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Multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging in L2 Arabic classrooms: teachers' beliefs vs. actual practices

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This study adopts a multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging perspective to explore the relationship between beliefs and actual linguistic practices concerning multilingual and multidialectal practices among L2 Arabic teachers in Islamic independent schools in Sydney, NSW, Australia. To this end, the study draws on class observations and individual interviews. The findings show a clear mismatch between teachers' beliefs about the use of English and their actual employment of it in the classroom. The majority of the teachers indicated that English should be either limited or totally avoided in the L2 Arabic classroom, but class observations showed that (a) English was utilized in all 11 classes, and (b) it was used significantly more than Arabic in nine of these classes. As for multidialectal practices, although most of the teachers believed that the use of non-standard varieties along with Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) should be limited, findings were inconclusive due to the fact that English was found to be the main medium of communication in the majority of the observed classes. Therefore, the study underscores the need for providing teacher training that demonstrates how to purposefully deploy multilingual and multidialectal translanguaging to help learners enrich their linguistic repertoire in their desired L2.

KEYWORDS

L2 Arabic, translanguaging, multilingual and multidialectal practices, teachers' beliefs vs. practices, the integrated approach, language ideology in L2 learning, diglossia

Introduction

A great deal of research in applied linguistics has recently focused on bringing multilingualism to the forefront to underscore the fluidity of language boundaries and challenge monolingual ideologies in second/additional language (L2) learning contexts (e.g., Otheguy et al., 2015; MacSwan, 2017, 2022; Wei, 2018; Leung and Valdés, 2019; Al Masaeed, 2020). Nevertheless, while multilingual practices have been widely researched in the L2 classroom and research on teachers' use of L1 in L2 contexts demonstrated that there is usually a discrepancy between recommendations/beliefs and actual practices on the ground (e.g., Polio and Duff, 1994; Macaro, 2001, 2005, 2009; Turnbull, 2001; Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie, 2002; Liu et al., 2004; De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009; Littlewood and Yu, 2011; Al Masaeed, 2016, 2020), less attention has been devoted to exploring multilingual and multidialectal practices by instructors in less commonly taught language learning contexts.

For example, one of the main challenges encountered by teachers and learners of Arabic is the diglossic nature of the language, where two varieties of the language are used side-by-side in Arabic-speaking communities, serving different functions (Ferguson, 1959; Holes, 2004; Nassif and Al Masaeed, 2022). Consequently, teaching and learning Arabic as an additional language presents linguistic and pedagogical challenges. In light of the recent calls for the multilingual turn in applied linguistics and for bringing multidialectal practices to the center of L2 Arabic (Al-Batal, 2018; Al Masaeed, 2022a,b; Nassif and Al Masaeed, 2022), the primary purpose of the present study is to investigate the (mis)alignment between teachers' beliefs and actual practices concerning the use of multilingual and multidialectal translanguaging in L2 Arabic classes in Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Translanguaging in L2 contexts

A considerable amount of research in L2 learning contexts has demonstrated the advantages of bi/multilingual practices for enriching learning (e.g., Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain(eds), 2009; DiCamilla and Antón, 2012; Cheng, 2013; May(ed.), 2014; Sali, 2014; Levine, 2015; Sert, 2015; van Compernelle, 2015; Al Masaeed, 2018, 2020, 2022c; Larsen-Freeman, 2018). May(ed.)'s (2014) edited volume, for example, convincingly criticized monolingual ideologies in second language acquisition (SLA) and highlights multilingual practices as the norm of our modern era.

Therefore, the term translanguaging has gained significant support to highlight the ways in which bilingual and multilingual practices can be used for the purpose of meaning-making and for challenging monolingual ideologies in bilingual education and L2 contexts (e.g., García, 2009; Turner and Lin, 2017; Al Masaeed, 2020). However, translanguaging is a relatively recent development in the field, with a strong but sometimes controversial relationship to code-switching. Code-switching and translanguaging are both multilingual phenomena occurring in multilingual societies and L2 contexts. While some traditions see code-switching as a sub-component of translanguaging, others do not. Both have potential functions in multilingual classrooms through the use of two or more languages or language varieties. Translanguaging refers to the multilingual practices that both learners and teachers deploy to "engage in *complex and fluid discursive practices* that include, at times, the *home language practices* of students in order to make sense of teaching and learning, to communicate and appropriate subject knowledge, and to develop academic language practices" (García and Wei, 2014, p 112).

