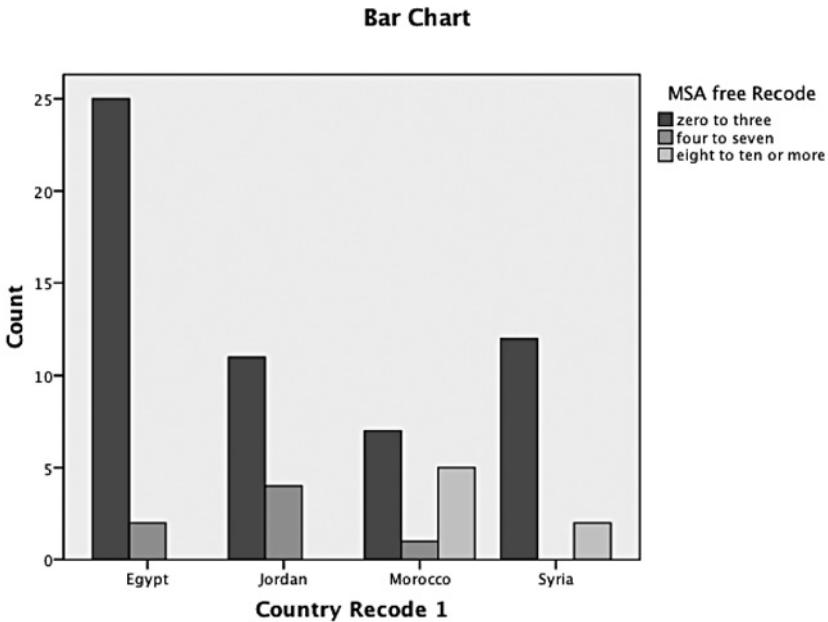


results will be presented in correspondence with the research questions.

Research Question 1

The first research question investigated the relationship between program country location and the amount of exposure to Arabic (SCA and MSA). Program country was analyzed with MSA contact hours (MSA communication beyond and not including homework). The MSA contact hours indicate the amount of time research participants spent conversing in MSA beyond and not including homework each week. It should be noted that there were twelve possible countries in the variable 'program country.' For this analysis, however, only those with at least five research participants were included. Thus, the remaining countries in this analysis are Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Syria. For the statistical analysis, the variable MSA contact hours was recoded from the individual options zero to ten hours and the option 'more than 10 hours' to the following groups: zero to three hours, four to seven, and eight to ten or more. A Pearson Chi Square test was performed. The Pearson Chi Square test succeeded in rejecting the independence of the variables, $\chi^2(6, N = 69) = 22.30$, $p = .00$. This indicates a statistically significant relationship between program country and amount of speaking MSA beyond and not including homework. From the results it appears that research participants in Morocco are more likely to spend their time communicating in MSA (53% in column 'zero to three hours'). Research participants in Egypt (92.6% in same column), Jordan (73.3%), and Syria (85.7%), however, spent very little time communicating in MSA beyond homework. It should be noted, however, that eight (66.7%) of the cells in the test had less than the expected five responses, which somewhat reduces the power of this test (min. expected was 1.32). Figure 1 shows the number of participants in each band ($N = 69$). In this analysis, the program country was labeled as 'Country Recode 1' and MSA contact hours as 'MSA free Recode' in SPSS.

