

# Language Maintenance: The Case of Modern Standard Arabic Among Bilinguals

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**Abstract**—This study explores how Jordanians, especially bilinguals, can maintain the usage of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Despite the importance of this topic, it is a fairly unaddressed area of research in the Arabic context in general and Jordan in particular. The study contributes to knowledge by raising the awareness of Jordanians and authorities about the means necessary to maintain the usage of MSA among Jordanians. Data were collected via face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 50 Jordanian linguists and thematically analysed. The results revealed that many factors could contribute to the maintenance of MSA, including education systems, governmental policies, society, the media, and international relations. Specific actions to maintain MSA might include designing language policies in favour of MSA across different sectors; obtaining official recognition and social support; encouraging the dedication and motivation of educationalists, language specialists, and individuals; and raising awareness of the value of MSA. The study concludes with pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research.

**Index Terms**—bilingualism, identity, language maintenance, MSA, language policy

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language has a fundamental value in the life of every nation. It is a tool for expressing thoughts, creating harmony between people, embodying cultural identity, and constructing civilizations (Khan, 2020). Maintaining an official language is vital to preserving national identity, which in turn necessitates adhering to a single language policy for the official language in multi-lingual and cultural contexts.

Language maintenance refers to ‘the preservation of the use of a language by a speech community under conditions where there is a possibility of a shift to another language’ (Ferguson, 1981, p. 530). It represents the ability of a language to preserve usage across domains by resisting the pressure of the dominant language (Baker, 2011) and considering the degree of its actual usage by speakers (Pauwels, 2016). Language maintenance remains a significant concern for families, educators, and linguists who endeavour to maintain target languages for the next generation (Abdelhadi, 2017; Cunningham, 2020).

Jordanians frequently switch between numerous vernacular varieties known as *ammiyyah* or *darijah* and English and rarely switch between these dialects and MSA. As a result, they commonly use a colloquial Arabic known as Jordanian Arabic (JA), resulting in concerns about a gradual decline in MSA in Jordan. This issue is worth further investigation, as it is clear that communication using MSA is a case of language death (Bani-Khaled, 2014).

The future of MSA is controversial among researchers and linguists (Al-Omari, 2013; Al-Attayah, 2013). Though MSA is the most formal and prestigious form of Arabic in Jordan, it is a dialect that belongs to everyone and no one (Jaradat & Al-Khawaldeh, 2015). MSA has lately been affected by various sociolinguistic phenomena, including diglossia, code-switching, Arabization, and Englishization, that may indicate a deterioration (Bani-Khaled, 2014; Mizher & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2014; Atek et al., 2020). Combining MSA with English and colloquial varieties of Arabic

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is commonplace in many Arab countries, including Jordan, and has affected youths' linguistic competency when writing in MSA (Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000; Albirini & Benmamoun, 2022; Alrwaita et al., 2022). Englishization and Arabization may also lead to English becoming a lingua franca, a medium of instruction, and a standard in chatting and texting. These factors imply that MSA is in danger of language death when its speakers cease to use it (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2) and pass it on to subsequent generations (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Such challenges necessitate designing a comprehensive language policy for MSA as the official language of Jordan.

The ramifications of native language loss should not be neglected (Triebold, 2020). Endangered language communities risk losing cherished cultural practices (Hoffmann, 2009). Language loss thus affects speakers, linguists, and their communities. Linguists may lose a source of information for feeding their research due to reduced available data from target language speakers (Almurashi, 2017). Hence, language revival attempts contribute to research prosperity, communal reconciliation, capacity building, and cultural tourism (Almurashi, 2017). The presence of many languages in the same country threatens the development of indigenous languages, which may ultimately lead to linguistic oblivion (ALRahal, 2014; TNhemachena, 2022). Folkhard (1972) argues that glorifying the vernacular language in every Arab country would reduce understanding amongst the Arabs, resulting in divergence among Arab cultures and the destruction of Arab cultural identity.

