Arabic Diglossia: Supporting Students’ Transition to the Year Abroad

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Year Abroad Purpose

- Motivate students to use the language in real-life situations
- Mingle with students from a different culture
- Understand the Arabic culture more
- Participate in cultural activities and celebrations
- Opportunity to combine studying and work

(Al Batal & Glakas 2017)*

* Al Batal & Galaks (2017). Dialect Integration: Students Perspectives within an Integrated Program in Arabic as One Language: Integrating Dialect in the Arabic Language Curriculum
Durham University: MSA

• Pedagogical practice throughout Arabic modules at Durham uses MSA as the only focus of the curricula

• Students first encounter with colloquial Arabic is on the year abroad
Arabic Year Aboard

Challenges

- Problems on arrival: MSA vs Colloquial

- Cultural & linguistic shock
  (Ridiculed and laughed at when using Fusha)

I reported my missing luggage to the police, but ended up being arrested!!!! 😞
Efforts to bridge this gap

• Supporting students transition to their YA

Our approach

Method
• Develop audios, videos
• Written material

Target
• Prepare level 2 Arabic students for their year abroad
• Jordanian, Lebanese and Moroccan

Material design and creation
• Returning students-level4 Arabic students
Students in Action
Students in Action
Learning resources

Lebanese

- Greetings
  - Introduction
  - Greetings and goodbye

- Cultural expressions
  - Beirut and its neighbourhood
  - Sounds and prepositions

- Daily life
  - Currency & numbers
  - Ordering food
Learning resources

Jordanian

- Introduction
- Greetings and goodbye

Greetings

- Local greetings and expressions

Cultural expressions

- Asking & answering
- At the cafe
- Verb conjugation

Daily life
Learning resources

Moroccan

- Greetings
  - Introduction
  - Getting to know each other

- Cultural expressions
  - At the marketplace
  - On the bus

- Daily life
  - At the hotel
  - Rent a flat
What did the students say about the project

Focus group with Arabic4
What did the students say about the project

Focus group with Arabic4

‘I was lost in the first few weeks in Beirut, so it would be really helpful for other people to have this resource to be able to have some knowledge, or at least be able to understand some dialect before they move to the Middle East.’
‘We spent a lot of time in classes picking up some Amiyya and if we go back to Durham, it feels a little bit like whatever we have learned is not being used because we only do Fusha in classes, and if we don’t get to use Amiyya we lose it. So working on this project was a good opportunity to keep up with the dialect. And, the other reason is, of course, being SHOCKED when PEOPLE LAUGH AT YOU when we used Fusha to order Shawarma 😐 أريد شاورما!!!!!
What did the students say about the project

Focus group with Arabic4

‘I think working on this project was very useful to keep up with my Amiyya- I LOVE LEBANESE AMIYYA... I really LOVE IT because it is very refreshing 😊, and I wanted to be able to share that with people...I just love the accent😊’
What is next?

• Level2 Arabic students to be introduced to the videos before embarking on their year abroad

• Questionnaire: returning Arabic2 students
شكراً لحضوركم!

Q and A

If you would like to use this resource with your students, please get in touch with us by email:

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