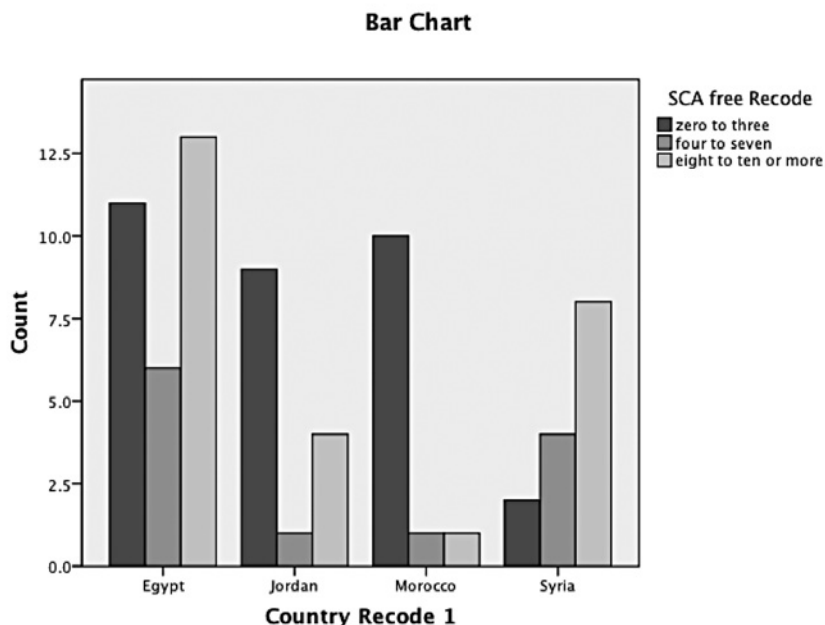
Figure 1. Program country and MSA communication



This illustration shows that the majority (79.7%) of the responses pertaining to MSA communication fall in the column ‘zero to three.’ This indicates that the research participants did not spend many hours per week communicating in MSA beyond homework assignments. The next analysis investigates program country with the amount of communication in SCA.

Program country was also analyzed with SCA contact hours (SCA communication beyond and not including homework). The SCA contact hours indicates the amount of time research participants spent conversing in SCA beyond and not including homework. The variable SCA contact hours was recoded as above. A Pearson Chi Square test was performed. The Pearson Chi Square test succeeded in rejecting the independence of the variables, $\chi^2(6, N = 70) = 15.68, p = .02$. Thus, there is a statistically significant relationship between program country and amount of communication in SCA. It should be noted that four (33.3%) of the cells had less than five responses, which somewhat reduces the power of the analysis (min. expected was 2.06). Figure 2 shows the number participants in each band ($N = 70$).

Figure 2. Program country and SCA communication



This illustration shows that the highest percentage of responses pertaining to SCA communication fall in the column 'zero to three' (45.7%) hours. The column 'four to seven' had a percentage of 17.1% and the column 'eight to ten to ten or more' had a percentage of 37.1%. Country to country, the responses in the various categories differ. For example, the highest percentage of responses for SCA communication in Egypt is in the column 'eight to ten or more' (43.3%) hours. Syria also has the highest percentage in the same column (57.1%). Interestingly, Morocco's highest percentage is in the column 'zero to three' at a remarkable 83.3%. Jordan's highest percentage was also in the column 'zero to three' at 64.3%.

Research Question 2

The second research question investigated the factors that influence research participant performance in the SCAS functions, or degree of acculturation. Such factors include pre-program exposure to different varieties of Arabic, program country, age, gender, and amount of interaction.

At the outset, a T-test was performed to investigate whether the research participants reported a statistically significant difference pertaining to the

degree of difficulty in performing the social functions at the beginning and end of their programs. The T-test revealed significance $t(92) = 15.09, p = .00$. Results indicated that the mean of the first two weeks ($M = 91.45, SD = 17.82$) was significantly higher than the mean of the last two weeks ($M = 68.77, SD = 15.48$). Thus, this analysis found that research participants do become more acculturated by the end of their study abroad programs.

The first factor concerns previous exposure to different varieties of Arabic (SCA and MSA) and degree of acculturation. This exposure was analyzed in reference to beginning and ending degree of acculturation. In addition, the calculated amount of change the research participants experienced from the beginning to the ending of their programs was also analyzed.

