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**CROSSING BOUNDARIES:  
ARABIC DIGLOSSIA IN THREE OF SALWA BAKR'S  
SHORT STORIES**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

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The Arabic language is characterized by a diglossic system where two language varieties are perceived to be used within the confines of the respective spoken or written context. The colloquial, or *'amiyya*, is generally considered the spoken everyday language of communication while Modern Standard Arabic, or *fusha*, is mainly a medium of written communication. These language boundaries often cross written and spoken communication, which results in a blending of the two language varieties allowing language users greater communicative flexibility than use of one variety alone would permit.

While there have been many studies of diglossia, most of them examine the prevalence of diglossia in the Arabic language and how the two language varieties are used together. This study addresses the effects that diglossia in literary texts has on readers and, in particular, how Egyptian writer, Salwa Bakr, strategically exploits the diglossic system in three of her short stories. The research questions that I address include how Bakr uses the two language varieties these stories, what patterns exist, if any, in her use of language, how readers respond to her use of language and how it affects the reader's perception of the three stories.

In order to answer these questions, I asked eight Egyptian women who were able to read Arabic to read each story and identify passages they thought were written in the dialect. Then, I interviewed each participant to discuss the effect that Bakr's use of language had on them while they read the stories. The passages, which the participants identified as dialect, were analyzed based on Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model.

There was no consistent pattern with respect to passages identified as dialect and MSA. There a pattern regarding the effect that Bakr's use of language had on the readers in that it made the stories more real for readers. Readers also noted that Bakr blends together various varieties of Arabic through out her stories, including a very high level Arabic, forms that can be read as either dialect or MSA, as well as the Egyptian dialect and MSA. Therefore, identifying the full array of language varieties that are employed by Bakr, and other Egyptian writers, opens the door to more possibilities of further understanding the Arabic language.

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

As Hodda El Sadda states in her introduction to *Such a Beautiful Voice*, a collection of Egyptian writer Salwa Bakr's short stories in translation, Egypt and the Arab world lack a "strong feminist critical tradition" (8) and are dominated by the critical male establishment which has, in the past, condemned women writers for producing "women's" or "feminist" literature. In this environment, women are commended for addressing universal and objective themes, which reproduce the dominant male discourse while marginalizing their own unique participation and expression. (8)

Within this context, Egyptian writer Salwa Bakr has established herself as one of Egypt's most interesting and forthright woman writers of fiction. Barbara Harlow discusses Bakr's contribution to women's literature in her introduction to *The Wives of Men*, another collection of Bakr's short stories in translation. She describes Bakr's narratives as able to address "the status of women's rights as human rights within a collective political struggle" (xiii) and to offer a "contemporary sociology of Egyptian women and gender relations through their oral histories." (xv) Additionally, Harlow states that Bakr's narratives argue the necessary but "conflicted connection between women's issues and their historical, political, institutional and especially familial contexts." (xv) What the State and traditional social order delineate as women's offences or breaches, Bakr recasts as gender issues: women's response to systematic abuses and class oppression. Her writing suggests the "necessity of emancipatory projects for social and political change grounded in current historical conditions and the material realities of

women's lives." (xv)

Although Bakr writes narratives that center mainly on the lives of female characters, she claims that she does not limit herself to writing strictly feminist literature. Rather it is a uniqueness of voice speaking through her stories that has made Bakr a prominent writer in Egyptian society. This voice challenges the order and structure of society and, in particular, the continuing debates regarding the use of the Arabic language.

The Arabic language is characterized by a diglossic system, or language duality, where two varieties are perceived to be used within the confines of their respective spoken or written context. The colloquial, or *'amiyya*, is the spoken everyday language of communication while the Modern Standard Arabic, or *fusha*, is a medium of mainly written communication. This diglossic situation provides challenges for a writer, especially when it comes to writing what the characters say. Due to the formal context where Modern Standard Arabic is usually found, its use in speech, or to represent speech, can have a distancing effect on the reader. In dealing with this problem, writers generally either resort to using Colloquial Arabic for dialogue or maintain the use of Modern Standard Arabic throughout the text. This, however, is not the case for Bakr. As Harlow suggests, Bakr does not limit herself to binary thought, approaching issues in an either/or manner. Rather she attempts to blend the two varieties of language in such an eloquent way that it seems as if she has created a new language which poignantly expresses her point of view. (24) Although Bakr's writing is discussed as if she has created a new language, she is in fact utilizing the two varieties of a language that already exists in

Egyptian society, the *'amiyya* and the *fusha*. Therefore, part of the “newness” or novelty of Bakr’s writing is a result of her unique combination of the language resources she has available to her.

According to Mushira Eid in “Language is a Choice: Variation in Egyptian Women’s Written Discourse,” Bakr’s use of language results in a subtle weaving of the colloquial into standard Arabic throughout her stories. The result reflects her position on “the role of language duality in literary discourse” and “how the world of each story is to be construed through language.” (224) Her subtle weaving creates a sense of unity that is often unnoticed until it is more closely analyzed. She affirms the discourse of language duality, not by waving a “colloquial flag” throughout her texts, but by creating a language, which challenges and contradicts the basic tenets of language duality. In this way, she is suggesting that “barriers can be transcended and oneness achieved through a more subtle, selective process.”(224)

In addition, Bakr’s style of language use recontextualizes language debates and social norms within Arab society. Just as Bakr’s characters attempt to transcend imposed limitations, Bakr’s writing transcends what other say about her and the perspectives that they impose on her writing. Her own perspectives about both her writing and Egyptian society go much deeper than those of most outside observers, and it seems that many analysts of her writing haven’t fully grasped the intention and effects of her language usage.

In this study, I propose to analyze how Bakr uses the diglossic situation in Egypt strategically and its influence on readers. Bakr uses the language duality to her

advantage in a way that challenges the existing social norms of Egyptian society.

Although I have not found discussion of the audience that Bakr writes for and appeals to, I contend that she is not writing for an academic audience, but a much broader audience within Egyptian society. Therefore, it is important to observe and analyze the effects of her writing on her audience. Observing this effect can give some insight into how her writing influences Egyptian society.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, I will seek to address the following questions:

1) How does Bakr use the *fusha* and the *'amiyya* in the three stories that will be examined, “The Smile of Death,” “The Beautiful Time,” and “Zainat at the President’s Funeral?”

2) Do any consistent patterns emerge regarding when a variety is or is not used? For example, among various types of characters and environments in the texts, or within diverse literary forms of the text, i.e. dialogue, narrative, or stream of consciousness?

3) What do readers understand about Bakr’s use of the diglossic continuum and how do they respond to it?

4) How does the reader’s understanding of Bakr’s language choices and their affects deepen the appreciation of her texts?

To answer these questions, I discussed the three stories noted above with eight women who were able to read Arabic. Before our discussion I asked them to read each story and identify what they thought was dialect in the stories. I later used the examples

that they identified as dialect to discuss Bakr's use of language and the effect it had on them while they were reading the stories. With the exception of chapter 2, the responses of the participants were taken in to account throughout the development of this thesis. Chapter 2 presents background information on Bakr's use of language and on Carol Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, which I use to analyze Bakr's stories. Chapter 3 presents a summary of each of the three stories, information on the participants of the study, and information on the interviews that were conducted with the participants. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the language that Bakr uses in the stories with specific examples. These examples will be taken directly from the stories and will include the original Arabic text, along with my own transliteration and translation of each example. Chapter 5 provides concluding remarks and areas outside of the scope of this study that could be expanded upon for future analysis.

## Chapter 2 – Background

This chapter presents background information on Bakr's use of language, covering what others say about Bakr's writing and what Bakr says about her own writing, and on Carol Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, which I use to analyze Bakr's stories.

