at-us here
'So I am missing this thing of course. We do not have it here'

Example (9) was from the conversation between Tns1 and Omn1 talking about the move to a city in the UK when Tns1 replaced the Tunisian verb *durt* "went" with an MSA equivalent but with a dialectal effect *itnaqalt* which would not be considered as a correct MSA conjugation of the verb. The use of the initial syllable *it* as in ***it****naqalt* is a dialectal feature while the correct equivalent of this verb in MSA would be *intaqalt.*

(9) Tns1: ***ʔitnaqalt*** *inta li-hnāk?*
went/moved you to-there?
'Did you go/move there?'

Example (10) is the last example here to show how the speaker borrowed phonological elements from MSA into a dialectal word instead of using the correct MSA equivalent. This was from the conversation between SdiH3 and Alg2 talking about living in a different culture when Alg2 borrowed the *hamza* sound from MSA in the word *marʔa* "woman" instead of the Algerian equivalent *mara*. However, in

MSA the word "woman" has two forms; the definite form is *al-marʔa* while the indefinite is *ʔimraʔa.* Therefore a correct MSA phrase here would be *ka-ʔimraʔa* "as a woman" and not *ka-marʔa.*

(10) Alg2: *inti ka-**marʔa** muslima w-ʕarabiyya….*
You as-woman Muslim and-Arab….
'You as a Muslim and an Arab woman…'

Table 4.4 below summarises the observed linguistic features of the cognates and the non-cognates borrowed from MSA and gives the number and the percentage of each feature. It shows that the use of the hamza sound in the cognates that were borrowed from MSA makes the highest number of instances which is 9 (17% of the total of borrowings and 38% of the cognate borrowings). The instances of replacing localised words were observed to make 27% of the total of the MSA borrowings and 48% of the non-cognate borrowings.

Table 4.4: The linguistic features of the cognates and non-cognates borrowed from MSA

The type of MSA borrowing	**Number and Percentage**	**Their linguistic features**	**Number and percentage**
Cognates	24 (45%)	The use of the *qaaf* sound	5 (9%)
		The use of *hamza*	9 (17%)
		Cognates with multiple phonological differences	5 (9%)
		Complex cognates with multiple morpho-phonological differences	5 (9%)
Non-cognates	29 (55%)	Localised lexis	14 (27%)
		non-localised lexis	15 (28%)
Total	**53**		

4.1.4 Variables influencing MSA borrowings

In order to identify the factors that may have influenced the borrowings from MSA other than the fact that these conversations were cross-dialectal, the borrowed items were further analysed to see whether certain variables correlate with the number of MSA borrowings. The analysis included the parts of speech of the borrowings, the formality of the topics in which they occurred as well as relations between the participants' demographic information in terms of gender, age and level of education and the number of MSA borrowings made by each.

The borrowed parts of speech

All the 53 instances were analysed in terms of their part of speech into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, connectors, negation particles and demonstratives. This was intended to explore whether certain linguistic elements are more borrowed from MSA than others. Table 4.5 lists the number of borrowed elements in each part of speech and shows that the highest number was for the nouns (34%) and the verbs (32%).

Table 4.5: The number of borrowed MSA elements by part of speech

Part of speech	**Total borrowings**
Nouns	18 (34%)
Verbs	17 (32%)
Adjectives	8 (15%)
Adverbs	7 (13%)
Connectors	1 (2%)
Negation particles	1 (2%)
Demonstratives	1 (2%)
Total	**53**

Non-linguistic factors

One non-linguistic variable was observed to have a connection with the number of the MSA borrowings; and that was the gender. Although the number of male participants was much less than the females, most of the MSA borrowings were made by male participants. Table 4.6 shows the number of male and female participants and the total number of MSA borrowings by each gender. The last column in the table shows that there was a rate of 4.8 borrowings per minute per male participant and only 1.6 borrowings per female participant.

Table 4.6: The number of borrowed MSA elements by gender

The gender	The number of participants	The number of MSA borrowings	The rate of MSA borrowing per participant
Male	6	29	4.8
Female	15	24	1.6

Another variable that was observed to be connected with the MSA borrowings is the topic of the conversations. As was discussed in the last chapter of the methodology, it was planned to avoid formality in the recorded conversations which is one of the factors that are known to initiate the use of MSA in any Arabic conversation whether it is cross- or intra-dialectal (Agius and Shivtiel, 1992; Al-Wer, 2013; Albirini, 2011; Bassiouney, 2006; Holes, 1993, 2004; Mitchell, 1986). The reason for focussing mainly on informal conversations was to observe whether MSA would still be used in informal settings and not initiated by a formal topic; however, as also these conversations were meant to be as natural as possible, it was not sensible to stop the participants from talking about a certain topic or to dictate this to them in the middle of their conversations. The free choice that was given to the participants in their conversational topics allowed them to be as natural as possible but also allowed the inclusion of some general societal and academic topics with a sense of formality.

The borrowed MSA instances were hence analysed according to the formality of the topic of the conversation. Formality here refers to the generic topics that are not particular to the individuals and not personalised. For example, and out of the various topics in the recorded conversations which were listed in table 3.2 in the last chapter, what was considered to be more formal were the following topics: The Arabic dialects and their differences, the perceptions about women driving in Saudi Arabia, difficulties in raising Muslim children in Europe, The effects of occupation on Arab societies. On the other hand, informal topics included: personal information about family and studies, favourite meals, shopping, holiday stories and plans and daily routines.

The analysis showed that 18 (34%) out of the 53 borrowing instances occurred in the formal topics mentioned above. Out of these 18 instances, 10 were cognates that included: 4 out of the total of 5 instances of the use of *qaaf* sound instead of other dialectal equivalents, 2 instances of the use of *hamza* and 4 instances of other cognates with multiple morpho-phonological features. Out of the 18 instances that occurred in formal topics, there were 8 non-cognates. The analysis of these 8 non-cognates showed that they were all non-localised words which are shared between many dialects. Example (11) below shows an MSA verb which was used by Lib4 in her conversation with Kwt1 talking about the topic of her study regarding the Arabs' attitude towards the dialects. Lib4 used the MSA verb *yarawna* "they see/perceive" instead of the Libyan equivalent phrase *yšūfu inn* even though the dialectal verb *yšūfu* is very familiar to most – if not all – NSs as it is shared between many urban dialects including the interlocutor's in this conversation - Kwt1.

(11) Lib4: *kēf inn-el-ʕarab* ***yarawna****-l-lahajāt*
How that-the-Arabs see-the-dialects
'How the Arabs see/perceive the dialects'

One more observation was noticed regarding the timing of the MSA borrowings. The analysis showed that 37 (70%) out of the 53 borrowings occurred in the first half of each conversation. As it was presented in table 3.2, most of the participants

did not know each other before they met for the recording of the conversations. It can be speculated here that the borrowings that were made during the first half of the conversations were due to unfamiliarity with the interlocutors and that the more comfortable they become with each other, the less need was there for language modification. The analysis of the borrowings in relation to the other non-linguistic factors of the demographic information of the participants such as their ages and level of education did not present any identifiable connection with the number or the type of MSA borrowings with the exception of gender.

4.2 Discussion

According to the literature review of the previous studies on Arabic cross-dialectal interaction, MSA – although is not purely used – was claimed to have a noticeable and a frequent presence in cross-dialectal conversations. The only study that attempted to quantify the use of MSA was Abu-Melhim's study (1992) in which he observed a total of 1402 instances of what he referred to as diglossic code-switching in 11 hours of cross-dialectal conversations which is approximately 2.12 instances per minute. This considerable use of MSA and the lack of their linguistic specification in the previous studies led to the first two research questions in the current study regarding the specific linguistic features that are borrowed in cross-dialectal interaction in order to facilitate well comprehended conversations and the observed variables that may have an influence on the borrowing from MSA. This section will discuss the results presented in this chapter in relation to the first two research questions.

4.2.1 Research question 1: Which linguistic elements are borrowed from MSA in informal cross-dialectal communication?

Based on the literature review, a considerable use of MSA would occur in any cross-dialectal conversation between educated Arabic NSs and based on the numbers of MSA borrowings stated in Abu-Melhim's study, hundreds of MSA borrowings were anticipated by the researcher to occur in the present study which would be sufficient for linguistic analysis and for presenting solid findings regarding the linguistic elements that are borrowed from MSA in cross-dialectal interaction.

However, the conversations analysis showed much less use of MSA than had been anticipated after the literature review. A total of 53 instances in 193 minutes were observed with a rate of 0.3 MSA borrowings per minute. The number of borrowings is quite small even though they included elements which might not even be borrowed from MSA. As mentioned in section 3.2.3, all these instances were labelled as MSA borrowings even though it was not possible to ensure that they are purely in MSA and not influenced by other dialects.

Another observation was the complete absence of MSA borrowings by some of the participants. As presented in table 4.1, 7 (33%) out of the 21 participants did not make any MSA borrowings in their conversations and these 7 participants were not observed to be of specific category of dialect speakers, age, or level of education. According to the previous studies, every participant made use of MSA in their cross-dialectal conversations with a variability in the extent of the MSA use of which certain dialect speakers – such as the Tunisians – made more borrowings from MSA than other dialect speakers (Shiri, 2002). The results in the present study confirm what has been stated in the previous studies reviewed in chapter 2 regarding the absence of a specific form as a lingua franca and that MSA is not purely used in cross-dialectal communication but a mix of elements form MSA and the dialects. What the results of this study add is that MSA has a more limited presence in cross-dialectal communication in comparison with previous studies. A considerable percentage of the participants did not resort to any use of MSA in their cross-dialectal communication and even for those who borrowed some elements from MSA, they were limited to few instances per participant.

The findings here – although showing a much lower rate of MSA borrowings – do not serve to discount or contradict the findings of previous studies but to highlight that there are possibly sociolinguistic factors that have affected the language use in Arabic cross-dialectal communication within the last few decades. Such factors could be the emergence of globalisation and the strong presence of the media which might have made the Arabic dialects more accessible to different dialect speakers around the world, and due to a better awareness of other dialects, some Arabic speakers, consciously or subconsciously, may resort less to MSA in order to ensure they are understood.

The participants in this study, although all were residents or visitors in the United Kingdom, most of them stated that their familiarity with various Arabic dialects was not a consequence of their life away from the Arab homelands but it started in childhood with the exposure to the media from different Arabic countries and the increasing migration of certain Arab communities to other ones. Familiarity with a range of dialects as well as personal reasons are explanations for this limited MSA use. Two of the participants who maintained their own dialects throughout the conversations were Egy3 in his conversation with Alg1 and Kwt1 in her conversation with Lib4. Egy3 stated that he was confident that his Cairene dialect is easily understood by other dialect speakers and that he does not see a need to modify his language when speaking with non-Egyptian NSs. Kwt1 who maintained her dialect including the localised words that are not common outside the Mesopotamian region stated that she prefers to stick to her Kuwaiti dialect as she feels shy and not confident enough to borrow utterances from another variety except from English in which she is very fluent. She added that her MSA was not very good due to her education in non-Arabic schools and that she had very little exposure to other Arabic dialects while growing up in a non-Arab country.

The limited number of MSA borrowings that were observed in this study did not provide enough instances for a linguistic analysis that can provide a straight answer to the first research question and present solid claims about how MSA is used in cross-dialectal communications. Out of the 53 instances, no specific linguistic elements of phonology, morphology or lexis were observed to be dominant. Most of the phonological borrowings were not purely phonological but phono-lexical such as the use of the MSA *qaaf* and the *hamza* sounds. There were also a number of morpho-phonological borrowings such as the use of MSA negation particles and the MSA passive forms of verbs. One observation regarding the type of non-cognates that were borrowed from MSA was the extent of localisation of certain lexical items. These were avoided by some of the participants and were replaced with either MSA or other more common dialectal equivalents. There were 14 (26%) out of the 53 instances that were classified as localized words limited to a certain variety and these were from the Iraqi and North African dialects. This observation agrees with Abu-Haidar's statement about the Iraqi speakers replacing

some localized words with other equivalents more familiar to non-Iraqi speakers (Abu-Haidar, 1994).

4.2.2 Research question 2: Are there any linguistic or non-linguistic variables that may influence MSA borrowings?

Answering this question, again, would require a substantial number of MSA borrowings in order to observe whether certain variables are correlated with this phenomenon of borrowing. The 53 instances of MSA borrowing were analysed in terms of their parts of speech and in relation with other non-linguistic variables such as the age, gender and level of education of the participant; however, due to this limited number of borrowings, the findings here are far from stating strong claims. If the effects of these factors on MSA borrowings are to be thoroughly examined, they may require a different setting than the situation of cross-dialectal interaction[17]. The analysis of the borrowed MSA words in this study in terms of their part of speech showed that most of the borrowed words were nouns and verbs with these two making 66% of all the 53 instances of borrowings. This high number could be due to these nouns and verbs being content words with more semantic value than adverbs, connectors and other functional words. It can be speculated here that replacing these content words in particular with their MSA equivalents aids successful comprehension.

In analysing the data in order to find links between the demographic information of the participants and the number of MSA borrowings they made, no observable links were found, except for the higher number of borrowings made by the male participants in comparison with the females as presented in table 4.6. However, as discussed earlier, in order to thoroughly examine the role of gender in making language modifications in cross-dialectal interaction, there would be a need for a larger number of participants and a more thorough exploration of the socio-

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17 As presented in chapter 1, another setting in which MSA has been observed to be borrowed is in the use of ESA in formal and semi-formal situations in which MSA is used in order to match the formality of the situation and not particularly for the purpose of aiding comprehension.

cultural factors that influence language modification while controlling other variables such as the participant's native dialect, level of education and age[18].

Another non-linguistic variable that was observed to possibly have initiated the use of MSA was the formality of the cross-dialectal situation either because of the unfamiliarity between the interlocutors which was noticed in the 70% of the MSA borrowings occurring in the first half of each conversation, or because of the topic of the conversation being depersonalised and about more generic societal matters. The 18 (34%) instances of MSA borrowings that occurred in the formal topics did not include any of the localised lexis, which may suggest that these borrowings were not necessarily intended for the purpose of achieving intelligibility but possibly more due to the nature of the conversation topics.

To sum up the findings regarding how MSA is used in cross-dialectal conversations, it can be stated that the borrowings from MSA that were observed in this study were quite limited and were far fewer than what previous studies have suggested. This could be due to many cultural and sociolinguistic changes which have occurred in the last few decades since cross-dialectal communication was last quantifiably investigated. Maintaining the participant's own dialect dominated these conversations with the exception of some of the localised lexis being replaced with more common equivalents from MSA as well as from other dialects. It was also observed that some non-linguistic factors may have an influence in initiating the use of MSA such as the formality of the conversational topic or the unfamiliarity of the interlocutor. The unanticipated limited number of MSA borrowings therefore did not provide substantive linguistic data to analyse except for the relatively frequent use of the *hamza* and the *q* sounds and the avoidance of localised lexis.

Although MSA was not used greatly in these conversations and most of the participants maintained their dialects, the level of understanding was observed to be high with very few instances of comprehension breaking down. The next chapter will present the observations regarding the success and the failure of

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18 For discussion on the effects of the level of education and other social variables on the use of MSA elements in intra-dialectal situations see Al-Wer (2002, 2011, 2013), Bakir (1986) and Bassiouney (2009).

comprehension in the recorded conversations and will discuss the factors and the strategies that were found to influence this high level of mutual intelligibility.

Chapter 5: Native listening comprehension strategies in Arabic cross-dialectal conversations: Results and Discussion

Chapter 2 briefly reviewed some of the studies that investigated Intelligibility between closely-related languages and dialects and the factors that can aid comprehension (Gooskens, 2007; Klaus, 1979; Mæhlum, 1992; Major et al., 2005; Tang and van Heuven, 2009). Some of the findings in these studies stated that the linguistic factors that affect cross-dialectal comprehension include the clarity of pronunciation, prosody and the extent of lexical and phonological affinity (Gooskens, 2007). Frequent exposure to and familiarity with non-native accents and dialects were also found to aid intelligibility (Cutler, 2012). One of the non-linguistic factors that were found to affect dialect intelligibility is the attitudes towards certain accents or dialects (Major et al., 2005).

All of these studies though were on languages other than Arabic and up to the date of this current study, intelligibility between the Arabic dialects has not yet been profoundly researched[19]. This lack of studies on Arabic cross-dialectal comprehension led to the third research question in the current study project which states: What are the strategies that the NSs apply and the factors that influence comprehensibility in cross-dialectal communication? The results discussed in the last chapter showed that the borrowings from MSA were much less than what was stated in previous studies and what was anticipated before starting this current study. However, the dominance of the native dialects which was observed in these conversations did not appear to hinder comprehension, which suggests that there must be factors and strategies applied by the speakers and the listeners to aid the successful comprehension between these dialects,

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[19] In a written personal communication with Charlotte Gooskens – who has done extensive research on intelligibility between closely related languages – she stated that she was not aware of such work being done on the Arabic varieties yet. This was also stated by Emma Trentman in her work on L2 Arabic dialect comprehension (Trentman, 2011, p. 25).

especially the distant varieties. This chapter will present and discuss observations regarding the strategies and the factors that aided cross-dialectal comprehension.

5.1 Results

In order to shed light on how lexical comprehension was achieved or failed in the recorded conversations of this study, all the instances of comprehension failure were observed. In addition, a list of the non-cognates, which did not hinder intelligibility, was made. These were then discussed with the participants in order to confirm whether they were familiar to them and if they were unfamiliar, then how they thought they managed to understand them. This subjective method of relying on the participants' as well as the researcher's intuition was the only possible method of exploration; as other more objective methods would require psycholinguistic research techniques which would be very informative but were outside the scope of this study.

A total of only 14 lexical items in the 193 minutes of the recorded conversations were not understood or were misunderstood. This can be calculated as a rate of 0.07 per minute. The next sections will present the observations regarding the comprehension success and failure and how the speaker and the listener dealt with the instances of comprehension failure. It will also present the factors that may have contributed to comprehension in relation to the listeners and the speakers.

5.1.1 Successful comprehension

The analysis of the results that are presented here identified themes related to actions taken by the speakers and strategies applied by the listeners which are all presumed to have a contribution to the intelligibility that was observed in these conversations. Excluding the 14 instances of comprehension failure, which will be presented later in this chapter, the 11 conversations progressed naturally with all the participants being observed to engage and respond to each other even though most of them were conversing mainly in their native dialects. This high level of intelligibility was aided by factors related to both the speaker and the listener in each conversation.

5.1.1.1 Strategies applied by the speaker

The last chapter discussed how 14 out of the 21 participants borrowed 53 elements from MSA. These borrowings, although they may have been the result of various factors, may also have had a role in achieving intelligibility. Other factors that were identified to have initiated the borrowings were the formality of the topics and the unfamiliarity of the interlocutor. Shiri (2002) also suggested in her study on Tunisians' interaction with the eastern Arabic dialect speakers that there are sociocultural factors that have a major role in initiating borrowings from other varieties. Determining the reasons behind a specific linguistic behaviour such as borrowing or code-switching is not a simple procedure and it would require a triangulation of research methods as the participants are not expected to always have an insight for what causes them to make a modification to their language use. However, it can also be inferred that language borrowing serves the aim of comprehensibility especially when the speakers are observed to avoid localised lexis and replace it with equivalents more familiar to the interlocutors and when the more distant varieties make more modifications to their language than the speakers of linguistically closer dialects.

One observation in the recorded conversations was of how some participants tried to acquaint their interlocutors with certain lexis in their dialects even without the interlocutors showing a lack of understanding. There were 13 instances of when the speaker mentioned to their interlocutor what a certain word was in their dialect or how phonologically it differs. These instances included 1 adjective and 12 nouns of which 6 were names of food that differed in the participating dialects. 6 out of the 12 were from the Libyan dialect and made by three of the Libyan participants. 5 were from the Iraqi dialect, 1 was from Syrian and 1 was from Egyptian. The following examples show three of these acquainting instances. Example (1) was from the conversation between Egy1 and Lib1 talking about the influence of education on different societies when Egy1 mentioned how the villages or countryside regions are referred to in the Cairene dialect.

(1) Egy1: *fīh farʔ bēn-il-mudun w-il-mudun-iṣ-ṣuġayyara,*
There difference between-the-cities and-the-small-the-cities,

il-ʔaqalīm eḥna binʔūl ʕalē-ha
the-countryside's we say on-it.

'There is a difference between the cities and the smaller cities, the countryside region we call them'

In example (1), Egy1 did not first use the Cairene word *ʔaqalīm* 'countryside' but a closer definition *il-mudun-iṣ-ṣuġayyara* 'the small cities' then added how it is said in Cairene. It can be speculated here that because the word *ʔaqalīm* in MSA has the more common meaning 'regions' and not necessarily 'villages' or 'countryside', Egy1 initially avoided it and replaced it with 'the small cities' in order to avoid misunderstanding, but then mentioned to Lib1 how the word is said in Cairene which could be an action taken in order to reduce the gap between the two dialects.

Example (2) was from the conversation between Egy2 and Lib2 talking about the difference in life between London and other cities in the UK when Lib2 used the Egyptian word *ʕēš* "bread", then he repeated it in Libyan *ḳubz* indicating that this is how it is said in his dialect.

(2) Lib2: *el-ʕēš, el-ḳubz eḥna ngūlu, ʔaġla*
The-bread (Egyptian) , the-bread (Libyan) we say, more expensive
'The bread (Egyptian), the bread (Libyan) we call it, is more expensive'

Example (3) was from the conversation between Irq1 and Syr1 talking about Ramadan rituals and visits when Irq1 interrupted Syr1 to state how the word *ḍuyūf* "guests" can be said in Iraqi. It was observed that when repeating the Syrian word, Irq1 pronounced it in her Iraqi dialect by replacing the *ḍ* sound with the *ḍ̠*.

(3) Irq1: *iḥnā ḍyūf* *nsammī-hum ḳuṭṭār*
We guests (in Syrian/MSA) call-them guests (in Iraqi)
'We call guests (in Syrian/MSA) guests (in raqi)'

The two actions of borrowing from MSA and acquainting their interlocutors with lexis in their dialects were the two strategies observed in this study to be taken by the speakers in order to aid communication or to decrease the linguistic gaps between the different dialects. There were also instances of borrowing from either the interlocutor's dialect or other dialects. However, as the focus of the present study is only on the use of MSA, the instances of dialectal borrowing were not included.

5.1.1.2 Strategies applied by the listener

As was discussed in the methodology of this study in chapter 3, the researcher observed the instances of non-cognates that did not seem to hinder comprehension and these were explored after the conversations by asking the interlocutors about whether they were familiar with these non-cognates, and if not, then how they thought they managed to understand them. The participants' answers were classified into five main explanations: dialect familiarity, making use of contextual clues, cognate-pairing, confirming an assumed meaning from the interlocutor and ignoring non-content words that did not carry much semantic value. Each of these factors or strategies is presented in the following sections.

Dialect familiarity

Understanding other Arabic dialects was stated by all the participants in the questionnaire to be an ability they have at different levels. They were all familiar with some of the phonological and lexical differences between them, especially the dialects in their region. For instance, the two Algerian participants stated that they can understand Moroccan and Tunisian very well. There was no participant who had no exposure at all to other Arabic dialects. Some of them stated that they were not sure whether they would be able to understand certain dialects that they had not had much exposure to such as Kwt1 who said that she had not much North African dialects much before. It is to be noted though that even with 8 instances of

Libyan words that Kwt1 could not understand in her conversation with Lib4, the conversation between them nevertheless was mostly mutually intelligible. Some participants also stated that they were so familiar with certain dialects that they can speak them fluently. Alg2, who spoke a lot of Levantine in her conversation with SdiH3, said she can also speak fluent Moroccan when conversing with Moroccan friends. 9 out of the 21 participants stated that they can speak only their own dialects.

Dialect familiarity was stated by the participants to be due to contacts and exposure through the media. Egy2 stated that she believes she finds it difficult to understand some of the North African dialects due to lack of exposure to them and their limited presence in the Arab Media in comparison with other Arabic dialects. On the other hand, Lib2 said that he was not very familiar with the Levantine dialects until about two decades ago when Syrian soap operas became very popular. Dialectal familiarity included awareness of certain distinctive phonological differences such as the glottal stop that replaces the MSA *q* sound in the Egyptian and some of the Levantine varieties, the gliding /j/ sound that replaces the /dʒ/ and the /tʃ/ sound that replaces the MSA /k/ in some of the Gulf varieties. Example (4) was from the conversation between Kwt1 and Lib4 when Kwt1 was describing a local dish and used the Kuwaiti word *dyāye* "chicken" which is a cognate of *dajāja* in MSA. When asked about this word after the conversation, Lib4 said that although she did not think she had heard the word "chicken" in the Kuwaiti dialect before, she knew that in Kuwait and some Gulf dialects the /dʒ/can be pronounced as a /j/ and so this knowledge aided her to recognise what the word meant[20].

(4) Kwt1: *ʕēš maʕa ḳuḍrawāt w-baʕdēn dyāye*
Rice with vegetables and-then chicken
'Rica with vegetables and then a chicken'

[20] It is to be noted here that the context must have been also a factor in comprehension in this example as the topic was about a local dish which could have aided Lib4 to correctly pair the Kuwaiti word *dyāye* with its MSA equivalent *dajāja* "chicken".

In addition to the awareness of phonological differences, most of the participants had a lexical awareness of frequently used non-cognates in their interlocutors' dialects. It was not feasible to ask the participants about each word they heard in the conversations and whether they were familiar with them or not; but some of the words they were asked about were non-cognates that they stated they understood because they were familiar with them due to previous exposure. Some of these familiar non-cognates are listed in table 5.1 below with their equivalents in MSA and in the interlocutors' dialects. The table also shows the frequency of usage of these words based on the Frequency Dictionary of Arabic by Buckwalter & Parkinson in which they listed 5000 of the most frequently used words in Arabic – including MSA and the most widely used urban dialects (Buckwalter and Parkinson, 2011). The analysis shows that the non-cognates that were familiar to the interlocutors were within the top 200 most frequently used words and they included interrogatives, adjectives, adverbs negation particles and connectors.

Table 5.1: Familiar dialectal non-cognates and their frequency of use

The word in the speaker's dialect	**Equivalent in the interlocutor's dialect**	**Equivalent in MSA**	**Meaning in English**	**Rank in word frequencies[21]**
marra (Saudi)	*wājid* (Libyan)	*jiddan*	very	171
ballašna (Jordanian)	*ebtadēna* (Egyptian)	*badaʔna*	(we) started	172
šinu (Libyan)	*ēš* (Saudi)	*ʔayy / māḏa*	what (interrogative)	46

[21] See Buckwalter and Parkinson (2011).