Researchers should investigate MSA maintenance not only among Arabs living in foreign countries but also among Arabs in countries where Arabic is the native language (Almurashi, 2017; Bouhdima, 2022). Therefore, the researchers were motivated to conduct this research to assist and encourage the community to maintain MSA as a shared native language. Hale et al. (1992) agree that linguists must prevent the contemporary deterioration of many of the world's languages by documenting them and convincing nations to invest in language revival. Investigating endangered languages and the required procedures to preserve them is a very important research topic (Migge, 2020). Despite its significance, the literature reveals a scarcity of research on MSA and Jordanian native speakers of Arabic. The extant research focuses on MSA in communication (Bani-Khaled, 2014; Mizher & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2014) and the extensive shift from using native languages to English, including the effects of acquiring Arabic as L1 and English as L2 (Palfreyman & Karaki, 2019). Currently, the research does not address how MSA could be revived as a mother tongue and maintained as the medium of communication among Jordanians, especially bilinguals. Thus, this study is the first of its kind and raises one research question: What policies could contribute towards a comprehensive maintenance of Modern Standard Arabic among Jordanians, especially bilinguals?

Overall, the researchers intend for the results of the study to raise bilinguals' awareness of the significance of preserving MSA and generate different ways for maintaining MSA. Similarly, the study may enrich existing theories or models for language maintenance and contribute to establishing Revival Linguistics, which Zuckermann coins as a new linguistic discipline and paradigm. This new paradigm concerns the universal constraints and mechanisms of language reclamation, renewal, and revitalization. It draws insights from one language revival endeavour in order to revive other sleeping languages worldwide (Zuckermann & Walsh, 2011). Overall, this study's outcomes may apply to all Arabic-speaking communities.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language maintenance is a crucial issue that has recently attracted researchers' attention (Zhang & Tsung, 2019; Tseng, 2020; Bleaman, 2022). It is indispensable in shaping personal, social, and ethnocultural identities (Tseng, 2020). Numerous theoretical frameworks explain language maintenance, management, and policies (Weinreich, 1974; Fishman, 2001; Holmes et al., 1993; Spolsky, 2021).

The present study draws from Fishman's (2001) model for reviving endangered languages and Spolsky's (2021) updated theory of language policy. Fishman's (2001) model proposes steps to direct and focus efforts to achieve revitalization and maintenance more effectively. These steps include encouraging adults to acquire the language, establishing a socially united populace of active speakers using that language, encouraging literacy in that language, and boosting the usage of that language among people of all age groups within state education, families, the workplace, local government services, and mass media.

Spolsky (2021) notes that language policy and management are necessary to 'survive in a world threatened by pandemics, climate change, and irresponsible governments' (Spolsky, 2021, p. xi). Language policy in Spolsky's (2021) theory is classified into ideology, practice, and management across key domains (e.g., individual, family, education, imperialism, and the nation-state). Spolsky (2021) emphasises the individual benefits of enlarging one's linguistic repertoire, the various non-linguistic variables in shaping language policy, and the difference between managers and advocates.

The research on MSA includes focuses on the significance of teaching Arabic (Daud & Ghani, 2017), reasons for the lack of use of MSA (Albalooshi et al., 2011), attitudes toward employing MSA in daily life (Bani-Khaled, 2014; Mizher & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2014), and errors in writing MSA (Al-Yaari et al., 2013). Few studies were conducted by Jordanian researchers on MSA. Al-Abed Al-Haq and Al-Masaeid (2009) claim that the growing use of English in Jordan threatens Arabic use in numerous domains. They argue that language planning is ideologized because Arabic is central to the religious ideology of Islam. Thus, preserving Arabic is a matter of protecting the language of Islam and its civilization. Despite their perception of English as the language of the future, Jordanians value the role of Arabic as an effective

vehicle in daily communication, the media, education, and the Islamic Arabic civilization. Jaradat and Al-Khawaldeh (2015) accentuates the importance of teaching MSA to non-native speakers as a lingua franca, liberating it from the dichotomous classification it is always confined to with the spoken varieties.