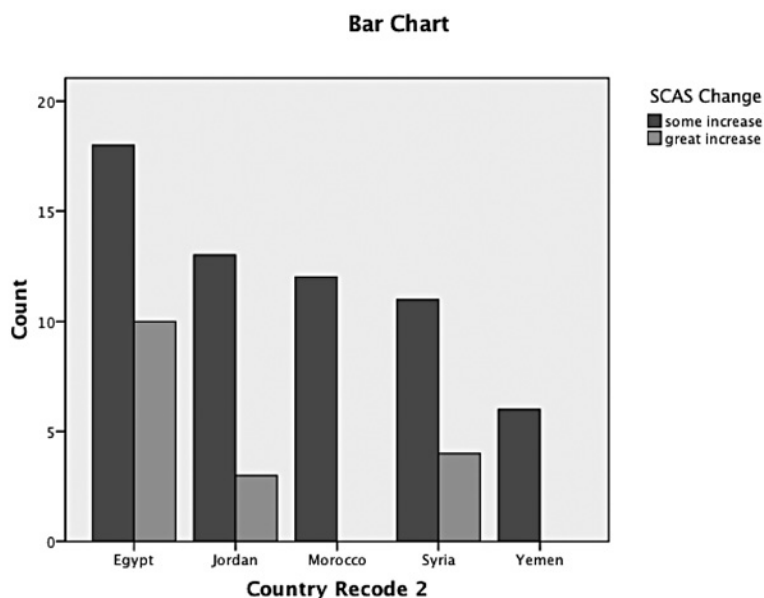
The opening analysis for this factor investigated the relationship between previous exposure to SCA with degree of acculturation at the beginning of the program. Due to great variance in the particular variety and amount of SCA previously studied among the research participants, this variable was recoded to include only two levels: previous study and no previous study. The exact question to which the research participants responded is: "Which, if any, spoken varieties (dialects) of Arabic (SpA [SCA]) did you study before arriving to your study abroad program? Please include the number of semesters for each variety (dialect)." This variable (previous exposure to SCA) was analyzed with the sum of the SCAS scale for the first two weeks. A GLM Univariate was performed. The analysis revealed that those with previous exposure to SCA ($M = 86.27, SD = 19.64$) reported greater acculturation than those without ($M = 95.30, SD = 14.86$) during the first two weeks of the study abroad program. The GLM test succeeded in rejecting the equality of the means, $F(1, 83) = 5.76, p = .02$. Exposure to SCA before the program indicates greater acculturation at the beginning of the program. It should be noted that the R Squared is only .065, which somewhat reduces the power of this analysis.

None of the other analyses dealing with previous exposure to Arabic and acculturation revealed significance. This means that previous exposure to SCA and acculturation at the end of the program was not significant. Moreover, previous exposure to SCA and degree of change in acculturation from beginning to end of program was not significant. Finally, none of the analyses investigating previous exposure to MSA revealed significance. The next factor that was investigated deals with program country.

Program country was analyzed with Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) change. The term 'change' here means the difference in the summed totals from the beginning and ending scores on the SCAS. These scores were then assigned to three variables: decrease, some increase, and great increase. Research participants who reported more difficulty with the SCAS tasks had

ending scores lower than beginning thus representing a decrease in acculturation. Those who found the SCAS tasks easier at the end of their programs were placed – depending on how much change – into the variables ‘some increase’ or ‘great increase.’ Countries with fewer than five respondents in this analysis were not included. The remaining countries were Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Yemen. A Pearson Chi Square test was performed. The Pearson Chi Square test failed to reject the independence of the variables, $\chi^2(8, N = 79) = 10.72, p = .22$. Results indicated that the majority (75.9%) of the responses per SCAS change were in the column ‘some increase.’ In fact, the majority of the responses from every one of the countries were in the column ‘some increase.’ Because there were only two responses in the category ‘decrease,’ a second Pearson Chi Square test was performed without the data from that column. Again, the test failed to reject the independence of the two variables, $\chi^2(4, N = 77) = 8.41, p = .08$. It should be noted that five (50.0%) of the cells had expected count less than five (minimum expected was 1.32). The test did, however, approach significance. Figure 3 shows the results in a bar graph.