### Bakr's Use of Language

According to El Sadda, Bakr is able to bring alive and articulate the discourse of the oppressed and underprivileged in a unique way due to her original style of fusing the *'amiyya* and the *fusha*. It is for this reason that El Sadda believes it impossible to write about Bakr without referring to the uniqueness of her style. In constructing this style, Bakr uses Egyptian colloquial expressions throughout the course of her narrative structure, where popular proverbs and a linguistic tradition typical of the Egyptian colloquial are intermingled throughout her words. (22) Bakr's unique style creates a voice of her own and "supercedes the dichotomy that is persistently emphasized and exaggerated" between Colloquial Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. (23) Bakr has bridged this dichotomy by employing what she calls al-Amiyya al-Fusha, or "the Classical-Colloquial language," which blends many colloquial words, phrases and structures, rooted in Modern Standard Arabic, throughout the narrative. (23)

Furthermore, Al-Nowaihi states that Bakr's use of language violates generic rules through the use of "ludicrous exaggeration, deliberate misuse of words or phrases, and mixing vocabulary and/or styles from very different contexts or genres." (20)

While it appears that Bakr aims to subvert the dominate language system, Eid

states that as none of Bakr's stories are written exclusively in the Egyptian dialect, it can not be said that she rejects the duality of the language system or the institutions behind it. Therefore, she neither totally accepts nor totally rejects the system. Rather, she works within the linguistic duality, taking advantage of the opportunities it allows in creating a language in which she can creatively express her individuality as a woman and as a writer. Thus, she has created a language, which is both conforming and subversive in its relation to the dominant discourse. (208-210)

In Eid's analysis of Bakr's use of language, she further states that the evidence of her use of language variety can be seen in the syntax and morphology of her writing. For example, the syntax and morphology used can allow a multiplicity of readings based on spelling, and pronunciation difference. The cultural context of an activity or image in the story, which is transmitted through popular culture, can also trigger a colloquial reading. In addition, word choice or lexicon is also manipulated to effect meaning. Bakr relies on word choices (lexical items), which are commonly identified in Egyptian culture as colloquial and used in every day interactions. These lexical items trigger a state of mind in her readers, which often influences a colloquial reading of her texts. (208-210)

Examples of Bakr's use of language will be seen in Chapter 4.

Eid additionally analyses the syntax of the language used in Bakr's texts. In her texts, there is very little colloquial syntax in both the narrative and dialogue, which can be interpreted to mean that she accepts the syntax of *fusha* as the standard variety. In her writing, both dialogue and narrative, on the one hand, and internal and external dialogue, on the other hand, are treated as one. The fact that Bakr uses mainly the syntax of *fusha*

in both the narrative and dialogue of her stories as opposed to blending the syntax of *fusha* with the syntax of the dialect is unusual because she blends the morphology and lexicon of the two varieties in her stories. However, Bakr doesn't use the highly marked standard in dialogue, which allows for the dialogue to be read in either variety. The overall tone in the dialogue sometimes leans toward standard and sometimes toward colloquial. The result is the literal tearing down of the linguistic divide. (223)

The fusion of colloquial expressions with the standard in the text creates an impression that the boundaries between these two language varieties have disappeared. Sometimes this style goes by unnoticed by the reader. However, sometimes the juxtaposition can have a shocking effect. (211) This effect is due to the fact that Bakr's suggestion of colloquial in the text makes it difficult for the reader to determine any dominant language with certainty. Because the Arabic script is traditionally written without any vowel markers and the dialect and standard are often voweled differently, a reading can result in different meanings for various words and, hence the overall meaning of the text if it is not made clear which variety an author is using.

Frequently, the words Bakr uses belong to both varieties (*'amiyya* and *fusha*) but are more commonly associated with the colloquial and day-to-day activities. In these cases, language variety can only be determined by pronunciation, which is not available with written text. As the titles and parts of her narrative can be read either way, it is the cultural context instead of linguistic clues, which gives rise to possible conflicting interpretations. Therefore, the shock is a result of the incongruity between text and context. The subtleness of her approach, often unnoticed on the surface but dramatic

underneath, is what makes her writing creative and ingenious. As a result, the reader has two options: to assign a standard understanding to the text, which accepts the dominant discourse or to reinterpret the writer's intention through "textual clues and contextual references." (212-213) "As a result, the language of narrative that emerges has a Standard Arabic linguistic base, but a lexicon filled with what appears to be colloquial written in a script consistent with both varieties and silent on pronunciation." (Eid 213)

According to Marilyn Booth in her review of Bakr's "The Golden Chariot Does Not Ascend to Heaven," the translation of Bakr's novel brings about the question of whether her novels are translatable. Bakr brings to mind places and characters in a way that depends on her use of colloquial Arabic tropes and expressions, and their placement within a literary Arabic context which can be very difficult to render gracefully and powerfully in English (232-235).

### **The Nature and Goals of Bakr's Writing**

In this section I will present discussions about Bakr's literature among scholars and within the media. According to El Sadda, Bakr has rewritten the rules of the cultural discourse by rejecting assumptions that are put forth as given and providing an alternative image of social and gender relations. This alternative image dismantles conventional values, structures and relationships. Therefore, El Sadda states that Bakr's "achievement can only be appreciated within a feminist theoretical framework of analysis and within the context of other women writers in Egypt."(9)

To shed light on this assumption, El Sadda cites Elaine Showalter and her analysis

in “A Literature of Their Own.” In her essay, Showalter divides the development of maturity in women’s consciousness and pursuit of self-fulfillment into three stages: the Feminine, the Feminist and the Female. While the Feminine does not form its own discourse, but utilizes and imitates the male dominated discourse already present, the Feminist rejects all dominant discourse as a protest against the subjugation of women. The third stage, the Female, is a rejection of both the imitation and the protest of the male dominant culture. This stage turns to the female experience as the source of expression and extends the feminist analysis of culture into the forum of literature. (9-10) Such a voice has been emerging over the last few decades and is articulated in the writings of Bakr. Her perspective of gender relations can be seen in the following quotation:

I do not believe that man is responsible for the unhappiness of women. I hold responsible the structure of relations, the social specifications, the concepts, values and prevalent norms. I deliberately portrayed man with no distinct features as a marginalized figure...I do not condemn man as a race or a sex but I do condemn the overall shape of our lives, the preconceived ideas which we accept as natural givens though they are not so, and should not be so. I condemn the common, the familiar, the taken-for-granted. (qtd. in *Such a Beautiful Voice* 12)

Bakr has frequently expressed the view that woman’s writing does not achieve anything “if it is merely directed against men.” She notes:

In our backwards society, women’s writing should play a positive role not only in freeing women but also the man. What the woman requires in order to realize

herself is equally required by the man, for he needs to enjoy the presence of a compatible woman as a life-partner, the presence of a mind that is in tune with his, the presence of emotions that can interact with his own. (qtd. in *The Wives of Men* x)

Bakr's work has also been described by El Sadda as a "significant revision of conventional, stereotyped structures and relations" (13) superceding the confines of binary thought in search of alternate structures, images and relations that will show to be more fulfilling for society. By refusing to depict the struggle of the sexes, Bakr's writing avoids the reductive attempts to classify and categorize. She situates her female characters in a larger context of oppression and subjugation where it is the fate of the individual characters to submit to a life of social inequality. Most of the women that she portrays come from the lower classes and, therefore, bear the greater burden of oppression. By promoting unheard voices of under-privileged women from lower classes of society, undermining traditional roles of women and emphasizing the potential of women outside the seclusion of their homes, Bakr creates a new language to express her original vision. (14)

As El Sadda points out, Bakr shatters labels associated with various social groups displaying the fact that shrewdness and foresight do not belong only to the educated. She shows that it is often the illiterate, under-privileged woman who show greater insight and more potential to change than middle-class women, who are indoctrinated into the status quo through the privileges they are accustomed to. (16) Madness often becomes the fate of her characters; however, this madness is not to their disadvantage. It can be seen as a

refusal to conform to “preordained cultural/political/social/sexual roles” (20) even as their attempts to conform often result in complete ostracization from society.

