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Negotiating Translanguaging Space: The Case of Mother Tongue Instruction in Arabic in Sweden

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In this article, translanguaging as a concept is used to study the negotiation of meaning in Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) in Arabic in a classroom. The case of Arabic makes translanguaging relevant to the diglossic situation between MSA and varieties of Arabic. The aim of this article is to study classroom interaction in MTI Arabic in relation to students' space for their varied linguistic repertoires. The material used includes fieldnotes, audio recordings from classroom observations in MTI Arabic and one teacher interview. A seamless shuttling between Swedish and Arabic varieties appears. The diglossic situation in Arabic means that while all students need to learn Modern Standard Arabic, the challenges are greater for those students whose language variety differs most from the teacher's. In this case, the teacher's Levantine variety was closer to the variety of some students than of others. The critical and creative aspects inherent in translanguaging put issues of student engagement and participation in focus. In this case, the teacher took a central position and students were rather passive, answering questions and completing set tasks. We conclude that the syllabus and teacher education for MTI need to include issues of linguistic variation and, in the case of Arabic, implications of the diglossic situation.

Keywords: ***mother tongue instruction, Arabic, translanguaging space, diglossia***

1 Introduction

In this article, translanguaging as a concept is used to study the negotiation of language repertoires in a Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) classroom in Arabic. In Sweden, students may receive MTI in a language other than Swedish that they actively use in their homes (see the SFS 2009:600). Since 1977, MTI, formerly called Home Language Teaching, has been the responsibility of each respective Swedish municipality: they must offer MTI when there are at least five students interested in studying the language in question. MTI classes may be either included in students' regular timetables or added as extra lessons before or after the regular timetabled subjects. Each MTI subject has its own syllabus (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2022). In primary and secondary school, MTI is an elective subject, and parents need to submit an application if they want their child to

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take it. This study is based on oral interaction in one classroom in MTI Arabic in a primary school in Sweden. Studies on MTI have for the most part focused on implementation (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015), students' attitudes towards the subject (Mattheoudakis et al., 2020; Straszer, 2011) and the positive effects of students' development on both the language used at home and the dominant language used at school (August & Shanahan, 2008; Ganuza & Hedman, 2018, 2019).

In Sweden, former research on MTI in primary and secondary school, such as by Avery (2015), Hedman and Ganuza (2015, 2017, 2018, 2019), Rosén et al. (2019), Straszer et al. (2020a, 2020b) and Wedin et al. (2021), has shown variation in implementation, conditions and outcomes. Since there is great heterogeneity in terms of students' proficiency and use of the language in question, more knowledge is required about classroom practices, such as language use and attitudes, in relation to linguistic variation. The case of Arabic in MTI actualizes issues of linguistic variation since students and teachers use diverse varieties of spoken Arabic while they write in and read Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This situation is commonly referred to as diglossia, a concept that we return to below. Thus, the MTI Arabic classroom may be understood to be a translanguaging space, since interaction naturally occurs by way of diverse linguistic repertoires.

Internationally, the type of education in focus here, where students receive instruction in a minoritized language, is commonly referred to as heritage language education. We use *mother tongue education* here, as this is the official term in Swedish for this school subject. Both concepts raise questions since several languages may be actively used in a student's home: these may be languages of high status globally, such as English and MSA, and Indigenous languages that are endangered or on the brink of extinction, such as Sami languages in northern parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia, as well as Romani languages, which are used in large parts of Europe. The case of Arabic makes translanguaging space relevant for the study of classroom interaction in relation to the diglossic relationship between MSA and varieties of Arabic. Even though these varieties are called *dialects* in the Arabic context, we find it more relevant to use *varieties* in light of translanguaging theory whereby language is not perceived as consisting of clearly defined, named languages, something that becomes clear in this case from the classroom in MTI Arabic.

The aim of this article is to study the implications of classroom interaction in MTI Arabic for students' space in terms of their varied linguistic repertoires. The classroom itself may be understood to be a minoritized classroom, in this case MTI Arabic in a Swedish-dominant school, with Arabic dominance inside the classroom, where the teacher and students use diverse varieties of Arabic. Thus, the article focuses on the negotiation of linguistic repertoires in this MTI classroom.

Although we understand that participants navigate between various types of linguistic resources in their negotiation of meaning, "orchestrating language and other semiotic resources to their advantage" (Canagarajah, 2018, p. 5), we focus on verbal interaction in this study. We direct our interest toward interactions rather than formal correctness, although we are aware of the function that correctness may have in a language classroom. Verbal resources may obtain new meanings through negotiation and are here understood to be mediated and nested in a variety of semiotic resources and as such "situated in expanded social, material, historical and geographical scales" (Canagarajah, 2018, p. 7).

2 Former Research

The study relates to former research on two topics: research on mother tongue and heritage language education and research on Arabic as a mother tongue.

2.1 Mother Tongue and Heritage Language Education

Some researchers, for example, Collier and Thomas (1997), Cummins (2000, 2021) and García (2009), argue that support for languages that students use at home and for their first language when it is not the dominant language in school benefits students academically. Studies by Ganuza and Hedman (2017, 2018, 2019) indicate that MTI for Somali-speaking students positively impacts their school results, particularly in their development of biliteracy. Also, when students are able to make comparisons between their languages, the effects are positive since this increases their general linguistic awareness (Cummins & Persad, 2014, p. 22). In a study from Greece, Mattheoudakis et al. (2020) suggest that literacy development at home and attendance in a heritage language class are beneficial for the development of the heritage language without disturbing the development of the majority language. Gironzetti and Belpoliti (2021) investigated the experiences of heritage language education teachers of Spanish in the US and found teachers' education to be lacking. They mentioned problems such as there not being a curriculum for heritage language education, and there were also questions about standard varieties and dialect.