The word in the speaker's dialect	**Equivalent in the interlocutor's dialect**	**Equivalent in MSA**	**Meaning in English**	**Rank in word frequencies**
mū (Saudi)	*miš* (Libyan)	*laysa*	not	59
hallaʔ (Jordanian)	*dilwaʔti* (Egyptian)	*alʔān*	now	125
šū (Syrian)	*šinu* (Iraqi)	*ʔayy / māḏa*	what (interrogative)	46
barša (Tunisian)	*kṯīr* (Omani)	*kaṯīr*	many	55
ḳōš (Kuwaiti)	*ḥilū* (Libyan)	*jayyid / ṭayyib*	good	140
ʔāku (Kuwaiti)	*fīh* (Libyan)	*hunāka*	there is/are	77
ʕašān (Omani)	*ʕalā ḳāṭir* (Tunisian)	*liʔanna*	because	57

Making use of contextual clues

Relying on contextual clues was another explanation given by the listeners of how they managed to correctly guess the meaning of a non-cognate. The context has a major role in understanding any form of text or speech whether it is in a native or a non-native variety. For comprehension to be successful whether it is in L1 or L2, the listeners activate their knowledge of a certain topic and a number of lexical entries that may be equivalent to the words they hear are activated (Schmid, 2003). With available contextual clues, the number of activated lexical entries are then reduced to a single element to be matched with the word they hear (Carroll,

1992). 22 words were stated by the listeners to be guessed with the aid of the context. 9 out of these 22 were stated to be completely unfamiliar non-cognates that could not be paired with equivalents in other Arabic varieties and it was only the context that aided understanding.

Example (5) shows one of the non-cognates that the listener stated to be unfamiliar to her but she could guess its meaning from the context alone. This was from the conversation between Egy1 and Lib1 talking about helping children acquiring their Arabic in a non-Arab environment. In Lib1's sentence, she used the feminine active participle *mga'mza* "sitting" which during the conversation did not seem to hinder Egy1's understanding. The equivalent of this word in the Egyptian dialect is *ʔaʕda* and *qāʕida* or *jālisa* in MSA. When asked about what it means, Egy1 stated that she had never heard that word before and could only guess from the context that it means "sitting". It is to be noted here also that there are morpho-syntactic clues in the word *mga'mza* that may have helped guessing its meaning. The prefix *m* and the suffix *a* in the word indicate it is a feminine active participle describing a certain action[22].

(5) Lib2: *w-inti mga'mza m'a-hum 'a-t-tilfizyōn*
And-you sitting with-them on-the-television
'While you are sitting with them (watching) TV'

Example (6) also shows a non-cognate that was stated to be understood only because of the context. It was from the conversation between Kwt1 and Lib4 talking about an assignment when Kwt1 used the verb *ṭarrašt* "I sent" which has the equivalent *arsalt* in Libyan and in MSA. Lib4 stated that, although she had not heard that verb before, it was easy to guess the meaning of *ṭarrašt* because of the word "email" that followed it. She said "it must mean either I wrote to her or sent her". Again, in this example, there are morph-syntactic clues that aid guessing the correct meaning. Although, Lib4 could not pair the root of the Kuwaiti verb *ṭarrašt*

22 See example (15) below in section 5.1.2 of how the same word *mgaʿmiz* was not understood in another conversation due to the lack of context.

with a related lexical item in other Arabic varieties, it was clearly conjugated as a first person perfect verb having the suffix "*t*" to give the clue that it is an action that occurred in the past tense and which had an indirect object recognized in the use of the other suffixes *la* "to" and *ha* "her".

(6) Kwt1: *ṭarrašta-lla-ha īmēl*
(I)sent-to-her email
'I sent her an email'

Cognate-pairing

In addition to the context, pairing cognates was another technique used to aid understanding. The affinity between the Arabic varieties entails the existence of a large number of cognates that differ from each other phonologically or morpho-phonologically. These linguistic differences between the cognates did not appear to hinder understanding. The participants seemed to make use of their linguistic knowledge about each other's dialects in order to pair the cognates, especially the words that they are not familiar with and have not been exposed to before. Quantifying for the number of cognates in these conversations was not attainable due to their numerous occurrences; however some examples will be presented here.

Example (4) earlier showed how Lib4 paired the unfamiliar Kuwaiti word *dyāye* with its familiar cognate *dajāja* using her knowledge of the phonological differences between Kuwaiti and other Arabic varieties. In this example, the two words *dyāye* and *dajāja* can be considered as simple cognates as they differ only phonologically. There were also more complex cognates that were understood because of the participant's pairing them with the aid of the context. Complex cognates are the words that involve a shared root and affixal morphemes (Carroll, 1992, p. 113). Example (7) is from the conversation between SdiH3 and Alg2 talking about homesickness when SdiH3 said the word *daḥīna* "now" which is a non-cognate of the Algerian equivalent *tawwa* and the MSA *alʔān* but it is also a cognate of the MSA phrase *hāḏa-l-ḥīn* "this time". Alg2 was asked about its

meaning and she stated that she had not heard it before but she could see its relatedness to the MSA phrase *hāḏa-l-ḥīn* and so she could guess its correct meaning “now”.

(7) SdiH3: *daḥīna ʔabġa arjaʕ balad-i*
Now (I)want (I)return country-my
‘Now, I want to return to my country’

Another example of a complex cognate that was stated by the listener to be easy to recognize as it is related to its equivalents in other varieties was in the conversation between Egy1 and Lib1. In (8), the Libyan multi-morphemic word *gilt-l-ik* “I said to you” is a complex cognate of the Egyptian equivalent *ʔulte-l-ik* and the MSA equivalent phrase *qultu la-ki.* There are a number of morpho-phonological differences between these complex cognates; nevertheless, these differences were stated to be easily recognised by the listener – Egy1 – who was able to identify the MSA root *q-w-l*, the *g* Libyan corresponding sound to *q*, the preposition *l* and the pronoun suffix *ki* . The phonological difference in the vowels and the syllabic stresses did not pose a problem in the recognition of the complex cognate.

(8) Lib1: *zayy ma-gilt-l-ik*
as what-(i)said-to-you (f.)
‘As I told you’

Pairing cognates without the use of the context can lead sometimes to misunderstanding or a lack of understanding. In examples (5) and (6), the context was the only aid for understanding the unfamiliar words as they could not be paired with equivalents in other Arabic verities. In example (5), the Libyan root *ga'maz* was etymologically explained by Lib1 to be made of the two MSA words *qāʕ* “the bottom/lowest of something” and the verb *mass* “to touch” and with a number of phonological modifications it took the current form in the Libyan dialect

to be *ga'maz* “sitting” which literally means “touching the ground”[23]. Without this detailed explanation of how the word was formed, it is not easy for the listener to pair it with familiar equivalents. In example (6), the Kuwaiti verb *ṭarraš* “to send” is a false cognate of the MSA verbs *ṭaraša* “to vomit” or *ṭariša* “to become deaf”. Without the context, the correct meaning would be difficult to reach. Later in the chapter, examples of comprehension failure will be presented and they demonstrate how pairing false cognates can result in misunderstanding or in comprehension breakdown.

Confirming meanings with the interlocutors

In addition to the listeners’ familiarity and the strategy of cognate-pairing, there were 6 instances of non-cognates and false cognates in which the listeners interrupted the speakers in order to check and confirm their meanings. In these instances, the listeners either managed to guess the correct meaning of the word or retrieved a meaning they were familiar with and wanted to make sure it was what they assumed. Example (9) was from the conversation between Kwt1 and Lib4 when Kwt1 was describing a local dish and was interrupted by Lib4 who wanted to confirm what she thought to be the Kuwaiti word for “rice”. In the interview after the recording, Lib4 stated that she was familiar with many Arabic dialects including the Kuwaiti and that she thought that the word for “rice” in the Kuwaiti dialect was *ʕēš* which in some other dialects means “bread”, but she asked Kwt1 in order to confirm what she knew.

(9) Lib4: *intum, al-ʕēš maʕnāt-ah ar-ruzz?*
You, the-rice (in Kuwaiti) meaning-its the-rice (in MSA)?
‘(In your dialect), *ʕēš* means rice?’

Example (10) shows another instance of a false cognate that the listener guessed and wanted to confirm that it was correct. This was from the conversation

[23] It is to be noted here that this explanation of the etymology of the Libyan verb is to be verified from other sources and what has been stated here is only the view of the participant.

between Lib1 and Egy1, when Egy1 used the word *balad* which in the Egyptian dialect can mean “a country”, “a city” or “a village”. The more common meaning of *balad* in some other Arabic dialects is “country”. As Egy1 and Lib1 were neighbours and knew some basic background information about each other, Egy1’s question about Lib1’s husband being from which country did not sound correct and therefore, Lib1 guessed it must mean city and she confirmed with Egy1 with a direct question of what she meant.

(10) Egy1: *ʔinti wi-dduktōr min nafs-il-balad?*
You and-the-doctor from same-the-country/city?
‘Are you and the doctor from the same country/city?’
Lib1: *qaṣd-ik madīna?*
meaning-your city?
‘you mean city?’

Ignoring non-content words

There were 8 instances of non-cognates that when the listeners were asked about they said they could not understand them; however, these words did not affect comprehension and without them, they still managed to understand the main content of what their interlocutors wanted to convey. Most of these were functional or non-content words which did not carry much semantic value in the sentences. Example (11) was from the conversation between Alg2 and SdiH3 talking about thetype of media they were exposed to and specifically the strong presence of the Egyptian media in other Arab countries. Alg2 used the Algerian word *bizzāf* “many” which is a non-cognate of the Saudi *katīr* and the MSA equivalent *kaṯīr*. When asked about its meaning, SdiH3 said she had never heard that word before and does not know what it means; but still the main message of what Alg2 said was easily comprehended.

(11) Alg2: *kan fīh musalsalāt maṣriyya bizzāf*
Was there soap-operas Egyptian many
‘There were many Egyptian soap-operas’

The next example (12) also shows an unfamiliar non-cognate that was ignored by the listener. It was from the conversation between Kwt1 and Lib4 when Kwt1 was describing how good one of her colleagues was. In her description she used the Kuwaiti word *sanʕa* "professional/skilled" which is a non-cognate of the Libyan *šāṭra* and the MSA *māhira*. The word was stated by Lib4 to be unknown to her and that she ignored it because she got the main idea of what Kwt1 wanted to say. In this example although the ignored word was an adjective and may not be considered a non-content word, it did not carry much extra semantic information that was necessary for understanding and therefore was ignored without affecting comprehension.

(12) Kwt1: *liʔanna-ha al-bint yaʕni muḥtarama w-ṭayyba w-sanʕa*
Because-she the-girl means respectable and-kind and- skilled

w-ḳōš ḳōš
and-good good

'Because the girl, I mean, is respectable, kind, professional and very good'

5.1.2 Comprehension failure

As was stated above, the level of intelligibility was very high in all the 21 recorded conversations, with only a total of 14 instances of lexical items that were misunderstood or hindered understanding. All of the 14 instances were content words with a substantial semantic value that was essential for comprehension in these sentences. 13 out of the 14 were non-cognates that the listeners could not pair with any familiar equivalents and there were not enough contextual clues to aid correct guessing. There was 1 false cognate which was paired by the listener with another linguistically related word that gave a wrong meaning. Example (13) shows this instance of the false cognate which was from the conversation between Egy1 and Lib1 when Lib1 used the Libyan word *ġādi* "there" and after the recording, Egy1 was asked about its meaning and she said "I think it means

tomorrow". When Lib1 explained to her the correct meaning, Egy1 said that she thought it was related to the MSA *ġadan* "tomorrow" as they seem to be sharing similar sounds and thought that Lib1 meant "go tomorrow" rather than "go there".

(13) Lib1: *ʕaddi ġādi*
Go there
'Go there'

Example (14) shows a non-cognate from the conversation between Jrd1, SdiH1 and SdiN1 when Jrd1 was describing how a local dish is made. The Jordanian word *ṣōbba* "heater" was unfamiliar to SdiH1 who then asked Jrd1 for clarification. Jrd1 responded by repeating the word twice and then giving the MSA equivalent *midfaʔa*.

(14) Jrd1: *b-iš-šitwiyyi byiʕmlū-hā ʕa- ṣ-ṣōbba tabʕit-il-kāz*
by-the-winter (they)make-it on-the-heater of (belongs to)-the-gas
'In winter, they make it (cook it) on the paraffin heater'

SdiW1: *ʕalā ēš?*
On what?
'On what?'

Jrd1: *ṣōbba…. ṣōbbit kāz… midfaʔa yaʕni*
Heater (in Jordanian) heater gas ….heater (in MSA) means
'A heater (in Jordanian) …..paraffin heater…. I mean a heater (in MSA)'

The next example shows how the lack of enough contextual clues can hinder understanding unfamiliar non-cognates. Example (15) has the same Libyan word that was understood only because of the context in example (5). By contrast, example (15) is from the conversation between Lib4 and Kwt1 when Lib4 was describing a local dish and how it is presented and she used the Libyan words

mgaʕmiz "sitting/placed" and *lōṭa* "down/on the ground" which were both unfamiliar to Kwt1. When asked about their meanings, Kwt1 stated that she could not understand or guess what they meant and she felt shy to ask.

(15) Lib4: *bikūn f-ṣaḥn kbīr mgaʕmiz lōṭa*
Is in-plate big sitting/placed down
'It is in a big plate placed on the ground'

The 14 words were analysed in terms of the frequency of use similarly to the non-cognates that were familiar to the interlocutors and were presented in table 5.1 above. Table 5.2 presents the 14 words and their equivalents in MSA and in English as well as their rank of frequency according to Buckwalter and Parkinson's dictionary (2011). The table shows that most of these words are not among the top 1000 frequently used words with three of them not found in the frequency dictionary which could mean that they are not among the top 5000 frequent words.

Table 5.2: The words that broke comprehension and their frequency of use

The word in the speaker's dialect	**Equivalent in the interlocutor's dialect**	**Equivalent in MSA**	**Meaning in English**	**Rank in word frequencies**
ġādi (Libyan)	*hināk* (Cairene)	*hunāka*	There	77
ṣubba (Jordanian)	*daffāya* (Hijazi)	*midfaʔa*	Heater	3667[24]
The word in the speaker's	**Equivalent in the interlocutor's**	**Equivalent in MSA**	**Meaning in English**	**Rank in word**

[24] This was the frequency of the verb "to heat" as the noun "heater" was not found ranked in the dictionary.

dialect	**dialect**			**frequencies**
ḥūli (Libyan)	*ġanam* (Hijazi)	*ġanam*	sheep	5145
bitgarri (Libyan)	*bitudrusi* (Kuwaiti)	*tadrusīna*	you study	1066
mgaʕmiza lōṭa (Libyan)	*jālis / maḥṭūṭ* (Kuwaiti)	*jālis / mawḍūʕ*	sitting down/placed	924 / 2696
ḥamū (Libyan)	*ḥārr* (Kuwaiti)	*ḥār*	hot	2459
māzāl[25] (Libyan)	*lissa* (Kuwaiti)	*māzāl*	still	214
šakāyir (Libyan)	*ʔakyās* (Kuwaiti)	*ʔakyās*	bags	2661
rgīga (Libyan)	*rqīqa* (Kuwaiti)	*raqīqa*	thin	2695
nṭayyib (Tunisian)	*ntabbil* (Omani)	*nutabbil*	to marinade	not ranked in the dictionary
nšayyiḥ (Tunisian)	*njaffif* (Omani)	*nujaffif*	to dry	4485
dōlma (Iraqi)	*malfūf* (Syrian)	*malfūf / maḥši*	dolma	not in the dictionary
šbinit (Iraqi)	not known to Syr1	*šabat*	dill	not in the dictionary
timman (Iraqi)	*rozz/rizz* (Syrian)	*urz/aruzz*	rice	4015

25 Although the word *māzāl* "still" is the same in Libyan and MSA, Kwt1 could not understand it as she had stated her education was not in Arabic and her MSA level was not proficient enough to understand MSA very well.

Table 5.2 shows that the 14 words that broke comprehension were mainly from the Libyan dialect; however, 6 out of these 8 Libyan words were in the conversation between Lib4 and Kwt1 with Kwt1 stating that her familiarity with other Arabic varieties including MSA was very limited due to her education and upbringing outside Arabic speaking countries. An analysis of how the listeners and the speakers dealt with the elements that were not understood showed that for 9 out of the 14 instances, the listeners asked a direct question for further clarification such as in Example (14) above. There were also 4 instances when the listeners stated that they ignored the unfamiliar words they heard, even though they affected comprehension. Two were stated by Kwt1 to have been ignored as she felt too shy to ask, and the other two were stated as such by Omn1 because he was not interested in the topic of cooking and recipes. For the 9 instances when the listeners asked their interlocutors for clarification, the interlocutors either gave an equivalent of the word in MSA, in another dialect, in English or a dialectal phrase/sentence describing what it meant.

5.2 Discussion

As was discussed in chapter 1, the Arabic varieties share many linguistic features and the degree of affinity or distance between them is variable, with the geographically close dialects having more affinity between each other than the more distant ones. Although, this linguistic affinity between the varieties has a role in facilitating understanding between their speakers (Ezzat, 1974), the present study aimed to investigate whether there were also other factors or strategies applied by the NSs in order to achieve intelligibility. In the analysis of the participants' responses regarding how they managed to understand certain utterances, some actions were observed to be taken by the speakers and their interlocutors in order to narrow the linguistic gaps and to achieve the high level of mutual intelligibility which was apparent in the total number of only 14 lexical elements that were not understood or caused comprehension to fail.

5.2.1 Research question 3: What are the strategies that the NSs apply and the factors that influence comprehensibility in cross-dialectal communication?

One of the observations in regard to the speakers was the borrowing from MSA and other dialects; especially when replacing highly localised lexis with more common equivalents. Another observation in this study which was not mentioned in the previous ones was of how some participants offered to acquaint their interlocutors with what certain words were in their own dialects or how they are differently pronounced. The 13 instances of acquainting the interlocutors included 6 names of food that differed between the dialects which were mostly in the conversation between Irq1 and Syr1. This could be due to their interest in the topic of local dishes and recipes. However, these instances were limited to some of the participants and mainly to the topic of food and the different names given in different dialects.

It can be stated here that the successful intelligibility that was observed cannot mainly be based on the speakers' actions of language modification as these were limited to 53 instances; but more due to factors related to the listeners and their familiarity with a range of Arabic varieties. As was presented in the last chapter, the number of borrowings was observed to be much less than what was stated in previous studies on cross-dialectal interaction and it was not an approach taken by all the participants but only by 14 out of the 21. Based on Abu-Melhim's data regarding the diglossic code-switching instances at a rate of 2.12 per minute, it was expected - if the same modification behaviour occurred in the current study - that over 400 instances would be observed in the 193 minutes of cross-dialectal conversations; yet the total number of borrowings was only 53. This noticeable lack of language modifications and the dominance of the native dialect use meant that there are factors other than the speakers' language modification that aided intelligibility.

The investigation of how some of the complex cognates and the non-cognates were understood revealed a number of factors and techniques applied by the listeners. One of these was their familiarity and previous exposure to other Arabic

dialects. All the participants regardless of their native dialect, age or level of education had a variable level of exposure to other dialects through contacts, growing up in another Arab country and through the media. Dialect familiarity included awareness of the distinctive phonological differences between the dialects and the frequently used non-cognates such as adverbs, question words, negation particles and some of the frequently used nouns as listed in table 5.1. On the morphological level as well, it was noticed that the participants were also aware of the main morphological differences between the dialects. For example the North African use of the prefix *ne* to denote first person singular present tense verbs[26] was familiar to all the participants in this study who engaged in a conversation with a North African dialect speaker. The number of cognates that were familiar to the interlocutors was too frequent to be counted in this study; but what was observed is that whether these cognates had slight phonological differences like the ones presented in example (4) or whether they were complex cognates with multiple morpho-phonological differences such as in example (8), they did not hinder comprehension.

Although dialect familiarity appeared to be the core basis for cross-dialectal intelligibility, there were a number of cognates and non-cognates that were unfamiliar to the interlocutors. For these, the listeners made use of the available contextual clues in order to guess their meanings. In addition to the context, the listeners also made use of their awareness of the dialectal morpho-phonological differences and paired the unfamiliar cognates and the complex cognates with familiar ones as in examples (7) and (8). According to Carroll (1992), the process of pairing complex cognates is initiated with the identification of the root and the affixal morphemes; the word is then matched with other lexis from the same root. With adequate contextual clues, the number of matched lexical items is reduced to the lexical item with the correct interpretation (Carroll, 1992). For some of the non-cognates and the false cognates as in examples (5) and (6), the listeners had to depend only on the context as the cognate-pairing technique would not lead to a

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[26] The prefix *na-* is used in MSA and dialects other than the North African to denote the first person plural rather than the singular.

comprehensible sentence. The role of the context in guessing the meaning of non-cognates was evident in contrasting the two examples (5) and (15) in which the same Libyan word *mgaʕmiz* "sitting/placed" was used; in example (5) its meaning was guessed from the context, while in example (15), there were not enough contextual clues to aid Kwt1 to guess its meaning.

The listeners also took two more actions that aided intelligibility; one was confirming with their interlocutors that they understood the correct meaning of what was said, as in examples (9) and (10) in which the listener retrieved what they knew about a non-cognate in the interlocutor's dialect, or they made a guess about its meaning and wanted to confirm that the guess was correct. The other action stated by the listeners was ignoring the non-content words as long as the main meaning of what they heard was adequately comprehensible.

The factors and the strategies applied by the speakers and their interlocutors have contributed to the mutual intelligibility achieved even between the most distant varieties. On the other hand, the 14 instances of comprehension failure occurred when none of these factors and strategies were applied. These were the non-cognates that could not be paired with familiar equivalents or they were false-cognates that when paired, lead to a wrong meaning. In all of these instances also, there were not enough contextual clues to aid guessing the correct meaning and they were all content words that carried a substantial semantic weight in the sentence so that ignoring them would cause comprehension to break down. These non-cognates were not familiar to the participants in this study; and when analysed in terms of frequency of use, they were not among the most frequently used words as presented in table 5.2, which may explain why they were unfamiliar. By contrast, the non-cognates that were familiar to the participants were all among the top 200 most frequently used words.

In most of these cases of the 14 unfamiliar words that broke comprehension, the listener enquired directly from their interlocutors about what they meant, and in response, the interlocutors either gave an equivalent in other varieties or in English or they gave an explanation of what it meant. There were only a few instances of when the listener was too shy to ask or did not have the interest to enquire. The

observations regarding the factors that contributed to the successful comprehension in this study are illustrated in figure 5.1 below. These factors form the basis of the research questions in the second part of this study which are related to the learning of Arabic as a Second Language. The next chapter will summarise the conclusions of the first part on the native cross-dialectal interaction and will discuss how these conclusions can be considered in the field of TASL in order to equip Arabic learners with some essential skills to aid their use and understanding of the Arabic language as a collection of varieties and not limited to one form.

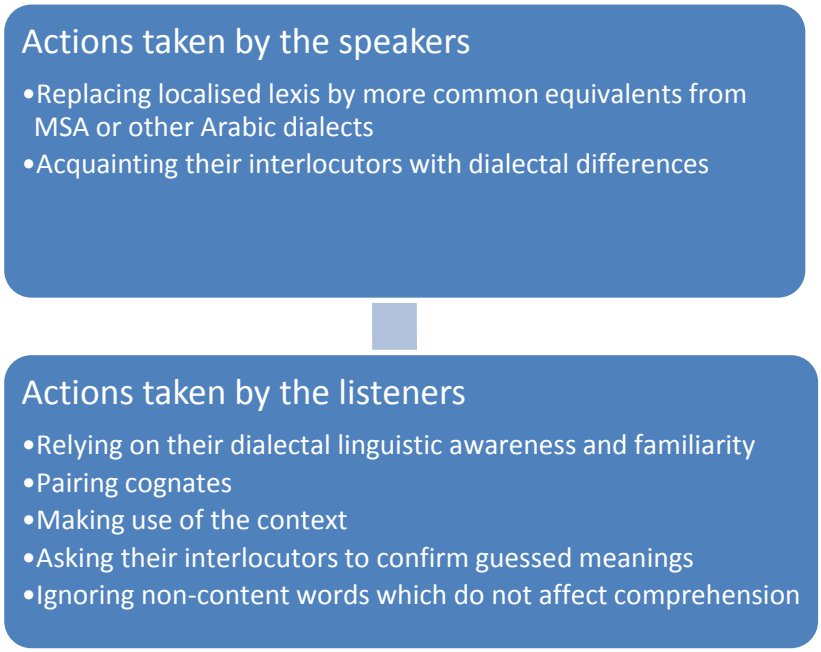

Figure 5.1: Observations of the actions taken by the speakers and the listeners in cross-dialectal interaction.

Chapter 6: Arabic cross-dialectal conversations: Conclusions

Diglossia and variability in the Arabic language has been a topic of significance in the field of teaching and learning Arabic as L2 since the term 'diglossia' appeared in academia. The ongoing debates and disagreements among TASL professionals and linguists regarding how to incorporate Arabic variability into TASL have led to many HE institutions resorting to the limitation of teaching MSA only with much less focus on the teaching of other Arabic varieties (Badawi, 2006). This limitation was found to cause frustration for learners who find themselves incapable of reaching a near-native level of proficiency and performing a range of language tasks in the correct and the appropriate form of Arabic (Palmer, 2007; Wilmsen, 2006). One of the ways to investigate the role of variability in TASL is to focus on the NSs and how they deal with Arabic variability in order to achieve maximum intelligibility and to base the teaching of Arabic as L2 on the skills that the NSs have (Wahba, 2006). In addition to the NS's ability to use MSA and a native dialect appropriately and interchangeably according to the situation, the NSs of different Arabic dialects have also been stated to be able to achieve mutual intelligibility in cross-dialectal situations (Abu-Melhim, 1992; Blanc, 1960; Ezzat, 1974).