It is in the world of Bakr that the simple, illiterate women have not been completely brainwashed by the media, an oppressive educational system, or conventions and customs promoted by the middle class. It is these women who take positive steps to change their lives and their environment. In this way, Bakr brings forth the “suppressed discourse of women” aiming to give it a vital and effective role in society which questions and devalues the conventional, stereotypical patterns supported and made popular by the discourse of the dominant culture. (22)

In her presentation at the “Arab Thought and Women” Conference held by the Arab Women’s Solidarity Association in Cairo in 1988, Ferial Ghazoul describes the writing strategies of Bakr’s narratives as the “eloquence of struggle” or the “rhetoric of the have nots” (*balagha al-ghilaba*) in their manner of contesting the departure from the “transitive potential of language” and its effective meaning in contemporary Arab discourse. Bakr’s stories are written from the social space of those who have been disconnected from the centers of power and positions of authority. Her characters, as mad, eccentric or underprivileged women, provide insight into the abuse of power by speaking out for those that are marginalized and, thus, allows for an analysis of change. In her writing, Bakr utilizes the “transitive potential of language” to explore the dynamics of cultural contradictions and linguistic struggle. Ghazoul states:

Bakr’s artistry lies in her use of narrative and colloquial language to open the

present to the future...[Bakr] thus seeks to get at the very conditions, aspirations and modes of subsistence in our traditions and our practices in order in turn to present popular reality and popular symbolism at one and the same time--a brilliant example of the eloquence of struggle. (qtd. in *The Wiles of Men* xix)

In Magda al-Nowaihi's article, "Reenvisioning National Community in Salwa Bakr's *The Golden Chariot Does Not Ascend to Heaven*," she concludes that Bakr's attempts to break away from cultural norms become a humorous attempt to give a voice to the voiceless. However, the reader's understanding of her humorous attempts is dependent on the audience's knowledge of the traditional styles and conventions, which have been displaced. If the audience has not been assimilated to those norms, it is not likely that they will find alternate meaning in the text. (20) The rules of the genre must be understood and considered inviolable in order for its disruption to be meaningful. However, because Bakr's narratives are full of cultural codes that are unfamiliar to non-Arabic speaking readers, her challenge to language and cultural norms is lost in translation. (21)

In her writing, Bakr uses a method which al-Nowaihi calls the "poetics of disorientation." Bakr's narratives move back and forth between spaces, characters and language varieties in a way that is normal and aberrant; accepted and marginal. She disorients her readers through juxtaposition and dislocation of thematic and stylistic spaces, which challenges their expectations and presents a critique of what has been the norm in Egyptian life. (11) Just as the political and social norms that are responsible for silence and oppression must be torn down, so must the languages and discursive modes

that support these traditional norms. (22) Thus, her stories aim at redefining cultural norms. In addition, Bakr constantly pushes her readers to rethink areas of thought and speech whether in political, literary or religious areas. She tries to expose the hypocrisy and superficiality of the various languages that society is accustomed to and to separate the traditional values from these languages values by taking away their cloak of respectability and seriousness. She does not offer another serious, moralistic language in their place, but a “topsy-turvy world that disorients to reorient” pushing us to search for meaning and value in her narrative style. (11)

Furthermore, Eid points out that although the characters in Bakr’s stories aim to transcend their social and political barriers, they often fail. Regardless of their successes or failures, the language used in constructing these stories and the worlds that they represent is able to transcend the “standard-colloquial divide.” In this way, Bakr achieves what her characters are unable to do -- to tear down barriers that limit them.

The only exception to Bakr’s fusion of language is in the few stories that are not written with any colloquial. The characters in these stories are able to transcend their boundaries; however, they are not human, being either a flower or bird. In her other stories, human beings are not so lucky in their ability to break free of oppression, though the ending of their stories is left ambiguous and open to interpretation leaving the hope of transcending the barriers. (221)

As Bakr is very much a part of the social culture of Egypt, I feel it necessary to include in my discussion how she is portrayed in the media and how she sees herself as a part of the social culture. In the media, Bakr is talked about in a similar manner as by

scholarly writers. In Al-Ahram Weekly, Bakr is described as “one of the most prominent Egyptian writers today.” In her letter to the editor, Madiha Mahmoud (in her response to El-Wardani) states that Bakr is able to bring voices to characters that have none, to tell the story for people who are unable to tell their own by giving them voices that were silenced by the dominant culture, and able to redefine Arabic literature. For this, Bakr is deserving of much admiration. El-Wardani notes Bakr’s ability to mold languages into an effective new text of her own creation and to reconstruct a narrative space in which she herself functions as a novelist. Bakr, however, sees more room to maneuver. In Khallaf’s article, “In Their Own Voices”, Bakr is quoted as saying:

We live in a conservative society, whose values and concepts are not easily changeable. Religion is one of the major features of the national identity. The wise writer has to use language that establishes a relationship with his readers. I only ask questions through writing, and I try to push the reader to think about them. (qtd. in “In Their Own Voices)

According to Marilyn Booth, “Salwa Bakr has become prominent among Egyptian short story writers” due to her portrayals of marginal, though not uncommon, women caught between “poverty and gender-defined oppression.” She constructs tragic lives that touch on comical elements through her use of colloquial Arabic and oral modes of storytelling.

In her stories, Bakr questions the concept of madness by questioning the definition of “female criminality.” The necessity and sacrifice, which define these

women's crimes, take place in a social context of violence against and repression of females. Bakr challenges the prevalent notions, which generate a rigid view of "woman's nature" and the danger of greater social freedom for women. (232-235)

### **The Markedness Model**

Carol Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model will be used to analyze the data gathered from the research. This model is based on the fact that all speech communities have more than one way of speaking due to varieties of languages, dialects, and registers. The Markedness Model (MM) makes the claim that through their language use, individuals exploit the established relationships between various linguistic varieties, in terms of who uses the varieties, and where and how they are used. Therefore, individuals take advantage of the associations that their addressees make between a variety and its typical use. (18) The MM model recognizes the language user's ability to make choices about the language varieties they utilize; choices which require "cognitive calculations about their potential effect." In addition, writers and speakers "make choices with the expectation that the addressees will recognize a choice as carrying a particular intention." (19)

The MM model also claims that the goal of the writer (I will be using the term writer from this point on; however, the term represents both speakers and writers) is "to enhance rewards and minimize costs." In other words, "the goal is to optimize," meaning that writers "choose one variety over another because of the benefits they expect from that choice, relative to its cost." (19)

In the Markedness Model, all writers assume what Myers-Scotton calls a markedness evaluator which suggests the ability to conceptualize markedness through realizing that linguistic choices lie on a continuum ranging with various degrees of markedness from unmarked to marked and to comprehend that unmarked varieties receive a different response than marked varieties. This ability is developed through associative learning based on language usage. (22) The markedness evaluator, therefore, is a device, which provides for the evaluation of the language the writer is exposed to by comparing the effect of one variety to associations with other linguistic varieties. (23) This evaluator is based on an internalized sense of which language variety is expected within various contexts and what the likely consequences of violating those expectations would be.

Through use of the markedness evaluator, Myers-Scotton has determined five maxims, which pertain to choices that writers make. According to Myers the unmarked-choice and marked-choice maxims can be applied to literary texts while all five maxims can be applied by the language choices made by the characters in the texts. (26)

- 1) The Unmarked Choice Maxim – Choices are made based on an unmarked index of an unmarked set of norms in order to establish the unmarked set of norms.

- 2) The Marked Choice Maxim – Marked choices are made which are not based on an unmarked index of an unmarked set of norms in order to establish a new set of norms as unmarked.

- 3) The Exploratory Choice Maxim – When the unmarked choice is not

clear, linguistic choices alternate between speech varieties to explore other speech choices, which create an index for the set of norms favored by the writer.

4) Deference Maxim – Using a variety, which expresses deference to others when respect is required from the circumstances.

5) Virtuosity Maxim – Using whichever variety is necessary to accommodate all speakers present.