Moreover, the term translanguaging is multifaceted and has been conceptualized and used by researchers and practitioners in various ways. For example, two main models of translanguaging have been proposed to explain the cognitive processing of language and how multilingualism functions. These models are the unitary and the integrated models of translanguaging. The unitary model argues that "bilingualism and multilingualism, despite their importance as sociocultural concepts, have no correspondence in a dual or multiple linguistic system" (Otheguy et al., 2019, p. 625). According to this model, code-switching is a separate phenomenon from translanguaging because it considers code-switching as a dual competence model based on two separate linguistic systems

(Otheguy et al., 2015). In other words, some of the leading scholars mentioned above (namely, Garcia, Wei, and Otheguy) have adopted a deconstructivist proposal that rejects the existence of named languages and, by extension, questions the psychological reality of bilingualism (see García et al., 2021, for details).

On the other hand, the integrated model assumes that the internal linguistic system of the individual is structured with separate lexical systems for each language and overlapping grammatical systems which share language components including phonetic, morphological and phonological features (MacSwan, 2017). This model considers code-switching as part of translanguaging, presupposing a distinction between the cognitive linguistic systems. More recently, MacSwan (2022) edited a thought-provoking volume that takes on a multilingual perspective on translanguaging to reject the deconstructivist thesis that does not acknowledge the existence of named languages or discrete language communities. This perspective accepts "language diversity as psycholinguistically real and socially significant, drawing on empirically informed theories of language and society to challenge prevailing language ideologies which oppress and disadvantage linguistically diverse communities" (p. 31).

Because of such various understandings of the term, Leung and Valdés (2019) argue that translanguaging is "still evolving and deepening as a stance, a theory, and a pedagogy" (p. 358). In this study, similar to MacSwan (2022), we adopt a translanguaging perspective that acknowledges the existence of named languages and varieties as part of the social (i.e., external) perspective when analyzing speakers' utilization of bilingual and multidialectal practices in L2 contexts. This linguistic fluidity does not disregard multilingual speakers' awareness of linguistic and ideological boundaries, but rather acknowledges their ability to strategically and creatively exploit and manipulate the linguistic resources they have at their disposal for engaging in productive and meaningful interactions. Consequently, translanguaging practices in the L2 classroom should be strategically and purposefully employed to support and enrich learners' desire to expand their linguistic repertoire in the named L2 (Al Masaeed, 2020). In this vein, the teacher's role is to support and model linguistic fluidity to help learners internalize, understand, and produce the desired named language so it remains the *general* means of communication in the L2 classroom. Additionally, adopting a multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging perspective empowers us to advocate for learners of diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging in L2 Arabic

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) functions as a standard written language and is considered as the official language of Arab countries. MSA is considered a symbol of unity and nationalism among Arabic-speaking people regardless of their religious faiths. However, in addition to MSA, Arabic is a multidialectal language with different national language varieties, each with its own set of linguistic rules (Ferguson, 1959; Holes, 2004; Al-Batal, 2018; Al Masaeed, 2020, 2022a,b; Nassif and Al Masaeed, 2022). Drawing on empirical research, scholars have increasingly characterized the sociolinguistic situation in the Arab world as a continuum

of spoken and written varieties with multiple registers (Holes, 2004; Mejdell, 2011; Younes, 2015). Therefore, while this makes the process of teaching and learning Arabic linguistically and pedagogically challenging, it positions it as an interesting context that is better be explored through a translanguaging standpoint.