The few studies that investigated how intelligibility is achieved in Arabic cross-dialectal communication all stated that no specific pure form of Arabic acts as the lingua franca and they all agreed on the substantial and variable presence of MSA in order to facilitate comprehension; however these studies were inconclusive on some vital questions regarding the linguistic features of MSA use and on the strategies applied by the interlocutors in order to comprehend unfamiliar lexis in a different Arabic dialect and achieve mutual intelligibility. The first part of the present study sought to further investigate how MSA is borrowed in cross-dialectal communications through a quantified linguistic analysis of the instances of MSA borrowings. The first part also aimed to observe the factors and the strategies applied by the speakers and listeners in cross-dialectal communication in order to achieve maximum comprehension. This chapter will summarise all the findings in the first part of the study in relation to the research questions and will discuss the

significance of these findings in dealing with the Arabic variability in TASL. The chapter will then discuss some of the limitations in the present study and areas for future research.

6.1 Findings

Unlike previous studies on Arabic cross-dialectal communication, the importance of the first part of the present study lies in its focus on providing a linguistic description of the MSA that is borrowed and the strategies and factors that aid comprehension rather than on the search for a lingua franca form or investigating the socio-cultural motives behind MSA borrowings. In order to linguistically investigate MSA borrowings in cross-dialectal interaction, informal conversations between speakers of different Arabic dialects were recorded and analysed. The present study intended to have participants with diverse backgrounds of native dialects, ages and levels of education that are larger in number than the previous studies in order to observe the use of MSA irrespective of the NS's background.

According to the literature review, it was hypothesised that a considerable number of hundreds of instances of MSA borrowings would be observed in the present study which were then to be analysed in order to find out whether certain linguistic patterns dominate the use of MSA in cross-dialectal interaction. However, the analysis revealed a limited number of MSA usages in cross-dialectal communication with 53 instances in the total of 193 minutes of conversations. These were also observed not to be made by all the 21 participants but only by 14 of them. Although, this limited number of borrowings did not constitute adequate data for linguistic analysis that would bring solid outcomes, it was a very useful finding that provided an insight into the phenomenon of the dominance of native dialect use in Arabic cross-dialectal informal conversations which could be a result of certain social and cultural changes in the last few decades that have led to more dialect familiarity and awareness. The limited use of MSA also meant that there must be factors and strategies that aid understanding between the Arabic dialects and reduce the need to resort to MSA. The results in the present study suggest that a

growing level of dialect familiarity has a major role in facilitating comprehension with minimal need for language modifications.

The main feature that was observed in the MSA borrowings was the avoidance of localised lexical items which were either replaced by equivalents from MSA or more common equivalents from other dialects. The action of replacing localised lexis confirms the fact that the NSs are familiar with each other's dialects and aware of which elements are limitedly used within a certain community. Most of the localised words that were avoided and replaced by equivalents from other varieties were from North African dialects. It is not simple to interpret whether this was due to a substantial lexical distance between these varieties and the other Eastern dialects or whether other non-linguistic factors are behind these borrowings. Although it is acknowledged among the Arabic speakers that the North African dialects are more distant from MSA and from Eastern dialects (Shiri, 2002), to the knowledge of the researcher, there are not enough comparative studies that empirically measured the linguistic distance between the Arabic varieties[27]. It has also been found that borrowings from MSA do not always serve the aim of comprehension (Abu-Melhim, 1992; Shiri, 2002) and they can be due to other socio-cultural factors such as affirming one's identity.

The linguistic features of the 53 instances of MSA borrowings included an approximately equal number of cognates and non-cognates. The most noticeable features in the borrowed cognates included the use of the *qaaf* and the *hamza* sounds with these two sounds making up 58% of the borrowed cognates as presented in table 4.4 in chapter 4. Other morpho-phonological modifications included the use of MSA negation particles and passive form of verbs. The non-cognates comprised mostly localised words that were replaced by MSA equivalents and other MSA words that classicised the sentences to match the formality of the conversation topics. The observation of possible links between the MSA borrowings and other non-linguistic variables such as the participants' age, level of education or gender did not reveal any major associations except for gender, with the male participants making more MSA borrowings than the females as presented

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[27] The researcher is aware of one study by Brustad (2000).

in table 4.6. However, again due to the limited number of MSA borrowings, it cannot be claimed that gender isolated from other variables is definitely a factor that initiates the use of MSA in cross-dialectal situations. Investigating the role of gender in language modification would require a whole study with that particular focus in order to thoroughly demonstrate strong claims.

The findings regarding how MSA was borrowed aimed to provide answers for the first two research questions of this study:

1. Which linguistic elements are borrowed from MSA in informal cross-dialectal communication?
2. Are there any linguistic or non-linguistic variables that may influence MSA borrowings?

On the one hand, the findings did not provide direct answers to these questions as they showed that MSA is actually limitedly used in cross-dialectal communication and that the native dialects dominate these conversations without causing much impact on intelligibility with the exception of the localised lexis being replaced by MSA equivalents. On the other hand, the dominance of the native dialect use reinforced the need for answers for the third research question:

3. What strategies do the NSs apply in cross-dialectal communication in order to achieve comprehensibility?

The literature that discussed the strategies applied by the NSs and the factors that aid mutual intelligibility across the urban Arabic dialects is very scarce. Ezzat (1974) argued in his study that the linguistic affinity between the dialects is the main reason for intelligibility being achieved but what has been lacking in the previous studies is the focus on the strategies applied by the listeners to achieve comprehension especially of distant linguistic elements on the lexical and morpho-phonological levels. Although the linguistic affinity between the Arabic dialects is relatively high especially on the syntactic level, there are lexical and phonological variations that can also hinder comprehension (Rosenhouse, 2007) unless they are familiar to the interlocutors. The present study aimed to investigate how intelligibility is achieved through observation of the lexical elements that differed between the dialects of the participants in each conversation and whether they

were comprehended or not. The observations revealed actions taken by both the speaker and the listener. From the speakers' side, there were two observations: borrowing from MSA and acquainting their interlocutor with how certain lexical items are said in their dialects. Most of these were names of food though, which could be due to those speakers' interest particularly in that topic.

The dominance of the native dialectal use by the speakers meant that more factors related to the listeners have a substantial role in aiding comprehension. In terms of how the listeners managed to comprehend the lexis of another dialect, the list of cognates and non-cognates that were observed in the recorded conversations were discussed with them and they were asked whether they understood them, knew them from before or not and how they think they managed to understand them. Their answers provided five reasons and strategies that explained how these words did not break comprehension. The first and the most frequent explanation was their familiarity of these words. This was inferred from answers such as: 'I know this word already', 'I heard it before', 'I know that in certain dialects they pronounce this sound in a certain way', 'I grew up in a country where they spoke that dialect' or 'I heard it frequently in the Arab media'.

The familiarity with the linguistic features of other urban dialects was evident with all the participants showing a level of dialectal awareness, even the ones who claimed to have had limited exposure to other dialects such as Kwt1 who grew up in a non-Arabic speaking country. Dialect familiarity included awareness of phonological aspects of certain dialects and how some sounds are pronounced differently. It also included awareness of morphological differences such as the affixal morphemes of negation and tense markers. There was also familiarity with lexical differences and especially the non-cognates that are frequently used such as question words, pronouns, prepositions and other common lexical items which the participants stated they knew already and had frequently heard before.

The second strategy applied by the listeners was making use of the context. Measuring the role of the context in comprehension in isolation from other factors is not feasible unless the participants are exposed to single words in other dialects and asked to state their meanings without providing them with any contextual

clues. In a natural conversation, the context is always an aid for comprehension. Moreover, the analysis showed that in some instances, the context was the only aid for comprehension. This was observed in the 9 dialectal words that the interlocutors stated they were unfamiliar with and could not relate them to any other familiar matches; being only through the context that they managed to guess their correct meanings. In these instances, the context that aided comprehension was through either the general topic of the conversation such as in describing a recipe, which entails certain language, or through enough context provided in a single word in the sentence such as in example (6) in the last chapter of the Kuwaiti verb *ṭarrašt* 'I sent' which was comprehended by the Libyan interlocutor because of the word 'email' that followed it. In addition to the topics, there are also linguistic clues that aided the correct guessing of unfamiliar non-cognates such as the affixes of verb conjugation, negation, and the patterns of active and passive participles which provide clues to the listener about the semantic and the syntactic role of the words in the sentences.

The third observed strategy was cognate pairing. This was inferred from the participants' answers which included statements like: 'I have not heard this word before but it sounded like…' or 'I am not familiar with this word but it is very similar to…' (they gave examples of cognates in another Arabic variety). The correct pairing of cognates was achieved because of the participants' familiarity with some of the phonological and morphological differences between the urban dialects which allowed them to match between the cognates that they had never heard before. The ability to pair the cognates was observed to be very high even with complex cognates that included multiple morpho-phonological differences. In these, the participants were able to recognize the different morphemes in a long word, such as the root, the tense conjugation affixes, the prepositions and the negation affixes. They were able to recognize the corresponding sounds in the urban dialects, such as the /g/ sound in some dialects corresponding to the MSA *qaaf* and they were able to recognize the different syllabic stresses without having these impacting the correct cognate-pairing. Two factors can be assumed to have enabled the NSs to have the skill of cognate-pairing. The first is their familiarity with and frequent exposure to each other's dialects which enabled them to acquire

an adequate linguistic knowledge about them. The second is again the presence of contextual clues that help to limit the number of lexical items that can be paired with unfamiliar cognates. The context also was observed to have a role in avoiding pairing false cognates such as in example (6) mentioned in the last chapter of the Kuwaiti verb *ṭarrašt* 'I sent'; which without the contextual clues could wrongly be paired with the MSA verbs *ṭaraša* 'to vomit' or *ṭariša* 'to become deaf'.

The fourth strategy applied by some of the listeners was checking and confirming meanings of unfamiliar words with the speakers. This was done by some of the participants when they guessed a meaning of an unfamiliar word but wanted to confirm that they had reached the correct meaning especially of false cognates that have different meanings across some dialects. The last strategy applied by listeners which seemed to have contributed to a comprehensible flow in the conversations was the ignoring of non-content unfamiliar words which did not carry a sufficient semantic value to impact the comprehension of the sentence. Although these were stated by the participants not to be understood as they could not pair them with other familiar equivalents and the context did not provide enough clues for guessing their meanings, they did not seem to affect comprehending the main message of what the speaker said.

The words that were ignored by the participants were limited to 8 instances in all the conversations. In addition to these, there were 14 lexical items that were also not understood but they hindered comprehension due to their considerable semantic value in the sentences. For these, most of the participants asked the speakers direct questions about what they meant while a few participants either felt too shy to ask or did not have the interest to understand their meanings. The analysis revealed that the 14 words were not among the most frequently used words in Arabic. They were mostly non-cognates that could not be paired with familiar equivalents and the context did not provide enough clues to aid guessing their meanings. The limited number of 14 instances of lexical items that hindered comprehension in the 193 minutes of conversations which is a rate of 0.07 per minute supports the fact that mutual intelligibility between the urban dialects is very high even with the dominance of the native dialect use and minimal instances of language modifications that were observed in this study.

6.2 Implications for TASL

One of the aims of this study in investigating language use and comprehension strategies in NS cross-dialectal communication was to examine the impact of these strategies in TASL and how they can be introduced to the learners of Arabic as L2 in order for them to have better comprehension of a range of urban dialects and to be able to successfully engage in Arabic cross-dialectal situations similarly to NSs. The literature review in chapter 2 has shed light on how the variability of the Arabic language is still an issue to be resolved in TASL with many HE institutions limiting their Arabic teaching to one variety but with some giving the opportunity to learners to learn a dialect in their year abroad but yet without much attention given to the linguistic difference between MSA and the dialects. The option of exposing the learners to a range of dialects and training them to have the skills to cope with this variability is still limited to a few institutions around the world. Badawi (2006) stated that one of the reasons for this limitation is the lack of empirical studies that looked at how NSs cope with Arabic variability and how Arabic L2 learners may benefit from instruction and training in how they can make use of the varieties they are familiar with, such as MSA and any dialects they have learnt in order to comprehend a range of varieties.

The answers to the first two research questions in this study aimed to list the linguistic elements borrowed from MSA in cross-dialectal communication based on the anticipation that these elements maybe taught to Arabic L2 learners so that they would be able to modify their dialect and MSA use to allow communication with different dialect speakers. However, the outcome of the study regarding the limited use of MSA entails that a choice of one dialect to be used in a cross-dialect conversation would be sufficient to aid the Arabic L2 learner to achieve successful communication without the need for much modification or MSA borrowings. The Learners may still be trained though to recognize the localized lexis in a certain community and try to avoid this and instead replace it with MSA equivalents when communicating with speakers of dialects outside that speech community.

The findings in the first part of this study also elucidated the factors and the strategies that enabled the native listeners to achieve comprehension of lexis in

other urban dialects even when their interlocutors spoke only in their own dialects without much modification. The factor of dialect familiarity was found to have a major role in aiding comprehension as it enabled the native listeners to pair between cognates using their morpho-phonological knowledge of other dialects. Even though most of the participants in the study were NSs of one dialect, their familiarity with the common and frequently used lexis in a range of dialects assisted intelligibility. The other strategies that the native listeners have applied included general listening comprehension strategies such as the use of context and the ignoring of non-content words.

Teaching listening comprehension strategies to L2 learners has been stated to be of importance in developing the learners' listening skills as they do not always automatically apply their L1 strategies when listening to L2 (Richards and Renandya, 2002; Rost and Wilson, 2013; Vandergrift, 2010). The native listening strategies that were observed in the first part of this study inspired the second part which focuses on training the Arabic L2 learners to use these strategies in order to have better lexical understanding of unfamiliar Arabic dialects. The second part will begin with a focus on the Arabic L2 learners and their objectives, then will present a case-study that investigates the level of lexical recognition in unfamiliar Arabic varieties and how this level can be improved with formal training.

6.3 Limitations and areas for further research

The aims of the first part of this study focused on the linguistic aspects of MSA use in cross-dialectal interaction and the factors that aided comprehension irrespective of the demographic and linguistic background of the participants; therefore, the analysis was limited to the linguistic forms rather than other sociolinguistic factors that may have an impact on language modifications. The number of 21 participants, although it provided an adequate linguistic data of 193 minutes of recorded language, was not large enough to give an insight into how certain groups of Arabic speakers modify their language in cross-dialectal communication. There were observations of the speakers of North African dialects making more

modifications to their language than the speakers of non-North African varieties; however, a total of 7 participants is a limited number for making strong claims about how the speakers of North African dialects choose to modify their language, especially when other variables such as age, gender and education are not controlled. Yet such observation would deserve further investigation of how speakers of certain varieties modify their language and for such an investigation a larger number of participants who speak these varieties would assist in reaching more solid conclusions.

Another approach to investigating the mutual intelligibility between certain dialects is through the measuring of the linguistic distance or affinity of these varieties phonologically, morphologically and lexically. Such studies have been conducted on Chinese dialects (Tang and van Heuven, 2009) and Scandinavian languages (Gooskens, 2007) but have yet to be applied to the Arabic varieties. If the linguistic distance between the Arabic varieties is measured, it can be a significant variable for investigating language modification and comprehension in cross-dialectal situations.

Another limitation in the current study was also related to the type of participants. Although, they had different levels of education from High school to PhD qualifications, they were all literate speakers who have had a variable level of exposure to and use of MSA, with the exception of Kwt1 who was not educated in the Arabic language. Their ability to read and write Arabic entails a higher level of exposure to MSA in comparison with an illiterate Arabic speaker. Investigating cross-dialectal communication between illiterate speakers is yet to be conducted (Abu-Melhim, 1992). It would be useful to see whether the ability to read and the exposure to written language have a role in aiding intelligibility between speakers of different dialects and whether the absence of an MSA background would have an impact on intelligibility. The literacy of the participants was observed in their borrowing of MSA elements when discussing formal topics such as occupations, education systems and the cultural differences between countries in which they classicised their language to match the formality of these topics. Although the study aimed to focus only on informal conversations in order to avoid formality as a variable in borrowing MSA, it was not possible to prohibit the participants from

engaging in these topics. This resulted in instances of MSA borrowings which could not be regarded as outcomes of only the cross-dialectal situation but were also due to the nature of the topics.

One of the aspects of cross-dialectal interaction that this study did not focus on is the 'leveling' strategy stated by Blanc (1960) in which the speakers borrow words from dialects other than their own. The reason that leveling was not investigated in the present study was its specific focus on the extent and the role of MSA in particular in aiding cross-dialectal comprehension and not on dialectal borrowings. Conducting such research would require a thorough investigation and verification to confirm that the borrowed dialectal words do not exist in both MSA and the speaker's dialect but belong to another dialectal variety. Examining the strategy of leveling in cross-dialectal communication in future research would give an insight to whether specific dialects or specific dialectal features have an impact in aiding successful communication and whether certain sociocultural factors influence borrowing from certain dialects and by certain dialect speakers.

In terms of the level of successful comprehension that was observed in this study, the factors and strategies applied by the listeners were not possible to isolate from each other. For example, the strategy of cognate-pairing was still aided by the use of the context. It would be useful in future research on dialect intelligibility to explore the role of cognate-pairing in isolation from other variables such as the context and to see how much cognate-pairing is applied by native listeners in order to understand an utterance in another dialect. For such an investigation to be conducted, the native listeners might be presented with short sentences or even individual dialectal words and asked to state their meanings without the presence of much context. Another approach also for investigating the strategies applied by the NSs to understand other dialects, could be through listening to third-party talks or intra-dialectal conversations in a different dialect and observing the level of comprehension the native listener can achieve and the strategies they apply. Examining how the NSs deal with Arabic variability, whether in cross-dialectal or intra-dialectal situations, would give more insight into how communication and comprehension is achieved and would enable TASL professionals to make use of

these techniques in order to enable Arabic L2 learners to better cope with language variability.

Part II Implications for the Teaching of Arabic as a Second Language

Chapter 7: Arabic as a Second language: Learners' needs in Higher Education

In order to embark on a case-study of training Arabic learners to comprehend lexis in a wider range of unfamiliar Arabic dialects, it was of relevance to shed light on what their learning goals and objectives were. In certain regions in the UK, a high number of learners of Muslim background choose to learn the Arabic language as a major or in combination with other subjects[28]. For this type of learner, one can assume that their motivations are mainly religious and if this is taken into account by the Arabic program co-ordinators and teachers, then a specific focus should be given to the use of CA and MSA in religious contexts. However, there is also a very high number of non-Muslim learners of Arabic and the studies that have looked at these learners' needs in the UK universities are scarce. Therefore, the Arabic programs are usually designed based on the institutions' vision and perceptions of language use as well as on the resources available. This chapter will review three studies that investigated Arabic learning needs, and then will present a pilot study on the learning needs of the Arabic students conducted in 2008 at the University of Manchester.

7.1 Previous studies on the learning needs of Arabic language students

Descriptive linguistics and language teaching methodology have received a lot of focus from language teachers and researchers. In recent years more attention has been given to the learners with the emergence of the learner-centred approach. Studies have shown that learning is most likely to take place when the contents provide for the learners' needs and interests regardless of the method used in teaching (Spolsky, 1989). Analysing learning needs through questionnaires or interviews could also help to raise the students' awareness of their own learning

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28 According to Byram (1992), at least one third of the Arabic learners in the UK are of Muslim background.

requirements. In an article about the importance of analysing learning needs, Long (2005) has emphasised that a language course will not be efficient without considering the students' needs before designing the content of the course; furthermore, he believes that every language course should be considered a course for specific purposes (Long, 2005).

In non-diglossic languages, needs analysis assists in deciding on the content of the language course. On the other hand, in diglossia, it is even more important to consider the learners' needs as it will play an integral part not only in the content of the language program but also in deciding on which forms to teach, in what order and by which teaching method. It has to be noted here though, that the importance of considering learners' needs does not entail that they are the only factor to base a whole language program on. Other factors that can take a role in designing a L2 program may include the targets of the educational institution, the feasibility and practicality of offering certain options in the language program and the potential employers' requirements.

In the field of TASL, very little has been written on why the L2 learners choose to learn Arabic. Two surveys were conducted in the US by Belnap (1986 and 2006) and one survey in the UK by Byram (1992), the three having slightly different objectives. The first survey by Belnap (1986) aimed to explore the reasons behind learning Arabic in order to appreciate the improvements that students would like to see in their programs; while his second survey was based on the assumption that the Arabic learners' needs may have changed post 09/11 with a noticeable increase in their numbers. By contrast, Byram's survey was an outcome of a decrease in the number of Arabic learners in the UK, as stated in the Parker Report that drew attention to the need to increase the available expertise in oriental and African languages to meet the demands of industry, commerce and diplomacy at that time (Latham, 1986).

Both surveys by Belnap, although they had a considerable time gap, revealed similar motivations for learning Arabic. The first survey had 568 participants from 24 HE institutions, while the second included 641 participants from 37 institutions. The first survey was handed manually to the participants and the second one was

conducted online. Both surveys aimed to gather demographic information about the learners and gave them a list of reasons for learning Arabic with options to indicate their level of agreement with each reason. The first survey asked direct questions about the importance of specific language skills to the learners and their beliefs about the learning of Arabic dialects. The second survey had more focus on L2 learning strategies. Belnap stated that the turnout was high in both surveys and that the students seemed keen to express their thoughts and needs. Table 7.1 and 7.2 from Belnap's surveys list the top reasons indicated by the participants for choosing to learn Arabic.

Table 7.1: Learners' top ten reasons for choosing Arabic in Belnap's first survey (1986)

Rank	Reason	Percentage of students	Number of students
1	Literature and culture	36.8	209
2	Want to travel or live in the Middle East	36.6	208
3	To talk to Arabs	29.2	166
4	For research: from original Arabic sources	20.2	115
5	Like languages	19.2	109
6	To read the Quran and religious texts	16.7	95
7	General education requirement	14.3	81
8	Have Arab friends	12.7	72
9	For fun	12.0	68
10	To prepare for a career	8.8	50

(Belnap, 1987, p. 33)

Table 7.2: Learners' top ten reasons for choosing Arabic in Belnap's second survey (2006)

Rank	Reason	Percentage of students[29]
1	To interact with people who speak Arabic	87.4
2	To travel to the Arab world	78.6
3	To read the modern Arabic press	67.5
4	To better understand Arabic culture	67
5	To understand Arabic radio or TV broadcasts	66
6	To better understand and appreciate its art and literature	
7	To read historical texts and literature	
8	To write personal correspondence	
9	To read modern Arabic literature	
10	To write formal correspondence or documents	

(Belnap, 2006, p. 173)

The results of the two surveys as presented in the tables above show that the ability to speak with Arabic speakers is among the three top priorities for learners in addition to the ability to understand Arab culture and media. On the other hand, the reasons that were traditionally believed by the instructors to be of priority in learning Arabic such as understanding the religious texts, preparing for a career or for research in Arabic sources seem to be of less priority for the learners in the later survey (Belnap, 2006). The results regarding the importance of learning

[29] Only the percentages of the first five reasons were stated in Belnap's analysis of the results.

and practising language skills revealed that speaking was the most important skill, then comes reading and listening at almost equal importance, while writing received the lowest ranking. In asking about the preference for learning a dialect in Belnap's first survey[30], approximately 50% of the participants stated that it was important for them to master an Arabic dialect and the highest preference was almost equally given to the Levantine and the Egyptian varieties (Belnap, 1987, p. 40).

The study by Byram (1992) took place between 1989 and 1991 and it focused on Arabic learners in schools and universities in the UK as well as Arabic teachers. Byram's survey aimed to investigate the demographic information on Arabic learners in order to encourage similar groups to learn the language. This was due to the observed drop in their numbers at that time, but this has changed completely post 09/11 with an annual increasing number of Arabic learners in the UK (Dickins and Watson, 2006). A small part of Byram's study focused on the reasons for learning Arabic and the methodology he used was based on interviews with teachers as well as students in order to infer the reasons for learning rather than by asking direct questions as in Belnap's surveys. Byram indicated that a low response was received. 140 questionnaires were estimated to be returned, however only 62 questionnaires were filled in. Not all the Arabic departments that were contacted responded to the study and so the interviews were held with fewer tutors than had been expected. From the interviews with the tutors, three main reasons for learning Arabic were reported:

1. To pursue a career in the Foreign Office or in business.
2. Because of an interest in Arabic culture due to being brought up in the Middle East.
3. Among students from a Muslim background the belief that they must learn Arabic and that they could teach it to their communities.

A few of the tutor interviewees also reported that many students come to learn Arabic out of a general interest in languages and they often want to use Arabic just

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30 The question of which dialect the students prefer to learn was included only in Belnap's first survey and not in the second one.

like the NSs do; they want to be able to speak it and understand it. In interviews with the learners, Byram reported a very small number of heritage students who wanted to learn Arabic because it is their or their parents L1: 3.2% (2 students out of 62). Approximately 77% (48 students) reported having Arab friends either in the UK or abroad and 69.4% (43 students) had visited the Arab world. Byram interpreted these results in his report and concluded the following learning needs:

1. To develop their Arabic as L1 and interact better with Arabic speaking relatives.
2. To be able to speak with Arabic speaking friends
3. To fulfil the desire to speak Arabic and integrate with an Arabic community.

Although, the results in Byram's study were limited to 62 responses only from the learners, they stress the importance of the ability to speak and interact with Arabic speakers and to have a good understanding of Arab culture which is parallel with the results of Belnap's larger surveys. Clearly, the Arabic learners aim to make full use of the language and want to be able to use the four skills at a near-native level. The skill of speaking was presented to be of the highest priority and the mastering of an Arabic dialect was one of the important reasons revealed in Belnap's first survey with an indication of the Levantine and the Egyptian varieties being of preference.

The question of learning more than one dialect or being able to interact with different dialect speakers was not investigated in any of these three studies. However it can be inferred from their results that no specific variety would provide for all these goals and a further examination of the learners' needs should be done, especially in the UK as Byram's survey does not provide up-to-date information on who the current Arabic learners are and their reasons for learning. Although, there has been an increasing number of Arabic learners, a limited number of the graduates reach a good level of proficiency in Arabic with a considerable number of them dropping their Arabic course before graduation (Wilmsen, 2006). The next section will present a pilot study that aimed to investigate the reasons for learning Arabic by 54 undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Manchester.