According to Myers-Scotton, writers follow marked or unmarked maxims if they are attempting to negotiate social norms in a way that is of benefit to them. The deference maxim and the virtuosity maxim provide fewer direct benefits, but they do provide certain indirect benefits. Such benefits include fulfilling an expectation of a payoff, avoiding a cost, showing them in the most favorable manner, or showing themselves as multidimensional through their linguistic repertoire. (26)

Furthermore, various individuals within a community generally have the same perception of what constitutes unmarked in a given situation. A linguistic choice is unmarked when it provides meaning that is the most “expected” in that it meets the beliefs of the people in the language community who control the social norms. As a result, “opportunities to designate markedness are not equally distributed across a community” and speakers often align themselves with the markers of the dominant group. (26)

The MM also assumes that writers function as rational actors making either conscious or subconscious choices that do not reflect their social group. In this way, Myers-Scotton believes that MM can be considered as a Rational Actor (RA) model. She

argues that linguistic choices are best observed as rational choices made by the writer. Therefore, each choice is done to enhance rewards and minimize costs, or as stated earlier, to optimize. It is also important to note that according to the MM the choices writers make are based on renegotiating the status quo. (29)

The RA model focuses on explaining why writers make the choices that they do. While writers as “rational actors include an evaluation of the effects of choices on others, the actor is central.” Writers seek to “optimize their own outcomes, not those of the addresses.” (30) The Rational Actor models also provide a mechanism, which activates behavior. It tells why certain behaviors happen as it focuses on a cost benefit analysis. In addition, it can tell how choices are made through observing desires and beliefs that are maintained by internally consisted values based on available evidence. (30) However, as students of language choice generally do, Myers-Scotton does not address the issues of conscious awareness of language choice and intentionality, both of which raise problems for any analysis of language choice.

### **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

In order to gather data for this study, I analysed three of Bakr's short stories: "Zainat at the President's Funeral" (*zinaat fii jinaaza al-ra'iis*), "The Smile of Death" (*basama al-maut*), and "The Beautiful Time" (*az-zaman al-jamil*). The stories were used in their original Arabic language rather than a translation since the Arabic diglossia as noted, cannot be rendered into English. I chose short stories rather than a novel in order to see how Bakr uses language within the completion of an entire story. I also felt that using various short stories might give the opportunity to look at the language used in diverse settings with new characters and different environments. This could provide an opportunity for deeper analysis of Bakr's writing and isolate any patterns that exist within her texts. As noted, I also interviewed eight Arab women after asking them to indicate passages in the stories that they considered dialect rather than MSA.

This chapter presents summaries of the stories, information on the participants of the study and the interviews that were conducted with the participants.

#### **The Stories**

The stories that I chose to analyze represent a range of literary forms and conventions (first person narrator, third person narrator, with dialogue, without dialogue) in order to determine if there were any variations of Bakr's use of the diglossic system within these different styles of writing, and to analyze the significance of any differences. The first story, "The Smile of Death," is written in first person as a stream of consciousness with very limited dialogue. The second story, "The Beautiful Time,"

employs a combination of dialogue and narrative. The third story, “Zainat at the President’s Funeral,” is written strictly as narrative. The only dialogue in the story occurred during retrospection when the main character, Zainat, thought back to previous conversations she had had. However, even this dialogue is very limited.

All of the stories revolve around the relationships between the various characters in the story and the relationships between the characters and the society in which they live -- themes that are common in Bakr’s stories and that are reflected by her style of writing and use of language. Because these themes are significant in understanding the reader’s experience of the story, a summary of each of the three stories is necessary to understand how Bakr’s linguistic choices with diglossia might influence the reader’s experience.

#### “The Smile of Death” (*Basama al-Maut*)

“The Smile of Death” is based on a young woman’s memories of her childhood friend, Samia, and her relationship with Samia’s mother, Umm Samia. The story begins at the train station, where the protagonist, who is never given a name throughout the story, is wishing farewell to Umm Samia, whom she has known for ten years. As the protagonist watches Umm Samia’s image grow smaller aboard the moving train, she feels very detached from her surroundings, as if she is dreaming. She compares this feeling to the time she underwent anesthesia. The protagonist tries to bring herself back to the current time and place as she becomes more and more aware that Umm Samia has departed. Once Umm Samia departs, the protagonist begins to reflect on her relationship

with Samia and Umm Samia.

The protagonist had met Samia in school ten years prior. At that time, she felt a strong attachment to Samia and was always at peace in her presence, despite Samia's biting sarcasm and continual mockery, which had even made the protagonist cry at times. However, Samia had a great sense of humor, which made the protagonist love her and think of her as more beautiful, funnier, and more intelligent than herself.

One day, Samia took the protagonist to meet her mother, Umm Samia. From the first time she met her, the protagonist had a feeling of astonishment whenever she saw Umm Samia. Umm Samia was a very emotional woman and even though she didn't speak much, she was often moved to tears. Examples of these times were when the protagonist informed her that the girls had passed their exams or when she greeted Umm Samia on a holiday. Without saying a word, Umm Samia would take the protagonist in her arms with tears streaming down her face.

Even though the protagonist had known Umm Samia for ten years, she never felt that she knew her well. Over the years, the protagonist would spend a lot of time at Samia's house with Samia and her mother. Umm Samia would sit and crochet in the same room with the girls, rarely ever saying a word. However, Samia and Umm Samia became like family to the protagonist, and she even visited them on every holiday.

After Samia and the protagonist graduated from school, Samia took a teaching job in the countryside where she was only able to return home a few times a week. During this time, the protagonist would go by Umm Samia's house everyday to see if she needed anything or to visit with her. During her visits, Umm Samia would look at the

protagonist with tears in her eyes and ask God to grant her success.

The last time the protagonist had seen Samia was when she came to visit the protagonist's mother during a short illness. Shortly afterwards, Samia was killed in an accident on her way to work. Many friends and relatives gathered quickly at Umm Samia's house after Samia died. These were all relatives whom the protagonist had never heard mentioned in the ten years she had known Samia and her mother.

When the protagonist heard the news, she rushed to Umm Samia's house in a state of shock and disbelief. When she saw Umm Samia, she became so distressed that she lost consciousness. The protagonist felt that it should have been she who had died because she believed Samia was better than her, even though most people viewed the protagonist as more beautiful, richer and smarter than Samia.

After Samia's death, the protagonist couldn't face Umm Samia. She felt responsible somehow for Samia's death, and she was embarrassed and ashamed. After the day of Samia's death, she stopped visiting Umm Samia. A month later, Umm Samia decided to return to her family's village. She came to the protagonist's house to say goodbye before she left town. The protagonist insisted on going to the train station with her.

The story ends as it began with the protagonist watching Umm Samia on the train as it departs. Umm Samia gives the protagonist a strange smile. This is the first time she has seen Umm Samia smile in the ten years she has known her. As her image grows smaller with the departing train, the protagonist feels frozen in time and place, detached from her true surroundings, a feeling which reminds her of when she underwent

anesthesia.

“The Beautiful Time” (*az-zaman al-jamil*)

“The Beautiful Time” is the story of Nousa, a woman who reflects on her childhood friend and first love, Salim. This reflection begins when Salim returns after having been gone for twenty years. As Nousa is getting ready to greet her old friend, she thinks back to when she was a young child and the strong feelings that she had for Salim. At that time, Salim was very dear to her, more dear than her own mother. However, Nousa was only seven years old and Salim was much older than her. He viewed Nousa much like a younger sister and a child that he helped care for. Nousa’s reflections on the time she spent with Salim contrast her childish immaturity and Salim’s role as her caretaker with her intense romantic love for Salim.

Salim’s return also jogs memories of Nafila, the girl whom Salim later married. Nafila was older and Nousa thought she was very pretty with beautiful clothes and jewelry. Because of Nousa’s intense feelings for Salim, feelings that she was too young to understand, Nousa was jealous of Nafila. Furthermore, Nousa remembers Salim’s marriage to Nafila as her first heartbreak.

At this point, Nousa comes back to the present and greets Salim. While Salim and Nousa’s mother reminisce about the past, Nousa can focus only on how much Salim has changed and how much older he looks. She notices that there is no joy in his eyes; they look dull and lack luster. Nousa’s mother begins to talk about how there is no joy in the world and how people have changed. Salim agrees and comments that bad people are

profiting while good people are suffering and going hungry.