The interest of the Arab world in this field of language policy appears to be relatively limited (Majadly, 2021). Certain research has focused on the policies adopted by parents to maintain Arabic. Hamed (2018) found that Libyan mothers often instituted Arabic-only policies at home, celebrated Islamic rituals regularly, enrolled their children in Arabic learning at school, and allowed them to watch Arabic TV channels. Attaallah (2020) found that, among Arabs in Sweden, Arabic was used as the only means of communication within the family and the community; this measure was a greatly valued symbol of ethnic, cultural, and religious identity.

Generally speaking, most studies done on Arabic maintenance mostly concentrate on English-speaking countries. Most use the term 'Arabic' without specifying which Arabic variety was maintained. Little research has been conducted on the maintenance of MSA among native speakers of Arabic. Consequently, this study explores whether MSA is maintained among the Arabs residing in Arabian countries and how the language can be maintained.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study explores Jordanians' opinions about how MSA could be revived and maintained in Jordan, especially among bilinguals. Data were collected from 50 Jordanian linguists via semi-structured face-to-face interviews.

The interview is valid as a method because it serves the study's purpose. It facilitates collecting in-depth opinions, which may be used to determine how to maintain MSA. This research method is also flexible since it enables an in-depth investigation of the interviewee's social life (Alshenqeeti, 2014). The researcher may thus collect descriptions of the real-life experiences of the participants and their interpretations of the underlying meanings. According to Berg (2007, p. 96), conducting interviews enables interviewees to 'speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings'. The interviews were thematically analysed by exploring the data for specific patterns and meanings to find themes. The data were examined for broad themes, coded, and then reviewed to represent the relevant content.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results revealed the participants' suggestions regarding an effective process for maintaining MSA, which were classified under different themes: Responsibility of the education system, society and the media, governmental policies, and the international relations. Each of these themes is a domain in which policy work and processes should change to support the maintenance of MSA. It appears that many ways could support reviving MSA, and no one particular way could unavoidably work alone to maintain it. As an alternative, a multidimensional approach may be indispensable. This finding indicates that maintaining the usage of MSA necessitates some joint efforts and better collaborative action by several parties, including individual speakers, linguists, the community, the media, governments, and Arabs, more broadly.

#### A. Responsibility of the Education System

The participants revealed great outrage due to the disappearance of MSA as a tool for communication. They ascribed the absence of MSA in communication to the educational system; for example, one participant stated, '*it's our schools' fault*'. They highlighted the vital role that educational institutions could have in the revival process of MSA, stating, '*To be honest, our educational system should hold the great responsibility of encouraging the use of MSA among bilinguals*'. The education system could play a role in maintaining MSA on different levels: the emotional, the theoretical, and the practical. On the emotional level, all educational institutions should work hard to instill a love of MSA in younger generations in the early years of their education through many activities. For example, one participant stated, '*teachers themselves should inculcate the love of MSA among them*', and '*they should act as their model in using MSA as their medium of communication*'. This could encourage younger generations to taste the aesthetic aspects of Arabic.

Many participants also stated that teachers should promote interest in research among their students by presenting examples of Islamic thought and Arab literature. For example, one participant said '*as simple as that motivating students to explore Arab libraries and see their most brilliant works*'. Teachers could play a significant role in explaining the origins of MSA in their students' minds and shaping the latter's experience and attitudes regarding the language. Influencing students in such a manner would be important due to the negative feelings regarding MSA expressed by several speakers. Such attitudes make it challenging for linguists and other interested members of society to gain support for revitalization. Thus, this finding indicates the decisive role that language attitudes can play in maintaining a target language.

On the theoretical level, a robust educational system needs to encourage learning and using MSA by redesigning the school and university curricula to stimulate their ambition. One participant stated, '*it is noticeable that there is a huge gap between our curricula and its implementation. What is given in MSA in textbooks does not require them to use it*'. Designing new educational materials written in MSA without mistakes preserves Arab cultural heritage in schools and

universities and may enable students to achieve proficiency in MSA; as clarified by a participant *'They are not provided with motivating competitive materials and activities, I think they should be revisited'*.