In a Swedish context, the implementation of and conditions for MTI have been studied by Ganuza and Hedman (2015) and Svensson and Torpsten (2013), who found great variations. This corresponds with what the Swedish School Inspectorate (2010) reported. The situation for and working conditions of MTI teachers were studied by Ganuza and Hedman (2015) as well as by Avery (2015). They found, similar to a government public report (SOU 2019:18), that there is great variation in the role teachers have and their working conditions. Students' attitudes to MTI were investigated by Otterup (2005), Straszer (2011) and Palm et al. (2019). In the case of MTI Arabic in Sweden, a study by Walldoff (2017) illustrated the heterogeneity among students when it came to varied oral and literacy proficiency. The importance of input for the development of Arabic–Swedish bilingual children was made apparent in a study by Bohnacker et al. (2021).

MTI classrooms, where teachers draw on students' varied linguistic resources and thus create translanguaging spaces, were studied by Straszer, Rosén and Wedin (Rosén, et al. 2019; Straszer et al., 2020a, b, c; Wedin et al., 2021). In these classrooms, both the languages in question (Somali, Arabic and Kurdish) as well as other languages were included in classroom practices. The researchers concluded that MTI as a translanguaging space allowed teachers and students to negotiate complex images and relations to the geopolitical spaces perceived as their home country while making language hierarchies and language policies concrete and visible. That said, Ganuza and Hedman (2017) highlighted the importance of relating interactional practices in the MTI classroom to local language ideologies. They found that monoglossic ideologies of languages as pure and bounded entities that are separable among some MTI teachers of Somali had negative effects on students' opportunities for spoken interaction in class. They warned that the use of pedagogical translanguaging in MTI may not be desirable when the subject holds a marginalized position within the school system. This may be the case when the language in question is perceived among users to be minoritized and threatened.

2.2 Arabic as a Mother Tongue

In 1959, Ferguson published an article titled "Diglossia", which examined four languages in which he found that different varieties of the same language were used for specific purposes. One of the languages used as an example was Arabic. His theory tied with the view presented at the time in Arabic linguistic scholarship where the distinction was made between Fusha/MSA and Ammiyah/Dialectal Arabic (DA), with the first seen as a high variety and the second as a low variety. In a chapter from 2018, most present-day sociolinguistic research on Arabic acknowledges that the idea of diglossia was an oversimplification (Albirini, 2016; Bassiouney, 2009; Holes, 2004) since speakers of Arabic

use different local varieties as well as the standardized variety in speech depending on the situation they are in. Despite the criticism, the term diglossia is still frequently used, both in laypersons' work and in scholarly texts, as the most transparent and agreed way with which to describe language at an aggregated level that highlights the specific features of Arabic and its use, both spoken and written. Another explanation is given by Brustad (2017), who argued that diglossia has become a "linguistic ideology," by which she meant "a shared set of ideas about language use (…) that represent an important aspect of the culture of the language (but) they do not necessarily reflect linguistic practice" (2017 p. 41). She went on to conclude that the split in register between MSA and DA is real for Arabic speakers as an idea about what Arabic should be (2017, see also Daniels, 2018).

Ferguson listed nine criteria for diglossia, and many can still be used to distinguish between MSA and DA. MSA is, by and large, the language of the literary heritage. It is learned only through formal education, and it is the focus on the study of grammar that characterizes it, the study of grammar being a tradition dating back to the 7th century.

The grammar, phonology and lexicon differ between MSA and the spoken Arabic varieties. Arabic speakers must deal with these differences in everyday life, which in turn leads to pedagogical questions in a school context, where students need to be taught how to work with the levels of language. Thus, the speakers of Arabic may be understood as being in a translanguaging space since they need to navigate between diverse varieties in their social life.

While a variety of DA is arguably the mother tongue, knowledge of MSA is needed to read and write and, as noted by both Bassiouney (2018) and Holes (2004), native Arab speakers move seamlessly between levels of Arabic, between MSA and DA, something that has been studied in several educational contexts. In a study from Lebanon, Oweini et al. (2020) argued that MSA should be used more in oral interaction in educational settings so that MSA becomes natural to children in their repertoire. Also, Abu-Rabia (2000) argued that the use of MSA facilitates students' reading proficiency, while several studies show that the use of DA helps students improve their MSA. In a study from Palestine, Khamis-Dakwar et al. (2012) show that children use their knowledge of DA to acquire MSA, and they suggest mixing the registers. Similar conclusions are drawn by Asadi and Kawar (2023), who stress the positive impact of oral proficiency in DA on literacy development in MSA in preschool. Leikin et al. (2014) and Shendy (2019) studied the impact of the use of both MSA and DA in preschool and showed that even small children may be aware of the varieties, thus indication that the discussion of diglossia is relevant in a preschool setting. That even children at preschool need to discuss the diglossia situation was shown by Saiegh-Haddad (2023). The importance of consciousness among students about diglossia in Arabic was shown by Khamis-Dakwar and Makhoul (2022). Based on a study in Lebanon, Amin and Badreddine (2020) concluded that the issue with MSA and DA is important in all Arabic medium education.