A recent line of empirical research in Arabic has demonstrated that learners value the opportunity to learn and use multidialectal practices (e.g., Abdalla and Al-Batal, 2012; Al-Batal, 2018; Isleem, 2018; Zaky and Palmer, 2018; Al Masaeed, 2020; Nassif and Al Masaeed, 2022). However, studies on multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging in L2 Arabic contexts are still scarce. A small number of studies have investigated this matter in the Arabic language context (e.g., Al-Bataineh and Gallagher, 2018; Al Masaeed, 2020, 2022a). Al-Bataineh and Gallagher (2018) conducted a study in the United Arab Emirates to investigate the attitudes of future teachers toward translanguaging when writing stories for young bilingual learners and to identify the variables that shaped their attitudes. The participants were asked to write a storybook of a fictional character's experience using MSA and English, and Emirati dialect as required. They found that the participants held highly inconsistent and uncertain attitudes toward translanguaging which they concluded were influenced greatly by language ideology. However, many participants did regard translanguaging as a positive learning practice. Moreover, many believed that it made reading translingual stories more interesting than the monolingual one.

Al Masaeed (2020, 2022a) studies on L2 Arabic during study abroad in Morocco and Jordan, respectively, demonstrate the need for the field of L2 Arabic to move beyond the MSA-only language ideology to support learners' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence development. For example, his study in Morocco (Al Masaeed, 2020) examined multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging practices among 10 learners (native speakers of English) and eight speaking partners during a summer program in Morocco. The participants were required to do four dyadic conversation sessions a week. The author examined recordings of speaking sessions that were supposed to be in MSA only. He concluded that despite the MSA-only policy, the participants used multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging as valuable resources for achieving and maintaining intersubjectivity throughout their interactions. The results also showed that alternations between MSA and non-MSA varieties were more frequent than switches between Arabic and English. He also concluded that French, while present, was the least utilized language in the examined conversations. In a more recent study, Al Masaeed (2022a) investigated the role of bidialectal practices during study abroad in Jordan on learners' pragmatic development. He employed a spoken discourse completion task to collect pre- and post-program speech acts production. His findings demonstrated that the ability to use bidialectal practices was a clear indication of learners' pragmatic development.

The synthesis of L2 Arabic research illuminates the following key points: (1) learners are interested in learning at least one spoken variety of Arabic alongside MSA, (2) multidialectal multilingual translanguaging practices mirror the sociolinguistic reality of Arabic speakers, and (3) multidialectal practices contribute to developing pragmatic competence. Based on these empirical insights, one can argue that L2 Arabic teachers should encourage and engage in multilingual and multidialectal translanguaging practices to help learners internalize, understand, and produce

the desired L2. Previous research on teachers' use of L1 in L2 contexts demonstrated that there is usually a discrepancy between recommendations/beliefs and actual practices on the ground (e.g., Turnbull and Arnett, 2002; Kim and Elder, 2005; Macaro, 2009; Copland and Neokleous, 2011; Sali, 2014). However, what seems to be still lacking is research on teachers' use of multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging practices in less commonly taught languages such as Arabic. Therefore, the current study draws on data from classroom observations and individual interviews to explore whether L2 Arabic teachers' beliefs about translanguaging practices (mis)align with their actual linguistic practices in the classroom.

Materials and methods

This study is a part of larger project on teachers' language learning and teaching beliefs and practices in Australia. In this section we present information about participants and context, as well as data analysis.

Participants and context

The current study participants were 11 L2 Arabic teachers from a number of three Islamic independent schools in Sydney, NSW, Australia. They were all volunteer participants who were recruited and consented in accordance with Institutional Review Board regulations. Teachers' background and demographic information is presented in [Table 1](#) below. The independent school system is similar to the mainstream public-school system in terms of the taught curriculum and the objectives derived from the New South Wales (NSW) Board of Studies (BOS) syllabus for languages other than English. According to the [Board of Studies NSW \(2009\)](#), the current syllabus content is consistent with a communicative focus, with the integration of the four core language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing within the cultural context of Arabic-speaking communities. For individual teachers, there is still a considerable degree of autonomy in classroom decision-making including task selection and decisions about which language and language varieties are most appropriate for classroom use.

However, the syllabus lacks explicit methods and provides minimal teaching guidelines (Liddicoat et al., 2007; Cruickshank, 2008). Moreover, in independent Islamic schools, English is used as the medium for instruction across all areas of the curriculum, whereas Arabic is specifically taught as a single subject. Arabic is taught as a required subject mainly in primary schools and up to Stage 4 (years 7–8) or Stage 5 (years 9–10) in some high schools, depending on the school. It is also offered as an elective subject at Stage six (years 11 and 12) in some high schools.