Planning a specific course at the school and university level about MSA and its significance to the community is important. For example, one participant stated, *'Ask any bilingual about the importance of MSA; you will be surprised by their answers. They are not fully aware of this gift given to them by Allah since Arabic is the language of the Holy Qur'an'. We should raise their awareness of its significance since it is not only symbols but a method of thought, an integrated vision extended by a unique civilized experience'*. A special course for teaching Arabic through the *Qur'an* could help link the MSA to its origin, enhancing the understanding of the *Qur'an* and MSA. For example, one participant said *'I believe that the Holy Qur'an should be our main source for teaching Arabic and other materials as you will not only learn religious rituals and commercial transactions terms, but also science and standard Arabic rules'*. The newly designed materials should be more connected to cultural heritage and history. For example, students could customize an Arabic language journal in school that can be published containing students' ideas under the supervision of their proficient teachers; as suggested by a participant *'Why not we encourage them to use MSA in producing their creative works and publish them in a special journal'*.

On the practical level, participants saw that school reform should spare no effort to handle the issue of MSA as a medium of learning, teaching, and communication, such as when one participant stated, *'Imagine the fruitful outcome of using MSA in learning, teaching, and communicating inside and outside classrooms'*. Magboul (2013) attributes the deficiency of MSA in educational institutions in Arab countries to the many 'profit-driven' schools that have advanced the learning and use of foreign languages at the expense of MSA.

Even teachers of Arabic courses use colloquial Arabic rather than MSA. Teachers and instructors at high academic institutes should be encouraged to use MSA through an authorised policy to encourage young generations to use it. For example, one participant stated, *'Teachers will not use it unless there is a strict policy that dictates using MSA with and emphasizing its significance for them'*. Teachers should therefore strive for correct pronunciation and eloquent Arabic style in their readings, explanations, and addresses to their pupils because; as noted by one participant *'the students will not learn the MSA if their teachers are incompetent in Arabic'*. Teachers themselves should use MSA as a medium of communication while teaching Arabic and other sciences because it would make them good examples for their students to follow.

Teachers, therefore, require training to obtain Arabic skills, such as a professional certificate. They should also be trained in new methods and techniques that depend on understanding and communicating instead of memorising and teaching grammar as a separate topic. They should use MSA in teaching other disciplines to achieve the desired goals; as stated by one participant *'science, maths, social sciences, ...should be taught using MSA'*. Teachers must fully prepare their classes to satisfy the wishes of their students, help students listen to their lessons, and respond to their advice. The teachers must make their students understand that MSA is the means to understand other sciences, and they will not receive the full benefit unless they learn the application of the rules of MSA.

Accordingly, students should practice speaking MSA in general education to contribute to their educational environment. Providing free courses and seminars for beginners, illiterate orphans, and parents will help eliminate illiteracy and complement the roles of school, community and family. As one participant stated, *'I think with more supportive courses, students will be competent in using MSA'*. Encouraging the use of MSA would promote understanding the importance and use of the Arabic worldwide. Some participants stated that schools should offer weekly intensive MSA teaching sessions to allow students to develop their MSA proficiency on an ongoing basis. A participant emphasised the importance of providing daily lessons at libraries to encourage students to read books and stories written in MSA and submit reports on those works in perfect MSA; A participant stated that *'I have never heard of free library classes given to students when one of their teachers is absent'*.

Moreover, special dictionaries that distinguish between Arabic words and those of foreign origin could be disseminated to students to help them quickly determine the difference as stated by a participant *'It is a good idea to encourage students to hold a MSA pocket dictionary as that of English'*. Furthermore, educational supervisors should assess teachers' ability to teach MSA proficiently; for example, one participant observed that *'If teachers are aware that their MSA usage will be evaluated, I am certain that they will excel'*.