Figure 3. Program country and SCAS change minus ‘decrease’



The additional Pearson Chi Square shows a result that approaches significance. The results show that no research participants in Morocco or Yemen reported a great increase in acculturation, whereas those in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria did. In fact, research participants in Egypt reported the highest percentage in the column ‘great increase’ indicating that they were able to make significant change in acculturation over the duration of their study abroad programs.

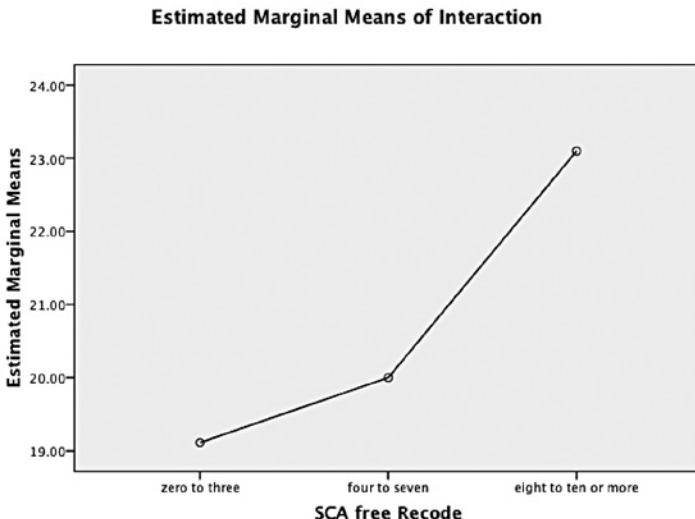
None of the analyses combining SCAS with age, gender, or amount of interaction revealed significance. The next research question investigated the issue of interaction in relation to exposure to different varieties of Arabic.

Research Question 3

The third research question investigates how exposure to different varieties of Arabic relates to the amount of interaction with host nationals.

SCA contact hours (SCA communication beyond and not including homework) were analyzed with interaction. A GLM Univariate test was performed. The GLM successfully rejected the equality of the means, $F(2, 77) = 4.03, p = .02$. Those who spent zero to three hours communicating in SCA each week had a lower mean ($M = 19.11, SD = 5.26$) than those who communicated in SCA four to seven hours ($M = 20.00, SD = 5.67$). Those who communicated in SCA for eight to ten hours or more had the highest mean ($M = 23.07, SD = 6.50$). Thus, the more hours spent communicating in SCA corresponds with increased interaction (R squared at .095). Figure 4 is a graph from this analysis.

Figure 4. SCA communication and interaction



This illustration shows that the mean of interaction increases within each group of SCA communication. A Post Hoc test (LSD) was also performed. Significance was found in the following meanwise comparison: ‘zero to three’ hours with ‘eight to ten or more’ at $p=.007$.

The issue of how learners feel about the different varieties of Arabic they encountered as participants in study abroad programs in the Arabic-speaking world was also investigated in the third research question. Amount of interaction was analyzed with two variables dealing with learner affective factors.

The first variable deals with how much desire the research participants manifest toward learning Arabic. This variable is the combination of two statements from the Arabic Variety survey instrument. These statements were:

1. Learning MSA was a priority for me in the host country.
4. I was enthusiastic about learning MSA in the host country.

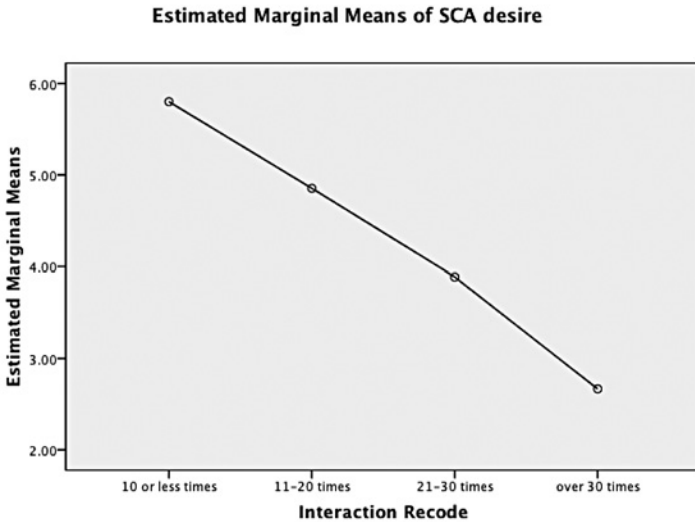
These particular statements were selected due to their nature about desire and learning MSA. The results of these statements are therefore combined into one variable called ‘MSA desire.’ The participants’ responses were summed for this analysis. This same pattern was followed for the same statements and SCA. The corresponding category is called ‘SCA desire.’