Data collection and analysis

Data were obtained over 9 months from 11 L2 Arabic class sessions ranging from first to tenth grade with an average number of 25 students in each classroom. In addition to the demographic information that was collected through a background survey, data for the study were gathered through classroom observations

TABLE 1 Teachers' demographic and background information.

Participants' pseudonyms	Age	Sex	Primary language	Ethnicity	Nationality	Degree	Arabic degree	Experience
Hamad	50 +	M	Arabic	Arab	Lebanese	Ph.D.	Yes	6 +
Salwa	20–25	F	Arabic	Arab	Lebanese	BA	Yes	2
Yosra	26–35	F	Arabic	Arab	Egyptian	BA	No	4
Raid	26–35	M	Indonesian	Asian	Indonesian	MA	No	4
Wahid	36–49	M	Arabic	Arab	Egyptian	MA	No	6 +
Amjad	36–49	M	Arabic	Arab	Jordanian	MA	No	4
Bara	20–25	F	Arabic	Arab	Palestinian	BA	Yes	2
Hiyam	36–49	F	Arabic	Arab	Egyptian	MA	No	6 +
Najwa	50 +	F	Arabic	Arab	Egyptian	Ph.D.	Yes	6 +
Nasir	36–49	M	Arabic	Arab	Lebanese	BA	No	6 +
Sana	36–49	F	Kurdish	Kurd	Iraqi	MA	No	6 +

and individual interviews to explore whether L2 Arabic teachers' beliefs about bilingual and multidialectal practices (mis)align with their actual linguistic practices on the ground. Each teacher was observed once in their classrooms for a period of 40–50 min; and following classroom observations, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted. Both classroom observations and interviews were audio-recorded.

Classroom observations data were analyzed as follows. The teachers' language use in the classroom was transcribed and read carefully. Next, the total number of words spoken by each teacher in their observed class were calculated, and multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging practices were categorized and tagged with codes. Then, instances of multilingual and multidialectal translanguaging (i.e., MSA, non-MSA, and English) were grouped into their relevant categories, and frequency of occurrence were tallied. But when it comes to Arabic in particular, each word, collocation, and structure was analyzed and categorized as MSA or spoken using linguistic categories in line with previous L1 and L2 Arabic studies (e.g., Alaiyed, 2018; Nassif and Al Masa'ed, 2022). For example, we took into account internal word vowelings for words that are shared between MSA and spoken Arabic (e.g., the word for "book" could be *kitab* or *kitaab*—the second only is considered MSA; the verb "I like" is considered MSA if it is *?uhib*, but spoken Arabic if pronounced as *baħib* as in Jordanian and Egyptian Arabic). MSA mood and case ending markers on word ends were not considered because these markers are usually dropped by Arabic speakers (Alaiyed, 2018). After that, following Rolin-Janziti and Brownlie (2002), functions for translanguaging practices were identified.

Analysis of the individual interview responses was conducted as follows: the teachers' interview responses were audio-recorded, transcribed, and then read and reread carefully until they became very familiar. Next, all statements relating to the research focus were identified, and each was assigned a code, or category. These codes were then recorded and each relevant statement was put under its appropriate code (open coding). Then, in a process of categorical aggregation (Creswell, 2007), the most relevant themes were grouped together under main categories (axial coding). The most relevant, similar and common concepts and categories were then organized into a data table. After that, the most common,

interesting, frequent and relevant themes to the research focus were chosen as the main themes to emerge from the interview data. In so doing, the main related themes addressed by most teachers included the use of English and non-MSA varieties alongside MSA. Consequently, individual teacher instances of multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging practices were compared to their stated beliefs in the interviews.