In addition, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Ministry of Culture should work collaboratively to establish centers or institutes at universities that aim at strengthening MSA for native speakers and teaching it to native speakers of other languages. For instance, one participant affirmed that, *'Sometimes I feel that the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Ministry of Culture work independently. There should be strong liaising between them for the sake of encouraging and maintaining MSA usage'*. Such centers and institutes could work on highlighting the relationship between Arabic and technologies, empowering Arabic learners, and educating community members about the significance of Arabic and its various uses. This would help create a generation that believes in the significance of MSA and wishes to instil it in others. They could also collaboratively design brochures of some expressions in MSA and distribute them; as suggested by one participant, *'Distributing brochures and mini dictionaries in MSA is an interesting and beneficial idea'*. This, in turn, will make them feel that Arabic is as important as other languages. Another idea that emerged was distributing mini-dictionaries for visitors on board or touring the Arab countries.

Additionally, these three parties could cooperate in designing a national test for Arabic language proficiency similar to English ones. Vigorous policies are requisites, among which is the one related to teachers. Teaching educational courses in MSA in schools and universities should be executed in a simpler and more attractive way. Increased hours should be allocated to teach the student how to express themselves and write stories or dramas in MSA. These results also align with Johnson's (2016) findings that education (i.e., curricula) plays a significant role in creating adult speakers of a language.

Arabic linguists could complement the role of educational institutions. There should also be a convergence between universities and communities for the overall process of reviving MSA; as one participant noted, '*Linguists, researchers, and specialists should work hand in hand towards this worthy goal*'. They should determine distinctive ways to transform language from the theoretical to the everyday, such as by speaking MSA everywhere. In this way, language scholars remind people of MSA's significance and how they can make it a lifestyle. They could also try to Arabicize concepts recently appear in other languages.

Moreover, interpreters of the *Holy Qur'an* should use MSA to enable non-native speakers to use MSA properly, for example, by developing a workshop for the Arab Linguistic Association to use worldwide. This means that more research should be published in Arabic. This finding supports Ladefoged's (1992) claim that, 'In this changing world, the task of the linguist is to lay out the facts concerning a given linguistic situation' (p. 811). Linguists and community members should train native speakers to speak MSA and conduct their research in this language. They should organise annual exhibitions to demonstrate novel practices for teaching the MSA. In addition, they could conduct research exploring how advanced technologies may raise MSA competency and proficiency at the school level. Additionally, researchers should work to make internationally recognised indexes, such as Scopus and Thomson Reuters, publish studies in Arabic. This finding accentuates the role of linguists in making the revival effort successful. Consequently, it is consistent with Thieberger's (2002) finding that linguists should provide rigorous theoretical consideration of how the fruitful language revival process works.

#### B. Governmental Policies

The participants also emphasised that even with awareness of the role of education and linguists in language maintenance, these efforts still may not be fruitful. The government is likely to be far more powerful in determining the destiny of such efforts; as one participant asserted, '*Whatever we do as teachers, specialists, and linguists to promote MSA usage will not work out unless we are backed by governmental support*'. Therefore, the government should produce a national plan for promoting MSA based on the high-quality practice, such as when one participant stated, '*designing a comprehensive national plan concerning MSA usage is a must*'. This type of intervention will require a long preliminary period of sensibly discerning, listening, learning, and describing the target community precisely, but it would help to assist and inspire language maintenance advocates. The government shoulders the responsibility of raising the economic and social status of the people, which may help to promote the language. This idea was accentuated by a participant, '*The government must be held accountable for working hard on elevating the status of Arabic speakers in and outside the country*'. This is because any influx of wealth to the nation can help to advance the community's status and, consequently, elevate the standing of the language, for example, by offering monetary resources for establishing and funding revitalization programmes. This suggestion supports Dorian's (1998, p. 13) argument that when people witness an ongoing proliferation in prosperity; specifically, they stated 'it may be that its usefulness lies above all in the fostering of a middle class with the social self-confidence to insist on traditional identity and heritage.' In other words, an improved economic and social status results in self-possession that assists in maintaining languages (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 31).