The second variable concerns ridicule and Arabic varieties. Research participants were asked to respond to the statement: “Communicating in MSA led to ridicule in the host country.” This statement was selected due to the current debate in the field of Arabic teaching and learning regarding the role of MSA and SCA. It is hoped that the responses from this item will help instructors and program administrators better understand the diglossic nature of Arabic as experienced by their students. The same statement was also analyzed for SCA.

The variable ‘interaction’ was recoded to make it categorical for the following analyses. Interaction is a sum of how often research participants interacted in a variety of situations each week in the host country. Responses from the survey were totaled with the lowest response of five and the highest at thirty three (with one atypical response of forty two). In the following analyses, categories for interaction were: ten or less times, eleven to twenty times, twenty one to thirty times, and over thirty times. The variables for MSA and SCA desire are considered continuous data because they are sums of some questions from the Arabic variety portion of the survey. The dependent variables thereafter, however, are categorical because they each come from only one Likert-type question.

Interaction was analyzed with SCA desire. A GLM Univariate test was conducted. Figure 5 is a graph from this analysis.

Figure 5. Interaction and SCA desire



This illustration shows that those who interacted more with the host nationals had a greater desire to learn SCA. For each level of interaction the mean of SCA desire goes down, showing greater desire to learn SCA. The row '10 or less times' in SCA desire had a mean of 5.80 ($SD = 1.79$) whereas the last row 'over 30 times' had a mean of 2.67 ($SD = 1.15$). There is, however, no statistical significance between the means. The analysis failed to reject the equality of the means, though it does approach significance, $F(3, 83) = 2.66$, $p = .053$ (R squared was .088). The results may indicate that the more one interacts with the host nationals, the more desire one has for learning SCA in the host country.

Due to the fact that there were less than five responses in the row 'over 30 times' for amount of interaction, an additional test was performed without this row. The additional test also revealed a result that approaches significance, $F(2, 81) = 3.01$, $p = .06$. Thus, it is still probable that the more one interacts, the more one has a desire to learn SCA (R squared was .069).

Interaction was analyzed with SCA ridicule. A Pearson Chi Square test was performed. The Pearson Chi Square test failed to reject the independence of the two variables $\chi^2(6, N = 86) = 10.10$, $p = .12$. However, due to the fact that there were fewer than 5 responses in the rows '10 or less times' and 'over

30 times,' an additional Pearson Chi Square test was performed without the data from those rows. The test succeeded in rejecting the independence of the two variables, $\chi^2(2, N = 80) = 7.91, p = .02$. It should be noted that four (66.7%) of the cells had expected count less than five (min. expected was 1.70). Figure 6 is a graph depicting the results of this analysis ($N = 80$).

Figure 6. Interaction and SCA ridicule modified



This illustration shows that the majority of the responses fall in the column 'disagree' in SCA ridicule (85.0%). Both rows '11-20 times' (91.2%) and '21-30 times' (80.4%) have the highest percentage of responses in this column. Thus, the more one interacts with the culture, the less probability there is that one would feel ridiculed when communicating in SCA. Due to the fact that there were less than five responses in the column 'agree' in the variable regarding ridicule and SCA, a third test was performed without that column. The additional test succeeded in rejecting the independence of the variables, $p=.02$ in Fisher's Exact Test. Figure 7 shows the results of this analysis and the expected cell counts.