Findings

In this section, we present the findings of whether teachers' beliefs about multilingual and multidialectal translanguaging practices (as obtained in the interviews) align with their actual practices on the ground (as obtained from class observations). The findings reveal that there is some mismatch between teachers' beliefs about multilingual and multidialectal translanguaging practices and their actual linguistic practices in the classroom and point to some frequent functions of multidialectal and multilingual practices. Below we present the findings in the following order: (a) teachers' beliefs vs. multilingual practices (i.e., the use of English alongside Arabic), and (b) teachers' beliefs vs. multidialectal practices (i.e., the use of MSA and non-MSA spoken varieties).

Teachers' beliefs vs. multilingual translanguaging practices

Findings show that instructors' beliefs about multilingual translanguaging practices (mainly the use of English alongside Arabic) varied to include support for its use as a primary resource as it is the students' L1; support for its use for specific purposes to facilitate communication; and a total opposition to its use because it slows learners' L2 progress. Hamad and Salwa, for example, are advocates for the unlimited use of English as a resource for L2 learning. This is because they have a large number of students who come from non-Arabic speaking backgrounds in their classes and because it is the language that learners are more comfortable and familiar with.

But the majority of teachers advocate for using English for specific purposes in the classroom. Bara, for example, believes that a limited amount of English is needed mainly with students of lower proficiency levels for giving instructions and explaining the task at hand. She commented, “I prefer Arabic, but I don’t apply [it] all the time because it’s hard sometimes, especially for lower levels. It’s hard to speak only in Arabic with them specially if you are explaining a task.” Three teachers (Najwa, Nasir, and Sana) are totally against the use of English in the classroom because it negatively impacts learners’ progress in Arabic. Najwa, for example, believes that Arabic should be taught through the use of Arabic only. She stated in the interview that, “it is easier for them to read English than Arabic and they will rely on English to understand Arabic. I want them to focus on Arabic because when they have the English they won’t put effort to read the Arabic.”

However, classroom observations of teachers’ actual linguistic practices reveal substantial use of English in the classroom. In fact, as can be seen in **Table 2** below, while all teachers were found to employ English in their classroom talk, most of them (9 of 11) employed English more than Arabic. Furthermore, all of those who supported the limited use of English did end up using it more than Arabic; and while all teachers who were against it ended up using it frequently, one of them (Najwa) was found to use it more than Arabic.

In addition to information provided in **Table 2** above, examples 1–3 below are extracted from class observations of the three teachers who stated their opposition to the use of English alongside Arabic in the classroom. In all examples in this section, MSA is in default font, non-MSA is underlined>, and English is in bold. Translation is provided in italics on a separate line when needed. Furthermore, transliteration conventions used in this article are adopted from **Alhawary (2018)** (please see **Supplementary Appendix A**).

(1) Najwa (class focus was on teaching writing and grammar):

Najwa: **Everyone got a ḥarf. What’s the meaning of ḥarf?**
 Students: **letter**
 Najwa: **Ok, I want this ḥarf, I want also a word.**

What’s the meaning of word?

Students: kalimah.

(2) Nasir (class focus was on reading, listening, and writing):

Nasir: nuriidu laḥman! **Excellent group number 1.**
 We want meat
Ok, group number 2, we want chicken
 Students: nuriidu dajaajan.

(3) Sana (class focus is on reading comprehension):

Sana: **village, town** il-qariyya, madiina, **village.**
 Student: **Miss, city** madiina?
 Sana: **yeah** nafs ʔišii
same thing
 Student: **and the town?**
 Sana: **il-town if you said countryside, bitkuun**
 qariyya, **village**
the- it would be
 Student: **Miss is madiina city?**
 Sana: **city.**

These examples are representative of teachers’ talk in the classroom, and provide an idea of the frequency and some common functions (e.g., asking questions, classroom management, explaining and clarifying vocabulary, etc.) of deploying English in class. They also point to the misalignment between teachers’ language beliefs and their actual practices.

Teachers’ beliefs vs. multidialectal translanguaging practices

Findings regarding multidialectal translanguaging practices [i.e., the use of spoken varieties alongside MSA reveal that the

TABLE 2 Teacher beliefs about the use of English in the L2 Arabic classroom and their actual linguistic practices (interviews vs. classroom observations).