3 Theoretical Framework

In this article, translanguaging space as a concept is understood, in accordance with Wei (2011), to be both an arena for translanguaging practices and a space created through the process of translanguaging. Wei argues that translanguaging "creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitudes, beliefs and ideology, as well as their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, which then becomes a lived experience" (Wei, 2011, p. 1223). In the classroom as a social space at a certain point in time, a specific mix of social relations is displayed, including a particular sense of belonging. Thus, we understand translanguaging space in educational settings to be a space where students' linguistic repertoires are displayed, acknowledged

and valued. Accordingly, translanguaging spaces are physical, timely and social spaces (Zhu, Wei & Lyons, 2017).

The concept of translanguaging space involves issues of language and power in classroom environments where new meanings are co-produced through the dynamic and complex nature of multilingual interaction (Wedin, et al., 2021). Thus, studying translanguaging space means adopting a critical perspective on multilingualism, such as argued among others by May (2014), García and Li Wei (2016) and Canagarajah (2018). This means that the interest is directed toward questions about power and social justice and that education is studied with a base in critically oriented perspectives on language and education (e.g., Cummins, 2000, 2021; Kemmis et al., 2014). This means a focus on how diverse language varieties are assigned varied statuses in terms of who gets to talk, who is heard, and who can influence the form and content of the education. Focus is also on issues about what identities are made possible. Thus, language as a concept is considered an ideological construct, actively created by interlocutors in their communication (Pennycook, 2010, p. 2) and not as distinct and static units (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011, p. 4).

In educational settings, some varieties are given high value while others may be made invisible. The use of monolingual norms in linguistically diverse groups may have negative consequences for students whose linguistic resources are not considered and may even be kept hidden, stigmatized or oppressed. If, instead, teaching considers multilingual norms and ideologies, the engagement and involvement of students in their education increase (Cummins, 2021; Garcìa & Wei, 2016; May, 2022) in ways that may be called translanguaging pedagogy (Lin, 2020). By studying this MTI classroom in Arabic as a translanguaging space, dimensions of language ideologies are highlighted in relation to the diglossic situation in Arabic.

4 Materials and Methods

Part of a research project, "Mother tongues, minorities and linguistic heterogeneity: Teaching methods and teaching practices in preschools and schools with a focus on literacies" (2022–24,)[1], this study was an action research study (Zeichner, 2001; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996) combined with linguistic ethnography (Copland & Creese, 2015; Snell et al., 2015). Teachers and researchers worked closely together and had clearly defined roles. This sub-study is based on classroom observations over the course of one school year (totally 10 hours) from a classroom of MTI Arabic with one teacher and one group of seven students who met for one hour once a week. Materials used were fieldnotes, audio recordings (140 minutes) and one teacher interview (21 minutes). The interview was semi-structured and focused on the teacher's qualifications, teaching in MTI Arabic in this and other student groups, collaboration with other teachers and students' parents, and the use of textbooks. The teacher was educated in Syria and had trained in Sweden to be an MTI teacher. The first author conducted the observations and interview, while the second author completed the Arabic transcripts.. Both authors participated in the analysis process. Both authors are born in Sweden, the first author has some knowledge of Arabic while the second author is a researcher in Arabic literature.

The students in school year three (ages 9–10) had MTI Arabic 60 minutes per week after their lunch break. The lessons that were observed were part of their regular school timetable. The school had a multilingual character: students and staff had various linguistic backgrounds even though most teachers were born in Sweden. The seven students were all born in Sweden. Four had a background in the Middle East, one had a background in Tunis and used a Maghrebi variety, and two had a Sudanese background. One of the students with a Sudanese background was new and began attending the

1. Project leader Carla Jonsson, other project members are Boglárka Straszer, Annika Norlund Shaswar and Hanna-Maret Outakoski.

class in lesson four of the total of ten that were observed. The teacher had Arabic as the mother tongue and used a Levantine variety.

The multilingual context of the school was apparent in many ways. For example, most formal signs in the school were in several languages (Figure 1).

Figure 1 *A multilingual school sign, with Swedish, English, Somali, Kormanji, Arabic, Farsi and Thai*

All participants, including the students' parents, were informed about the study and gave their consent to participate. The material has been handled securely in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the XX University data protection plan. Material is presented in ways that prevent the recognition of participants.

The material was analyzed to explore implications of classroom interaction on students' space for their varied linguistic repertoires. The first step involved the reading of fieldnotes and transcripts of recordings to find sequences where various linguistic resources were used. We tried in particular to identify sequences where Swedish and diverse varieties of Arabic were used or given focus, either as a specific strategy by the teacher or as communication between the students and the teacher. In step two, we listened these parts of the recordings to several times for a detailed analysis to refine transcripts. In a third step, the material was analyzed in relation to an understanding of the classroom as a translanguaging space to try to find recurring patterns in language use. This increased our understanding of how the negotiation of linguistic resources in this classroom relates to student's space for their varied linguistic repertoires.