7.2 The learning needs of students of Arabic at the University of Manchester: A pilot study

To the researcher's knowledge, this pilot study is the first to investigate Arabic learners' needs since Byram's. It aims to explore whether there have been any major changes in Arabic learning priorities. Knowledge about learning needs can validate whether the next part of this study – which is concerned with the learners' ability to cope with Arabic variation – would be of relevance and importance. This information can assist in making decisions regarding which varieties to teach and which skills to focus on in a university Arabic program and whether an introduction to the linguistic similarities and differences between the Arabic varieties is relevant. This study was administered at the University of Manchester in the month of April towards the end of the academic year when all students – even those in their first year - were aware of the existence of different Arabic varieties. 54 Arabic students participated including students in their first four years of undergraduate study and postgraduate students who were taking Arabic as part of their Masters or PhD study.

7.2.1 A description of the questionnaire and its administration

The questionnaire, which is presented in appendix D, comprised three sections. The first section had two questions only about the students' year of study and the degree they were doing. According to Belnap (2006), knowing about the degree that the learner is doing can give an insight on why they are doing Arabic as part of their degree. The Arabic language course offered at the University of Manchester can be taken as a major course and form an integral part of the degree, such as the BA in Arabic Studies or the BA in Islamic Studies and it has to be studied for the four years of the degree including the year-abroad. In other degrees such as in the BA in Middle Eastern History, Arabic is not a compulsory module and the students do not continue learning it in a year-abroad program. The second question about their year of study was included in order to find out whether there are any noticeable differences in the learning needs among the students in different years of their study. It could be assumed that the more mature students would have clearer and more specified reasons for learning. However it is also argued that the

learners get influenced by their teachers' perspective regarding which variety of Arabic is to be learnt. Belnap's survey showed a contradiction between some of the students' desire to speak with native speakers and their attitude towards the teaching of an Arabic dialect. He argues that the teachers' beliefs about the importance of MSA and the lack of encouragement to learn Arabic dialects, explain some of the students' negative attitudes towards the learning of dialects (Belnap, 2006).

The second section formed the main part of the questionnaire which aimed to gather data related to the students' purposes in learning Arabic. Many of the questions presented here were a result of informal conversations with Arabic learners and tutors and some of the questions were also inspired by Belnap's surveys. One difference between this questionnaire and Belnap's and Byram's surveys is that the reasons for learning were more comprehensive. Students were not only provided with a general statement like "I am learning Arabic to get a job", but more specific ones as in "I am learning Arabic to get a job as a translator". The job of a translator would entail the need for MSA mainly; while for a social worker, an Arabic dialect is needed more for spoken interaction with Arabs. 35 reasons for learning Arabic were given to the students and they were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each reason by choosing one of four response options (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). The reasons and needs to learn were grouped into five categories in order to assist the participants in organizing their thoughts when responding to the questions. The five categories of learning purposes are the following:

a. **Career purposes:** This category included 10 jobs that depend directly or indirectly on different Arabic language skills such as being a translator, an Arabic teacher, a journalist or working in other fields that would require Arabic. An extra option was given for other jobs that were not listed in the questionnaire.

b. **Academic purposes:** This category was included as some students could be motivated to pursue studies to higher levels - MA or a PhD - in a field that requires Arabic skills. Six choices of different academic fields were provided in the questionnaire. These included further studies in: the Arabic language and

linguistics, Islamic studies, Middle Eastern Politics, Middle Eastern History, Middle Eastern Media, Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures and an extra option for any other fields of higher education that require Arabic. For each of these fields, the skills and the varieties of Arabic language required can differ. Reading Arabic books on Middle Eastern history requires a high level of MSA and CA, while the study of Arabic culture might require interaction with the NSs in an Arabic dialect.

c. Religious purposes: The Arabic language has been linked to the religion of Islam. The whole diglossic situation of Arabic is believed to have come into existence mainly because the Arab speakers and linguists wanting to maintain the language of the Quran and protect it from any alterations (Versteegh, 1997). This is one of the reasons that CA and MSA continued to exist with their importance while the dialects kept changing over time and from one place to another. Learning Arabic for Muslims is very important as a part of their identity and as an obligation in their religion to understand the Quran in its original language. Learning Arabic for religious purposes entails the need for accuracy in pronunciation and the ability to understand the written and the recited verses of the Quran and Hadith (the Prophet Muhammad's narrations) as well as other religious texts. It will also mean limited production skills of writing or speaking in the language unless the religious purposes include preaching in Arabic and Quran recitation. This category included reasons such as understanding the Quran and Hadith, understanding ceremonies and prayers, being able to give religious talks and understanding religious texts and ceremonies other than the Islamic ones.

d. Personal and social purposes: This category included six learning needs related to the learners' interest in speaking Arabic with the NSs and in living in an Arabic speaking community. These were indicated in the previous studies to be of high priority for learners and it would be useful to know whether this priority is still given to the same purposes.

e. Media and cultural understanding purposes: Eight reasons were included under this category in the questionnaire as well as an extra option for any other cultural reasons the students might have. They were related to the learner's interest in understanding Arab culture and the different types of media and

literature and each of these can entail a different form of Arabic and different skills. Information about these interests can assist in designing courses on Arabic for specific purposes such as the Media Arabic courses offered by the universities of Manchester, London, St. Andrew's, Leeds and Edinburgh.

The third section of the questionnaire aimed to gather some information about the students' preferences and needs for learning Arabic dialects. The question of which dialect(s) to teach is a very important one to investigate, because even when the majority of Arabic teachers agree on the importance of teaching the two varieties H and L, they are put off by the difficulty of deciding which dialect to teach. Ferguson has pointed out that one of the reasons teachers choose to teach the H form only and ignore the dialects is that they cannot decide on which dialect to teach (Ferguson, 1963). The results would shed light on the learners' attitude towards learning an Arabic dialect and whether the dialects of a specific region in the Arab world are preferred or whether there is a mix of dialects that are needed.

In the questionnaire, the main Arabic dialects were grouped under four categories based on (Freeman, 1996). These were: Gulf, Egyptian, Levantine and North African. The students were asked to respond to this question only if they thought they needed to learn an Arabic dialect, otherwise to ignore the question. If they decided to respond, then they were asked to tick the dialect categories they were interested in, and if there was more than one category, they were to order them according to preference. They were also given the choice of adding any other dialects they were interested in that were not mentioned. At the end of the questionnaire, a textbox was provided for the students to express any other comments regarding the design of the questionnaire itself and the type of data that it aims to gather.

The questionnaire was anonymous. However and before administering it, consent forms were distributed to all the students to ensure their agreement in participating. In the forms, they had to write their names and signature (See Appendix E). The questionnaire was distributed to the students in class giving them adequate time to respond to all questions and to add further comments if required. They were asked to try and respond to all the questions if possible in

order to gather more data and have clearer analysis. The researcher was present to respond to any questions that may arise. The answers were collected and entered manually into SelectSurveyASP Advanced online software provided by the University of Manchester. The data analysis was also conducted using the same software.

7.2.2 The Results

This section will present the results of the data analysis. Some tables will be presented to show the overall results for each category which will be in figures and percentages as well in order to aid interpretation and the discussion of results.

The Degree:

53 out of the 54 students responded to this questions. The majority of them were doing a degree with a main focus on the Arabic language. 18 students (34%) did Arabic studies and 11 (21%) did Arabic and Islamic studies. The rest of the participants did Arabic as a part of various degrees such as: Middle Eastern Languages, Middles Eastern History, Linguistics and Modern Languages.

The Year of Study:

Table 7.3 shows the number and the percentages of the students who participated in each year. The highest number of respondents was from year 1 (23 students – 43%). In the year 3 class, most of the students spend that year abroad and therefore, only 6 students (11%) participated who all did a BA in 'Arabic and Islamic Studies' which at that time, at the University of Manchester, did not require a study-abroad. Therefore, the data collected from year 3 students does not represent the needs of all the students in that year. The same situation applies to year 4 students, as there were many absentees on the day when the questionnaire was administered.

Table 7.3: The number of participants at different years of study

Year of Study		Response Total	Response Percent
First year		**23**	**43%**
Second year		**17**	**31%**
Third year		**6**	**11%**
Fourth year		**5**	**9%**
MA		**1**	**2%**
PhD		**2**	**4%**
Total Respondents			**54**

<u>The Learning Needs</u>:

Students were asked in this section to respond to all the questions with agreement or disagreement. Table 7.4 below shows the top 10 learning needs that received the highest agreement (including agree and strongly agree) responses. This will be followed by the results of each category of purposes in more detail. Table 7.4 shows that the highest priority in learning Arabic is able to communicate with Arabs in and outside the Arab world. It is worth noting here that these two reasons did not receive any "strongly disagreement" responses. The table also shows that out of the five categories of learning needs, the category of "Media and cultural understanding" received fairly high agreement responses in comparison with the other categories such as "career purposes" and "religious purposes".

Table 7.4: The top ten learning needs with the highest agreement responses

Rank	Learning needs	Percentages of agreeing responses	Number of agreeing responses
1	To live in or visit the Arab world	96%	52
2	To speak with the Arabs in the UK and outside	96%	52
3	To understand the news on TV and radio	83%	45
4	To understand newspapers and magazines	79%	43
5	To have better understanding of Arabic culture	78%	42
6	To get a job as a translator	78%	42
7	To understand political speeches	74 %	40
8	To get a job as an interpreter	71%	38
9	To do further studies in Arabic Linguistics	70%	37
10	To understand and initiate formal dialogues	68%	36

a. Career purposes:

Figure 7.1 shows the percentages of agreement responses regarding all the 10 career options given in the questionnaire. Out of the 10 job options given, 42 students (78%) either agreed or strongly agreed with a career in translation being a reason for learning Arabic. Then came "Interpreter" (38 students; 71%) while the third in the list was "to get a job in journalism and the media" (33 students; 61%). The figure presents the total percentages of "strongly agree" and "agree" responses separately. This is due to the varied responses collected; when combining the "strongly agree" and "agree" some of the career options might seem to have the same priority for the students; however when separating them, some

career options tend to have more priority. For example, the combined agreement responses for "working as a preacher" and "as a social worker" are the same – 15 (28%) – however the former gets 9 (17%) “strongly agree” responses while the latter gets 1 (2%) “strongly agree” responses. A few participants also indicated their interest in other career options such as: "to use Arabic in relief and humanitarian work", "to get a job in the UN" and "to get a job in the Foreign Office". Analysing the data further according to the year of study or the degree did not reveal any noticeable differences.

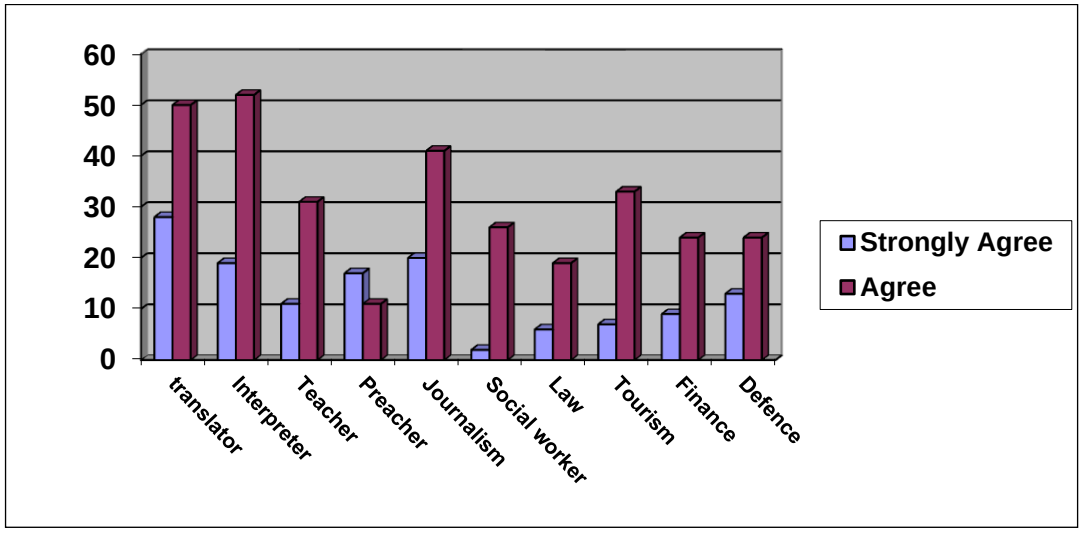

Figure 7.1: Percentage of agreement responses to the career options

b. Academic purposes:

Table 7.5 lists all the agreeing responses to the academic fields given in the questionnaire in the order of their priority for the students. In general, the results show that learning Arabic for academic purposes is not one of the first priorities for most of the participants. The number of "strongly agree" responses is fairly low. Out of the 6 choices given, "doing further studies in the Arabic language and linguistics" had the highest percentage; 38 students (70%) either agreed or strongly agreed, except for year 4 students who showed more interest in doing further studies in Arabic Media, with 3 students out of 5 agreeing on this option being one of their interests.

Table 7.5: "Agree" responses to Academic purposes ranked according to priority

	Academic field	**Number of agreeing responses out of 54**	**Percentages of agreeing responses**
1	Arabic Linguistics	38 (18 strongly agreed)	70
2	Middle Eastern Societies	32 (11 strongly agreed)	59
3	Middle Eastern Politics	27 (8 strongly agreed)	50
4	Islamic Studies	25 (11 strongly agreed)	46
5	Middle Eastern Media	24 (6 strongly agreed)	46
6	Middle Eastern History	23 (10 strongly agreed)	44

c. Religious purposes:

Table 7.6 shows the "agree" results to all the religious purposes in the questionnaire in order of priority. The highest was given to the aim of understanding the Quran which received 30 (55%) "agree" responses (including the "agree" and "strongly agree" responses); while the religious purpose of giving Islamic talks - which would require speaking skills in CA and MSA - received the least "agree" responses. The analysis of the number of "strongly agree" versus the "agree" responses to all the religious purposes showed that it was of a high priority, the number of "strongly agree" responses being higher than the "agree" responses for all religious purposes. For example, for the 30 (55%) participants who agreed with the purpose of understanding the Quran, 18 participants chose the "strongly agree" response while 12 chose the "agree" response.

Table 7.6: "Agree" responses to religious purposes ranked according to priority

	The religious purpose	**Number of agreeing responses**	**Percentage of agreeing responses**
1	To understand the Quran	30 (18 strongly agreed)	55
2	To understand Islamic texts	27 (17 strongly agreed)	50
3	To understand Islamic talks and prayers	22 (16 strongly agreed)	41
4	To understand non-Islamic religious texts and talks	22 (12 strongly agreed)	41
5	To give Islamic talks	15 (10 strongly agreed)	28

d. Personal and social purposes:

Table 7.7 presents all the responses to the options in this category in order. The results showed that the statement "to live in or visit an Arab country" had the highest number to all the other needs in the whole questionnaire. 39 students (72%) strongly agreed and 13 students (24%) agreed while only 2 students (4%) disagreed. The statement that had the next highest "agree" responses was "to be able to speak with Arabs in and outside the UK". A smaller number of students indicated speaking with Arab friends as one of their motivations. The lowest "agree" responses in this category were for the statement "to speak with relatives", which implies that the number of heritage students from an Arab background was limited within these participants. When analysing these results in terms of the degree or the year of study, no noticeable differences were found.

Table 7.7: Responses to personal and social purposes ranked according to priority

The learning reasons	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
To live in or visit an Arab country	39 (72%)	13 (24%)	2 (4%)	0
To speak with the Arabs in/outside the UK	35 (65%)	17 (31%)	2 (4%)	0
Have an interest in Arabic and the ME	34 (63%)	18 (33%)	2 (4%)	0
Have an interest in languages in general	28 (52%)	18 (33%)	7 (13%)	1 (2%)
To speak with Arab friends	11 (20%)	27 (50%)	10 (19%)	6 (11%)
To speak with relatives	3 (6%)	7 (13%)	15 (28%)	29 (54%)

e. Media and cultural understanding purposes

Table 7.8 shows the “agree” responses (combining the “strongly agree” and the “agree” responses) to the given options in this category. The eight learning purposes in this category had very high agreement responses. More than half of the participants agreed on all the purposes. The highest “agree” responses were for the statement "I am learning Arabic in order to understand the news on TV and Radio", with a total of 45 students (79%) agreeing. The two reasons "understanding the news on TV and reading the newspapers" had higher "strongly agree" responses than the "agree" responses, while the rest of the options in this category had higher "agree" than "strongly agree" responses.

Table 7.8: "Agree" responses to the Media and cultural understanding purposes

	The purpose	Number of agreeing responses	Percentage of agreeing responses
1	To understand the news on TV and Radio	45	83
2	To understand the newspapers and magazines	43	79
3	To have a better understanding of the Arabic culture	42	78
4	To understand political speeches	40	74
5	To understand and initiate formal dialogues	37	68
6	To understand movies and songs	32	60
7	To understand classical Arabic literature	31	58
8	To understand modern books and novel	30	56

The results of the third section of the questionnaire: Which dialect?

53 students out of 54 responded to this question. Table 7.9 shows the number and percentages of the students who chose each category and their preferences for them. The numbers in the first row in the table indicate the priority of learning with number 1 indicating highest priority while number 5 means lowest priority. There were responses indicating interest in all the four dialect groups. The table shows that the Gulf dialects received the highest number of responses (47 students – 89%), out of whom, 29 students (55%) indicated that learning a Gulf dialect would be their first priority over the other dialects. The Egyptian dialect comes in the second place in terms of the number of responses and the preference given to it. The third was Levantine dialects, which received very similar responses to the Egyptian. When examining the responses from each year and each degree, the results were similar, with Gulf Arabic receiving the highest preferences while North African received the lowest preference. Egyptian and Levantine dialects fluctuated between the second and the third place of preference. Three Students also

expressed their interest in speaking other dialects (Somali Arabic and the Khuzestan Arabic spoken in Southern Iran).

Table 7.9: Students responses towards learning the Arabic dialects

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Response Total**	**Response Average**
Gulf	62% (29)	19% (9)	9% (4)	11% (5)	0% (0)	**47**	**1.7**
Levantine	21% (9)	42% (18)	30% (13)	7% (3)	0% (0)	**43**	**2.2**
Egyptian	30% (13)	47% (20)	16% (7)	7% (3)	0% (0)	**43**	**2.0**
North African	12% (3)	29% (7)	29% (7)	25% (6)	4% (1)	**24**	**2.8**
Other	67% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	33% (1)	**3**	**2.3**
Total Respondents							**53**
(skipped this question)							**1**

7.2.3 Discussion of the results of the questionnaire

This section will discuss the results that were analysed and presented in the last section of this chapter.

The degree and year of study

The results of this part of the questionnaire showed that a considerable number of the participants (55%) were learning the Arabic language as a main subject in their degrees with 18 students (34%) doing Arabic Studies and 11 (21%) doing Arabic and Islamic Studies. The interest in Arabic and Islamic studies could be due to the type of community living nearby Manchester University where the questionnaire was administered. Possibly if the questionnaire was administered in other areas of the UK, the students' interests and degrees may differ slightly. It has to be noted here

though that filtering those students who do only Arabic Studies or Islamic Studies did not necessarily indicate a major direction in their motivation compared to the other students who took Arabic as a part of their degrees (24 students – 45%). The results showed also a gradual decrease in the number of students in each year of study. Year 1 had the highest number 23 (43%) while year 4 had the least- 5 students (9%). As mentioned previously, it happened that there were a high number of absences in year 4 class on the day of administering the questionnaire and it was not feasible to contact those absentees afterwards. Also, most of year 3 students were doing their study abroad and so they were not available to participate in the questionnaire. However, it is still observed that the number generally decreases every year as explained by the tutors and the administrators which is an observation that deserves further research in order to investigate the reasons behind some students dropping their Arabic course after the first or the second year.

Students' learning needs

This part of the questionnaire aimed to list the main priorities and learning needs of the students of Arabic in general. It was assumed by the researcher prior to the administration of the questionnaire that filtering specific degrees or years of study would give different results and would mean major different needs, but this was not the case. The ten top learning needs which were listed in the table 7.4 were almost identical when applying data filtration. This could support the reliability of these results even though the number of the participants was fairly small. The results showed a general preference towards learning Arabic for social and cultural reasons more than other purposes like religious and career motivations. The aim of interacting with Arabic speakers and understanding their culture was a high priority for 96% of the participants including those who are doing a degree in Islamic studies and who also stated a religious motivation to understand the Quran. The second category of learning purposes was for understanding the language of the Arab Media which includes news items in MSA, interviews and talks in mixed varieties and the entertainment media of songs and movies which are mainly in the dialects

The aim of learning Arabic for career purposes, although it was not the highest priority for most of the participants, was still expressed as an important goal specially in the field of translation and interpreting with an average of 76% of respondents stating that they would want to be able to use their Arabic in such jobs. The linguistic functions and the forms of Arabic needed for these two jobs are variable. The job of the translator requires straightforward skills of reading and writing in the target language. In the case of Arabic, most texts are limited to MSA for contemporary literature and CA for older texts. Therefore, this job would require high proficiency level in reading and writing in MSA and CA. On the other hand, the job of an interpreter requires listening and speaking skills in a specific variety which could be MSA in a formal situation, CA in a religious event or any of the Arabic dialects in informal situations and depending on the geographical area as well as any type of mixed Arabic that embraces more than one variety.

Academic Purposes

This part of the questionnaire aimed to find out if Arabic is learnt as a tool to aid postgraduate study in a specific field. For example, some students might be interested in doing further studies in the pre-modern Middle Eastern history which means they will need to understand CA texts. Others who do Middle Eastern Politics will need to read more contemporary documents in MSA and probably to engage in conversations with specific political lexis in ESA. Unfortunately, the clarity of the instructions in this section could be disputed. The sentence "doing further studies in the field of" might not have been a clear as specifying "doing an MA or a PhD in the field of". The reason also for doubting the validity of the results of this section is the high number of “agree” responses to the given options. It might not be really true that all these respondents wanted to do postgraduate studies in those fields. However, even if the results were valid, they showed that doing further studies is not the main reason for learning Arabic. The number of "strongly agree" responses was quite low in comparison with the "agree" responses and definitely lower in comparison with the other categories of learning purposes. The highest “agree” response in this category though was for doing further studies in Arabic Linguistics. This could be interpreted in different ways. It could mean that the students find their undergraduate study not sufficient for

them to reach a high proficiency level in the language and therefore they wish to do further studies in it. It could also be interpreted as a pure interest in Arabic linguistics and in any case, such aims mean that the learners should learn “about” the language as well as learning “it”. Comparative analysis of the linguistic systems of the different Arabic varieties would be essential for those students who would like to do further studies in Arabic linguistics.

Religious purposes

As was presented in table 7.6, more than half of the participants (55%) agreed that understanding the Quran was one of their needs in learning Arabic, and exactly half of them (50%) agreed on the goal of understanding other Islamic texts. For the other religious purposes, less than half of the participants agreed to them. It is important to note here that for all these religious purposes, the “strongly agree” responses were higher than the “agree” responses; this could mean that for the majority of those who agreed on the religious purposes, it is a high priority to achieve such goals. Most of the religious purposes given in the questionnaire entail a need for understanding rather than for the skill of language production except for the reason of "preach in Arabic" when the learner should be able to speak and communicate in CA which was the reason that gained the lowest number of “agree” responses in this category with only 15 students out of 54 (28%). When examining the 28% who agreed on that purpose, they were a mix of students from different years and different degrees and interestingly, they were not all doing a degree in Islamic studies. This could be a point to consider for universities, that providing a module on enhancing CA speaking skills might appeal to this group of students who strongly agreed on this purpose. If this is a separate module, it will not be compulsory for all Arabic learners but will be provided only for those who are interested in gaining this specific skill.

Personal and social purposes:

Table 7.7 showed that living in or visiting the Arab world as well as being able to speak with Arabic NSs in general had the highest agreement responses in the whole questionnaire. Also these two options did not receive any "strongly disagree" responses which again emphasizes the importance of this reason for the

learners. It can be argued here that the skill of speaking or communicating with the NSs is the first priority in learning for the majority of the participants. This learning need entails the importance of knowing at least one Arabic dialect and adequate knowledge of the linguistic features of a range of urban dialects. The question of which Arabic dialect to teach is still under debate among specialists in TASL. This will be referred to in the next section about "which dialect to teach". Table 7.7 showed also that speaking Arabic with relatives is not a priority for the majority of the participants which might indicate that the number of students of Arab origin was quite limited in this questionnaire.

Media and cultural understanding purposes

This category of learning purposes received a high number of agreeing responses with an average of 80%. In Byram's survey, it was noted that many students in the UK choose to learn Arabic in order to understand the media content and better understand Arab culture (Byram, 1992). The results of this section agreed with Byram that understanding Arab culture and Media seems to be a very important reason for learning Arabic in the British universities. The varieties of Arabic used in the media include all the levels of Arabic language which are described by Badawi (1973) and also include different Arabic dialects depending on the source of media. However, out of all the reasons in this category, the ones that received the highest “agree” responses were related to understanding the broadcast and printed news which rely mainly on MSA. This could make the choice of a course in Media Arabic the right one to provide for the need of understanding the news. As mentioned previously, some universities are already offering such a course. In general, these results mean that understanding Arabic culture is a priority for learners and therefore it is vital that whichever Arabic course is taught at university level, it has to encompass adequate knowledge of Arabic thought and culture.

Preference towards specific Arabic dialects

The results of the previous sections in the questionnaire implied that speaking and understanding Arabic dialects is very important for the learners for the reasons they strongly agreed with such as living in an Arab country, being able to communicate with Arabs, working as an interpreter and generally understanding

Arab culture. The results presented in table 7.9 showed an unexpectedly high interest in Gulf Arabic which was not stated in the previous study by Belnap (1987) to be a choice that learners would prefer. There could be certain differences between the learner's need in the US – where Belnap's surveys were administered – and the Arabic students in the UK that explain the different interest in the Gulf varieties. The time gap between Belnap's survey and this present one is also quite big and many social and political changes have happened which might explain the new interest in learning the dialects of the Gulf. It could be due to their growing economic states or to the religious affiliation of some of them. It would be useful to investigate this further in terms of the reasons behind choosing a Gulf dialect and the specific varieties within that region that are of more importance to the learners bearing in mind that at the time of this current research, most universities, when they choose to teach a dialect, they opt for the Egyptian or the Levantine varieties.

The results of this section showed a high number of responses regarding learning more than one dialect which means that most of the learners do not have an interest in only one variety but two, three and even four different dialects with the highest priority being given to the Gulf. Therefore, it would be very beneficial for learners to be taught about the linguistic aspects of other Arabic dialects, especially some of the elements that they share such as common lexis, word order and syntactic rules as well as their linguistic differences. In Ferguson's attempt to answer the question of which dialect to teach, he proposed a focus on the most popular or geographically central dialects such as Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian and North Moroccan dialects (Ferguson, 1963). Thomson (9914) also supported the option of Egyptian, which as he stated, has been the main choice for most British universities, due to the social and financial aspects of spending a year abroad in Egypt (Thomson, 1994). However, both Ferguson and Thomson also suggested the importance of teaching the learners general linguistics elements which are shared by most Arabic dialects and exposing learners to different dialects for the aim of recognition more than production.