Group	Teachers	Year	Beliefs about the use of English (interviews)	Class observations	Use of English	Use of Arabic
A	Hamad	7	Supports the use of English	Mainly English	81.05%	18.95%
	Salwa	1	Supports the use of English	Mainly English	95.16%	4.84%
B	Yosra	3	For limited use of English	Mainly English	84.05%	15.95%
	Raid	9	For limited use of English	Mainly English	85%	15%
	Wahid	9	For limited use of English	Mainly English	71.25%	28.75%
	Amjad	4	For limited use of English	Mainly English	85.2%	14.8%
	Bara	7	For limited use of English	Mainly English	76.3%	23.7%
	Hiyam	9	For limited use of English	Mainly English	71.1%	28.9%
C	Najwa	4	Against the use of English	Mainly English	62.2%	37.8%
	Nasir	7	Against the use of English	Mainly Arabic	41.1%	58.9%
	Sana	10	Against the use of English	Mainly Arabic	42.2%	57.8%
Total					72.23%	27.77%

majority of instructors (8/11) supported the limited use of non-MSA spoken varieties alongside MSA for specific purposes (e.g., encouraging students, asking questions, giving instructions, etc.), but 3/11 were in opposition to utilizing any non-MSA varieties. Those who were in favor of a judicious use of multidialectal practices believe that such practices would support students' home language, enhance cultural connections, and maximize participation. The three teachers who were against the use of non-MSA believe that such practices are different from what is in the textbook and can be confusing and challenging for students who come from non-Arabic speaking backgrounds. Only one of these three teachers (Yosra) was found to use non-MSA eight times in the little amount of Arabic (15.95%) she used in class time. The other two were found to be consistent.

However, classroom observations reveal that teachers' actual linguistic practices fell into three categories: (a) teachers who didn't use non-MSA at all, (b) those who employed it occasionally (less than 10%), and (c) those who used it more frequently (more than 10%) (as Table 3 below shows). An interesting finding is that the two teachers who used English the least (Najwah and Sana) were found to use multidialectal practices the most; and those who deployed multilingual practices the most (Salwa and Raid) did not use multidialectal practices at all.

Examples 4–6 below are extracted from class observations of the three teachers who used non-MSA the most alongside MSA in the classroom.

(4) Sana (class focus is on reading comprehension):

šuu binsammii theater bilšarabiih
What do we call theater in Arabic?
 What do we call in Arabic?
 maaðaa nusammii al theater bilšarabii?
 What do we call the.

(5) Najwa (class focus was on teaching writing and grammar):

šuu! Yasmin ũind-haa ħarf wa ħattit-haa

fi kilmit faraašah
 Look! Yasmine has the letter "F" and she used it
 in the word butterfly
 wa ħatišmal sentence.
 And she'll make a.

(6) Hiyam (class focus was on reading comprehension):

Hiyam: Yeah, alright Tahir, mumkin tikammil?
Can you continue?
 Tahir: (reads the part the teacher asked him to read)
 Hiyam: Yeah alright, maazaa fahamt?
What did you understand?
 Tahir: kaan ũam bištayil
He was working
 Hiyam: ũam bištayil! maa fiiš ħaagah ũismahaa
ũam bištayil
there isn't such a thing as
 kaan al-fataa. . . (asking Tahir to read the answer
 from the book in MSA).
The boy was. . .

Similar to the use of English, the employment of non-MSA is found to serve various functions in the data including (but not limited to) asking questions (as in example 4), offering an explanation (as in example 5), or providing comments on students' answers/work to evaluate their performance (as in example 6) (see [Supplementary Appendix B](#) for a complete list and frequency of the functions both multilingual and multidialectal practices serve in the current study). However, example 6 is of special interest and merits more attention. Hiyam asked the student (in Egyptian Arabic) to start reading and when he was done, she asked him about what he understood from the text he has just read. The student answered in Lebanese Arabic, but Hiyam repeated the student's answer using Lebanese Arabic and then commented (in Egyptian Arabic) to evaluate the student's answer. Next, the student read the answer from the book in MSA. What is interesting in this exchange is the teacher's criticism of the student's use of non-MSA

TABLE 3 Teachers' beliefs about the use of non-MSA in the L2 Arabic classroom and their actual linguistic practices (interviews vs. classroom observations).