While this conversation is going on, Nousa is thinking that she too doesn't feel any joy in the world that there is no genuine laughter and people don't care for each other any more. She comments to Salim that these facts are why she never married. Nousa, Salim and Nousa's mother continue to talk about their concerns for the current state of affairs in the world: the poor quality of education for Salim's grandchildren, relatives who have moved abroad whom Nousa's mother fears she will never see again. Salim also weeps at the mention of his wife's name. The burden of these things brings Nousa to tears. Nousa feels that all of them have been crying on the inside waiting for a reason to vent their tears. She thinks perhaps people weep at the funerals of famous singers like Abdel Halim and Um Kulthum because it gives them an occasion for expressing pent-up feeling of sadness and loss.

Salim tells Nousa and her mother that he should go. He insists that they are all busy and he doesn't want to burden them. Nousa's mother tells him to come again. Salim promises to come back, but he never does.

“Zainat at the President's Funeral” (*zinaat fii janaaza al-ra'iis*)

In the story “Zainat at the President's Funeral,” the main character, Zainat, is an extremely poor, illiterate widow who enlists the help of a local barber named Abdu to help her write letters to the President of the Republic in order to request payment for the small monthly pension of three pounds to which she is entitled but which she never received. In this story, the President is never referred to by name, but only as “the

President of the Republic.” Linking his title to the funeral in the story, most readers interpret the president to be Nasser due to references of his sudden death, his popularity among the local people and the later infamous bread riots even though, his name is never given. Therefore, it is knowledge of the historical context that gives the President his identity for the readers.

After her written request, Zainat begins receiving a small pension. This event represents what Zainat believes is a very special relationship between her and the President, even though they never meet. Zainat believes that the President is personally concerned about her pension and the quality of her life since, to her mind, he acted so quickly to respond to her letter. She believes that he is her only supporter and spends long hours talking to pictures of him, which she keeps in her small shack. During this time, she convinces herself that she is in love with him.

The pension that Zainat begins receiving makes a difference in her life; however, she is still unable to meet all her expenses. Abdu, the barber, suggests Zainat write another letter to request an increase in her pension. Zainat, with Abdu’s help, sends nine letters to the President regarding her pension, but with no response. Still believing that she has a special relationship with the President, Zainat attempts to approach him personally with her request while he is returning from the mosque in a procession. Before Zainat is able to reach him, though, the President’s guards aggressively shove her away. This does not change Zainat’s feelings for the President nor her belief in their special relationship. In fact, Zainat believes that this incident makes their relationship stronger and that the President would have been mortified if he had known about the way

in which his guards had treated her.

After Zainat sends her tenth letter to the President, she finds out that he has died. The entire country is shocked and greatly grieved. She joins the other grieving citizens in the street to watch the funeral procession go by. As the procession goes by, Zainat realizes that the last letter she sent requesting an increase in her pension will not go to the president and that she does not know where it will go. At this thought, she goes into a state of frenzy and rushes towards the President's coffin. The guards try to stop her and she begins kicking, screaming and biting the people around her. They take her to the police station and file a report. The story concludes with a commentary about how Zainat was detained at another police station a few years later after participating in riots that began when the government raised the price of bread. She went to the station saying, "May God have mercy on your soul, our dear love."

It is worth noting that a section about Abdu's writing in the letters is woven into the story of Zainat. Abdu uses his rhetorical talents in writing these letters in order to get a response from the President. Yet, it seems as if his writing skills are weak because they didn't elicit any response from the government after the first letter. However, writing the letters strengthens his rhetorical talents and helps him find new words that move him. Additionally, the quick response to the first letter greatly increases his confidence in his writing ability. Abdu includes in his letters expressions of gratitude, laudatory remarks about the President, and other idiomatic phrases typical of this type of letter.

## **The Participants**

In order to answer the third and fourth questions, I asked eight women to read Bakr's three short stories, and to consider what they believe was dialect in the text and how it effected their perception of the stories. The eight women who participated in the study all came directly to the United States from the Middle East and were able to read Arabic texts. All but one of the participants were teachers of Modern Standard Arabic; five came from Egypt, one from Syria, one from Iraq and one from Sudan. I had originally intended include six women in the study, three who were teachers of Arabic and three non-teachers of Arabic. However, at the time, I was studying Arabic in Monterey, CA and was unable to find female native Arabic speakers in the area who were not teachers of MSA. I also attempted to include younger participants in the study to see if there was a difference of perception among various age groups. However, I was unable to find younger participants at the time.

All the participants were of the same age group ranging from 40-60 years old and had received a university degree: A.A. (1), B.A. (2), M.A. (2) and PhD (1). All participants had diverse educational backgrounds with degrees in social work, library science, linguistics and economics. The participants were selected based on availability; however, I attempted to find individuals from various countries in order to determine if there are different perceptions in how the dialect is used throughout various countries and if individuals from different countries were able to determine a clear distinction between the MSA and the Egyptian dialect in Bakr's texts.

## **The Analysis**

Bakr's writing was analyzed in two stages. The first stage was designed to look at where Bakr uses the dialect in the text of the three stories discussed above. In this stage, each of the eight participants was asked to read the three stories and highlight the passages in the texts that she thought were written in, or represented, the Egyptian dialect. The participants were also asked to think about the language that Bakr uses in her writing while they were reading the stories. Of the eight participants, all eight read the stories; however, only six highlighted what they thought was dialect in each story: one of the Egyptian women and the Syrian woman did not return the stories with highlighted text, but they did participate in the interview.

The methodology, use in this stage of the study, has limitations in that it focuses only on two language varieties due to the fact that the students were told to only look what they considered dialect and non-dialect. Consequentially, this methodology set up the study in a different way than if I had asked the students to identify more than just the two categories of language, such as identifying dialect, MSA, what could be both MSA and dialect, or if I had framed the task in some other way. As a result, the data that I received was likely different than those I would have collected if I had done the study in a different way.

At the second stage, the participants were asked to explain why they thought the parts of the text that they underlined were dialect. They were also asked why they believed these parts were not MSA. Next, the participants were interviewed in order to

determine how they perceived the writing style in the stories and how this style affected their own perceptions of the stories. I also talked with them about how the stories affected them and what they took away with them after reading the stories.

The questions for the interviews were composed with the attempt to not lead the readers to any particular conclusion. They addressed the areas of the reader's knowledge about the writer, perception of the language duality present in the narratives, and their own response to the stories. The questions that were used during the interview are below.

### Questions

- 1) Who do you think the author is speaking to?
- 2) Do you think she reaches her intended audience?
- 3) How do you think her intended audience will respond to the story?
- 4) How do you think Bakr is different from other writers? How is her writing style different from other writers?
- 5) How does she use the Arabic language as compared to other Egyptian writers?
- 6) How might her stories be different if she had used the language a different way?
- 7) How does Bakr's use of language influence the meaning of the stories?
- 8) Have you heard of Salwa Bakr? In what context?
- 9) What kind of effect do you think she is trying to create? Was she successful in your case?
- 10) Does her use of language challenge your thinking in terms of

social/political/religious barriers?

The interviews were conducted with six of the participants; the other two participants, one of the Egyptian women and the Sudanese woman, were unavailable to interview. After the interviews, the texts from each of the participants were analyzed; this included six copies of each of the three stories with the areas that the participants identified as dialect. As I began the analysis, I noticed that all of the participants had highlighted different words and phrases as dialect. As a result, there were a large number of words and phrases that were identified as dialect by only one or two of the participants. In order to standardize the analysis of the language, I decided to use only words and phrases that were identified as dialect by a minimum of three of the six participants. From this, I found a total of 123 examples that were identified as dialect by three or more of the participants. Next I labeled these 123 examples based on the number of participants that identified each as dialect, for example, four out of six, five out of six, etc. I then chose examples to further analyze that had at least five of the six participants or all six of the participants identifying them as dialect. I also chose examples of dialect that displayed a different pattern of Bakr's use of language than patterns that occurred consistently throughout the story. In the next chapter, these examples of dialect will be analyzed based on Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model. This analysis will explore the marked and unmarked linguistic choices that that Bakr makes and what these choices index for the reader in terms of social class, locality, and ethnicity.