As with translanguaging theory, where language varieties are not understood as distinct and static units (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011, p. 4), the distinction between specific Arabic varieties is not obvious. In this case, however, we chose to follow conventions in the Arabic context. We distinguished between MSA and DA as outlined above due to their different usages. The field of Arabic dialectology is vast, and there are numerous studies on the differences between dialectal norms even within specific neighborhoods (Redkin & Bernikova, 2017). In this article, we take a broader perspective and follow the division quoted by Owens (2019), which mentions six varieties of Arabic: Maghrebi, Egyptian, Sudanese, Levantine, Mesopotamian and Peninsular Arabic. The division is built on shared features such as loanwords from a particular language, pronunciation practices and speech melody, but does, of course, not account for the country- or city-specific traits of the varieties. We have chosen this division since our purpose here is to show the way the varieties are used and the fact they differ substantially from each other; however, our aim was not to conduct a close

linguistic analysis of the varieties used. While transcribing what the participants said, we had to decide on what linguistic features to talk about in terms of varieties and MSA that would make the text readable.

Some varieties are better known, even among speakers of other varieties, thanks to radio and TV broadcasts (Egyptian), drama series (Syrian) and songs (Egyptian and Lebanese). Others, such as the North African varieties, are commonly considered more challenging for speakers of other varieties to understand because of influences from Berber languages, French and Spanish. To represent the Arabic used in the classroom, we adopted the transliteration system used by the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES). In this system, the Arabic letters are given as their closest Latin equivalent with additions of certain markers: dots below the letters or lines above indicate special features in the Arabic pronunciation. The letter <t> is "an unaspirated voiceless dental stop as in the English "stop" (Abu Chacra, 2017), whereas <ṭ> is "an emphatic consonant, classified as a pharyngealized voiceless alveolar stop similar to the sound /t/ in the English word "tall" (Abu Chacra, 2017). Arabic has 28 letters; three of these, <a, i, u>, are vowels, and there are also three corresponding short vowels for the same sounds. The long vowels are shown with lines above them in the transliteration (ā/ī/ū). Aside from vocabulary, the main difference between varieties of Arabic in the sample material is how the three vowel sounds are represented and how some of the emphatic and interdental fricatives are pronounced. Most of the conversations in the material presented were in dialect, mainly the Levantine variety. In the transliteration, we account for this by not showing the short vowels when they are not used rather than adding them to mimic MSA (cf. nAdrus/ndrus). We also retain the Levantine feminine ending -eh when used rather than changing it to the MSA -a ending as well as prefixes and suffixes specific to the varieties and the pronunciation of some emphatic and interdental fricatives. The decision to combine Arabic dialectological traditions with translanguaging theory enabled us to explore the space for students' linguistic repertoires in this classroom.

5 Results

The results show how the teacher and students continuously navigated between their varied linguistic repertoires in their in-class interaction. As might be expected, focus was on Arabic during the lessons. The teacher started the lessons by greeting students in Arabic and initiating small talk before presenting the topic for the lesson, as in excerpt 1[2]:

Excerpt 1

1	T*: Ahlan wa sahlan, wīn S1?*	T: *Welcome, where is S1?*
2	S1*: Rāḥit tshrab mayy.*	S1: *She went to get some water.*
3	T*: Tshrab mayy, ah. Ahla wa sahla fīkūn!,*	T: *To drink water, ok. Welcome! How are you?*
4	*kīfkūn? Shū akhbārkūn? Kull shī tamām? Wa*	*What is new? Everything's fine? The school is*
5	*l-mdraseh mniḥa? l-ḥamdu-li-lah. S3 ghāybeh?*	*fine? Thank God? S3 is absent?*
6	S2: *Eh*	S2: Y*es*
7	T: *Maktūb huna, hiyye marīḍa. Wa S4 hūn. Kīf*	T: *It says here, she's ill. And S4 is here. How*
8	*kanat al-fursa?*	*was the break?*
9	S2*: Mniḥa*	S2: *Fine*
10	T: *Ma'mīn am-tl'abū aktar shī? Shū*	T: *Who do you play with most?? What games*
11	*l-al`āb illī tl`abūha?*	*do you play?*

2. Transcripts have been translated into English. Words in **bold** were spoken in Swedish. *Italics* are used to mark the use of dialect and underlining is used to mark MSA. We use T for "teacher" and S for "student." For reasons of anonymity, students are identified by numbers rather than names. Square brackets [ ] are used for comments inserted into transcripts, and ellipses … for pauses between speakers.

Small talk often lasted for 5–15 minutes, and the teacher would ask all the students in turn a question about a topic, such as the school break or the weekend, and as in excerpt 1 commonly used a Levantine variety. During small talk, the teacher encouraged students to use Arabic. In the excerpt above, the teacher initiates a discussion, asking the students what games they know from what she calls "*blādnā*" (our countries). She asks students to compare games they play in Sweden with games from other countries: "*Shū fī al`āb hūn mawjūdeh tl'abūha b-swīd wa ma fī b-blādnā? Wa shū fi al`āb mawjūdeh b-blādnā wa ma mawjūdeh hūn b-swīd*?" (What games and toys do you have here in Sweden that are not in our countries? And what games and toys are there in our countries that you don't have here?) One student mentions basketball, and the teacher asks if anyone knows the game "*al hujla*" (to jump paddock). When students do not understand a word, she explains until one student provides the Swedish translation "*hoppa hage*." Another student says: "*Fi l`abeh hūn b-swīd ma fī b-sūriyya, lekland*." (Here in Sweden, there is something that there is not in Syria, playland.), and the teacher asks the student with a background in Tunis if there are Playlands in Tunis:

Excerpt 2

1	S4: ***Ja det finns***	S4: **Yes, there are.**
2	T: *Fīh, shuftī intī?*	T: *Ah, you've seen them?*
3	S4: ***Ja det finns och det finns karuseller***	S4: **Yes, there is and there are carousels.**
4	T: *B-tūnis?*	T: *In Tunis?*
5	S4: ***Ja det finns en stor butik och man kan***	S4: **Yes, and there is a big shop and you can**
6	***kolla på bio***	**watch cinema.**
7	T: *Shū ismhā? Intī min ayy mdīneh?*	T: *What's it called? From which city are you?*
8	S4: *Ash-Shūsa*	E: *Ash-Shūsa*
9	T: *Ismhā Sūsa, mā hīk?*	T: *It's called Soussa, isn't it?*

In this small talk, the teacher and students mainly use Arabic except for the student in excerpt 2, S4, who uses Swedish except for in line 8 when she mentions the city where her family comes from. Here, the teacher corrects her pronunciation of the name of the town. The talk continues with other examples of games and pets in Sweden and the countries where students in their countries of birth. In this way, most of the talk during lessons was teacher-led, with the Levantine variety dominating in combination with Swedish.

For the most part, the classroom assignments related to a textbook or handouts copied from other textbooks or downloaded from the Internet. In some lessons, the teacher showed a YouTube film. Topics during the observed lessons were family, numbers, time (month, season and weekday) and furniture. Activities included talking, reading and writing, as well as drawing, playing hangman and Mikado and dancing to music.

The interaction in the classroom involved the use of Swedish and diverse Arabic varieties. Six students alternated between Swedish and an Arabic variety. The four students with a background in the Middle East used a Levantine variety, and the students with a Sudanese background used a Sudanese variety. The seventh student, S4, had a Tunisian background and used a Maghrebi variety in her home. Consequently, she used Swedish, which is apparent in excerpt 2 above, except for sometimes when explicitly told by the teacher to use Arabic (see excerpt 9 below). The teacher used Swedish as well as a mix of MSA and Levantine, such as in the following excerpt when she translated into Swedish:

Excerpt 3

1	T: *Ayy faṣl? Faṣl* **vår**, *shū ismoh b-l- ʼarabī?*	T: *Which season? The season* **spring**, *what's it*
2	*Faṣl?*	*called in Arabic? Season?*
3	S: *Rabīʼ*	S: *Spring*
4	T: *Faṣl l-rabīʼ*	T: *The spring season*

Here the teacher asks for the Arabic word for "spring" using Swedish to help and switches between Levantine and MSA. Thus, the teacher used Swedish to support students' understanding when she thought it necessary. Sometimes the teacher had difficulty understanding a Swedish word and found an Arabic equivalent, such as in excerpt 4 when a student is talking about something they were playing during the break and uses the Swedish word "smasha" (to smash):

Excerpt 4

1	T: *Shū ismah b-l-swīdī*? ***Smasha*?**	T: *What is it called in Swedish*? **To smash?**
2	S: ***Smasha***	S: **To smash**
3	T: **Smasha.** *Yʼanī ṭḍrabū* l-*kurah b-l-ʼarḍ wa*	T: **To smash**. *Meaning that you hit the* ball *to the*
4	*hiyyeh btnatt?*	*ground and it bounces back?*
5	S: ***Jag tror inte att det finns på arabiska***	S: **I don't think it exists in Arabic**
6	T: *Eh, bass fīnā nʼūl mnkubb* l-kurah *ʼal-ʼarḍ*	T: *Yes, but we can say that we throw* the ball on
7	*wa hiyyeh tartafaʼ, mā heek? Nḍrub*	the ground and it raises itself back up, *right? We*
8	*l-kurah*	*hit* the ball

Here, the teacher uses Levantine, except for the words "*l-kurah*" (ball) and "*tartafaʼ*" (to raise oneself). In this case, prefixes and pronunciation are dialectal; however, the word for "ball" and the verb phrase "raise itself back up" are MSA, making the answer appear more scientific. The teacher asks for clarification in line 1 and then in line 3 gives an explanation based on the information that has been given. In line 5, a student says that she does not think there is a word for "*smasha*" in Arabic, which demonstrates her awareness of how some words used in Swedish do not have a direct Arabic translation. Although there is an expression in MSA that has the same meaning (*yaḍrub ḍarba sāḥiqa*), the teacher agrees and proceeds. The teacher demonstrates that it is possible to express the concept in Arabic and in so doing shuttles between a Levantine variety and MSA. The mix of phonetic and syntactic features from the Levantine variety with words from MSA shows the seamless shuttling between varieties.

In the following example, the students have watched a film in MSA about the seasons. The teacher asks questions about the film using very explicit Levantine words:

Excerpt 5

1	T: *Wa kamān ʼālū shughleh, l-yawm bkūn qasīr*	T: *And they said something else, is the day short*
2	*walla ṭawīl?*	*or long?*
3	S:*Ṭawīl*	S: *Long*
4	T: *L-yawm? B-shitteh bkūn ktīr qasīr, btṣīr sāʻa*	T: *The day? In winter it is very short, it turns*
5	*tlāteh wa bkūn ʻaṭmeh, mā heek?*	*three [o'clock] and it is dark, isn't it so*?