Teacher	Beliefs about the use of non-MSA (interviews)		Actual use of non-MSA observed in class (percentages and number of instances)		
1. Salwa	Group 1	Against the use of non-MSA	Group 1	Not used	
2. Raid		Against the use of non-MSA		Not used	
3. Yosra		Against the use of non-MSA		7% (8 times)	
4. Bara	Group 2	For limited use of non-MSA	Group 2	3% (5 times)	
5. Amjad		For limited use of non-MSA		6% (8 times)	
6. Wahid		For limited use of non-MSA		2% (11 times)	
7. Hamad		For limited use of non-MSA		6% (16 times)	
8. Nasir		For limited use of non-MSA		Group 3	17% (41 times)
9. Najwa		For limited use of non-MSA			23% (51 times)
10. Hiyam	For limited use of non-MSA	19% (41 times)			
11. Sana	For limited use of non-MSA		30% (91 times)		

in spite of her own employment of multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging practices in both her request and evaluation of his answer. This is a clear example of the misalignment between teachers' beliefs and their actual linguistic practices regarding multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging practices.

Discussion

This study set out to examine language beliefs and actual linguistic practices among L2 Arabic teachers in Islamic independent schools in Sydney, NSW, Australia. To this end, we utilized class observations and individual interviews to explore whether L2 Arabic teachers' beliefs about the use of multilingual and multidialectal practices align with their actual linguistic practices in the classroom. Findings are summarized and discussed accordingly.

Our findings indicated a clear mismatch between teachers' beliefs about the use of English and their actual employment of it in the classroom. While the majority of the teachers (9 of 11) in the interviews believed that English should be either limited or totally avoided in their teaching, classroom observations showed that English was not only used in all classes, but it was also utilized more than Arabic in 9 of 11 classes. When asked about this point in particular (the high amount of English used by those teachers) during the interviews that came after class observations, most teachers attributed the use of English to students' proficiency levels and preference for using English over MSA. This finding shows that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and linguistic practices concerning multilingual practices is complex, and that teachers are not always aware of the discrepancies. This is consistent with previous studies regarding the use of L1 in L2 contexts (e.g., Macaro, 2009; Copland and Neokleous, 2011; McMillan and Rivers, 2011; Sali, 2014). However, the current finding is at odds with results from many studies that found that teachers tend to use L1 in lower amounts on average (e.g., Polio and Duff, 1994; Macaro, 2001, 2005; Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie, 2002; Turnbull and Arnett, 2002; De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009).

Nevertheless, although the findings regarding multilingual practices above can be interpreted as evidence of the misalignment between teachers' language beliefs and their actual linguistic practices on the ground, our finding regarding teachers' beliefs about the employment of non-MSA varieties alongside MSA and their actual linguistic practices in the classroom were inconclusive. While multidialectal practices in the classroom are supported to a limited degree and utilized infrequently by the majority of the teachers, it was difficult to provide a clear-cut conclusion on this matter because English is found to be the main medium of communication in the majority of the class.

Therefore, we argue that the amount of English utilized in the current study is quite concerning because it seems that it is given more precedence over multidialectal practices (both MSA and non-MSA) that can better support learners' motivation to engage in conversations that mirror the sociolinguistic situation in the Arabic speaking world, and bolster their understanding of the cultural nuances of the language. In other words, the employment of English this much seems to defeat the purpose of strategic and purposeful use of bi/multilingual translanguaging to support the

desired named language (i.e., Arabic). This brings to mind one of the important questions that Leung and Valdés (2019, p. 365) raise for us to bear in mind as we continue to work toward refining what translanguaging as a pedagogical stance exactly means in the L2 classroom: how does a translanguaging classroom address the pedagogic issues connected to the development of language-specific proficiency and use for learning purposes?