## **Chapter 4 - Data/Analysis**

### **Introduction**

All of the participants of this study noticed a clear distinction between the dialect and the MSA in Bakr's stories. However, several of the participants felt that the use of the dialect did not change the meaning of the story or convey a particular message. Additionally, three of the participants felt that it was Bakr's writing style that was unique rather than her use of language, because the mixing of the dialect and MSA is very common in Egyptian society and has been used by many writers. (Personal Interview with participant, September 2006) Therefore, the participants felt that there was nothing unusual or unique about the use of the dialect in the stories. They also felt that the politics at the time did not influence the mixing of the two language varieties, but instead influenced the events of the stories.

Furthermore, the participants felt that Bakr's style of writing showed that she does not disregard the dialect or try to impose it on people either. The dialect is constantly present in society and on television, where people frequently switch between the colloquial and MSA. (Personal Interview with participant, July 2006) They also expressed that Bakr is not the only one to write this way, nor is she the first person to write this way; she is part of a movement of writers who use both the dialect and the MSA when they write. (Personal Interview with participant, November 2006)

Despite recognizing a clear distinction between the dialect and the MSA in the stories, the participants did not agree on which passages of Bakr's texts were in the

dialect. However, there were several passages that four of the six or five of the six participants agreed contained dialect. Nevertheless, every participant highlighted examples of dialect that none of the other participants identified as dialect, even though some of these examples are commonly used in the Egyptian dialect.

That fact that the participants did not agree on what can be labeled as dialect shows that there does not seem to be any clear-cut distinction shared by all between what is dialect and what is MSA. Even though I asked all the participants why they thought the words and phrases that they highlighted were dialect and they all said, "Because it is dialect," all the participants had different ideas about which words and phrases qualified as being written in the dialect. However, there were some patterns among the participants themselves in terms of the prevalence of dialect in Bakr's stories. Two of the participants were very conservative in what they considered dialect, while two other participants were very liberal in what they considered dialect. The two participants who were more conservative in what they considered dialect had higher levels of education in the field of language and literature; one had a PhD in Applied Linguistics while the other had a M.A. in Library Science. Another participant who only participated in the interview and was able to identify various levels of Arabic in the stories as well as the dialect had a M.A. in Economics. The two participants who were the most liberal in what they identified as dialect had lower-level degrees in a non-linguistically related field; one had a B.A. in Social Work while the other had an A.A. in drafting. This could show a correlation between the level and field of education and the criteria for distinguishing between dialectal and MSA forms.

In addition, some patterns emerged regarding the participants' opinions of Bakr, her use of language, and the effect that Bakr's writing had on the participants while reading the stories. These patterns emerged from the comments that the participants made during the interview. Even though five of the six participants had not heard of Salwa Bakr prior to the study, all six of the participants identified the colloquial words and phrases as typical to the Egyptian dialect, and all agreed that these words and phrases were appropriate for the context of the story. Five of the six participants thought Bakr's writing had a social or political motive; however, the motive was not expressed through the use of the language, but through the situations in the story. Four of the six participants thought the dialect helped readers to experience the story and made the story more real for the readers than the use of MSA alone would have. Three of the six participants thought that Bakr was reflecting the language as it is actually used and that her style of writing, not her use of language, was unique. Finally, five of the six participants thought the words Bakr used gave the truest impression of the meaning, or that the meaning couldn't be expressed in any other way, for example, by using MSA.

For the rest of this chapter, I will be analyzing excerpts from three of Bakr's stories looking at the way the dialect is used in the stories and the effect on the reader. I will be using Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model to look at what is marked and unmarked with respect to code choice and what Bakr's use of language indexes in these excerpts.

## **The Smile of Death (basama al-maut)**

“The Smile of Death” is written in first person as a stream of consciousness with very limited dialogue. Since this form of writing is based on internal thought, I had expected that there would be a significant amount of dialect, similar to a story with a lot of dialogue. However, this story had the least amount of dialect in it. There were seven passages in which more than three of the six participants agreed the dialect was used. For six of these seven examples, no more than three of the six participants agreed that these phrases were dialect. For the seventh example, four out of six participants agreed that this phrase was dialect. Consequently, this phrase was the only phrase in the story that had more than half of the six participants identifying it as dialect. In addition, most of the words viewed as dialect by the participants were borrowed words or local phrases and names.

For this story, I will be analyzing three of the seven examples of dialect identified in the story. The other four examples that were identified as dialect were repetitions of the same phrase. In terms of thinking about Myers-Scotton’s Markedness Model, all the examples of dialect that I will be discussing for this story are marked choices, indexing the Egyptianness of the characters while the use of MSA is unmarked. This use of the dialect indexes the Egyptianness of the characters because they are words and phrases typical of the Egyptian dialect and are either used to describe the characters or are spoken by them.

The first example of the use of the dialect in the story is an idiomatic phrase that appears in the middle of a paragraph written in MSA. In this paragraph, the protagonist

is describing the personality of her friend, Samia, and gives an example of Samia's typical behavior. Even though this dialectal phrase appears in the middle of a paragraph of MSA, it is appropriate within the context of that paragraph.

مرة شبهتني بالارنب بوجود البنات، غضبت وبكيت بحرقه، ولكنها سرعان ما اعتذرت لي دون ان تقتنع بذلك، وهي تسألني بدهشه: وهل مثل هذه الاشياء تدعو للغضب؟! ... وأيضاً البكاء؟!!! سامية. بمها خفيف جدا هذا ما اظن انه حبيني فيها دائما

Marra shabhatni bi-l-arnab bi-wajuud al-banaat, ghaDibtu wa bakaytu bi-Hurqa, wa lakinaha sur'aana maa i? tadharat lii duun an taqtana?u bi-dhalik, wa hiya tasa'aluni bi-dahishihu: wa hal mithl hadhihi al-ashya' tada?u li-l-ghaDab?! ... wa aiDan al-buka'?!! saamia .. *damaha khafif* jiddan hadha maa uZan anahu Hababani fiiha daa'iman, ...

One time, she compared me with a rabbit. I became angry and cried in distress. She quickly apologized to me without conviction and asked me with astonishment, "Do things like this cause you to be angry? And to cry also?" Samia ... she was very *charming*. This is what I thought always made me like her.

Literally translated this phrases means "her blood is light;" however, its connotation is that Samia is charming or amusing. It is not uncommon in Arabic to see the word "blood" used in an idiomatic fashion to describe someone's character. There are several idioms that use the word "blood" with various adjectives to give different qualities or characteristics to people. Furthermore, it is the order of the words in the phrase that differentiate it into dialect or MSA.

For this particular phrase in the story, the adjective is placed after the noun, “damaha khafiif.” This varies from the MSA structure of the phrase where the adjective is placed before the noun, as in “khafiif damaha.” In MSA, the literal translation becomes “lightness of her blood.” By putting the adjective after the noun, as in the dialect, the focus of the phrase becomes the adjective, which describes Samia’s character. As a result, this phrase focuses on feelings and qualities of people rather than on physical objects and events. In contrast to the dialect, the MSA version, which rearranges the word order by placing the noun after the adjective, focuses on a concrete object. As a result, the phrase appears to be more concrete and grounded with the physical word rather than with feelings and relationships. By placing a dialectal phrase that focuses on the qualities of a character in the middle of a narrative written in MSA, the reader’s attention is drawn to the importance of the characters and their relationships in the story. Consequently, as one interviewee noted, the language that Bakr uses does not focus on a particular object or place, but on feelings and relationships between the characters (Personal Interview with participant, July 2006). This makes the story appear to be more intimate and realistic; a characteristic several readers expressed strong appreciation for. (Personal Interview with participant, October 2006)

The second example of dialect in the story is a phrase that utilizes a borrowed Turkish word and a borrowed French word to describe a particular style of furniture. This phrase appears on four other occasions throughout the story; however, the word “kanaba” is used alone without the word “istaambuli.” It is only the first time that this phrase is mentioned that the words “kanaba” and “istaambuli” appear together as shown

in the passage below.