Some participants believe that there should be a political decree that Jordanian universities use MSA, such as when one participant stated, '*Enforcing a political decree for employing MSA is a necessary step in the right direction*'. The government can also issue specific rules that necessitate the use of the language in official contexts at home and abroad; these measures would make knowledge of the MSA more cherished in the public and foreign spheres. Germany is a good example; it is a country with significant pride in its official German language and uses it in every context worldwide. Governmental recognition could also enhance the language's prestige. The government should also allocate funds and incentives for establishing an academy of the Arabic language comparable to that of the Hebrew language, which was established to serve many purposes. These purposes include investigating and compiling the Hebrew lexicon consistent with its historical layers, studying the structure and offshoots of the Hebrew language, and directing the expansion of Hebrew in light of its potential, and its daily and academic needs through setting its vocabulary, grammar, and characters. Several charitable groups and associations could also support the utilisation of MSA by people in general.

Maintaining MSA could also be achieved through arranging competitions for all ages with a special focus on young people and giving prizes could be a step in the right direction; as emphasized by one participant '*Never ever underestimate small endeavours, such as organizing contests to foster using MSA. This could help a lot*'. The government should also consider promoting cultural tourism to Arabic-speaking countries to learn about these cultures and languages. Campaigns that raise awareness of MSA, for example, with a slogan that 'Our language is our identity' may stimulate passion and interest in MSA. One promising step that might facilitate the revival process of MSA is the governmental acknowledgment of MSA as the official language for official affairs, electronic apps, and programmes.

‘What could also help is to see and hear MSA everywhere in public institutions, programmes, and so on’. For example, Arabic should be used on road signs and in the names of shops. This means unifying the language in the country to be MSA in all aspects. The government could also require and accredit MSA proficiency as a condition for graduation and applying for a job in Arab countries. Their efforts would culminate in good marketing for establishing specific offices in foreign countries for teaching MSA to use when visiting Arab countries. The government could design toys or games specifically for teaching MSA. This highlights that, with the government's help, communities could be empowered to promote MSA.

### C. Responsibility of the Media

The participants emphasised the significance of the media in promoting the use of MSA. The media can play a crucial role in augmenting the prestige of a target language; as one participant noted, *‘The mass media should undertake the task of asserting [MSA’s] significance and popularizing the standard Arabic language due to [the media’s] impact on the expression of opinion, ability to guide people, and persuasive power’*. Enriching the prestige of a language is essential to saving it from being abandoned. People may feel it is essential to preserve their language if it is used in the media. Using the MSA in media could prove that the language can function successfully in the modern era and offer native speakers of Arabic more opportunities to hear the language frequently. MSA could be used in different forms of television content, including news coverage; documentaries; and educational, health, and political programmes, to reinforce pride in the language. Radio can be used to promote people’s awareness of the significance of MSA and can contribute to the development of an educated and cultured generation that could become the core of a scientific Arabic society. Depicting the use of MSA as a scientific language could reinforce the view that Arabs do not simply imitate others in pursuit of prestige and modernization. One participant suggested that new media forms using MSA aimed at children be developed. Such content should suit children’s learning styles and promote the use of MSA. As the participant noted, *‘We should pay more attention to our children and encourage them to start adopting vernacular and foreign languages through watching cartoons’*. Specific attention should be devoted to the support that technology can offer, as both technology and social media represent effective and accessible means of communication for MSA speakers.

### D. Social Responsibility

The participants affirmed that languages might vanish if their speakers did not appreciate the value of saving their mother tongues. The process begins with native speakers, who should reinforce the value of MSA and appreciate using it, exemplified by one participant’s statement that *‘There is a strong relationship between language and the social actor (human), where without the existence of language, speakers would not exist and vice versa’*. Another participant stated that *‘Speakers of MSA should not feel inferior; rather, they should be proud of themselves’*. It is due to their feelings of inferiority toward foreign cultures and languages that modern generations have started boycotting MSA. Al-Omari (2013) claims that society is responsible for promoting other languages at the expense of MSA, for example, by naming shops and restaurants in English or by the job seekers who demand that curriculum vitae be written in English. Thus, MSA may only be saved with the help of the language community, as in the case of France and Germany. Baker (1988) asserts that a speaker’s attitudes are learned, not inherited predispositions. Furthermore, they are one of the most essential factors for maintaining a language. Muliawati and Yusnida (2022) likewise assert that language maintenance cannot be achieved if there is a negative perception of the language, which is illustrated in one participant’s statement that *‘If we continue to feel that speakers of other languages are much better than us, we will not preserve MSA’*. Any language will not be preserved unless its speakers genuinely want to utilise it in daily interaction. Consequently, raising public awareness and increasing positive attitudes towards the target language may play a significant role. Jordanian Bilinguals must realise that MSA is as prestigious and essential as any other language. Thus, Jordanians should have a stronger interest in learning and using MSA. Each sector must implement and analyse each strategy to see which programme, method, and approach work best for the community’s needs and wishes.