Here the teacher uses Levantine, which can be seen in the pronunciation; the specific markers for the present tense added as prefixes to the verbs "*bkūn*" (line 5); the removal of the short vowels at the beginning of verbs and nouns; and a word order specific to the Levantine variety. The student's answer in line 3 about winter days being long shows that the student seems to have missed the explicit information either in the film or in the question. The teacher clarifies and reminds students of how it gets dark by three o'clock in the winter. The explanation is also in the Levantine variety with the same specific grammatical features. No reference is made to the film or the MSA expressions used in

the film. Some of the dialectal features used by the teacher, such as b- initial to verbs, are used in many varieties, but not in North African Arabic such as Tunisian. Others are more specific to Levantine, such as the placement and use of "*ktīr*" (very) as a word to reinforce adjectives.

The next excerpt demonstrates how some students also used Levantine when talking, this time about the days of the week:

Excerpt 6a

1	T: *Halla' biddī minkon tsā'dūnī, māshī, aktub 'a*	T: *Now I want you to help me, ok, I will write*
2	*lūḥ wa antū tsā'dūnī, itafa'nā?*	*on the board and you will help me, agreed?*
3	S: *Eh*	S: *Yes*
4	T: L-y*awm shū huwweh?*	T: *Today, what is it?*
5	S: *Itnayn*	S: *Monday*
6	T: *Yawm l-ithnayn*	T: *The day Monday*

Here, the teacher repeats "*itnayn*" in the same variety as "*ithnayn*," changing /t/ to /θ/, which is closer to MSA. The talk about the days of the week continues:

Excerpt 6b

7	S2: *L-tlāta*	S2: *Tuesday*
8	T: *El-thalatha*	T: *Tuesday*
9	T: *Talātha niḥna nsammīhā* l-thulathā	T: *Tuesday we call it* Tuesday

The teacher continues by changing the pronunciation stepwise, first from /t/ to /θ/, and then by exchanging the pronunciation of a/ā (pronounced /a/ and /a:/ respectively), and finally /a/ to /u/. Thus, the teacher successively changes the students' Levantine pronunciation to a pronunciation that matches MSA: *L-tlāta* -> *el thalatha* -> *l-thalātha* -> *l-thulathā*. The changes here are examples of differences between Levantine varieties, where the voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ in MSA is pronounced with an unaspirated voiceless dental stop /t/. The same change can be seen in the pronunciation of Tuesday in line 7 when S2 says in Levantine: "*L-tlāta*." The teacher uses *el-* rather than *al-* as the definite article, retaining some of the dialectal pronunciation, but note that the variation in the pronunciation of the article *el/l* is not dialectal but results from speech speed. Here, the teacher makes the changes more or less implicitly, saying in line 9 that "we" call it "*thulathā*," implying MSA is the norm.

In a few cases the teacher explicitly talks about standard Arabic and dialects, such as in relation to a film she plays showing furniture in a room, when she asks students about words for furniture in their varieties:

Excerpt 7

1	T: *Mā ism hadhā?*	T: What is this called?
2	S1: *Shubbāk*	S1: *Window* [a common word in many varieties for "window"]
3	T: *Lā, b-l-raf ʿa l-īd S1?*	T: *No, raise your hand. S1*?
4	S1: *Shubbāk*	S1*: Window*
5	T: *Shubbāk, kmān b-l-lugha l-ʿarabiyya l-fuṣḥā*	T: *Window, also in the Standard Arabic language*
6	*shū mn'ūl? Shubbāk, wa shū kmān? ḥada min-*	*what do we say? Window, and what more? Has*
7	*kum samaʿ klmat* nāfiza?	*anyone heard the word* window*?* [Pronounces the MSA nafidha as "nāfiza, with stress on /z/]
8	S: Ahh	S: Ahh
9	T: *Nāfiza. Shubbāk, shubbāk, ismah nāfida.*	T: Window, *window, window is called* window.
10	*Idhan, nāfida,* wa *hayy, shū ismah hayy?*	So, *window*, and *this*, *what do we call this*? [points to a curtain in the picture]
11	*B-l-tūnisī shū btūlū?*	*In Tunis what do you say?*
12	S4: *Ridāl*	S4: Curtain [says "ridāl" for "ridā" which is curtain in Maghrebi]
13	T: *Ridā*	T: *Curtain*
14	S2: *Ridā*	S2: *Curtain*
15	S4: ***U U inte i,*** *ridū*	S4: **U u not I**, c*urtain*
16	T: *Ok, ridū,* ʿūli	T: Ok, *curtain,* say it
17	S: *Ridū*	S: *Curtain*
18	T: *B-sūriyah, b-ḥalab, shū btūlū?*	T: *In Syria, in Aleppo, what do you say*?
19	S3: *Brdayyeh*	S3: *Curtain*
20	T: *Brdayyeh. Shū btūlū l-hayy b-sūdān*?	T: *Curtain. What do you call it in Sudan*?
21	S5: *Sitāra*	S5: *Curtain*
22	T: *Sitāra, b-l- ʿarabī ismha* sitāra (The word *sitāra* is used in MSA and in the Sudanese variety, hence marked as both DA and MSA)	T: *Curtain, in Arabic it's called* curtain T_