كنا نجلس دائماً جلستنا الثلاثية هذه هي على الكنبة الإستانبولي القديمة الموضوعة تحت  
النافذة عينها مرة على شغل الكيروشية الذي بيدها ومرة على الشارع الهادئ الذي قلما  
يعبره عابر

Kunna najlisu daa'imān jalisatna ath-thulaathia hadhihi hiya ?alaa al-kanaba al-istaambuli al-qadiima al-mauDuu?a taHta an-naafidha ?ainuha marra ?ala shughl al-kiruushia alladhi bi-yadiha wa marra ?ala al-shaari? al-hadi' alladhi qallama ya?abaruhu ?aabir

The three of us always sat in this manner, she (Umm Samia)) on the old Ottoman placed under the window, her eyes at times on the crochette that was in her hands and at times on the quiet street which pedestrians seldom crossed,....

The words “kanaba” (< French canape ‘couch’) and “istaambuli” (< Turkish Istanbul ‘Istanbul’) are common words borrowed from the French and Turkish languages respectively, and, as such, they refer to objects imported from other cultures. The word “kanaba” is an Arabized word for “couch,” and the word “istaambuli” is a reference to the Ottoman Empire. This phrase, “kanaba istaambuli,” gives the connotation of a very particular style of couch. The MSA word for couch is “maqa’d,” however; this word would not describe this particular type of couch as accurately as these words of foreign origin would. As a result, dialectal phrases can be used to give a precision of meaning to the objects that the characters encounter. In this way, these borrowed words give a

specific label to specific objects, which become more precise and local, creating a more vivid image for the readers than a generic MSA term would create.

Furthermore, the use of the dialectal phrase rather than MSA draws the reader into the every day life of the characters through the common objects that they regularly encounter. As a couch is a common everyday object, the use of dialect words, which are understood by native Egyptians and used in daily life (Personal Interview with participant, May 2006), brings the reader into the everyday life of the character and creates a sense of familiarity within the story. These everyday objects are best expressed in the dialect, or as borrowed words, because these words are familiar to the reader and are commonly used in the dialect. (Personal Interview with participant, July 2006) However, as with most other borrowed words, they are not commonly used in MSA. (Personal Interview with participant, November 2006) Therefore, in this same context, an MSA word would distance the readers from the characters. Nevertheless, by utilizing words and phrases that are particular to the Egyptian dialect (Personal Interview with participant, May 2006) combined with the MSA, Bakr can, at the same time, transfer the cultural background to some of the readers and also address a broader spectrum of readers. (Personal Interview with participant, July 2006)

The third example of dialect in the story is a spoken phrase that appears as the final line at the end of a passage written in MSA. This example is the only passage in this story that more than three of the six participants labeled as dialect; four of the six participants agreed that it was dialect. It is the final exclamation at the end of the passage that closes the current chapter of the story and begins a new chapter about the family cat,

“Pussy.”

وهي (ام سامية) لا تتحدث أبداً ولا تشاركنا الحديث أو حتى تبتسم لنكات سامية، فقط من حين الاخر كانت تباعد بين حديثنا قائلة:

- سأصنع شايا.

او تنبهنا:

- استعدوا للأكل.

ما عدا ذلك، لا اذكرها متكلمة قط...أذكر مرة بعيدة ذهبت فيها لسامية لتغيبها عن المدرسة يومين، وعندما دقت الباب فتحت لي هي، وطالعتني عيناها والدمع يتساقط منهما على يدي التي تعانق يدها وقالت:

- بوسى ولدت امبارح ثلاثة!!

wa hiya (umm saamia) la tataHadathu abadan wa la tashaarikna al-Hadiith au Hatta tabtasamu li-nikaat saamia, faqaT min Hiin al-akhar kaanat taba?adu baina Hadiithna qaa'ilan:

- sa'aSana?u shaayan

au tanbahuna:

- ista?adu li-l-akl

ma ?ada dhalik, la adhakaruha mutakallima qaTTu...adhakaru marra ba?iida dhahabtu fiiha li-saamia li-taghayyubiha ?an la-madrasa yaumain, wa ?indama daqaqtu al-baab fataHat lii hiya, wa Taala?atni ?ainaha wa al-dam?a yatasaaqaTu minhuma ?ala yadi allati taa?anaqu yadiha wa qaalat:

- busi waladat imbaaraH thalaatha!!

She (Umm Samia) never spoke or conversed with us, or even smiled at Samia's jokes. She would only, from time to time, interrupt our conversation saying, "I will put on some tea," or to remind us to, "Get ready to eat."

Except for that, I don't remember her ever speaking...I remember a long time ago I went to see Samia because she had been absent from school for two days. As soon as I knocked on the door, Umm Samia opened it for me and looked at me. She embraced my hand and with tears falling from her eyes she said, "*Pussy had three kittens yesterday!*"

The phrase, “Bussi walidat imbarah thalath!” is translated to English as, “Pussy had three [kittens] yesterday.” What makes this phrase dialect is that Bakr uses the dialectal term “imbarah” for “yesterday” rather than the MSA word “ams.” The sentence structure also indicates the dialect because Bakr puts the subject before the verb rather than after it as it would likely be in MSA.

This phrase comes at the end of a passage where the protagonist tells about how she spent her time with Samia and Umm Samia and uses these events to further describe her relationship with Umm Samia. Given the nature of diglossia, it is not uncommon to see the dialect used to relate the dialogue in a story. However, the other spoken phrases in the story do not follow the typical nature of diglossia and are written in MSA rather than the dialect.

Throughout this passage, the protagonist relates that during these times, Umm Samia would sit across the room crocheting and looking out the window rarely saying a word. When she did speak, it was in reference to bringing food or tea to the girls. These spoken references to food and drink are written in MSA. However, the final phrase in this section, where Umm Samia tells the protagonist that Pussy had three kittens, was a more personal statement about what was happening in Umm Samia’s life rather than the

perfunctory statements that she usually made, and is written in dialect. In this statement, Umm Samia is showing emotion as compared to her previous comments regarding food or drink, which are more functional phrases. By closing this section with a personal statement written in dialect, the relationship between the protagonist and Umm Samia appears to be more personal than it would otherwise have seemed. Therefore, in this example, the use of the dialect draws the two characters even closer together.

Additionally, the use of the dialect, as words that real people speak, makes the stories more real and reflects the language as it is actually used. One of the participants commented that “Bakr’s use of the dialect creates a relationship with the reader by being simpler, and makes it easier for the reader to understand what the story is about.”

(Personal Interview with participant, July 2006) The dialect also gives the story a touch of reality and sincerity. (Personal Interview with participant, October 2006) The MSA would likely not create the same impression; as one of the participants confirmed stating that when the dialect is not used a lot, she does not feel as close to the characters.

(Personal Interview with participant, July 2006)

Umm Samia’s statement also introduces a new character to the story, Pussy, the family cat, the presence of which brings the family closer as they interact with it. Pussy is not mentioned earlier in the story, and this statement starts a new section about Pussy and her role in the family. Umm Samia’s concern for and interaction with the cat makes her more personable than she originally seemed. Not only does this statement enhance the relationship between the protagonist and Umm Samia, but it also shows a different and more personable side to Umm Samia than what had previously come across in the

story.

### **The Beautiful Time (az-zaman al-jamil)**

“The Beautiful Time” is written as a mix of narrative and dialogue. I expected there to be a moderate amount of dialect in the story since there was a lot of dialogue and the dialect could logically be used in the dialogue. This assumption proved to be true in that this story had the second largest amount of dialect of the three stories with 43 samples that more than three out of the six participants agreed were dialect. Among these 43 examples, all six of the participants agreed that four of these examples were dialect. In addition, the majority of the dialect occurred in the dialogue, though there were some borrowed words and local names that were identified as dialect as well. These borrowed words refer to the names of local places or food and are highlighted by Bakr by being written in parentheses, which separates them out from the rest of the text. In other words, in this story, the dialect is not exactly mixed with MSA, but it is used only as borrowed words, which are highlighted, or in the dialogue. As a result, this story has the clearest distinction of the three stories as to where the dialect is used and where it is not used, i.e. dialect used for dialogue and the MSA used for narrative writing. Also, by putting borrowed words in parentheses, Bakr is emphasizing this distinction.