7.3 Conclusions

The needs analysis presented in this chapter which was the outcome of the present study as well as previous studies would have an important role in program design and methodology in TASL. The results discussed in this chapter showed a range of different needs and also showed preferences towards achieving specific needs rather than others with no major significance observed between the learners' interests in different degrees or different years of study. The ability to speak and understand Arabic was revealed to be the highest priority in learning Arabic with the participants expressing a high interest in interacting with the NSs and in understanding Arab culture and media. Although learning Arabic for career purposes is not the highest priority for learners, a fair number expressed an interest in using Arabic in a translation career and around half of the participants were also interested in understanding the Quran and religious texts and for the majority of those who chose this option, it was a high priority. Understanding the language of the news was shown to be another important reason for learning Arabic. The learners would need to reach a high level of proficiency in MSA and specifically in the register of the media found in the news broadcasts in order to have a good level of comprehension. Speaking an Arabic dialect was stated by the participants to be a very important skill, as also stated in the conclusions in Belnap's first survey. However, this questionnaire showed a new interest in learning the dialects of the Gulf region and in learning more than one dialect.

This needs analysis pilot study has confirmed what was stated in Belnap's studies in the US regarding the learners' growing interest in interacting with the NSs as well as in being able to do other formal tasks appropriately and proficiently. In short, the Arabic L2 learners want to reach a level in language proficiency that resembles its NS. These conclusions stress the importance of avoiding the tradition of the limited approach in TASL which focuses on the learning of one variety only or, in better cases, touches upon the fact that other varieties exist without raising the learners' awareness of the extent of this variation. In order for a university Arabic program to provide for these needs and to enable its graduates to function in Arabic in a fashion close to the NS, it is crucial to take the NS's skills into account

and train the L2 learners to apply these skills. The first part of this study concluded that the NSs, as well as being able to use a native dialect and MSA appropriately according to the formality of a situation, can achieve a high level of mutual intelligibility when interacting with speakers of different Arabic dialects even with minimal language modifications. This successful comprehension was due to certain factors and strategies applied by the native listeners and which are to be investigated in TASL. The final chapters of this thesis will examine the Arabic learners' ability to cope with unfamiliar lexis in a range of dialects and will examine the effects of training them to have better dialectal understanding. Before moving onto the next chapter, it is useful to reflect on this pilot study and to list certain recommendations if the study is to be administered again on a larger scale.

7.4 Points to consider if administering the questionnaire in the future

After piloting this questionnaire at the University of Manchester, the following points were noticed and will be important to consider if administering the questionnaire again:

- Giving the questionnaire to the learners towards the end of the academic year is good timing, because by that time they are more aware of the diglossic situation of Arabic and the existence of its multiple dialects.
- It is useful to gather more demographic information about the students such as the gender and other language skills, to find out how these characteristics affect their motivations.
- Two options can be added to the career category: working in human relief organisations and working for the Foreign Office. These were stated by some students as other interests for job opportunities.
- It is important to provide the option of adding an extra statement that is not provided already in the questionnaire.
- In the academic purposes, it was noticed that a high number of learners chose the option of doing further studies, while in reality; very few students proceed to that level (Dickins and Watson, 2006). It is possible that the sentence "doing further studies" was not clear enough to the majority and

it might be important to specify what "further studies" mean and to replace it with "doing an MA or PhD degree".

- In the category of "Media and Culture understanding purposes", the reason “initiating formal dialogues" can be deleted. It was not understood by some students and it is usually a task limited in certain jobs such as working in the Media.
- In the same category, the reason "understanding Classical Arabic literature" can be deleted. Some students might not know exactly what is meant by Classical Arabic and how it differs from MSA. This can be replaced by "understanding Arabic poems and old stories or texts"
- In the category of social purposes, it would be useful to separate the reason "living in the Arab world" from "visiting the Arab world". Visiting the Arab world needs survival basic language, while "living" there means the need for a higher level of proficiency in the dialect of that region as well as MSA.
- In the last question about the Arabic dialects, it might be more useful to list urban Arabic dialects rather than groups of dialects and ask the students to tick only four of them, then to arrange these four in the order of their needs and preferences. It would be useful as well to provide them with a space to explain the reasons for their first choice as a minimum. In analysing the data, these choices can be grouped into the four categories of dialects that were originally provided, in order to find out whether there is a preference towards a specific category. This change is recommended as some participants said that they wanted to choose the Saudi dialect as the first priority and Yemeni dialect as the last priority, but they could not do so because both dialects were under the same category.

Chapter 8: A multi-case study on L2 listening comprehension of cross-dialectal Arabic: Methodology

The discussion in the last chapter about the learners' needs showed that the general aim of their learning Arabic is to attain a near-native level of proficiency in all the aspects of diglossic language use. These aspects include the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking with a correct choice of an Arabic variety – MSA, a dialect or a mix of both – in both intra-dialectal and cross-dialectal situations as well as the skill of achieving a satisfactory level of comprehension of a range of urban dialects. The first part of the study looked at how lexical recognition and comprehension was achieved by the NSs in cross-dialectal interaction and it showed that both the speaker and listener apply certain strategies to aid intelligibility. The findings about the NSs' listening strategies led to the following research questions which are concerned with the Arabic L2 learners:

> (4) To what extent can the advanced university Arabic students achieve successful dialectal comprehension?
>
> (5) Can explicit instruction of the NSs' listening strategies affect the level of L2 dialectal lexical comprehension?

This chapter presents the methodology for an exploratory multiple-case study that aims to seek answers to these two research questions and to lead to more comprehensive and theory-building future studies. Research on listening comprehension suggests that language variability can pose a difficulty in L2 listening comprehension and that the learners find it easier to comprehend the standard varieties better (Major et al., 2005). In the case of Arabic, although the variability is immense, yet there are a lot of common linguistic features that theoretically should assist L2 comprehension of different dialects. Trentman (2011) reported in her study investigating comprehension in Arabic L2 listening that the knowledge of MSA and at least one dialect had a positive effect on the students' ability to comprehend unfamiliar dialects and that the proficiency level

and multiple dialect exposure correlated with successful comprehension (Trentman, 2011). Research on listening comprehension also advocates listening strategy instruction which was stated in some studies to have a positive impact on the level of L2 listening comprehension (Abd-El-Al, 2002; Cohen, 2011; Cross, 2009; Field, 2008b). Most of these studies tested the effectiveness of strategy instruction on comprehension in non-diglossic languages, especially in English as a Second Language. The present case study tries to explore whether the same effectiveness applies to a diglossic language such as Arabic. It will focus mainly on the skill of cognate recognition which is more relevant to cross-dialectal listening than to the case of listening to unrelated second languages.

8.1 The study design

This is an experimental multi-case study which included five learners of Arabic in their final year of undergraduate studies at the University of Manchester. The decision to conduct a case study as opposed to a bigger scale experimental study reflected the intent that it should be more exploratory rather than aiming to lay substantial claims. Additionally, the availability of participants was another reason for conducting a multi-case study. A bigger number of participants would have provided more representativeness and variation but recruiting a bigger number of committed participants was not feasible.

In order to efficiently conduct this case study, a triangulation research strategy has been applied by drawing upon more than one source of information for more comprehensive analysis. These included interviews with the participants, observations of their performance and comments as well as conducting listening comprehension pre- and post-tests. According to Duff, the strategy of triangulation creates more confidence in interpreting data in qualitative research (Duff, 2008). The study design took the following steps:

a) Ethical approval was sought and granted following the guidelines set out for research at the University of Leeds.

b) A number of cognates collected from the data in the first part of the research were selected to form the core of the dialectal comprehension listening tests.
c) NSs of five dialects (Gulf[31], Hijazi Saudi, Egyptian, Syrian and Libyan) were asked to volunteer recording pre-written sentences in their own dialects.
d) The recorded sentences were checked by other NSs of these dialects to ensure their validity before they were used in writing the pre-test, the post-test and for use in the training sessions.
e) Arabic learners were approached to be the participants and the study was explained to them.
f) The pre and post-tests were piloted on two NNSs who were not participants in the study.
g) A listening pre-test was conducted to test the participants' ability to recognise cognates in unfamiliar dialects.
h) 3 hours of training sessions were arranged in which the researcher taught cross-dialectal listening strategies to the participants and provided them with practice listening drills.
i) Comments from the participants before, during and after the training were documented.
j) A post-test was administered to test the participants' dialectal comprehension skills after the training.

8.2 The participants

The participants in this study were five Arabic learners who were all in their final (fourth) year of Arabic language studies and who had been students of the researcher for more than two years. They were approached at the beginning of February 2013, which was the beginning of the second semester in the academic

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31 Gulf dialects in most literature on TASL refer to the dialects spoken in Saudi Arabia and all the other smaller Gulf countries: Oman, Qatar, Emirates, Bahrain and Kuwait. However in this case study 'Gulf' refers to the dialects of Kuwait and Emirates which have some phonological and lexical characteristics that distinguish them from the Western Saudi dialects such as changing the MSA sound /dʒ/ to /j/ and the /k/ to /ʧ/.

year 2012/2013. An email was sent to a group of 8 students with the highest marks achieved in their MSA proficiency level in previous university exams. The choice of advanced learners versus intermediate or beginners was intentional in order to focus the study only on students with a good knowledge of MSA and at least one dialect. It was outside the scope of this study to test the effect of the language proficiency level on their performance in dialectal comprehension. Six out of the contacted students agreed to participate; but the final number of participants was five as one of them could not commit to attend. In selecting the participants, it was intended to make sure that they all had some instruction in at least one dialect. According to Trentman (2011), the knowledge of a dialect plus MSA was an advantage in dialectal comprehension in her study.

The participants were given a short questionnaire in order to collect some information about their language knowledge and to make sure that none of them were bilingual or of Arab origin, which might have an effect on their dialectal comprehension. Table 8.1 below shows the information gathered about the participants who will be referred to throughout the study using the anonymous labels P1 to P5 (for Participant 1 to 5). All of the participants were monolinguals with English as the mother tongue for four of them and German for one participant (P2). They all stated that they were between 22 and 25 years old. All the participants happened to be studying one or two other languages besides Arabic in their university degree. They all had instruction in at least one Arabic dialect during their year abroad.

P1 was an exception regarding the variety of Arabic dialects that she had been exposed to in comparison with the rest of the participants. She stated that she had been motivated to learn about different dialects since the beginning of her Arabic studies which led her to make many Arab friends in Manchester and to watch a lot of Arab media and write down the linguistic characteristics she observed in each dialect. She also had intensive exposure to the Emirati dialect working as a primary teacher in a school in Dubai during her year abroad there. During the interview before the pre-test, P1 commented that she can understand a number of Arabic dialects quite well to the extent that she can compete with some of her NS friends in guessing where an Arab person is from by listening to their dialect and

understanding them. The researcher's familiarity with these students, their proficiency level, their attitude to Arabic learning and their motivation were very useful in selecting them. All the selected students were hard working and very committed to their Arabic studies throughout their degree and they achieved high marks in their university MSA examinations averaging between 72 and 92% in previous academic years.

Table 8.1: The demographics of the participants

Participant	**Gender**	**L1**	**L2**	**Dialects exposed to**	**Context of dialect exposure**	**Proficiency score out of 100 in MSA**
P1	F	English	Arabic, Urdu, Spanish	Jordanian, Egyptian, Emirati, Moroccan, Iraqi, Saudi	10 months (year-abroad) in Emirates, 3 months in Jordan, 2 months in Morocco and short travels to Egypt and Saudi, Arab media and having many Arab friends.	90
P2	F	German	Arabic, English, Hebrew	Egyptian, Levantine	14 months (year-abroad) spent in Egypt, 3 months spent in Palestine, having a Lebanese friend.	92
P3	F	English	Arabic, French	Egyptian	10 months (year-abroad) in Egypt, Arab media	75
P4	M	English	Arabic, Farsi	Egyptian Moroccan	5 months (year-abroad) in Egypt, 6 months in Morocco, Arab media	72
P5	M	English	Arabic, German, French	Egyptian	10 months (year-abroad) in Egypt, Arab media	72

8.3 The setting

University classrooms with computers, a projector and speakers were used for conducting the tests, the interviews and for the training sessions. The first meeting with the participants took place on the 14th of March, 2013. In the meeting, they were given a brief summary of the study and a consent form to sign (see appendix H). This was followed by the listening pre-test and then a group interview to discuss dialectal comprehension. On the same day, they had their first hour of lexical training. The next two hours of training took place on the 18th and the 20th of March. The post-test was conducted on the 21st of March. It was ensured that the time scale between the tests and the training sessions was not long as the information they received in the training sessions would still be easily retrieved from memory. The dates were chosen to be just before their university Easter break in which the students start to get busy preparing for their final year examinations. This was to ensure that they were not under that stress, but yet close enough to reach the proficiency level expected of them at the end of their studies.

8.4 The test instrument

The pre- and post- listening tests comprised 25 dialectal sentences each to be translated into English. Each sentence had one or two words which were the focus of the test. These words had equivalent cognates in MSA that were anticipated by the researcher to be familiar to the participants. The words were all true cognates which were collected from the NSs' cross-dialectal conversations in the first part of this research and which were all successfully and easily comprehended by the NSs. No false cognates were used in the tests as they can break comprehension even for the NS. The selected cognates included simple content words of single morphemes as well as multi-morphemic words; this was to test the participants' ability to recognise the different components in the dialectal words such as the negation particles, object pronouns and prepositions. For example, in including the Saudi word *mā-ḥaḍḍarta-ll-uh* "I didn't prepare for him", it is to test whether the participants would recognise all or any of its morphemes; the root of the content

word *ḥ-ḍ-r* “to prepare”, the negation prefix *mā* , the preposition *ll* and the pronoun *uh* “him”. The pre-test included 36 words to be tested of which 13 were multi-morphemic while the post-test also included 36 words of which 16 had multiple morphemes. All the tested words are presented in Appendices E.1 and E.2.

In drawing up the list of the words to be tested, it was apparent that these true cognates had variable levels of linguistic distances, with some of them differing from their MSA equivalents in only one phoneme, such as *imm* (in Levantine) / *umm* (in MSA) “mother”, while others involve multiple morpho-phonological differences, such as *ma-tgul-l-ich* (in Gulf) / *la taqūl(u) la-ki* (in MSA) “she doesn’t say to you”. If the pre-test included only simple cognates that differed in one phoneme while the post-test had more complex ones, then the results would not be reliably comparable. In order to ensure that the pre and the post tests are adequately comparable, it was important to classify these words into categories depending on the linguistic affinity with their cognates in MSA, then to include a similar number of each cognate category in both tests.

Classifying cognates in any language is a complex procedure that has not yet been standardised (Chacón-Beltrán, 2006). Some linguists choose phonological criteria such as the number of different consonants and vowels, the length of the words, or the addition or deletion of phonemes in order to classify the cognates (Moss, 1992), while others combine phonological, orthographic and semantic differences using often computer software (Hauer and Kondrak, 2011). Conducting a thorough analysis of the Arabic cognates and classifying them according to different linguistic criteria would be a separate and a lengthy work that is outside the scope of this study. To the date of this study, the researcher is not aware of any study that has collected and classified the cognates in the Arabic varieties. Therefore, a simple phonological approach was used here to classify them based on the number of morpho-phonological differences that were observed. This was mainly to help in the design of the tests and was not intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of Arabic cognates. Table 8.2 lists 15 morpho-phonological differences and 1 semantic difference between the cognates that were used in this study. These linguistic differences included the use of different phonemes, the addition and

deletion of phonemes, and morphological differences. The table also gives examples from the tests with the different linguistic elements being highlighted in bold.

Table 8.2: Morpho-phonological differences between the cognates in the tests

	The morpho-phonological differences	**Examples from cognates in MSA and the dialects**
1	Different vowel[32]	***i**mm / **u**mm*
2	Different consonant	***g**alam / **q**alam*
3	Longer vowel	*bek**ā**m / bik**a**m*
4	Doubled consonant	*ga**ḍḍ**ēt / qa**ḍ**aytu*
5	Shorter vowel	*s**a**kna / s**aa**kina*
6	Shortening doubled consonants by deleting one of them	*ki**l-**hum / ku**ll**u-hum*
7	Eliminated vowel	*btcham / b**i**kam*
8	Eliminated consonant	*tiyī / tajī**ʔ** **(the glottal stop at the end of this verb is eliminated)***
9	Extra vowel	*ʕagūz**a** / ʕajūz*
10	Extra consonant	***n**waladt / wulidt*
11	Switched order of phonemes	*umm-**ik** / umm(u)-**ki***
12	Different syllabic stress	*mad**ra**sa / **ma**drasa*
13	Extra morpheme	***ʕamb**-yiḥkī / yaḥkī* (the morpheme *ʕamb* in Syrian denotes present tense)
14	Different morpheme	***ḥa**-rjaʕ/ **sa**-ʔarjiʕ* (both morphemes are used to denote future tense in different varieties)
15	Combining separate words to make up morphemes in one word	*ulte-l-ha / qultu laha*
16	Partial cognates with different meaning but sharing the same semantic field	*ʕamb-yiḥkī* "he talks"*/ yaḥkī* "he narrates"

[32] These include very distinct vowels such as /i/ and /u/ and closer ones such as /e/ and /ɛ/.

Based on the listed morpho-phonological differences in table 8.2, the tested words were put in three categories. It is worth mentioning here that classifying each word depended only on the number of morpho-phonological differences it had with its MSA cognate and not on the type of morpho-phonological differences. An initial thought of classifying the words according to the type of the linguistic difference, e.g. cognates that differ in vowels or morphemes, seemed to over-complicate the test design and the analysis process, as most of these cognates have a variable number of linguistic differences. Therefore, a simpler categorisation was applied by only counting the number of morpho-phonological differences regardless of which of the 16 differences above they were. Examples of these cognates will be given later in this section. The following are the three categories of cognates used in the tests with category A having the simplest cognates with fewer linguistic differences while category C includes the more complex cognates:

A. Simple cognates that have only 1 or 2 differences such as *gabl (*Saudi) */ gabla* (MSA) "before"
B. Cognates that have 3 or 4 morpho-phonological differences such as *ma-ngūli-š* (Libyan) / *la naqūl(u)* (MSA) "we don't say"
C. More complex cognates that have more than 4 morpho-phonological differences such as *ma-gult-alla-ha* (Saudi) */ ma qultu laha* (MSA) "I didn't tell her".

The pre-test included 17 words from category A, 13 from category B and 6 from category C, while the post-test included 14 words from category A, 18 from category B and 4 from category C. It is anticipated that the cognates from category A would be easier to recognise while the cognates from category C would be more difficult as they would require the listener to recognise their roots as well as the other morphemic affixes.

Five dialects were equally used in the pre and post-tests; these were: Egyptian (Cairene), Saudi (Hijazi), Gulf (Kuwaiti and Emirati), Syrian (Damascus), Libyan (Eastern). These dialects were observed to be easily comprehended by the NSs in

the first part of the research. The decision to include this range of dialects as opposed to focusing only on one dialect was intended to provide more variability in the tests and to observe whether the participants would be able to recognise and pair the cognates in a range of dialects in a similar way to the NSs. This study did not aim to focus on a specific dialect or specific structures but rather on the cognate pairing strategies that can be applied to aid comprehending a variety of unfamiliar forms. It was also important to include this range of dialects as the participants have had exposure to different dialects.

It was anticipated that the participants will recognise the dialects familiar to them better than the unfamiliar ones. In the case of the five participants here, Egyptian Arabic was familiar to all of them at different levels of proficiency, while the Gulf and Libyan dialects were the least familiar ones. The words that were selected from these dialects reflected certain morpho-phonological elements that were characteristic to each of them, such as the clustering of three consonants which is found in Libyan Arabic and other North African varieties, the use of /ʧ/ in Gulf dialects as a corresponding sound to the /k/ in MSA, changing the syllabic stress in negated verbs in the Egyptian dialects as highlighted in bold in *es**ta**ʔbil / ma-staʔ**bi**l-š* "he received / didn't receive".

The words were put in sentences which provided some context but not too much contextual clues that could lead to pure guessing of the meanings of the tested words without having to relate them linguistically to familiar cognates. The rest of the words in the sentences were also carefully selected to be familiar to the participants, so that the focus would be to test the comprehension of the cognates only rather than the whole sentences. The sentences were checked and recorded by NSs of the five dialects. They were volunteers who were approached from personal contacts, as Arabic speaking students at the University of Leeds and through Arabic online mailing lists. There were at least two speakers who recorded the sentences for each dialect. This was to give the researcher the option to choose the recording with the best quality. The volunteers were asked to record the sentences at a natural speed as they would usually say them in their communities.

After compiling the sentences, three other NSs and two NNs - who were not among the participants - were asked to listen to the sentences and do the tests. This was to pilot the tests and ensure their reliability before using them with the participants. This piloting exercise was certainly useful as it led to eliminating and changing a few of the sentences either because they were reported not to be clear enough or because they were easily guessed from the context only and did not require much linguistic knowledge. The final sentences that were used in the tests are presented in Appendices F.1 and F.2 in English and in the DIN 31635 transcription using the intellaren.com website (Intellaren) with the tested words highlighted in bold.

In order to ensure the similarity of the pre and the post-tests, the same format was used. Each test had 5 sentences from each dialect. Both tests started with sentences with simpler cognates and gradually progressed to the more complex ones. The length of the sentences was an average of 3.9 words per sentence in the pre-test and 4.2 words per sentence in the post-test with the shortest sentence being made of two words only while the longest was of seven words in both tests. The number of the cognates in the three categories above was not exactly the same in the tests but very close on average.

The following are some examples of the sentences that were used in the pre and the post listening tests. Example (1) shows one of the sentences used in the post test with the cognate to be tested highlighted in bold and it shows also the equivalent in MSA. The sentence aimed to test comprehending the Syrian word ***imm-ik*** "your mother" which is a simple cognate from category A. Its equivalent in MSA is *umm(i)-ki* and so they have one phonological difference in the initial vowel. The rest of the words in the sentence are familiar to the students at that level. The context in the sentence is about living with someone; however, in order to successfully comprehend the whole sentence, the listener has to guess the meaning of the highlighted word by relating it to familiar cognates. It is assumed that such simple cognates should be easily matched by the advanced students even if they have never had exposure to Levantine Arabic.

(1) Syrian = *inti sākne maʕ* ***imm-ik?***
You(f.) live with **mother-your**(f.)?
'Do you (f.) live with **your mother**?'
MSA = *hal taskunīna maʕa* ***ʔummi-ki****?*
(inter.) live(2nd p. f.) with mother-your?
'Do you (f.) live with **your mother**?'

Example (2) has a cognate from category B with 3 phonological differences (an extra consonant and two different vowels). It is the Libyan past verb ***nwaladt*** "I was born" which has the equivalent *wulidt(u)* in MSA. In order for the listener to correctly understand the verb, they are to recognise its root *w-l-d* and consider other possible phonological variations in its form. It is expected that the participants would already easily understand the rest of the words in the sentence *bi* "in" and *ṭrābles* "Tipoli" which provides some context to aid comprehension.

(2) Libyan = ***nwaladt*** *bi-ṭrābles*
born (1st person sl.) in-Tripoli
'**I was born** in Tripoli'
MSA = ***wulidtu*** *bi-tarāblus*
born (1st person sl.) in-Tripoli
'**I was born** in Tripoli'

Example (3) has the Gulf word ***ma-tgul-l-ich*** "she doesn't tell you" which differ from its MSA cognate *lā taqūlu la-ki* in 8 morpho-phonological elements (a different vowel, a different consonant, a shortened vowel, two eliminated vowels, switched order of phonemes, a different morpheme and combined morphemes). In order to correctly decode this word, the listener needs to recognise its root and the attached morphemes as well as to be familiar with some of the corresponding sounds. In this case, the MSA root is *q-w-l*. The *q* sound is changed to *g* in Emirati dialect; the attached morphemes for negation are *lā* in MSA but *ma* in Emirati and the object pronoun *ich* "you" in this example is *ki* in MSA.

(3) Gulf = ***ma-tgul-l-ich*** *ʕinwān-hā*
(neg.)-say(3rd. p. f.)-to-you(sl.f.) address-her
'**She does not tell you** her address'
MSA = ***lā taqūlu la-ki*** *ʕunwāna-hā*
not say(3rd. p. f.) to-you(sl.f.) address-her
'**She does not tell you** her address'

All the sentences were then transcribed phonetically[33] in a PowerPoint presentation to be used in the pre and post-tests. The participants were asked to listen to the sentences and write their translations without seeing a transcript, then to listen again and provide answers after seeing the transcript. The rationale behind showing them the transcription was to ensure that their answers were not affected by non-linguistic factors or by gaps in their L2 listening abilities in general. If a participant cannot guess the correct meaning of a word even after seeing its transcript, then the reason would be their inability to relate that word to its familiar cognates, rather than because they could not hear a certain sound well for example. Lexical segmentation in L2 listening according to Field is one of the commonest causes of breakdown of understanding (Field, 2003). Therefore, seeing the transcript would aid the participants in recognising the boundaries of the words and hence leave them only with the task of lexical pairing in order to understand. The decision to use English letters in transcribing the sentences versus using Arabic script was to avoid giving the participants clues from reading them. Some of the tested cognates are homographs in Arabic script. For example, the dialectal words *gabl* (Saudi) and '*abl* (Egyptian) are written in the dialects exactly the same way as in MSA *qabl* قبل. Seeing the words in Arabic script could have given them clues for guessing the correct meaning without relating the cognates only by listening.