Figure 7. Interaction and SCA ridicule – third test

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.159 ^a	1	.013		
Continuity Correction ^b	4.417	1	.036		
Likelihood Ratio	9.027	1	.003		
Fisher's Exact Test				.018	.011
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.078	1	.014		
N of Valid Cases	76				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.26.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

This table shows the results of the third Pearson Chi Square test in this analysis. This test succeeded in rejecting the equality of the variables. Thus, the more one interacts with the host nationals, the more one is likely to disagree that communicating in SCA led to ridicule.

Discussion and Implications

The first research question investigated the issue of program country. The majority of the analyses in this research included responses from research participants who studied in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Syria. Each of these countries is known for a difference in culture and customs. Each country also has its own spoken variety of Arabic that is unique. The exception here is that Jordanian and Syrian are both usually classified as Levantine, though there remain noticeable and marked differences in the varieties. The results of these analyses revealed significance in the amount of contact hours in both MSA and SCA with program country. In particular, research participants in Morocco spoke more MSA and less SCA in their free time than research participants in any other country. The opposite is true for the countries Egypt and Syria. Jordan follows the pattern of Egypt and Syria in MSA contact hours, but not SCA hours. This is interesting because one frequently hears the claim that Moroccans are able to understand Levantine and Egyptian because of a variety of media productions, whereas the reverse does not hold – Egyptians and Levantines are unable to understand Moroccan Arabic easily. Perhaps Moroccans are used to having their local spoken varieties considered

unintelligible by foreigners and therefore do not encourage foreign students to learn it, though this is conjecture.

The second research question was about acculturation. The opening analysis in this question revealed that the research participants found the SCAS functions more difficult at the beginning of their program. This indicates that the research participants did acculturate as time passed.

The next analysis investigated pre-program exposure to SCA and the degree of acculturation at the beginning of the study abroad program. The results indicate that the more pre-program exposure to SCA, the more acculturated learners are at the beginning of the programs. This may be beneficial for Arabic departments to know. The nature of SCA is very much related to understanding the culture of the locations in which it is spoken. Describing the nature of SCA, Versteegh (2004) wrote, “the colloquial language as the language of family and home is associated with the in-group, with intimacy and friendship, whereas the high variety is associated with social distance and official relationships” (p. 195). Thus, it is logical that learners who have pre-program exposure to SCA are more acculturated at the beginning of the program because they are intimately learning about the culture through its language. Language departments would be wise to consider the benefits of offering courses in SCA to students before study abroad programs. This statement, however, will certainly be met with skepticism by those who are concerned about which SCA should be taught. This author argues that the answer is relatively straightforward if a particular institution of higher education already has a study abroad program in place. For example, if an institution has a study abroad program in Egypt, it would make sense to introduce pre-study abroad students to Egyptian Arabic. This would likely help them to be more culturally prepared before arriving in Egypt. As for institutions of higher education that do not yet have programs in place, they might consider the results of the extensive research performed by the NMELRC. This research found “that 86% of students who expressed interest in learning Spoken Arabic [SCA] prefer either Levantine or Egyptian Arabic” (Al-Batal & Belnap, 2006, p. 396). Thus, it may be a good idea to first look at opening a program in Egypt or the Levant. There is certainly value and importance in other Arab countries as well.

Program country was also investigated with the amount of change in acculturation. The amount of change in acculturation was selected because it has the potential to show in which countries research participants experienced considerable change in acculturation. There were twelve countries represented in the data, though only those countries with at least five research participants therein were used in these analyses. The remaining countries in this analysis were Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Yemen. Results show that the amount of

change in acculturation is nearly significant with program country. The results may indicate that research participants in Morocco and Yemen did not achieve a level of great change in acculturation. Some of the research participants in the other countries in this research were able to make a great increase in the amount of change in acculturation. Such discrepancy may be attributed to differences in the cultures. Ward and Kennedy (1999) found results in their past research that “suggest that sociocultural adaptation problems decrease as a function of ethnic and cultural similarity” (p. 667). For example, the authors reported that “Chinese sojourners in Singapore experienced less sociocultural difficulties ... than non-Chinese (p. 667). It may be that Morocco and Yemen are less similar culturally to the research participants’ home cultures than those in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The issue of modernity and development may also contribute to these results (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Certainly, Yemen is the least developed of all these countries. Morocco, however, is quite modern and developed. Future research should investigate this issue.