Ongoing initiatives by Jordanians are needed to reclaim MSA and stop imitating others and the obsession with foreign cultures, as mentioned by one participant, *‘We should take the initiative to stop blindly imitating others just because they are globally recognized’*. These initiatives could persuade young people that MSA is useful, relevant, and desirable worldwide. People should stop thinking that growth and evolution are directly connected to learning foreign languages; instead, MSA should be the primary language. This would make them appreciate MSA.

Parents should encourage their children to speak MSA daily at home; as one participant stated *‘You frequently hear parents saying, “we want our kids to be perfect in speaking English”; why not MSA?’*. A special focus should be on talking with kids in MSA because they acquire language rapidly and spontaneously. When they are six, they have a unique linguistic ability, which could make them a leading user of MSA, such as when one participant stated, *‘The family should be responsible for preserving MSA, as they must help their children speak it in their first years of life so that they believe that MSA is their mother tongue’*. Parents and their children should listen to videos of speakers proficient in MSA. *‘The easiest way to develop proficiency in MSA is through listening to various types of movies. Besides learning the language, you will learn its culture as well’*. This finding meshes well with other researchers’ (Aziz et al., 2020; Yusuf et al., 2022) findings that parents play a significant role in spreading the target language. Jordanians should frequently watch various films and documentaries in MSA. People should also place a particular

focus on reading the *Holy Qur'an*, understanding its vocabulary, and using this language in daily life '*Considering our rich source, the Holy Qur'an, which has been preserved till now, we have to rely on it heavily for learning words, expressions, grammar, and so on*'. Jordanian EFL learners could also replace commonly used foreign terms with MSA ones; as suggested by one participant '*Encouraging children to read and learn the Holy Qur'an would help them acquire more MSA lexicon and eventually use it*'.

Furthermore, the number of native speakers of Arabic is increasing abroad; they quickly adopt the foreign language as their lifestyle and forget using Arabic as their medium of communication; as noted by one participant '*It is a disaster that many families are keen for children to learn and use the foreign language and this phenomenon is expanding, despite the risks it entails*'. Therefore, this is a reminder that they also must continue using MSA and teaching it to their kids. This idea supports Nhemachena's (2022, p. 167) call for emphasising the significance of 'socializing agent and the initiator of language policies that drive the linguistic decisions of the family'. These outcomes are consistent with Fillmore's (2000) and Chimumbutane and Gonçalve's (2023) results that emphasise the significance of the family in maintaining the target language through regular communication with their children at home and with outside community.

#### E. The International Relations

The participants also emphasised the necessity of international joint efforts, such as when one participant stated, '*It is the responsibility of all Arabs and the Islamic nation; facing this challenge must be a collective confrontation to find effective solutions*'. The participants asserted that preserving MSA is the duty of all Arabs, so any initiative in one country should be supported by others.