In this example, the teacher starts the exercise with MSA: "*Mā ism hadhā*?"(What is this called?), and in line 10 says the same in Levantine: "*wa hayy, shū ismah hayy*" (and this, what do we call this?). In line 6 she refers to "*fusha*," which is the Arabic word for MSA. However, when she in line 9 gives the word in MSA for window, she pronounces "*nafidha*" as /*nafiza*/ with extra emphasis on /z/, showing awareness of the voice in /ð/ but represents it as /z/, which may be perceived as a hybrid form between DA and MSA. Yet in lines 9-10, the same word is repeated with the more dialectal pronunciation /d/. When S4 is asked to give the word for curtain in Tunisian, the student says in line 12 "*ridāl*" and is corrected by the teacher, who repeats "*rida*," without the final /l/. S4 then corrects the teacher's pronunciation to "*ridū*." Many words for furniture and clothes are country-specific, and in this case, it is the French word "*rideau*" that is the origin. In line 18, the teacher asks for the word in a Syrian variety, specifying the city "*ḥalab*" (Aleppo) and thus acknowledges the often quite large differences between local varieties within a country. The teacher ends the talk about curtains by saying "*b-l- ʿarabī ismha sitāra*" (In Arabic we say curtain), referring to MSA/Fusha as "Arabic," thereby dismissing the varieties as not Arabic.

In the following excerpt, the teacher refers to numbered pictures on a worksheet, which is going to be homework for next week. The teacher gives the instructions in Levantine and specifies how the words are to be written, and thus in MSA:

Excerpt 8

T: N*ktub wāḥid* sarīr, *itnīn* tāwila ma´ kursī, *tlāta sajjād*a	*We write one* bed, *two* tables with a chair, *three* carpets

The instruction "*nktub wāḥid*" (we write one) is in Levantine while the word for bed, "*sarīr*" is in MSA. Thus, the teacher here refers to the MSA version of the words by using the phrase "we write" as opposed to what the same pieces of furniture might be called in spoken varieties.

As mentioned above, one of the students, S4, always chose Swedish in her interaction in the classroom, unless explicitly instructed by the teacher to speak Arabic: this is apparent in the following discussion on how students spent Eid. The whole conversation is in Levantine, except for what is said in Swedish:

Excerpt 9

1	T: *Ayy yawm antī rḥtī? Juma'a, sabṭ, aḥad?*	T: *Which day did you go? Friday, Saturday,*
2		*Sunday?*
3	S4: ***Fredag***	S: **Friday**
4	T: *Shū ismo?*	T: *What is it called?*
5	S4: *Juma'a*	S: *Friday*
6	T: *Rḥtī yawm l-juma'a, m'a mīn rḥtī?*	T: *You went Friday, with whom did you go?*
7	S4*:* ***Em, med mina syskon och min vän och***	S4: **Eh, with my siblings and a friend and a**
8	***sen en vän som är 12***	**friend who is 12**
9	T: *Mā fahimt, aḥkīnī 'arabī!*	T: *I don't understand, speak to me in Arabic*
10	S4: [skrattar]	S4: [laughs]
11	T: [skrattar] *aḥkīnī 'arabī*	T: [laughs] *speak to me in Arabic*
12	S4**:** ***Jag kan inte***	**S4: I can't**
13	T: R*ḥt m'a*	T: *I went with*
14	S4: *aṣdiqā'ī*	S4: my friends
15	T: *akhwātī) ummī*	T: *my siblings ... my mother*
16	S4: ummī	S4: *my mother*
17	T: *Wa mīn kmān? Bābā ija m'akon?*	T: *And who else? Did your daddy come with*
18	Abī ... *fraḥtū y'ani*	*you?* My father … *You had fun*

Here the teacher tries to encourage S4 to speak Arabic first by implicitly asking for Arabic by suggesting days "*juma'a, sabṭ, aḥad*?" The student answers in Swedish, but the teacher urges her to speak Arabic by repeating the question "*Shū ismo*?" (What is it called?), and the student answers "*Juma'a*" (Friday). When the student continues in Swedish, the teacher pretends not to understand Swedish, and both laugh. As the student claims "*Jag kan inte*" (I can't), the teacher in line 13 prompts the student in Arabic. However, when the student then continues with "*aṣdiqā'ī*" (friends) the teacher instead says: "*akhwātī*" (siblings), pauses and continues. The teacher then, in line 17, suggests the Levantine "*bābā*" but changes to the more standardized "*abī*"

The student S4, who mainly used Swedish in class, was an active student who often answered the teacher's questions and took the initiative to talk. According to the teacher, she was a good student with sound Arabic skills, both oral and written, in the Tunisian variety. According to the teacher, the reason S4 preferred to speak Swedish instead of Arabic was that her variety differed from the varieties of the others, and she didn't feel confident using it in class. The teacher said in the interview that students were allowed to use Swedish but that she encouraged them to speak Arabic, such as she does in this example. In lines 17–18, the teacher seems to give up and sums up "*fraḥtū y´ani*" (you had fun), and S4 continues to talk about the celebration of Eid in Swedish.