The third research question investigated exposure to the different varieties of Arabic and research participant interaction with host nationals.

As for SCA contact hours and interaction, results indicate that the more hours spent communicating in SCA corresponds with increased interaction. Due to the colloquial nature of SCA, this result is not surprising. Students out in the public are most likely communicating and interacting with people in the native SCA. Perhaps it is easier for natives to speak SCA? This would seem reasonable based upon Maamouri’s (1998) claim about MSA not being a mother tongue. Thus teaching and learning SCA may restore the learner’s confidence in spoken interaction that is lost in rigid MSA curricula (Ryding 1995).

Amount of interaction was analyzed with the desire to learn SCA. The results approached statistical significance. It would appear that those who interacted more with the host nationals had a greater desire to learn SCA. This relates to a finding above that that revealed the research participants who interacted more with locals spent more time communicating in SCA. An additional modified GLM without the row ‘over 30 times’ also found near statistical significance among the variables. Thus, it is likely that those research participants who interact more with the locals have a greater desire to learn SCA and spend more time engaged in communicating in SCA. It is hoped that such results will validate institutions of higher education that are now pursuing an integrated approach. Certainly, the subject is no longer taboo – in the United States -- as Ryding stated in Redden 2008.

Interaction was also analyzed with regard to SCA ridicule. Results found that the more one interacts with the culture, the less probability there is that

one would feel ridiculed when communicating in SCA. This may be because SCA is frequently used in daily communication and among in-groups.

Limitations

There are several limitations that should be noted in this research. The first limitation is the wording of some of the questions. In the section about language contact, for example, research participants responded to the statement: “Beyond and not including homework, on average, how many hours each week did you spend conversing in ...” followed by a number of varieties of Arabic. The question should have been: “Beyond *class time* and not including homework, on average, how many hours each week did you spend conversing in ...” This revised question would clarify that the MSA communication was taking place outside of homework *and* class time in order to accurately calculate the amount. It is assumed that the research participants inferred this meaning, though future research should correct this. The term “priority” in the third research question also has the potential for misinterpretation. The term should, perhaps, not have been combined with “desire” in the analysis regarding student desire to learn MSA and SCA.

Other limitations deal with the nature of the research participants’ programs. The recruitment materials only indicate that volunteers needed to have studied Arabic in the Arabic-speaking world within the last three years (at the time of completing the research instrument). No attention was paid to whether the research participants were in intensive language programs or in programs in which some or all of the instruction was content-based and in English. At least one research participant was in no program at all and was self-studying or using tutors. Moreover, some of the research participants only studied MSA or SCA (not both) during their time abroad. It is assumed, however, that living abroad produces some exposure to both varieties. It is also unknown whether the research participants had participated in study abroad more than three years previous to their contribution in this research.

Another limitation is that some of the research participants received a complimentary copy of a book in Arabic and English for participating. This was only available to those who were in the most recent administering of the research instruments.

Finally, in a few rare instances a small number of research participants wrote textual comments throughout the research that seemed to contradict certain selections they made in the research instruments. The author changed the research instrument selections to reflect the textual comments. Such instances were very atypical. The author did not, however, read every comment to check for contradictory information.

Future Research

There are a number of directions this research could take in the future. One of the directions is a comparison of intensive Arabic programs abroad with domestic immersion programs. A study could be conducted to investigate proficiency and acculturation in these types of programs with normal university classes as a control. It would be interesting to see how study abroad programs compare and contrast with domestic immersion programs. It would also be interesting to investigate how these two programs differ from the normal coursework at a university (the control group).

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