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33 The transcription system used here was not the IPA as this might have not been familiar to the participants but a simple transcription using Latin-based alphabet with the aid of the Intellaren transcription website. http://www.intellaren.com/intellibe/doc

8.5 Procedure and ethical considerations

An ethical review form was submitted to the school and an approval was given for the study to be conducted. The anonymity of the study and a brief description of its aims were explained to the participants in a consent form which they signed[34]. The participants were given two similar answer sheets for each test (See appendix G for both the consent form and the listening test sheets). In these they were asked to write an English translation of what they think they heard even if it was only part of the sentence. They were told that they had the option of listening again to the same sentence twice. This was to make sure that their answers were not affected by non-linguistic factors, such as outside noises or a momentary of lack of concentration. It was also to decrease listening anxiety which can negatively affect language students' performance in listening tasks in general (Serraj and Noordin, 2013; Zhang, 2013). There was a pause between each sentence to give them enough time to write the translations. Then they were asked to use the second answer sheet to do exactly the same task but this time while seeing a phonetic transcription of the sentences presented on a screen through a PowerPoint presentation and a projector. They were asked to write "the same" in the second answer sheet if they thought the translation was exactly the same before and after seeing the transcript. After the end of both tests, the researcher discussed with the participants a list of the MSA equivalents to all the cognates in order to confirm that they were familiar with them.

8.6 The dialectal training intervention and the group discussions

The dialectal training included 3 lessons, 1 hour each. One participant (P5) could not make it for one of the lessons, so it was made up for him so that he would have exactly the same training that the other participants received. P1 chose not to attend two of the lessons as she felt she was very familiar with the content and

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[34] As the researcher was also their teacher, it was very important to assure the participants that their performance in this study was not associated by any means with their performance in their degree and their university summative assessment and would have no impact at all on their relationship with the researcher as their teacher.

believed she already had the skill of successful dialectal comprehension. Of course her claim was to be tested in the pre- and post-tests.

The dialectal training intervention aimed to introduce the corresponding sounds in most of the urban Arabic dialects and to train the participants to use the same listening strategies that were observed in part 1 of this research to be used by the NSs in order to correctly pair the cognates which included the following techniques:

- Making use of contextual clues.
- Considering all possible manipulations of the phonological differences between the Arabic varieties.
- Recognising the root of unfamiliar words in order to guess their meanings by relating them to their cognates in familiar varieties.
- Recognising morphemic affixes in unfamiliar words.

A group discussion was conducted before the pre-test in order to have an insight into perceptions of comprehending different dialects and what they thought of whether it would be possible to understand dialects that they had not been formally taught or adequately exposed to. Another group interview was held in the first training lesson after the pre-test reflecting on their answers in the pre-test and comparing them with the correct answers. The participants were introduced then to the NSs strategies which would have enabled them to correctly guess the meanings of the unfamiliar dialectal words in the pre-test.

In the second hour of the training, the participants were introduced to the corresponding sounds in the urban Arabic dialects using the online resource (AVIA) developed by the University of Maryland which lists the pronunciation differences between seven Arabic varieties (Anon, 2007). The participants were given examples of how some words are pronounced differently in the dialects. Examples from the 16 morpho-phonological elements listed in table 8.2 were also used in the training. All the examples used in the training lessons were carefully selected so as not to include any of the words used in the post-test. However, it was also made sure that all the required strategies and pronunciation knowledge was introduced and practised during the training lessons. In the same lesson they were also

introduced to some of the frequently used words such as the question words and some prepositions in the major Arabic dialects. These were observed to be familiar to the NSs and they are essential for successful comprehension. At the end of the second hour, the participants were given a practice sheet which had a similar format to the tests.

In the third and last hour of training, the participants were introduced to the importance of root, pattern and morpheme recognition. They were given examples of some words that comprise more than one morpheme and they practised breaking these words into their morphemes after deciding what the roots were. A list of the common prefixes and suffixes in different varieties was introduced to them again using the AVIA resources as well as examples collected by the researcher from part one of the research. In between the lessons, the participants were emailed some sentences in different dialects to listen to for home practice. Throughout the training, the group interviews and from the email correspondences with the participants, their comments and feedback on aspects of cross-dialectal comprehension were also documented for analysis.

8.7 Procedures for the data analysis

The participants' translations of the tested words were manually classified into two tables of correct and incorrect answers. Wrong translations and blanks were classified as incorrect as the students had not managed to pair them with the correct cognates in familiar varieties. Words with roots that were correctly identified but wrongly translated were treated as correct answers. For example, the Libyan sentence in the pre-test *bdēt iddirāsa fšahr novamber* meaning "I started studying (the study) in the month of November" was translated by one participant as "The beginning of the study was in November". Although this is not exactly the translation of the word *bdēt* "started", the answer shows that the participant managed to recognise the root of the word *b-d-**ʔ*** and with the aid of the limited context in the sentence, s/he managed to achieve a translation that is very close to the accurate meaning. It can be argued here that if more contexts

were available for the participant, they might have got a more accurate translation of the word as a verb instead of a noun.

Two words in the post-test were excluded from the analysis as they would have posed an element of unreliability in the results. These were the Libyan verb *njū* "we/I come" and the demonstrative *hādi* "this". The first was easily predicted from the context in the sentence *njū bilbāṣ kulli yōm* "we come by bus everyday"; and might have not required much linguistic pairing. This was reflected by the different answers given and which were all close enough to the accurate translations i.e. "we arrive by bus everyday", "we take the bus" and "we go by bus". It was not possible to distinguish whether the participant just guessed the meaning or whether they managed to recognise the root of *njū* but wrote "we take" instead of "we come". The second word *hādī* "this" can also mean "quiet/calm" in different Arabic varieties. Some participants translated the sentence *mangūliš ilkilma hādī* "we do not say this word" as "we do not say quiet words" and "we do not speak softly". These wrong translations indicate that the participants managed to recognise the root of the word correctly but with the limited context available, they could not pair it with the accurate cognate. With the elimination of these two words, the pre and post-tests both had 36 lexical items each to be paired.

The functional morphemes in the tested words were analysed separately and were grouped into five categories: pronouns, prepositions, negation particles, tense identifiers and number identifiers. This classification helped in identifying how many of these morphemes were correctly recognised even when the root of the content element was not. For example, one participant managed to recognise the negation morpheme, the preposition and the object pronoun but not the main content morpheme in the Saudi word *māḥaḍḍartalluh* "I did not prepare for him" and he translated it as "I didn't ..(blank).. For him". Table 8.3 shows the number and type of functional morphemes in each test.

Table 8.3: The functional morphemes in both tests

The functional morphemes	The pre-test	The post-test
Object pronouns	11	11
Negation particles	4	7
Prepositions	5	4
Tense identifiers	1	1
Number identifiers	1	1
Total	22	24

Both the content and functional morphemes were also grouped into tables according to the dialect. This was to find out whether a certain dialect was easier to recognise in both tests and whether the dialectal training had more effect on a certain dialect than the others. Table 8.4 presents the number of content and functional morpheme in each dialect in both tests which shows that the pre-test has a total of 58 elements to test and analyse (36 content roots and 22 functional affixes) while the post-test has a total of 60 elements (36 content roots and 24 functional affixes).

Table 8.4: The tested elements in each dialect in both tests

	The pre-test			**The post-test**		
	Content	**Functional**	**Total**	**Content**	**Functional**	**Total**
Gulf	7	6	13	6	4	10
Saudi	7	5	12	8	8	16
Syrian	7	4	11	8	3	11
Egyptian	7	5	12	8	7	15
Libyan	8	2	10	6	2	8
Total	**36**	**22**	**58**	**36**	**24**	**60**

The analysis focused on the answers that the participants wrote after seeing the transcription of the dialectal sentences. Their answers prior to seeing the transcript were also recorded in tables but were not analysed in the same detail. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the reason for including the transcript was to exclude the other listening variables that may affect their answers. However it was still useful to see how much aid the transcript can provide in decoding words in unfamiliar dialects. Such data could also be insightful for researchers in psycholinguistics. The next chapter will present and discuss the results of the participants' performance in the pre-test and the post-test after the training intervention as well as the themes emerging from the group discussions.

Chapter 9: A multi-case study on the L2 listening comprehension of cross-dialectal Arabic: Results and Discussion

This multi-case study sought to explore answers for the following last research questions of this study project: 4. To what extent can the advanced university Arabic students achieve successful dialectal comprehension? 5. Can explicit instruction of the NSs' listening strategies affect the level of L2 dialectal lexical comprehension? Chapter eight presented the methodology of the study which included pre and post listening tests and group interviews to reflect on their Arabic cross-dialectal understanding and the value they found in the training they received. This chapter presents and discusses the quantitative results of the analysis of the participants' performance in the tests as well as a qualitative analysis of their responses and comments from the interviews. As mentioned in the last chapter, the participants were asked to listen to the tested sentences twice; once without seeing a transcript and the second time while seeing a phonetic transcription of the sentences. This was intended to exclude the variables that are purely related to the process of listening and which are not necessarily related to their skills of pairing unfamiliar lexical items to the familiar cognates. Listening twice and knowing that they will be shown a transcription was also to help in precluding or at least decreasing the level of L2 listening anxiety. Although, they provided answers before and after seeing the transcription, only their answers post-transcript were analysed and discussed in this chapter. A brief examination of their answers before and after seeing the transcription showed that there was a variable level of a higher number of correct answers on the part of all the participants after seeing the transcription and they all commented that the transcription clarified certain sounds for them.

9.1 Results

The pre-test that was given to the participants to measure their cognates' recognition included 58 morphemes (of which 36 were content roots and 22 were functional affixes). An accurate translation of each of these morphemes indicated the participant's ability to pair them with their cognates in familiar varieties. Five dialects were used in the tests, of which the Egyptian and the Syrian dialects were familiar to some of the participants through different levels of exposure while the Gulf, Saudi and Libyan were unfamiliar to all of them except for P1 who had had more exposure to an extensive range of dialects.

9.1.1 Correct pre-test responses by dialect

The total number of correctly recognised morphemes in the pre-test (both content roots and functional morphemes) for each participant in the five dialects is presented in table 9.1 below. The first column in the table lists the five dialects and the number of the tested elements in each of them between the brackets. As table 9.1 shows, an exceptional total number of correct translations (93%) were achieved by P1. For the rest of the participants, the average score was 51% of correct answers which is shown in the last column in the table. The calculated averages in the last column of this and all the other tables in the rest of this chapter exclude P1 because of her unique level of exposure to a variety of dialects and the fact that she did not attend two of the three training sessions. Her answers therefore do not represent the average advanced student. They, do however, show how extensive exposure to the dialects can aid cross-dialectal comprehension. Out of the five dialects, the lowest score achieved was an average of 32% for the Syrian morphemes while the highest were for the Libyan 70% and the Egyptian 58%.

Table 9.1: Correct pre-test responses by dialect

The number of elements in each dialect	**P1**	**P2**	**P3**	**P4**	**P5**	**The average of the percentages (excluding P1)**
Gulf (13)	100% (13)	46% (6)	46% (6)	62% (8)	39% (5)	48%
Saudi (12)	100% (12)	75% (9)	50% (6)	33% (4)	33% (4)	48%
Syrian (11)	86% (8)	64% (7)	18% (2)	27% (3)	18 (2)	32%
Egyptian (12)	100% (12)	100% (12)	58% (7)	42% (5)	33% (4)	58%
Libyan (10)	90% (9)	60% (6)	70% (7)	90% (9)	60% (6)	70%
Total (58)	**93% (54)**	**69% (40)**	**48% (28)**	**50% (29)**	**36% (21)**	**51%**

9.1.2 Correct pre-test responses by type of morpheme

The answers in the pre-test were also analysed according to the type of morphemes that were correctly recognised. One of the aims of the study was to investigate the participants' ability to segment the utterances they hear and to recognise the roots of the content morphemes as well as all the functional affixes in the multi-morphemic words. The analysis showed that some participants were able to recognise the roots while some managed to recognise the object pronouns or the negation affixes only. Table 9.2 shows the number and percentage of the correct responses of the content roots and the functional affixes by each participant. Out of the 22 functional affixes in the pre-test, 11 were object

pronouns, 5 were prepositions[35], 4 were negation particles, one was a tense identifier[36] and one was a number identifier[37]. The last two morphemes were both combined in table 9.2 as they did not independently form a major quantity for analysis. All the five participants managed to recognise more content roots than the functional affixes; however, the highest percentage of recognised elements was the negation affixes which are very similar in all the five dialects: *ma* (as a prefix) or – in the case of the Egyptian and the Libyan dialects – is combined with the suffixes *š, ši or iš*. The table also shows that the preposition *l* "to" or "for" was the most difficult to recognise for all the participants except for P1. The last column in table 9.2 shows the average of the percentages of the correct morphemes.

Table 9.2: Correct pre-test responses by type of morpheme

The recognised elements		**P1**	**P2**	**P3**	**P4**	**P5**	**Average of the percentages (excluding P1)**
content roots (36)		97% (35)	72% (26)	53% (19)	56% (20)	44% (16)	56%
Functional affixes (22)		86% (19)	64% (14)	41% (9)	41% (9)	23% (5)	42%
of which were:	pronouns (11)	82% (9)	64% (7)	46% (5)	36% (4)	18% (2)	41%
	prepositions (5)	100% (5)	60% (3)	0% (0)	20% (1)	0% (0)	29%
	negations (4)	100% (4)	75% (3)	75% (3)	75% (3)	75% (3)	75%
	tense/number identifiers (2)	50% (1)	50% (1)	50% (1)	50% (1)	0% (0)	38%

35 These were the Arabic preposition which consists of a one consonant /l/ meaning "to" or "for" and which is always used as an affix to a noun/pronoun. In many Arabic varieties, it can be preceded or followed by a vowel such as highlighted in the Egyptian *ʿultelluh* "I said to him" and in some varieties it can be doubled as in the Saudi equivalent phrase *gultalluh*.

36 This was the dialectal future tense identifier *ḥa* "will" in the Syrian word *ḥanḍall* "we will stay".

37 This was the dual suffix *ēn* in the Syrian word *ʔijrēneh* "his (two) legs"

In order to measure the effect of the training intervention, a post-test was given to the participants with the same format as of the pre-test. Table 9.3 below compares the total number and percentages of the correctly translated morphemes in both tests for each participant with the last column in the table showing the average of the percentage of correct answers for all the participants excluding P1. Although, P1's results in the post-test do not represent the effects of the intervention, as it was stated earlier that she did not attend all the training hours, her results were still analysed and are reported on in this section. A drastic change in P1's performance in both tests would question the validity and the reliability of the tests or would require further explanations. The data from Table 9.3 is illustrated graphically in Figure 9.1 which shows a variable level of increase in the number of correct responses in the post-test. The highest increase was by P5 achieving 32% higher than his results in the pre-test while the lowest increase was by P4 who achieved only 7% higher than in his pre-test results. The overall average of the increase in the number of correct answers is 20% higher.

Table 9.3: The total number and percentages of the linguistic elements that were correctly translated in both tests

Total No. of correct elements	**P1**	**P2**	**P3**	**P4**	**P5**	**The average of the percentages (excluding P1)**
In the pre-test (58)	93% (54)	69% (40)	48% (28)	50% (29)	36% (21)	**51%**
In the post-test (60)	98% (59)	88% (53)	72% (43)	57% (34)	68% (41)	**71%**

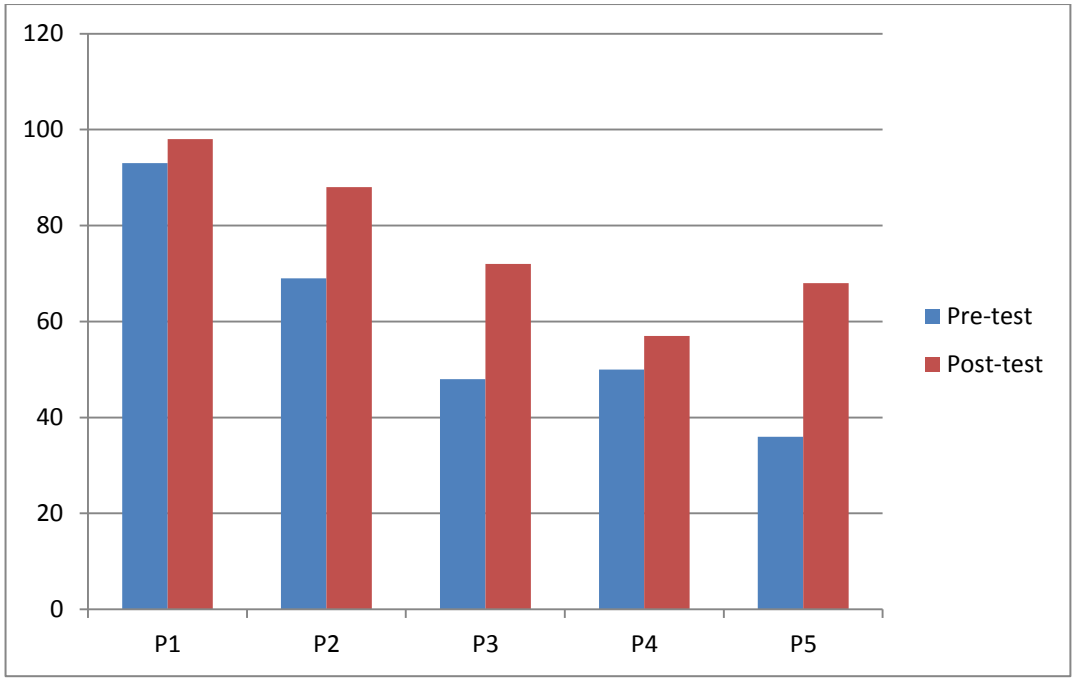

Figure 9.1: The percentage of correct elements in both tests

9.1.3 The effects of the training on their recognition of cognates in unfamiliar dialects

In order to investigate the effects of the training on the participants' recognition of cognates in unfamiliar dialects, their answers in each dialect in both tests were compared. Table 9.4 shows the number of all the tested morphemes - both the content roots and the functional affixes - in each dialect in the post-test and the number and percentages of correct answers given by each participant. The last column again gives the averages of the percentages of correct answers which, in comparison with the data in table 9.1 above, can show an increase achieved in recognising morphemes in all the dialects.

Table 9.4: Correct post-test responses by dialect

The dialect	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Average of the percentages (excluding P1)
Gulf (10)	100% (10)	70% (7)	60% (6)	50% (5)	40% (4)	55%
Saudi (16)	100% (16)	94% (15)	75% (12)	81% (13)	69% (11)	80%
Syrian (11)	100% (11)	100% (11)	82% (9)	46% (5)	73% (8)	75%
Egyptian (15)	93% (14)	80% (12)	67% (10)	33% (5)	73% (11)	63%
Libyan (8)	100% (8)	100% (8)	75% (6)	75% (6)	88% (7)	85%

Figure 9.2 illustrates the averages of correct responses for each dialect in both tests and shows that the lowest increase achieved was in recognising the Egyptian morphemes, while the highest increase was in recognising the Syrian and the Saudi morphemes.

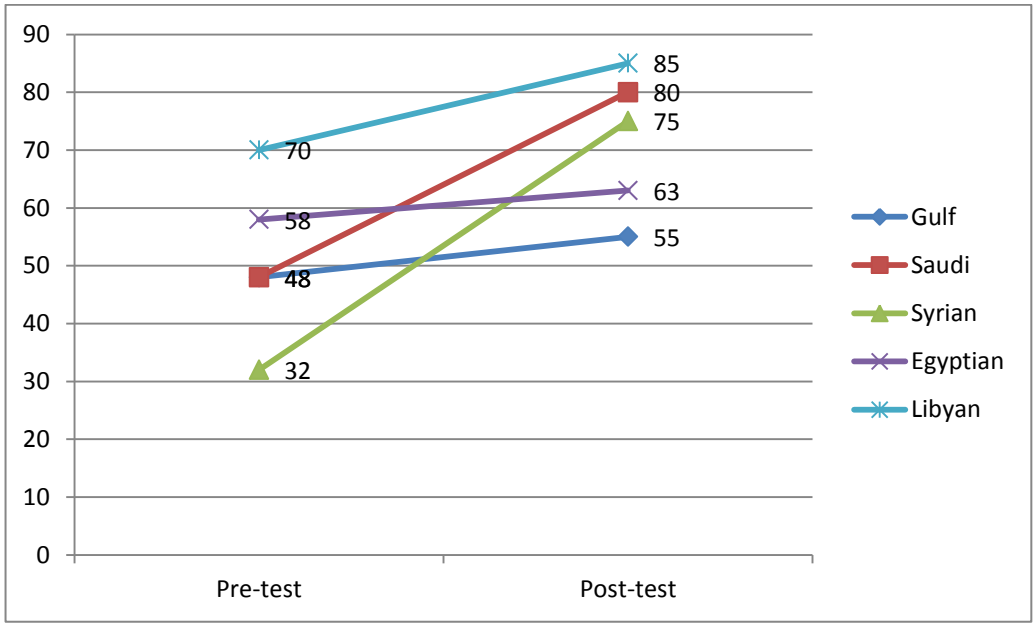

Figure 9.2: Averages of correct responses by dialects in both tests

9.1.4 The effects of the training on their recognition of root and functional morphemes

The participants' answers in the post-test were also analysed according to the type of morpheme. The 60 linguistic elements in the post-test included 36 content roots and 24 functional morphemes of which 11 were object pronouns, 4 prepositions[38], 7 negation prefixes and suffixes, 1 tense identifier[39] and one number identifier[40]. Table 9.5 presents the participants' correct responses by each type of morpheme. A comparison between these results and the pre-test results in table 9.2 above shows that the training intervention had a positive effect on their ability to recognise both the content roots and the functional affixes with the former rising from an average of 56% to 72% and the latter rising from 42% to 70% of correct answers. This increase is clearly higher for the recognition of the functional affixes than for the content roots.

Table 9.5: Correct post-test responses by type of morpheme

The number of linguistic elements		**P1**	**P2**	**P3**	**P4**	**P5**	**Average of the percentages**
Content roots (36)		97% (35)	86% (31)	75% (27)	58% (21)	69% (25)	72%
Functional affixes (24)		100% (24)	92% (22)	67% (16)	54% (13)	67% (16)	70%
Of which were:	Pronouns (11)	100% (11)	91% (10)	55% (6)	36% (4)	64% (7)	62%
	Prepositions (4)	100% (4)	75% (3)	50% (2)	25% (1)	50% (2)	50%
	Negations (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)	100 (7)	86% (6)	100% (7)	97%
	Tense/ number identifiers (2)	100% (2)	100% (2)	50% (1)	50% (1)	0% (0)	50%

38 This was the preposition /l/ "to" or "for".

39 This was the future tense identifier *ḥa* "will" in the Saudi word ***ḥa**rjaʿ* "I will return".

40 This was the dual suffix *ēn* in the Kuwaiti word *sint**ēn*** "two years".

A comparison between the correct responses by the type of morpheme in both tests is illustrated in figure 9.3 below. It shows an increase in the number of correct morphemes of all types in the post-test. It also shows that the negation affixes were the easiest to recognise in both tests while the preposition affix was the least recognised.

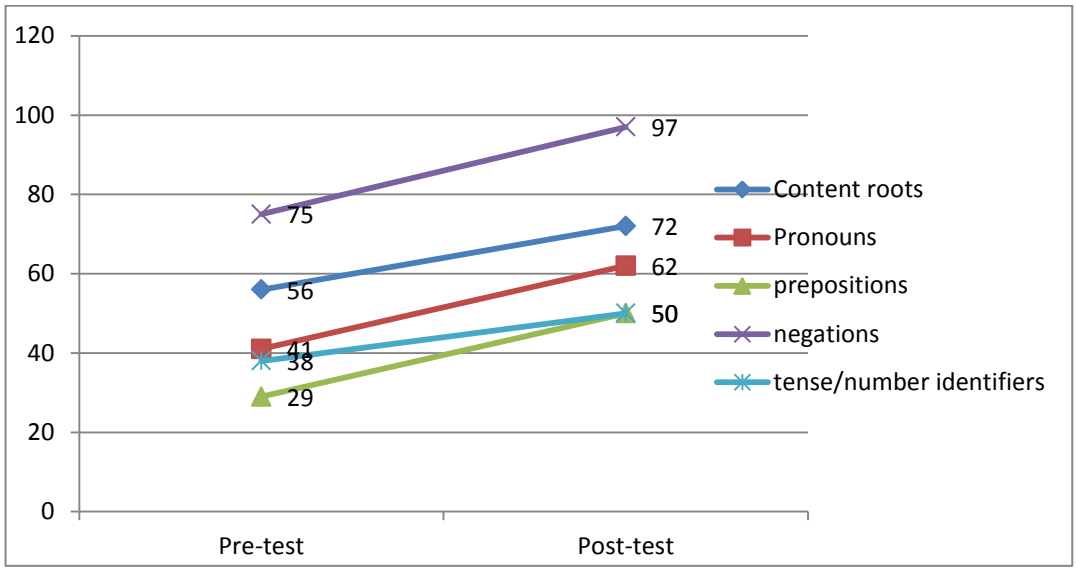

Figure 9.3: Averages of correct responses by type of morpheme in both tests

9.1.5 Results of the interviews

The group interviews and discussions that took place before and after the tests and during the training lessons aimed to elicit from the participants their views on comprehending unfamiliar dialectal words and specifically on the difficulties they face and the strategies they believe they apply in order to decode unfamiliar lexis. The interviews also tried to unveil the participants' views of the training they received. The following are the emergent themes of the interviews:

9.1.5.1 The importance of learning about the pronunciation rules and the corresponding sounds in the Arabic varieties

All the participants stressed that learning about the corresponding sounds in the dialects helped them to guess unfamiliar dialectal words. This was clear in the pre-test as none of the participants – except for P1 - managed to recognise that the

Gulf word *rāyil-ha* "her man" is a cognate of *rajuli-ha* in MSA and *ragil-ha* in the Egyptian dialect due to their unfamiliarity with the glide /j/ in the Gulf dialects being a corresponding sound to /ʤ/ in MSA. Another example from the Gulf dialect was the sound /ʧ/ being a corresponding phoneme to the /k/ in MSA. This was known to P4 and P5 who managed in the pre-test to recognise that the word *simach* "fish" is a cognate of *samak* in MSA. They said that although they have not been exposed to the Gulf dialects and they had never heard the word *simach* before, they were aware that the /k/ sound can change to a /ʧ/ in some Arabic dialects and that is how they guessed the correct meaning of the word. P2 and P3 expressed the view that if they had also known about the /ʧ/ sound, they might have been able to guess the correct meaning.

In order to examine their statement about the usefulness of learning the pronunciation system of the dialects, a comparison of their results was made looking at all the Gulf words correctly translated with the corresponding sound *y* in both tests. The analysis found only 1 (13%) correct response out of 8 in the pre-test by the four participants while after learning about the Gulf pronunciation system, these increased in the post-test to 9 (75%) correct responses out of 12 in the words that contained the corresponding /j/ sound.

