Teaching Colloquial / Oral Language in Classroom
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Preview

- Current FL teaching practices
- Models of diglossia in cryptologic languages
- Language and Culture
- Creating teaching materials in colloquial languages
- Teaching colloquial languages
Why Teach Colloquial Language?

- The US national security needs have changed since 9/11.
- Cryptologic linguists face radically different language and cultural situations in the field. [See # 3 & 4 in references]
- Native speakers and insurgents do not speak in the language of media, textbooks, or classroom.
• Foreign languages are taught in the framework of English as a Second Language [ESL].

• It follows the conventions of standard American English, American approach to education, and urban American cultural thinking [Critical Thinking], not critical understanding of others.
Standard Language

• Standard language is shaped by mass education, literary practices, publications, technology, media, mobility, etc.
• Its writing conventions and grammar rules are standardized
• The dictionaries have clear and concise meanings of words
Earlier and current models of language teaching are based on the classical languages: Arabic, Greek, Latin, Persian, Sanskrit.

- Classical language is a dialect-neutral register.
- No one used classical languages at home, streets, and market place.
- People spoke in local dialects.
Models of Diglossia in Cryptologic Languages

Arabic and Persian are used in diglossic context: a standard, high [H] variety and a low [L], common variety. The H variety is for literary & academic works, official relationships, respect, and keeping social distance.

Colloquial is the language of the family and home, street, market, in-group, intimacy, and friendship.
Culture is directly related to colloquial language in which nearly all communications take place.

Essential cultural communication: euphemisms, humor, cursing, social media, texting, etc. all take place in colloquial and local language.
Language Contexts in Middle East

- Standard Language
- Regional Variety of the Capital City
- Local/Village
Examples - Arabic

MSA

↑ Gulf Arabic

↑ The Arabic of the capital, Muscat

↑ Arabic dialect of a village in Oman
Persian

Standard Persian – Literary, Academic

↑ Colloquial Persian of Teheran, [standard model]

↑ Dialects of Isfahan, Mashhad, Bakhtiari [tribal]
Dari: Afghan Persian

Standard Dari

↑ Colloquial Dari of Kabul, the capital

↑ Local dialects of Panjsher, Badakhshan, Herat,…
Pashto Dialects

Pashto does not have a long literary tradition. There are four regional standards/broad varieties of Pashto:

- Kandahar
- Central
- Nangarhar-Peshawar
- Tribal dialects of the mountainous region of Khost and Waziristan [oral]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Standard Pashto</strong></th>
<th><strong>Khost / Waziri Pashto</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lās [hand]</td>
<td>lus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lāsuna [hands]</td>
<td>lusina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mor [mother]</td>
<td>mer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xar [donkey]</td>
<td>xār</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pašto</td>
<td>paxte/pašte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zmā [my]</td>
<td>imu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stā [your]</td>
<td>itu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rāza [come!]</td>
<td>ārtsa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Colloquial Language

• Real native language
• Close to the people, their thinking, outlook on life events
• All insurgent groups and militants communicate in colloquial / local dialects
MSA and Colloquial Arabic in Classroom [1]

- “Palestinians process MSA as a second language, similar to their processing of Hebrew, rather than as a first language.”
MSA and Gulf Arabic: Two Groups [1]

- Group 1 - first studied MSA for a year and then studied Gulf Arabic [GA]
- Group 2 - studied GA for a year and then MSA
- Group 2 had higher motivation, higher retention, more material covered than Group 1
Language and Culture [5]

**Low Context [American]**
- Meaning is given in the linguistic code, texts, dictionaries
- Literate culture, speaking is influenced by literacy
- Linear, logical, analytic, critical, straight

**High Context [Mid-East]**
- Meaning is created in interpersonal contexts of communication
- There is a high residue of traits of oral cultures
- Repetition, ambiguity, emotions, imagery, circular
Create Training Materials from Scratch

• Collect extensive samples from native speakers in TLs
• Personal narratives, processes, professions, instructions, current events, vocabulary lists / mind maps style, etc.
• Stories, historical events, religious views, etc.
Teaching Material from Scratch

- Develop teaching materials on sound system, word structure, vocabulary, grammar of the language
- Integrate the local culture in the language and communication style
In the Classroom

- Arabic: colloquial → MSA
- Persian: colloquial → regional colloquial
- Persian: standard → colloquial
- Pashto: standard → Waziri [a six-week add-on course for those with 2+/2 in listening and speaking in standard Pashto]
References


4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMkrh3Hvj0s