*How will nations survive if their children abandon using their language? Therefore, preserving MSA has now become a sacred, national, and legitimate duty in light of the sway of the electronic invasion that is taking place now. There must be an Arab national project in which all Arab governments participate to develop new mechanisms to save MSA from this collapse and retreat.*

The participants suggested that an active and influential language policy should be applied across Arabic-speaking countries to resolve the issue of the absence of a unified mother tongue and linguistic fragmentation. The latter was highlighted by Suleiman (2004) '*Yes, a project or a unified language policy adopted by all Arab governments and Arab and Islamic institutions, even if it is under the umbrella of the League of Arab States, or an umbrella that the Arabs accept*'. A unified MSA language planning policy should be designed, adopted, implemented, and evaluated across Arab countries. Hence, foreign learners of Arabic and Arab learners of foreign languages will not face the problem of dealing with many varieties of Arabic. This finding meshes well with Jaradat and Al-Khawaldeh's (2015) call for teaching MSA Arabic as a lingua franca for learners of Arabic. Considering MSA an essential part of their identity, all Arabs should work hard to preserve it. Nofal (2011) and Ennaji (2005) emphasised the significance of Arabic for uniting all members of a community. According to Fishman (2011), a strong sense of identity could motivate language maintenance. Accordingly, this finding supports Sabbah's (2015, p. 60) call for the '*Arabs to take serious actions to stop any deterioration of their language as language represents their identity*'.

The participants also call for resolving the issue concerning MSA being sometimes unable to produce scientific terminology for generations overwhelmed by technological revolutions and crises such as COVID-19 as stated by many participants, '*The Arab nation needs modern linguistic terminology*'. '*Arabs should absorb all new scientific terms; this requires specialists to make their considerable efforts in choosing useful and valid terms for various new aspects of science, invention and thought*'. They advocate developing an MSA corpus as a fundamental step to enable practical experience in its implementation.

*MSA is still in urgent need of more corpus and dictionaries to accommodate many of general and specialized vocabulary mentioned in foreign books as this would ensure that the Arabic language keeps pace with the civilization development.*

Language planning and corpus planning are usually inseparable since corpus planning promotes the standardisation of the national language (Yashiro, 2012). It aids in the codification and elaboration of MSA linguistic terms needed to cope with new fields of use in diverse contexts. Language specialists should convene to develop strategies to benefit from technological developments to develop and preserve MSA through the planning of MSA corpora. Language specialists could also benefit from Arabicization by creating Arabic-derived terminologies for representing foreign neologisms within Arabic. This technique could help preserve the linguistic purism, standardise the scientific content, and facilitate access to science and technology databases (Al-Qahtani, 2000). Thus, specialists across the Arab world should adopt a well-organized strategy in order to promote Arabicization at higher education institutions. Storing huge text and speech databases on computers will be essential for further implementation, assessment, and research. This strategy aligns with other researchers' (i.e., Allwood & Hendrikse, 2003; Sabbah, 2015) outcomes, accentuating the value of corpus planning. Implementing NLP applications is required to facilitate understanding and learning MSA.

Overall, the findings support Fishman's (2001) and Spolsky's (2021) models since MSA maintenance could be achieved gradually and with support from many sectors. The essential task is approaching the problem from all directions by boosting the power of MSA, creating a community of practice using different immersion techniques, extending its usage to many domains, and enhancing coordination in the planning and implementation of the language. The findings support Kendall's (2001) call for more extensive joint efforts of national and regional sectors and

grassroots at homes and schools.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper aims to emphasise the significance of MSA in communication by illuminating the necessary safeguards for its usage. Any efforts require enthusiastic society members, families encouraging respect and loyalty to MSA, an improvement of the political status of MSA, and support from educational institutions, the media, and linguists. All these factors contribute to an effective language policy. Attaining governmental recognition can be advantageous for increasing the official status of MSA, procuring fiscal resources to promote its usage, and promoting its use in various communities. The supreme role of academics is that of advisor and organiser, as determined by the community's needs. Although the maintenance process of MSA requires a great deal of knowledge, expertise, and efforts across sectors, it can result in personal, educational, and governmental empowerment, as well as a greater sense of pride among the people for their heritage and purpose in life.

These findings can benefit learners, teachers, researchers, linguists, and other segments of the Arab community. The study concludes with recommendations for further research avenues, such as promoting the importance of Arab nationalism in maintaining MSA, exploring ways to change Arab's negative attitudes toward MSA, and stimulating the widespread use of MSA as a lingua franca. This study presents several ways to build successful language policies to be adopted nationally and internationally and calls others to implement them.

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