9.1.5.2 Combining morphemes in the dialects

The participants stated that one of the most difficult linguistic features they found when they started learning a dialect was multi-morphemic words as they differ from their cognates in MSA in syllabic stress and in how the morphemes are connected to each other to make one long word that is often hard to segment. P2 – who had stated that she can speak and understand the Egyptian dialect quite well – said that it took her a long time before she was able to segment and recognise the affixes in Egyptian multi-morphemic words.

9.1.5.3 Linking between the unfamiliar and the familiar varieties

All the participants stated that when they listen to an unfamiliar dialect, they try to link the words they hear to what they already know in MSA or in other familiar dialects, but they also said that this strategy does not always work and sometimes it causes frustration when what they think they hear is not comprehensible. In

analysing their answers in the pre-test, there were 10 instances in which they clearly depended on their knowledge of the Egyptian dialect[41] in order to try and guess the meaning of words in the unfamiliar varieties which sometimes did not result into a correct recognition. Example (1) below has a Saudi sentence from the pre-test which was translated by P4 as "we talked and went to the **mountain**"; in this example, P4 did not pair the Saudi word *gabl* with its cognate in MSA *qabla* but with the Egyptian word *gabal* "mountain".

(1) Saudi = *kallamn-āh* ***gabl*** *ma-nrūḥ*
called/talked(1st p. pl.)-him before that-go(1st p. pl.)
'We talked to/called him before going'
MSA = *kallamn-āhu* ***qabla*** *an naḏhaba*

Another instance of how the participants relied on their knowledge of the Egyptian dialect in decoding unfamiliar words is in example (2) from the pre-test which has the Gulf interrogative *chēf* "how" - a cognate of *kayfa* in MSA. P2 – who did not know about the corresponding sound *ch* to the MSA *k*, translated the sentence as "**Look** …..the house" through pairing the word *chēf* "how" with the Egyptian word *šūf*[42] "look".

(2) Gulf = ***chēf*** *rāḥ* *al-bēt?*
how went(3rd p.m.) the-house
'How did he go home?'
MSA = ***kayfa*** *ḏahaba ila-al-bayti?*

41 As was presented in table 8.1 in chapter 8, the Egyptian dialect was the one dialect that all the participants had a variable knowledge of because they spent all/part of their year abroad in Egypt.

42 The verb *šūf* is commonly used in many urban Arabic dialects including Egyptian.

9.1.5.4 The effectiveness of the strategy training

All the participants reported that they found the training very useful; even P1 who attended only one out of the three hours of training, commented that it was a useful reminder but she stated she already applies these strategies when listening to a variety of dialects and therefore chose not to attend further hours. P2 and P5 stated that more exposure to the dialects would have made the training more useful. P2 said in a correspondence after the post-test:

> The second test felt easier than the first one we did, but there are still a few gaps... I feel like I need to listen to more Kuwaiti and Saudi speakers.

P3 commented that she found learning about the pronunciation rules and the corresponding sounds in the dialects was the most useful aspect of the training she received; she said:

> I found the whole experience really interesting and enjoyable! I definitely noticed that I am already more aware of what to listen out for in the words I don't quite understand the first time around! I really enjoyed the training, so thanks so much for asking me to help out with this!! … I think learning about the pronunciation differences was the most useful part of it; when I listened to [P1] talking in Emirati Arabic, it sounded alien like another language, but now I can get more of what she says.

P4 said that he believes that if more contexts were available for the sentences in the test, he would have achieved higher scores. He also questioned the effectiveness of the training for recognising lexis in more linguistically distant varieties such as the Moroccan or the Yemeni dialects.

9.2 Discussion of the results

This section will discuss the results presented above of the participants' performance in recognising cognates in familiar as well as unfamiliar dialects before and after the training intervention. The discussion will examine the linguistic elements that they successfully recognised and how the training had an effect on their level of lexical recognition.

9.2.1 Research question 4: To what extent can the advanced university Arabic students achieve successful dialectal comprehension?

The pre-test showed a high level of lexical recognition with an average of 51% of correct answers including the dialects that the participants stated that they had not had exposure to. P1 was the only participant who had a lot of exposure to different dialects and also had the motivation and the interest to learn about a range of Arabic dialects throughout her four-year degree. P1's results in the pre-test supported her claim of being very good in understanding different dialects as she achieved a 93% proportion of correct answers with the Gulf and Saudi appearing to be the easiest for her to recognise which could be due to the most recent extensive exposure that she had to these varieties prior the pre-test.

The lowest score that all the participants have achieved was for the Syrian cognates. This could be a result of one particular difficult word in the pre-test which included three out of the total of 11 Syrian morphemes. This was the Syrian word *ʔijr-ēn-eh* "his (two) legs" which corresponds to *rijlāh* or *rijlayh* in MSA and which is shown in example (3) below. None of the participants managed to pair any of the three morphemes in this word (the Syrian content morpheme *ijr* to the MSA *rijl* "leg", the dual number identifier *ēn* to the MSA *ā(n)/ay(n)* or the possessive pronoun *eh* to the MSA *h* "his". When the results were discussed with them afterwards, they all explained that this word had too many differences from MSA to be recognised and especially the change of some of the root letters and their order from *r-j-l* in MSA to *ʔ-j-r* in the Syrian dialect[43].

(3) Syrian = *w-allah* ***ʔijr-ēn-eh*** *teʕbet* *ṭūl-en-nhār*
By-god leg-(dual affix)-his (became) tired whole-the-day
'Indeed, his legs became tired the whole day'

43 Note that the Syrian word *ʔijr-ēn-eh* was successfully understood by the two NSs who the test was piloted with prior administering it with the participants. They were not Syrian speakers but Egyptian and Saudi and they stated that they had never heard this word before; however, they managed to pair it with its cognates in other familiar dialects.

The highest scores in the pre-test were achieved in recognising the Libyan and the Egyptian dialects. This could be due to the students' higher exposure to the Egyptian dialect during the year abroad and through the Egyptian media and due to certain linguistic similarities between the Egyptian and the Libyan dialects such as the negation affixes *ma/š* which were successfully recognised by all participants despite the fact of not being exposed to the Libyan dialect before. The results in the pre-test show that although none of the participants - excluding P1 - had had exposure to the Gulf and the Saudi dialects, they managed to recognise, on average, the correct meaning of 48% of the tested morphemes in these two varieties. They expressed the view in the interview after the pre-test that they had not expected to achieve these scores in understanding the lexis of these two varieties and did not feel confident about their answers because of their unfamiliarity with these dialects. This may indicate that some Arabic students may have a perception of some dialects being entirely distant from other familiar varieties and they may underestimate their abilities to comprehend them.

It is important to stress here that – as mentioned in the last chapter – these participants were the hardest working students in their class who achieved high marks during their four year degree in Arabic studies and so their results may be specific to their proficiency level. Students with a lower level of proficiency or those with less aptitude for L2 learning might have different results if given the same tests. The participants also happened to have learnt another one or two languages in addition to Arabic which are factors stated to enhance the acquisition of second and third languages (Andreou and Galantomos, 2009; Cook, 1999; Trentman, 2011).

One observation in the analysis of the results of the pre-test was that all the participants managed, on average, to recognise more content roots than the functional affixal morphemes. On average they achieved 56% of correct answers for the content roots and 42% for the affixal morphemes with the exception of the negation affixes for which they have achieved an average of 75%. One reason for the high score in recognising the negation affixes could be their linguistic similarities across the Arabic varieties where they mostly comprise the prefix *ma* and, for some dialects, the suffix *š.* The participants seemed to have found more

difficulty in segmenting the other affixes of the object pronouns, the preposition /l/ and the tense and number identifiers. Although these might give the impression that they do not significantly vary in their phonology between the Arabic varieties, they can entail a change in the syllabic stress shifting from the content root towards the functional suffixes. According to Field (2003), native listeners rely on the syllabic and lexical stresses to assist in determining the boundaries of words and morphemes; while L2 listeners can have difficulties in segmenting what they hear, he argues they can be trained to better segment morphemes if they learn about the stress patterns of L2 (Field, 2003).

An example of this shifting in dialectal syllabic stress can be seen in example (4) in the Saudi Hijazi phrase *mā-ḥaḍḍart-**all**-uh* 'I did not prepare for him' in which the stress is on the prepositional affix rather than on the content verb as is the case in the MSA equivalent *ḥaḍḍ**ar**tu*. In the pre-test both the content verb *ḥaḍḍart* and the negation prefix *mā* were recognised by four out of the five participants. The preposition *l* was recognised by P1 and P2 and the object pronoun *uh* was recognised only by P1. P2 translated the sentence as 'haven't you prepared dinner for them?', P3 wrote 'haven't you prepared the dinner?', P4 wrote 'Did you prepare the…..' and P5 wrote 'I didn't …..dinner'.

(4) Saudi = *mā-ḥaḍḍart-**all**[44]-uh-l-ʕaša*
Not-prepared-for-him-the-dinner
'I didn't prepare dinner for him'
MSA = *mā-ḥaḍḍ**ar**tu la-hu al-ʕa šāʔ*
Not-prepared for-him the-dinner
'I didn't prepare dinner for him'

Another explanation for the participants' higher percentages in recognising the content roots than the functional affixes could be the higher semantic value that the content roots convey. In a study by Field (2008a) investigating listening in English L2, he stated that in L2 listening comprehension, the learners across

44 The syllables in bold are the stressed syllables.

different levels of proficiency give more attention to the content words than the functional ones (Field, 2008a). He comments that the reasons for this might be the fact that the content words carry more semantic value than the functional words or because the functional words are more difficult to identify in fast connected speech (Field, 2008a, p. 411). In the case of Arabic some of these functional morphemes are attached to the content words and they can entail different syllabic stress among the different varieties as demonstrated in example (4) above.

Example (5) also shows how the content root was easier to identify than some of the functional affixes. The example has a sentence in the Egyptian dialect with the tested word consisting of five morphemes. Although, all the participants were – to varying levels - familiar with the Egyptian dialect, it was still not easy for all of them to segment all the affixes in the long multi-morphemic word *fa-štarit-**hu**-l-ha* 'so I bought it for her'. Four participants recognised the verb *štarit* 'I bought' and two participants only – P1 and P2 – recognised the last two morphemes *l-ha* 'for her'. Their translations were as following: P1 and P2 translated the full sentence accurately; P3 wrote 'I saw a beautiful dress in the shop, so I'm glad to buy it'; P4 wrote 'I saw a beautiful thing in the shop, so I will buy it' and P5 wrote 'I saw a pretty…. In the shop…..'

(5) Egyptian = *šufti fustān gamīl fi-l-maḥalli fa-štarit-**hu**-l-ha*
(I)saw dress beautiful in-the-shop so-(I)bought-it-for-her
'I saw a beautiful dress in the shop, so I bought it for her'
MSA = *raʔaytu fustān(an) gamīl(an) fi l-maḥall(i) fa-šta**ray**tu-hu la-ha*
(I)saw dress beautiful in the-shop so-(I)bought-it for-her
'I saw a beautiful dress in the shop, so I bought it for her'

9.2.2 Research question 5: Can explicit instruction of the NSs' listening strategies affect the level of L2 dialectal lexical comprehension?

The analysis of the results showed an increase in the number of morphemes that all the participants managed to recognise from an average of 51% in the pre-test to 71% in the post-test. P5 had much higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-

test, rising from 36% to 68% of correct answers, while P4 achieved a slight increase from 50% to 57%. It is outside the scope of this study to investigate the causes of the variable improvement in their dialectal recognition. Rather what this study is interested in is the fact that all the participants managed to achieve higher results after the training. In observing their recognition of the dialects of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia which were unfamiliar to all of them except for P1, the average of what they scored in the pre-test was 48% of correct answers in both varieties. In the post-test, the average increased to 55% for the Gulf morphemes and 80% for the Saudi. One reason for this increase which was expressed by the participants during the interviews is learning about the corresponding sounds in these varieties such as the /k/ versus /ʧ/ and the /ʤ/ versus /j/. This was evident in the analysis in section 9.1.5.1 above which showed an increase in the number of the recognised Gulf words with the glide *y* in the post-test.

The results of the post-test showed an improvement in the participants' ability to recognise more affixal morphemes than in the pre-test which increased by 28% from an average of 42% to 70%, while their scores in recognising the content roots also increased but by 16% from 56% to 72%. In the interview after the pre-test, all the participants stated that they find the affixal morphemes to be one of the most difficult features in the dialects due to the change in the syllabic stress as well as the faster and the more connected style of speech in comparison with MSA. During the training intervention, the participants were reminded of the importance of anticipating certain morphemes and trying to segment them in order to guess the meaning of the multi-morphemic words in unfamiliar varieties. They were given examples of all the types of morphemes that they can expect to hear. They expressed the view that the easiest they found were the verb negation particles as they are restricted to the prefix *ma* and, sometimes, the suffix *š.* The negation suffix is mostly there along with the prefix, so hearing a *ma* at the beginning of a word and a *š* at the end is a clue that these are more likely to be negation affixes rather than syllables of one morpheme. On the other hand, they stated that it is not always easy to determine whether an /l/ sound is a part of one long morpheme or whether it is the preposition. Comparing the results of both tests as illustrated in figure 9.3 above shows a consistent order of the difficulty in recognising the

morphemes, with the negation affixes being the easiest to recognise in both tests, then the content roots and the preposition still appearing to be the most difficult.

The following are examples of the morphemes in the complex cognates which the participants managed to better decode and recognise in the post-test in comparison with the pre-test. In the pre-test, P5 could not recognise the preposition *l* in any of the complex cognates. In example (6), he translated the sentence in the post-test as "did you ….. **for me** the bag at home?". This translation shows that although he could not pair the Egyptian content root *laʔa* "found" to its MSA root *l-q-y* "to encounter/come across", he managed to recognise the preposition and the pronoun at the end of that word.

(6) Egyptian = *laʔit-l-i-l-kitāb ʕand-ak fi-l-bēt?*
found(2nd p. m.)-for-me-the-book at-yours in-the-home?
'Have you found the book for me at your home?'
MSA = *hal*[45] *laqayta l-i al-kitāba ʕind-aka fi-l-bayt(i)?*
(interr.) found(2nd p. m.) for-me the-book at-yours in-the-home?
'Have you found the book for me at your home?'

In the pre-test and before the training, P2 was not aware of the /ʧ/in the Gulf dialects being a corresponding sound to MSA /k/, and therefore, she could not correctly translate any of the Gulf words that included the /ʧ/sound as presented earlier in example (2). Example (7) below from the post-test has the Gulf word *ṣār-l-ich* "has been for you" which includes the pronoun *ich* "you" and the preposition *l* "for/to". In translating the sentence, P2 wrote "... (a past verb) to you 2 years at university". This shows that although she could not recognise the content verb *ṣāra* "has been/became", she could recognise the preposition and the /ʧ/sound in the object pronoun suffix.

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45 The interrogative word *hal* for yes/no questions is more commonly used in MSA than in most dialects.

(7) Gulf = *ṣār-l-ich* *sint-ēn* *ʃi-l-jāmʕa?*
became-for-you year-(dual affix) in-the-university?
'Have you been at university for two years?'
MSA = *hal* *ṣāra* *la-ki* *sanat-ān* *fi-l-jāmiʕa?*
(interr.) became for-you year-(dual affix) in-the-university?
'Have you been at university for two years?'

In contrast with example (4) earlier in which four participants could recognise the root and the negation prefix but could not recognise the preposition or the pronoun suffix in the Saudi complex cognate *mā-ḥaḍḍart-all-uh* "I did not prepare for him", a very similar Saudi complex cognate from the post-test in example (8) *mā-gul**tal**laha* "I did not say to her" was fully recognised by all participants even with the change in the syllabic stress.

(8) Saudi = *mā-gul**t-al**la-ha* *makān al-matʕam*
Not-told(1st p.)-to-her place the-restaurant
'I did not tell her the place (address) of the restaurant'
MSA = *mā **qul**tu* *la-ha* *makāna al-matʕam*
Not-told(1st p.) to-her place the-restaurant
'I did not tell her the place (address) of the restaurant'

The training that the participants have received, even though it was limited to three hours only, it was found to be beneficial as stated by the participants as well as through the analysis of the results of the post-test. Another factor that may have also improved their results in the post-test is exposure. Through the pre-test and the training intervention, they were exposed to the corresponding sounds and some of the structures and lexis of unfamiliar dialects.

Chapter 10: Conclusions

The second part of this PhD project aimed to explore the possibility of training the Arabic L2 learners to use certain strategies in order to better comprehend unfamiliar dialects. As was stated earlier in this thesis, diglossia and variability in the Arabic language pose a challenge to both learners and teachers. Although some institutions in the last few decades have recognized the importance of learning both MSA and a dialect (Dickins and Watson, 2006; Ryding, 2006; Younes, 2006), the question of which dialect to teach remains to subject to different views. Obviously, it would not be practical or feasible for a university language program to teach the tens of Arabic varieties that exist, and therefore, the question of which dialect to focus on arises and the approaches in answering this question are based on different factors such as the students' preference, the popularity of a certain dialect (Khalil, 2011), the political and the economic importance of the region where it is spoken or simply the availability of teaching resources (Ferguson, 1963).

However, the attempts to answer the question of which variety to teach seems to be averting TASL professionals from the reality of the Arabic language use by the NSs in which the varieties of Arabic encompass features of one language (Giolfo and Sinatora, 2011). Even when MSA and a dialect are equally taught in an Arabic university program, what is still missing is the question of how to cope with the other Arabic varieties, especially the urban and the widely spoken and understood ones. What the present study affirms is that regardless of which dialect is taught to L2 learners, it is essential to train learners to manage cross-dialectal communication and to achieve better comprehension of the dialects that they have not been taught. This chapter will summarize the findings from the second part of this study project in relation to the research questions and will discuss its limitations. It will then present the conclusions of the whole project with its two parts and discuss the implications of these conclusions for the field of TASL. The chapter will end with directions for further research areas.

10.1 Findings: L2 comprehension of lexis in unfamiliar dialects

The pre-test that was conducted in the case-study aimed to examine answers to the fourth research question regarding learners' ability to recognize cognates in unfamiliar dialects and to provide results that can be compared with the participants' performance after being trained. The results of the pre-test showed that these advanced learners did automatically apply strategies of pairing between the lexical items that they already know and the unfamiliar ones in the dialects that they had not learnt before or have not been exposed to. The overall average of the correct cognate's recognition that they achieved was 51%, which was higher than what the participants themselves had expected. For the dialects of Saudi and the Gulf, of which most of them were completely unfamiliar, they achieved an average of 48% of correct answers. However, some of the participants stated that their complete unfamiliarity with the morpho-phonological features of certain dialects prevented them from correctly pairing the cognates. This was evident in how some of them made use of their knowledge of only one dialect - the Cairene dialect - in trying to guess the meanings of words in other varieties such as Gulf and the Libyan dialects, which could not always lead to comprehension of the sentences in which these unfamiliar words were used.

Another observation in the results of the pre-test was the participants' ability to recognize more content roots than functional affixes, which according to Field (2008a), is an observation in any L2 listening across different proficiency levels and which can be improved through classroom listening training in which the learners' attention can be drawn to the functional words and affixes in what they hear. In contrast, the recognition of functional affixes in the cross-dialectal comprehension by the NSs in the first part of this research was completely successful and the differences in the affixes and the syllabic stresses did not hinder comprehension. This comparison between how the NSs and the Arabic L2 learners recognized the affixes in multi-morphemic words emphasized the demand for answers to the last research question regarding the effects of the strategy instruction on the learners' abilities to recognise cognates.

The three-hour training that the participants received prior to the post-test covered the aspects that were observed to be aiding comprehension in NSs cross-dialectal communication. These included the listeners' familiarity with the phonological and morphological differences between the urban Arabic varieties and the frequently used lexis in a range of dialects. The learners were introduced to the main phonological differences between the urban dialects, the morphemes used to denote tenses and negation as well as some of the highly frequent words such as pronouns, prepositions and question words. In addition to the linguistic familiarity, the strategies of cognate-pairing, the use of contextual clues and ignoring of non-content words were all introduced to the participants in the case-study and they were given assignments to do at home for further practice. The training was commented on by the participants to be a revelation about how better comprehension can be achieved in unfamiliar Arabic dialects without having to formally learn each of them. They all highlighted that learning about phonological differences in particular gave them a better perspective on how these dialects differ and the high potential to comprehend them.

The post-test aimed to examine the effects of the training on the learners' ability to use their linguistic knowledge to correctly pair the cognates and recognise any possible affixes in the complex cognates. The results showed an increase of the average of correct answers from 51% in the pre-test to 71%. The average of their answers in the unfamiliar varieties of Saudi and the Gulf increased from 48% to 68%. It was also observed from the analysis that the training helped to improve their ability to recognise functional affixes which increased from an average of 42% in the pre-test to 70% in the post-test. Their answers in the post-test implied that they were more cautious when listening to complex cognates and they considered whether what they heard was one morpheme or more. In addition to the training lessons, the exposure that they received through the pre-test and the training, even though it was limited, might have been another factor in improving their lexical recognition in unfamiliar dialects. As stated in chapter 2, exposure to different varieties of L1 or L2 has a major role in aiding successful listening (Cutler, 2012). This was evident in how P1, who was not formally taught some dialects but

had a lot of exposure to them, was skilled in recognising more cognates than the rest of the participants.

10.2 Limitations of the case-study

This multi-case study was intended to be exploratory more than being a comprehensive study of Arabic cross-dialectal L2 listening and therefore it had a number of limitations. One of these is its focus only on the morpho-phonological and lexical aspects of the Arabic varieties and not on other linguistic elements such as the syntax. As was stated earlier in this thesis, lexical differences are perceived to be the main area that distinguishes Arabic varieties and this morpho-phonological variation is what has been observed to cause comprehension to succeed or fail (Ezzat, 1974; Rosenhouse, 2007). Therefore, focusing only on the lexical part of the language would be of direct relevance to testing the dialectal comprehension. However, further research would still be useful to assess the learners' ability to decode unfamiliar dialectal syntactic structures.

Another limitation was the fact that the study was based on five dialects only which were stated in part one of this thesis to be easily intelligible among the NSs. These dialects were also chosen due to the practicality and the possibility of finding NS volunteers willing to record the sentences. It was hoped to include other more distant varieties such as the North African or Yemeni, but a lack of availability of volunteers prevented this option. It would be useful in future studies to test the success of L2 cross-dialectal listening comprehension using other more distant dialects.

There were also limitations regarding the number and the linguistic skills of the participants in the study. A bigger number of participants would provide more variation and more concrete results and could indicate other factors that may affect L2 dialectal comprehension and the effectiveness of strategy instruction. However, the limitation here was due to the difficulty in finding a large number of committed students who would be suitable and willing to participate in the study. All the participants also happened to have good linguistic skills with a relatively high level of proficiency in MSA, an exposure to at least one Arabic dialect and an

advanced proficiency level in another second language which, as previously mentioned in section 9.2.1, are all factors that can have an effect on their success in cross-dialectal understanding. Therefore, the results of this study may be restricted to this type of advanced L2 learners. Conducting the same study on a bigger number of participants or a group which is more diversified in their linguistic abilities might yield different conclusions.

The last limitation was the fact that the participants were shown a phonetic transcription of what they heard in the tests for the reasons explained earlier in chapters 8 and 9. Although the results here are relevant to the specific aim of testing their cross-dialectal cognate-pairing, they do not necessarily reflect their performance and the cognitive process of a typical situation of L2 listening comprehension. In real-life cross-dialectal situations, transcripts are not normally present and the input is mainly auditory. Nevertheless, there can be more contextual clues to aid comprehension.

10.3 Conclusions of both parts of this study project

This PhD project aimed to explore ways of tackling the diglossia and the variability of the Arabic language in TASL through an examination of how NSs deal with it. The initial motivation behind the study was based on the literature on NSs' cross-dialectal communication with the stated fact that MSA is variably used in order to facilitate such communication. As MSA is the main variety taught in many HE institutions, it is of relevance to both the MSA teacher and learner to have an insight into how MSA is borrowed and used in cross-dialectal communication to achieve intelligibility. Therefore, it was assumed by the researcher that the first part of this project, with the cross-dialectal conversations recorded between speakers of 12 Arabic dialects, would yield a considerable data of MSA borrowings that can be analysed in order to provide a linguistic description of how MSA is borrowed in cross-dialectal conversations. Such a linguistic description, if introduced to Arabic L2 learners, would reveal to them how modifying their Arabic with the use of certain MSA elements can help them to achieve a near-native level of proficiency in conversations with speakers of a range of dialects.

The analysis of the results in the first part of the study showed that the use of MSA borrowings in cross-dialectal communication was relatively limited and therefore invalidated the significance of the original research question of how MSA is borrowed in order to achieve intelligibility. However, this limited use of MSA and the dominance of the native dialect prompted other research questions on the strategies applied by NSs in order to manage comprehension and the possibility of training L2 learners to apply the same dialectal comprehension strategies. The interviews that were held with the NS participants in the first part of the study showed that dialect familiarity had a major role in facilitating understanding. In addition to their dialect familiarity, the NSs applied a number of listening strategies in order to recognise cognates in other dialects and to achieve maximum comprehension.

The possibility of training the L2 learners to use the same NS's strategies was explored in the second part of this project. In this part, learners were observed to be applying cognate-pairing strategies in order to decode lexis in unfamiliar Arabic dialects. Their cognate pairing was relatively high compared to what had been anticipated by the researcher and by the participants. However, some of their mistakes in the pre-test showed that some strategy instruction could provide them with tools in better decoding cognates in unfamiliar dialects. The strategy training, although it was conducted for three hours only, was observed to have made a positive impact on these learners' ability to recognise both simple and complex cognates in unfamiliar dialects. The results showed that exposing L2 learners to the morpho-phonological and the lexical variation in the urban Arabic dialects and training them to recognise cognates can help them to achieve better comprehension without having to be formally taught each dialect separately. The findings in this study provide a recommendation for university Arabic L2 teaching programs that aim to assist their students in achieving the sought near-native level of proficiency. In addition to the common teaching of MSA and a dialect, the recommendation is to consider introducing the students to variations in the Arabic language and to train them to apply cross-dialectal listening strategies in order to reach an adequate level of comprehension of different urban dialects irrespective of which dialect they have already learnt in class.