Multidialectal translanguaging responds to learners' needs and has a crucial role in developing their pragmatic competence to connect with the Arabic speaking world and its cultures (e.g., Al-Batal and Belnap, 2006; Younes, 2015; Al Masaeed, 2020, 2022b,c). Therefore, focus should be on Arabic as one language (Al-Batal, 2018); that is, both MSA and non-MSA should be brought to the forefront in the classroom through teachers modeling such practices to support learners. Example 6 above has an important implication. Students can read a text in MSA and then use multidialectal practices to discuss it and answer questions about its details (which is what was really happening till the teacher objected to the student's use of non-MSA). Adopting a multidialectal perspective in the classroom would increase participation, validate learners' linguistic backgrounds, and eventually make learning more meaningful for students.

Multilingual and multidialectal translanguaging mirrors the sociolinguistic reality of the modern world and can be utilized to maximize learners' understanding and enhance their language learning if used strategically and purposefully (Macaro, 2005; Al Masaeed, 2016, 2020). Our findings have shown that most teachers are not aware of how often they deploy multilingual and multidialectal practices to boost L2 learning (Macaro, 2005; Littlewood and Yu, 2011; Zhu and Vanek, 2015). These practices can act as a continuum, complementing each other and available for teachers to utilize according to the specifics of the context and the students to maximize learning outcomes. Therefore, the findings of this study point to the need for demonstrating the gap between beliefs and practices concerning our linguistic practices in L2 learning contexts, and to the need for providing teachers with training opportunities that focus on enhancing and critically evaluating their multilingual and multidialectal practices. Such opportunities are unfortunately lacking, which is a disservice to the field. Moreover, the findings of this study underscore the importance of adopting a multilingual translanguaging approach that acknowledges named languages (Al Masaeed, 2020) and the psycholinguistic reality of bilinguals to be able to challenge language ideology and advocate for learners in L2 learning contexts.

For multidialectal practices in particular, an integrated approach that sees value in teaching spoken varieties alongside MSA (Younes, 2015; Al-Batal, 2018) is in order, which means that independent schools need to re-examine the NSW BOS syllabus to better address the diglossic nature of Arabic. Program coordinators and policymakers should remedy this problem to help teachers (1) become more aware of the standard language ideology to see the benefits of multidialectal practices, and (2) develop a clear sense of when and how they should engage in multilingual and multidialectal practices in the classroom to mirror sociolinguistic practices of Arabic speakers and meet the goals of the learners. This can be tackled by providing training workshops through which Arabic teachers get access to video-taped classroom interactions that clearly show how translanguaging is utilized. This will include

both types of practices: those that support language learning and meaning-making, and those that impede the learning process.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that it is clear that more research on multidialectal practices in particular is needed. We hope that future research will build on the methods and findings in this study to explore the issue of multidialectal practices in the L2 Arabic classroom through examining beliefs and practices by both teachers and learners. Some of the limitations of the current study, for example, include obtaining only one class session from each teacher and, to a certain degree, the lack of video-recordings. The use of video-recordings in particular would offer more insights into actual practices as it can capture both linguistic and other various semiotic resources that participants utilize in their classroom interactions.

Conclusion

This study utilized class observations and individual interviews to explore the relationship between beliefs and actual linguistic practices concerning multilingual and multidialectal practices among teachers of L2 Arabic in Islamic independent schools in Sydney, NSW, Australia. Findings showed a clear mismatch between teachers' beliefs about the use of English and their actual employment of it in the classroom. The majority of the teachers indicated that English should be either limited or totally avoided in the L2 Arabic classroom, but class observations showed that (a) English was utilized in all 11 classes, and (b) it was used more than Arabic in 9 of these 11 classes. Moreover, since English was found to be the main medium of communication in the majority of the class, multidialectal translanguaging was found to be rather limited. Based on these findings, the study emphasizes the need for adopting a multidialectal and multilingual translanguaging perspective that draws on empirical sociolinguistic insights to (1) enhance language education, and (2) offer teacher training that demonstrates how to purposefully and strategically deploy multilingual and multidialectal translanguaging to help learners enrich their linguistic repertoire in the desired L2.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. Written informed consent from the participants' legal guardian/next of kin was not required to participate in this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s), and minor(s)' legal guardian/next of kin, for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

Author contributions

HK collected the data. Both authors worked together on writing and analyzing the data and approved the submitted version.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

The reviewer LN declared a past co-authorship with the author KA to the handling editor.

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Supplementary material

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2023.1060196/full#supplementary-material>

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