To summarize, in this MTI classroom the teacher and the students navigate among Arabic varieties and Swedish. The translanguaging that takes place may be characterized as seamless, shuttling between not only words and expressions but also affixes and

prosodic and phonetic features. The teacher's language ideology (Kroskrity, 2004) may be described as a combination of translanguaging and monolingualism, where Swedish and DA are accepted, while MSA is positioned as preferred in the classroom and as the variety to use for reading and writing. As the teacher herself uses a Levantine variety, this also has a strong position in the classroom. It is understandable that although students' varieties are accepted, MSA is the variety that students are expected to acquire through the teaching of reading and writing and, to a certain extent, also in oral form. The use of different Arabic varieties is implicit and is sometimes made explicit by the teacher. However, the case of S4 – the student with the Tunisian background – makes the dilemma of MTI Arabic apparent. The variety this student uses differs considerably from those used by the other students: the Sudanese variety was used by two students and the Levantine was used by the teacher and all the other students. Consequently, this student chooses to speak Swedish in class, although she is gently encouraged to speak Arabic. What is not apparent from the excerpts is how this student makes sense of the interaction, which is in Levantine or MSA, varieties that are quite different from the student's own. It may be the case that parts of what the teacher said were less comprehensible to her.

An ambiguity in terms of the use of Arabic varieties appears when the teacher herself switches between Levantine varieties and MSA. Since she seldom highlights these switches, students are not explicitly made aware of this. For those students who use non-Levantine varieties this may cause confusion. As students do not frequently ask questions in the classroom, this is not something that we may know. Thus, this appears as a translanguaging space where MSA and Levantine varieties dominate and where Swedish as well as North African and Sudanese varieties of Arabic are more or less implicitly positioned as less preferred.

6 Discussion and Conclusions

Through the study of classroom interaction in relation to students' space to use their varied linguistic repertoires, a seamless shuttling between Arabic varieties and Swedish is apparent. However, the diglossic situation in Arabic means that while all students need to learn MSA, the challenges are greater for students with varieties that diverge more greatly from the teachers. In this case, students' dialectal backgrounds influenced their opportunity to use Arabic in class.

The examples with the talk about the days of the week and furniture show that this teacher makes students aware of diglossia while trying to encourage the use of MSA. This pedagogy is contrary to what is argued by Abu-Rabia (2000) and Oweini et al. (2020) to exclusively use MSA both orally and in writing in the classroom. The way the teacher in this case made the diglossia a topic in the classroom corresponds with the research of, for example, Khamis-Dakwar et al. (2012), Asadi and Kawar (2023), Leikin et al. (2014), Shendy (2019), Saiegh-Haddad (2023), Khamis-Dakwar and Makhoul (2022) and Amin and Badreddine (2020). However, the teacher in this case seemed only partly aware of dialectal variance and the differences between MSA and her own Levantine variety.

Here, the seamless shuttling between MSA and DA was done both explicitly and implicitly in terms of both vocabulary as well as morphological and phonological features, which supports Makoni and Pennycook (2007) and Blommaert and Rampton (2011) in their claims that language does not consist of distinct and static units and is creatively created by interlocutors in interaction (Pennycook, 2010). However, these results show that some students may be less willing to use MSA in class. It may be sensitive and face-threatening for someone to change their pronunciation, and children may be less open to such changes in their speech. In this case, the teacher herself sometimes showed awareness of the linguistic variation. To refer to MSA as sometimes Fusha, sometimes Arabic and sometimes as the variety used in writing may be confusing and may make the linguistic variation less apparent.

However, in our observations there was little space for students' repertoires to be displayed, acknowledged and valued (Wei, 2011; Zhu, Li and Lyon, 2017). This means that in accordance with Wei's (2011) definition of a translanguaging space, students' opportunities to use other varieties other than MSA and Levantine for meaningful performance was limited. From a critical perspective, the combination of translanguaging and what we call a mild form of monolingualism represented here, where MSA is the variety that is implicitly given power, together with Levantine through the teacher's language use, only occasionally opens up for students' diverse varieties. Even though students' varieties were sometimes made visible, the Sudanese and Maghreb varieties of some students were given less space. The importance of negotiating language varieties and letting students influence form and content, as highlighted by Cummins (2000; 2021) and Kemmis et al. (2014), was seldom apparent in this classroom in terms of the interaction between the teacher and S4. One student's consistent use of Swedish in class, interspersed with a few examples of Maghreb, could be interpreted as timid resistance to the dominant norm. The dialogue about Eid, where this student's use of Maghreb is corrected to MSA by the teacher, and the one about words for curtains, where the student and teacher correct each other, are two rare examples of negotiation of language norms observed in this classroom.

The critical and creative aspects inherent in translanguaging space put student engagement and participation in focus (Cummins, 2021; Garcìa & Wei, 2016; May, 2022). In this case, the teacher was at center and the students were rather passive, answering questions and performing set tasks. The interpretation could be that the dominance of MSA and Levantine forms part of a monolingual classroom policy, where what is commonly called Arabic is the norm. However, the fact that both other Arabic varieties and Swedish were acceptable shows that the diglossic situation opened the classroom as a translanguaging space, be it to a limited extent.

We conclude that a syllabus for MTI (Swedish National Agency of Education, 2022) and teacher education in MTI need to include issues of linguistic variation in the languages in question. In the case of Arabic as a mother tongue, its teachers need to be aware about the implications of the diglossic situation on the individual student's space to use their whole linguistic repertoire. When left to the individual teacher to create his or her own linguistic norm, the equivalence of education is at risk.

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