10.4 Questions for further research

This study has shown that L2 Arabic learners intuitively try to link between familiar and unfamiliar Arabic lexical items in order to comprehend them. It also showed that training them to apply certain cognate-pairing strategies can improve their understanding of words in unfamiliar dialects without having to be formally taught each dialect and without having to go through intensive exposure to a variety of dialects. However, the limitations in this case study have also led to further research questions which, if investigated in the future, may enrich the academic debates on the issue of Arabic variability in TASL. The following points discuss the emerging research questions and their potential contribution to TASL:

(1) What is the role of syntactic variation in L2 cross-dialectal understanding? There are research studies that compared the syntax of some Arabic varieties and showed that there are more syntactic similarities than differences (Brustad et al., 2004). Investigating how much these syntactic differences affect L2 cross-dialectal comprehension can assist the Arabic teachers in prioritising the introduction of certain grammatical rules. This will also shed light on the role that syntax can play in cross-dialectal comprehension in contrast with other linguistic aspects such as the morpho-phonological and lexical variations which were explored in this thesis.

(2) What are the effects of strategy training on understanding more linguistically distant dialects? Certain Arabic dialects such as the North African are perceived by the NSs of being linguistically very distant and therefore unintelligible to other dialect speakers (Abu-Melhim, 1992; Shiri, 2002). Arabic learners are likely to develop the same attitude and believe that their language learning should be only geared towards the more intelligible varieties. Up to the date of writing this thesis, no studies were found which methodically measured the intelligibility of these dialects to either NSs or NNSs[46]. Investigating whether certain strategies can aid

[46] A forthcoming paper by Slavomír Čéplöa et. al. is expected to functionally measure the intelligibility between NSs of Maltese, Libyan an Tunisian dialects (Čéplöa, 2014).

learners to better comprehend distant dialects can change the perception of the unfeasibility of understanding a broader range of dialects and might give the perception that the Arabic varieties are all facets of one language rather than being unrelated.

(3) What are the effects of strategy training on the learners' cross-dialectal understanding at lower proficiency levels? L2 proficiency level is stated to be a factor that affects learners' ability to distinguish between and comprehend the non-standard varieties of a certain language (Major et al., 2005; Ortmeyer and Boyle, 1985). The participants in this study had a high level in at least one Arabic variety which must have assisted them in the task of comprehending unfamiliar lexis. Investigating whether strategy training can aid cross-dialectal understanding at different proficiency levels can have an impact on curriculum design in TASL and may encourage both teachers and learners to explore the extent of variation in Arabic at the beginning of their Arabic study instead of delaying it until a higher level in the language.

(4) Are there specific phonological differences that can impact L2 cross-dialectal comprehension? In this study, certain corresponding sounds seemed to be difficult for the learners to guess and they had to be formally taught in order to be recognised such as the glide /j/ sound in the Gulf dialects which corresponds to the *j* in MSA. On the other hand, variations among the dialects in pronouncing the vowels did not seem to cause difficulty in recognising cognates. Jenkins (2011), who has done research on the phonological features of English that affect intelligibility, states that certain consonants were found to contribute more than others to intelligibility between NNSs of English and she adds that teaching about these features in particular can be more useful to the learners than the traditional focus on the Received Pronunciation (RP) of the NS (Jenkins et al., 2011). The focus on the role of phonological variation in Arabic was outside the scope of this study. However, investigating which Arabic phonological features have greater impact on cross-dialectal intelligibility can have an important role in teaching Arabic pronunciation.

(5) How long does the positive impact of the training last? In this case study, the pre and post-tests and the training in between were all conducted within a relatively short period of time and had a positive impact in aiding the learners to understand cognates in unfamiliar dialects. It would be of importance to investigate the usefulness of such training after a longer period of time and to see whether the training has enabled the learners to acquire long-standing skills or simply provided them with skills that are limited to a specific period of time.

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Appendix A: Consent form for recording the NSs cross-dialectal conversations

Consent Form
"The language of interaction among different Arabic dialects speakers"

Rasha Soliman
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Aims of the project:

This project is based on recording informal natural conversations between speakers of different Arabic dialects. Some of the recorded language will be transcribed and analysed linguistically. The project also will involve gathering some demographic information from the participants which will be used only for the research purpose.

What you will be asked to do

You are asked to converse with another Arabic speaker using your dialect as naturally as you do every day. You are also free to ask for clarification from the other speaker in case you do not understand something he/she said. This conversation will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. You will also be asked to give basic demographic information about yourself and answer few questions about informal topics which will also be recorded.

How the data collected will be used.

The recorded language and questionnaire is completely confidential. Only the results of data analysis will be written or presented in this study. Your identity will not appear in the thesis.

As a responsible researcher I, **Rasha Soliman**, will keep all personal information that you might reveal completely confidential and though I may quote, describe and analyse the data, all data will be presented with complete anonymity. Additionally I will immediately withdraw your data if you should decide to withdraw from the project at any time. And you are free to withdraw from participation at any time with no need for explanation.

To be completed by the participant.

I, _____, agree to participate in the above research project. I have carefully read the above description of the project and understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix B: Resources used to verify the MSA borrowings into the dialects of the participants

General resources on the urban Arabic dialects

- FAMiliarization. 2012, from http://famdliflc.lingnet.org/index.aspx
- Arabic Variant Identification Aid (AVIA). (2007). 2011, from http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~nlynn/AVIA/Level3/index.htm
- Brustad, K. (2000). *The syntax of spoken Arabic: a comparative study of Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, and Kuwaiti dialects*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Holes, C. (1986). VARIATION IN THE MORPHOPHONOLOGY OF ARABIC DIALECTS. *Transactions of the Philological Society, 84*(1), 167-190.
- O'Leary, D. L. (2001). *Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*: Routledge.
- Parkinson, D. *ARABIC-L@LISTSERV.BYU.EDU*. from https://listserv.byu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=ARABIC-L

Resources on the North African dialects

- Ashiurakis, A. M. (1985). *A Complete Course of how to Speak Arabic in Libya*: Ad-Dar Aj-Jamahiriya.
- Ben Abdelkader, R. (1977). Peace Corps English-Tunisian Arabic Dictionary.
- Bergman, E. M. (2005). *Spoken Algerian Arabic*: Dunwoody Press.
- Dickinson, E. (2004). *Spoken Libyan Arabic*: Dunwoody Press.
- Owens, J. (1984). *A short reference grammar of eastern Libyan Arabic*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz.

Resources on Iraqi, Saudi and other Gulf dialects

- Clarity, B. E. (2003). *A Dictionary of Iraqi Arabic*: Georgetown University Press.
- Holes, C. *Dialect, culture, and society in eastern Arabia*: Leiden : Brill, 2001-.

- Holes, C. (1984). *Colloquial Arabic of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
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- Ingham, B. (1994). *Najdi Arabic: Central Arabian*: J. Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Omar, M. K. (1975). Saudi Arabic, Urban Hijazi Dialect: Basic Course.
- Phillips, M. (2006). *Iraqi Dialect Versus Standard Arabic: Iraqi Dialect Usage Analysis : 'Irāqī*: Monterey International Institute.
- Prochazka, T. (1988). *Saudi Arabian dialects*. London: Kegan Paul International.
- Qafisheh, H. A. (1975). *A basic course in Gulf Arabic*: University of Arizona Press.
- Rice, F. A., & Sa'id, M. F. (2005). *Eastern Arabic with MP3 Files*: Georgetown University Press.
- Smart, J. R., & Altorfer, F. (2003). *Gulf Arabic*. London: Teach Yourself.
- Woodhead, D. R., & Beene, W. (1967). *A Dictionary of Iraqi-Arabic: Arabic-English*: Georgetown University Press.

Resources on Levantine dialects

- Cowell, M. W. (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Syrian Arabic with Audio CD: (based on the Dialect of Damascus)*: Georgetown University Press.
- McLoughlin, L. (2008). *Colloquial Arabic (Levantine)*: Taylor & Francis.

Resources on the Egyptian dialects

- Hinds, M., & Badawi, E.-S. M. (1986). *A dictionary of Egyptian Arabic : Arabic-English*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban.

Appendix C: Needs Analysis Questionnaire

Why Arabic?

Needs Analysis Questionnaire for Arabic Language Learners

This is a pilot questionnaire which aims to provide a detailed analysis of the Arabic language learning purposes at a British university.

Please answer the questions below as accurately as possible in order to assist the researcher in defining your learning needs. The first section is about your study. The second section lists all possible purposes for learning Arabic. Please state how they apply to you. You can have **more than one** motivation for learning Arabic. There are four options:

Strongly Agree *= if this is one of your main reasons to learn Arabic*
Agree *= if this is an important reason for you to learn Arabic or if you are not sure about it but you think it might be one of your motivations in the future.*
Disagree *= if it is not an important reason for you and you do not think it will be one of your aims in the future.*
Strongly disagree *= if this is absolutely not one of your reasons to learn Arabic*

Please note that this is a pilot questionnaire and your comments for any changes are highly appreciated.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Rasha Soliman
PhD Candidate
The University of Leeds

Some of the questions in this questionnaire were inspired by Dr. Belnap's paper in:
Belnap, R. K. (2006). A Profile of Students of Arabic in U.S. Universities. In: Wahba. et.al. (eds). *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Publishers, pp. 169-178

Section 1: My Study

1. Name of my University

2. Name of my Degree

3. I am a ……

- ○ First year student
- ○ Second year student
- ○ Third year student
- ○ Fourth year student
- ○ MA student
- ○ PhD student

Section 2: My Learning Purposes

1. Career purposes: ***A. I am studying Arabic in order to get a job that will depend mainly on my Arabic skills as / in the field of:***

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	**Translator (of written language)**	○	○	○	○
2.	**Interpreter (of spoken language)**	○	○	○	○
3.	**Arabic language teacher**	○	○	○	○
4.	**Islamic preacher and tutor**	○	○	○	○
5.	**Other** (please specify)	○	○	○	○

B. I am studying Arabic in order to get a job which can benefit from my Arabic skills as a / in the field of:

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	**Journalism and the Media**	○	○	○	○
2.	**Social worker**	○	○	○	○
3.	**Law**	○	○	○	○
4.	**Tourism**	○	○	○	○
5.	**Finance, Banking and Business**	○	○	○	○

6.	**In the Ministry of Defense**	○	○	○	○
7.	**Other field** (please specify)	○	○	○	○

2. Academic Purposes: ***I am studying Arabic in order to have an Academic career or do further studies in:***

		Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1.	**Arabic Language and Linguistics (Including Arabic Translation)**	○	○	○	○
2.	**Islamic Studies**	○	○	○	○
3.	**Middle Eastern Politics**	○	○	○	○
4.	**Middle Eastern History**	○	○	○	○
5.	**Middle Eastern Media**	○	○	○	○
6.	**Middle Eastern Societies and Culture**	○	○	○	○
7.	**Other** (please specify)	○	○	○	○

3. Religious Purposes: ***I am studying Arabic in order to:***

		Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1.	**Understand the Quran and Hadith**	○	○	○	○
2.	**Understand Islamic Arabic texts (Fiqh books, religious narratives, etc.)**	○	○	○	○
3.	**Understand Khutba, Islamic talks and Duaa'** (prayers)	○	○	○	○
4.	**Be able to give Khutba, preach or do Daawa in Arabic**	○	○	○	○
5.	**Understand Arabic religious talks and texts other than Islamic (Jewish or Christian)**	○	○	○	○
6.	**Other** (please specify)	○	○	○	○

4. Personal and Social Purposes: *I am studying Arabic because:*

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	**I want to understand and speak with my Arabic speaking relatives**	○	○	○	○
2.	**I want to understand and speak with my Arabic speaking friends**	○	○	○	○
3.	**I want to be able to speak with the Arabs in or outside the UK**	○	○	○	○
4.	**I want to live in or visit the Arab world**	○	○	○	○
5.	**I am interested in the Arabic language or the Middle East**	○	○	○	○
6.	**I like learning languages**	○	○	○	○
7.	**Other** (please specify**)**	○	○	○	○

5. Media and Cultural understanding purposes: *I am studying Arabic in order to:*

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	**Have a better understanding of Arabic culture**	○	○	○	○
2.	**Understand the Arabic news on the radio or TV**	○	○	○	○
3.	**Read the Arabic newspapers and magazines**	○	○	○	○
4.	**Understand political speeches and debates**	○	○	○	○
5.	**Initiate and understand formal dialogues or interviews**	○	○	○	○
6.	**Understand contemporary Arabic books and novels**	○	○	○	○
7.	**Understand Classical Arabic literature**	○	○	○	○

8.	**Understand movies, songs and soap operas**	○	○	○	○
9.	**Other** (please specify**)**	○	○	○	○

6. Spoken Arabic varieties:

In reference to all the previous learning purposes, if you believe that some of your reasons to learn Arabic involve speaking it, please state which varieties you need to learn.

The Arabic spoken varieties are grouped into the following five categories; please tick all the categories applicable to your needs. If you tick more than one category, please number them in the order of your learning priority; 1 = my first priority. If you would like, you can also circle or underline the name of the country or the dialect you are specifically interested in.

☐ **Gulf** *= any dialect of the following countries: Iraq, Kuwait, Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi and Yemen.*

☐ **Levantine** *= Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese*

☐ **Egyptian** *= Egyptian and Sudanese*

☐ **North African** *= Libyan, Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan*

☐ **Other** *(please specify)* _____

Thank you very much for your time. If you think that any of your reasons for learning Arabic is not mentioned in this questionnaire, please write it in the box below as well as any comments or suggestions about the questionnaire, its layout and clarity:

Appendix D: Consent Form for the needs analysis questionnaire

Department of Linguistics and Phonetics School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Consent Form

"Needs Analysis Questionnaire for Arabic Language Learners"

Rasha Soliman
PhD study
Department of Linguistics and Phonetics
University of Leeds

Aims of the project:

This questionnaire is a part of the research. It aims to gather information about the purposes of learning the Arabic language at university level and to investigate the importance of learning the two forms of the language (spoken and written).

What you will be asked to do

You are asked to give basic information about your degree, then to state how the learning purposes in the questionnaire are applied to you.

How the data collected will be used.

The questionnaire is completely anonymous. You are not asked to give information about your identity. All the data collected will be confidential and only the results of data analysis will be written or presented in this study.

As a responsible researcher I, **Rasha Soliman,** will keep all personal information that you might reveal completely confidential and though I may quote, describe and analyse the data, all data will be presented with complete anonymity. Additionally I will immediately withdraw your data if you should decide to withdraw from the project at any time. And you are free to withdraw from participation at any time with no need for explanation.

To be completed by the participant.

I, _____ agree to participate in the above research project. I have carefully read the above description of the project and understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix E: The tested words in the case study

Appendix E.1: The tested words in the pre-test of the case-study and their cognates in MSA

The dialect	The words to be tested	Cognate category	Their cognates in MSA	English meaning
Syrian	*bēt*	A	*bayt*	house/home
	ʔiṣṣit	A	*qiṣṣat*	story
	b-iššitwiyye	C	*b-iššitāʔ*	in winter
	biṭbuḳū-ha	B	*yaṭbuḳū(na)-ha*	they cook it
	ḥa-nḍall	B	*sa-naḍ̂all*	we will stay/ be still
	ʔijrēn-eh	C	*rijlā-h*	his (two) legs
	teʕbet	A	*taʕibat*	(became) tired
Kuwaiti	*chēf*	B	*kayfa*	how
	simach	A	*samak*	fish
	dyāye	B	*dajāja*	chicken
	ma-tgull-ich	C	*la taqūl(u) la-ki*	she doesn't tell you
	rāyil-ha	B	*rajul(u)-ha*	her man (husnband)
	mā-ḥibb	A	*lā ʔuḥibb(u)*	I don't like
	ʕinwān-hā	A	*ʕunwān(u)-hā*	her address
Saudi	*gabl*	A	*qabl(a)*	before
	mā-gdar	B	*lā aqdir(u)*	I can't
	dāka	A	*ḏālika*	that
	mā-ḥaḍḍart-all-uh	B	*mā ḥaḍḍart(u) la-hu*	I didn't prepare for him
	dagāyig	B	*daqāʔiq*	minutes
	mšīna	A	*mašīna*	we walked/went
	kallamnā-h	A	*kallamnā-hu*	we talked to him

Libyan	*aš-šay*	A	*aš-šayʔ*	thing
	waggaf	A	*waqqaf(a)*	stopped
	eš-šarg	A	*aš-šarq*	the east
	bdēt	B	*badaʔt(u)*	I started
	jīt	A	*ji ʔt(u)*	I came
	il-mrā	B	*al-marʔa*	woman
	gilt-l-ik	C	*qultu la-ki*	I told you (f.)
	tlāta	B	*ṯalāṯa*	three
Egyptian	*šaʔʔa*	A	*šaqqa*	flat
	hina	A	*huna*	here
	ʔurayyib	B	*qarīb*	near
	gamīl	A	*jamīl*	beautiful
	fa-štarit-hu-l-ha	C	*fa-štaraytu-hu la-ha*	so I bought it for her
	ʔaddimt-il-hum	C	*qaddamtu la-hum*	I served to them
	mitʔaṭṭaʕa	B	*muqattaʕa*	cut (adj. f.)

Appendix E.2: The tested words in the post-test of the case-study and their cognates in MSA

The dialect	The words to be tested	Cognate category	Their cognates in MSA	English meaning
Syrian	*imm-ik*	B	*Umm(u)-ki*	Your(f) mother
	i-lha	A	*la-ha*	For her
	mustaʔbal	A	*mustaqbal*	Future
	ʕambyiḥkī	B	*yaḥkī / yatakallam(u)*	He is talking
	il-ʕlāʔe	B	*al-ʕilāqa*	The relationship
	bināt-un	B	*bayna-hum/(a)*	Between them
	ʔijīti	A	*jiʔti*	You(f) came
	kīf	A	*kayfa*	how
Kuwaiti	*bchām*	A	*bikam*	How much?
	ʕayūz	A	*ʕajūz*	Old lady
	tiyi	B	*tajīʔ(u)*	(she) comes
	ṣār-l-ich	B	*ṣāra la-ki*	(Lit.) became for you

				(you've been)
	sint-ēn	B	*sanat-ayn*	Two years
	ryūl-i	B	*rijlā-y / arjul-i*	My legs
Saudi	*gāl*	A	*qāla*	(he) said
	šayy	A	*šayʔ*	(some)thing
	gaḍḍēt	B	*qaḍayt(u)*	(I)spent
	el-ḥagīga	B	*al-ḥaqīqa*	The truth
	mā-gult-alla-ha	C	*mā qultu la-ha*	I did not tell her
	mā-lgēt-uh	C	*mā laqayt-uhu / mā wajadt-uhu*	I did not find it
	ḥarjaʕ	B	*saʔarjiʕ*	I will return
	mā-ʕrif	A	*lā ʔaʕrif(u)*	I don't know
Libyan	*is-sūg*	A	*a-ssūq*	The market
	gabl	A	*qabla*	before
	nwaladt	B	*wulidt(u)*	I was born
	nilgā-hum	B	*nalqā-hum / najid(u)-hum*	We find them
	gaʕdīn	B	*qāʕidīn*	sitting (pl.)
	ma-ngūli-š	B	*la naqūl(u)*	We don't say
Egyptian	*waraʔa*	A	*waraqa*	Paper
	ʔalam	A	*qalam*	Pen
	rekib	A	*rakiba*	he rode / took
	daʔāyeʔ	B	*daqāʔiq*	minutes
	ma-staʔbil-ši	C	*mā (i)staqbala*	he didn't receive
	resalt-i	B	*risālat-i*	my message
	ma-ʔult-el-ū-š	C	*ma qultu la-hu*	I didn't tell him
	laʔit-l-i	B	*laqayta l-i / wajadta l-i*	you found for me

Appendix F: The sentences used in the case-study test

Appendix F.1: The sentences used in the pre-test

	The dialect	The sentence	Meaning in English
1	Syrian	*kilhum bilbēt*	They are all at home
2	Cairene	*šaʔʔa raqam sitta hina*	flat number six is here
3	Kuwaiti	*chēf rāḥ albēt*	how did he go home?
4	Hijazi	*kallamnāh gabl manrūḥ*	we talked to him before we went
5	Syrian	*šū ʔiṣṣit elfilm*	what is the film's story?
6	Libyan	*hāda kān aššayy elwaḥīd elli waggaf erriḥla*	that was the only thing that stopped the trip
7	Kuwaiti	*māḥibb essimach*	I do not like fish
8	Libyan	*huwwa mn eššarg*	he is from the east
9	Cairene	*elbēt miš ʔurayyib min hina*	the house is not close to here
10	Libyan	*bdēt biddirāsa bšahr novamber*	I started the study in the month of November
11	Hijazi	*māgdar atfarraj ʕattilifezyōn*	I cannot watch TV
12	Kuwaiti	*ʕēš maʕ a ḳuḍrawāt wbaʕdēn dyāye*	bread with vegetables and then chicken
13	Libyan	*jīt wmʕāya lmra wʕindi talāta ṣġār*	I came with the wife and I have three children
14	Kuwaiti	*matgullich ʕinwānha*	She does not tell you her address
15	Syrian	*biššitwiyye biṭbuḳūha*	In winter, they cook it on the gas

		ʕalgāz	
16	Hijazi	*dāka alyōm kan ḥarr*	That day was hot
17	Cairene	*šofte fustān gamīl filmaḥalle faštarithulha*	I saw a beautiful dress in the shop, so I bought it for her
18	Syrian	*alyōm ḥanḍall bilbēt*	Today we will stay at home
19	Kuwaiti	*sāfarat maʕ rāyilha*	She travelled with her husband
20	Cairene	*ʔaddimtilhum elʔakl essāʕa sabaʕa*	I served them the food at seven o'clock
21	Hijazi	*māḥaḍḍartalluh lʕaša*	I did not prepare dinner for him
22	Libyan	*ʔani giltlik ismaha*	I told you her name
23	Hijazi	*šufnāhum dagāyig wemšīna*	we say them for minutes and we went
24	Syrian	*wallah ʔijrēnah teʕbat ṭūlennhār*	By lord, his legs ached the whole day
25	Cairene	*ellaḥma kanit mitʔaṭṭaʕa*	The meat was cut

Appendix F.2: The sentences used in the post-test

	The dialect	The sentence	Meaning in English
1	Syrian	*ʔinti sākne maʕ ʔimmik*	Do you live with your mother?
2	Cairene	*mumkin waraʔa wʔalam law samaḥt*	Can I have a paper and a pen please?
3	Kuwaiti	*bchām elḳubuz*	How much is the bread?
4	Hijazi	*māgāl wala šayy*	He did not say anything
5	Libyan	*mšīna lissūg min gabl*	we went to the market before
6	Kuwaiti	*šuft waḥda ʕayūz maʕa bintta filbāṣ*	I saw an old woman with her daughter in the bus
7	Cairene	*rekib elʔutubīs wbaʕde daʔāyeʔ kan felbēt*	He took the bus and in few minutes he was home
8	Syrian	*ʔinšāllah ʔilha mustaʔbal*	God's willing, she will have a future
9	Libyan	*njū bilbāṣ kull yōm*	We come by bus every day
10	Syrian	*kan ʕambyiḥki maʕ ṣāḥbu*	He was talking to his friend
11	Libyan	*ʔinwladt fiṭarāblus*	I was born in Tripoli
12	Hijazi	*iza gaḍḍēt sana kāmla ḥarjaʕ ʕala makka*	If I spend a whole year, I will return to Makkah
13	Libyan	*kull manrūḥ nilgāhum gaʕdīn filmaktba*	Every time we go, we find them sitting in the library
14	Kuwaiti	*raḥ tḳalliṣ eljāmʕa wbaʕdēn tiyi bētna*	She will finish university and come to our house
15	Hijazi	*wallah māʕrif ēš ilḥagīga*	By the lord, I do not know what the truth is
16	Syrian	*kīf kānit elʕlāʔe bināten*	How was the relationship between them?

17	Cairene	*mastaʔbilši rsalti*	He did not receive my letter
18	Libyan	*mangūliš elkilma hādi*	we do not say this word
19	Kuwaiti	*ṣārlich sintēn filjāmʕa*	Have you been at university for two years?
20	Hijazi	*māgultallaha makān almaṭʕam*	I did not tell her the restaurant's address
21	Syrian	*kīf ʔijīti elyōm*	How did you come today?
22	Cairene	*maʔultelūš raqam ettelifōn*	I did not tell him the phone number
23	Hijazi	*mālagētuh fissūg*	I did not find it in the market
24	Kuwaiti	*ḏ̣ahri weryūli teʕbaw flandan*	My back and my legs ached in London
25	Cairene	*laʔitli elketāb ʕandak filbēt*	Have you found the book for me at home?

Appendix G: The consent form and answer sheet for the dialectal L2 recognition case-study

Ethics Procedures for Research in Linguistics

Consent Form

"The Cross-dialectal Arabic comprehension by Non-Native Speakers"

Rasha Soliman

PhD study

Department of Linguistics and Phonetics

University of Leeds

Aims of the project:

This project is based on teaching the learners of Arabic some of the linguistic elements of Arabic dialects and testing the impact of that teaching on their level of dialectal comprehension. The project also will involve gathering some demographic information from the participants which will be used only for the research purpose. It is hoped that this research will contribute a lot to the current teaching of Arabic as a Second language.

What you will be asked to do

You are asked to take a pre-test and a post-test of listening comprehension of different Arabic dialects. Then attend few hours with the researcher who will introduce you to certain linguistic elements of the Arabic dialect and get you to practise them and test your comprehension again afterwards. You will also be asked to give basic demographic information in a questionnaire about your yourself including the variety of languages you can speak.

How the data collected will be used.

The results of your comprehension tests, your participation in the project and the information you give in the questionnaire are completely confidential. Only the results of data analysis will be written or presented in this study. Your identity will not appear in the thesis.

As a responsible researcher I, **Rasha Soliman**, will keep all personal information that you might reveal completely confidential and though I may quote, describe and analyse the data, all data will be presented with complete anonymity. Additionally I will immediately withdraw your data if you should decide to withdraw from the project at any time. And you are free to withdraw from participation at any time with no need for explanation.

To be completed by the participant.

I, _____, agree to participate in the above research project. I have carefully read the above description of the project and understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

Signature:

Date:

Pre-Test

Your Name:

Please listen to the 25 sentences which are said in different Arabic dialects and write the English translation of what you think you have heard. If you could only understand part of the sentences, you can write the translation of that part.

Please remember that your responses here are for the purpose of this PhD study and that this is not an examination.

Thank you again a lot for agreeing to participate in this study.

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