During the story, the narrative occasionally reveals the present inner thoughts of the protagonist, Nousa. Her memories of the past, however, are played out in dialogue between herself and Salim or herself and her mother. Nousa’s internal thoughts are written almost exclusively in MSA, while the dialect occurs in the dialogue that replays

Nousa's memories. This distinction between the MSA and the dialect separates Nousa's current thoughts from the memories of her past, emphasizing the difference between past and present. In this story, the use of the dialect to describe the past makes the past more alive bringing it into the present and allowing the reader to experience these events with Nousa. As a result, the use of the dialect makes the past appear less distant than it really is, even though, in the story, twenty years had gone by. Furthermore, the use of the MSA to reflect on the past gives the MSA a more analytical role while the use of the dialect to recount Nousa's life experience gives the dialect a worldlier, and more experiential role.

Originally, I had expected Nousa's inner thoughts to be written in dialect as I believed it to be similar to spoken language. However, as in the "Smile of Death," inner thoughts, which exist somewhere between spoken and written language, are not revealed in the dialect, but in MSA instead. The fact that inner thoughts are written in MSA and not dialect seems to reveal a correlation between inner thoughts and written language, both being more private than spoken language as the owner of the thoughts or writings can choose when to display his or her thoughts and to whom as opposed to spoken language, which is harder to control with respect to who hears it when it is spoken.

Since the majority of examples of dialect appeared in the dialogue of the story, I chose to analyze examples that varied from the common diglossic system of the narrative's being written in MSA and the dialogue's being written in dialect. This left me with borrowed words within a passage written in MSA, and a passage of dialogue written almost exclusively in MSA juxtaposed with a passage of dialogue written almost exclusively in dialect. I also included a structure that was similar to a phrase I had

analyzed in “The Smile of Death.”

With respect to Myers-Scotton’s Markedness Model, the first two examples of dialect that I will be discussing for this story are marked as indexing the Egyptianness of the characters and the foreignness of the objects, while the MSA is unmarked. For the final conversation that I will be discussing, the MSA is marked and the dialect is unmarked, indexing the separation of the characters from the past. The MSA is marked in this passage because it is used in the dialogue, which is normally reserved for the dialect in everyday interactions.

The first three examples of the dialect that I will be discussing appear in the first paragraph of the story as borrowed words. These words appear throughout the paragraph and are highlighted in the text by double parenthesis differentiating them from the rest of the text, which is written mainly in MSA.

لن اذهب الى عملي في ميدان التحرير، وسأستريح لمدة ثلاثة أيام من مصائب المواصلات،  
ورائحة أنفاس ((الكمساري)) المشبعة ببخار البصل والفاول، ولن أرى مبنى ((الانتكخانة))  
الوسخ، وخازوق المدينة المسمى بالبرج، وإعلان ((شوييس))، وأشياء أخرى

lan adhabu ilaa ?amalii fii midaan al-taHriir, wa sa'astaryahu li-mudda thalaatha  
ayyaam min maSaa'ib al-muwaaSalaat, wa raa'iHa anfaas ((al-kumsaarii)) al-  
mushabba?a bi-bukhaar al-baSal wa al-fuul, wa lan araa mabna ((al-antikhaana))  
al-wasikh, wa khaazuuq al-madiina al-musamma bi-l-burj, wa i?laan  
((shuwabis)), wa ashya' ukhraa...

I won't go to work in Liberation Square and will rest for three days from the

hardship of commuting and the odor of the ((*conductor's*)) breath which is saturated with the fumes of onions and ful, or cooked beans. I will not see the dirty ((*museum*)) building, the *stick of the city called the tower*, the advertisement for ((*Schweppes*)) and other things...

These words “kamsari” (< It. *commissario* ‘conductor’), “antikkhanna” (< Turk. *alantkkhanh* ‘museum’), referring to the Egyptian museum in Cairo, and “shawibis” (< Engl. ‘*Schweppes*’), referring to a brand of carbonated beverages, are common words in the everyday life of Egypt and give a precise and local meaning to the text. They index Egyptian culture more specifically than the MSA equivalents might because the words and phrases from the dialect that Bakr uses have a stronger effect on the reader and create a more personal relationship between the reader and the story. By using the dialect words to name food, drinks, and buildings or by putting common dialect phrases in parentheses, Bakr draws attention to these items. In addition, the borrowed words that Bakr uses are commonly used in local villages. They are particular to a certain area, in particular rural environments, and evoke thoughts or feeling of these areas. Because of this, the dialectal, or borrowed words, set the location of the story and the area of Egypt where the story takes place. (Personal Interview with participant, July 2006)

The use of these borrowed words also brings the reader into the realm of Nousa’s everyday life while she is thinking about her daily commute to and from work. They help the reader experience the story and relate to Nousa’s character.

The next example I chose to analyze is an idiomatic phrase that occurs in the dialogue of the story. The reason that I chose to analyze this phrase is because it is

structurally similar to the idiomatic phrase, “damaha khafiif,” that occurred in “The Smile of Death”; however, the idiomatic phrase in “The Smile of Death” occurs within a narrative written in MSA, while the similar phrase in “A Beautiful Time” occurs in the dialogue of the story.

<وفجأة جاءتني صورة ((نافلة)) كاملة...>>((نافلة)) غريمتي...((نافلة)) التي كنت اغار منها تلك الغيرة...يتملكني شعور خفي، بأن...أخذه (سليم) واجري... بعيداً عن ((نافلة)) ولما تجلس أمامه،...اقترب منه...وافرد له ذراعي واقبله في كتفه... وفي الدار، بعد ان نعود، تسألني أمي عن حال ((نافلة))..فأجيبها في حنق. - ((نافلة)) دمها ثقيل.

wa faj'atan jaa'atni Suura ((Naafila)) kaamila...((Naafila)) ghariimati...((Naafila)) allati kunntu aghaar minha tilka al-ghaira...yatamalakni shu?uur khafiyy, bi-anna...aakhadhuhu (saliim) wa ajari ba?iidan ?an ((Naafila)), wa lamma tajlisu amaamahu aqtirabu minhu.... wa afradu lihu dhiraa?ii wa aqbaluhu fii katifihi... wa fii-d-daar, ba?da an na?audu, tasa'alunii ummii ?an Haal ((Naafila))...fa'ajiibuha fii Hanaq: ((Naafila)) damaha thaqiil.

Suddenly, a complete image of ((Nafila)) came to me...Nafila, my rival who I was jealous of... a hidden sensation to take Salim and run far away from ((Nafila)) took possession of me...when she sat in front of him...I moved closer to him... I reached out my arm to him and kissed him on his shoulder. After we returned home, my mother asked me how Nafila was. I answered her, "Nafila is intolerable."

Literally translated, this phrases means “her blood is heavy”; however, its

connotation is that Naafila is unappealing or unpleasant. In MSA, the adjective normally comes before the noun, as in “thaqil damaha.” In dialect, however, the adjective comes after the noun, as in “damaha thaqil,” which puts more emphasis on the characteristic of the person. As in “The Smile of Death,” placing the adjective after the noun puts the focus on the feelings and qualities of people rather than on physical objects and events.

The majority of the dialect in the story is seen through the dialogue, and most of the dialogue is written in dialect. However, there is a passage of dialogue in the story where there was no dialect. This conversation occurs near the end of the story after Nousa finishes reminiscing about her childhood relationship and greets Salim on his present return. It takes place between Salim and Nousa’s mother about the state of the world and how things have changed for the worst. There are two sections to this conversation. The first section has Nousa’s mother talking about how there is no more joy in the world and remembering times in the past when they would spend holidays together. The second section of the conversation is Salim’s response to Nousa’s mother. He curses the present days and says that bad people are making the good people look bad through their immoral and illegal activities. The conversation ends with Nousa thinking about how she too has noticed that there is no joy in the world and that people don’t seem genuinely happy.

It is interesting to look at the way that the dialect is used in this conversation. In the first section, where Nousa’s mother is talking, only one out of six participants identified any dialect in this section. In the second section, three out of six participants identified the majority of the passage as having dialect in it and a total of five out of six

participants identified at least one word of dialect in the second section. Only one participant did not identify any dialect in the passage.

- الحياة صارت بلا طعم يا سليم... والناس لم تعد ناس... أتذكر يا سليم عندما كنا في شم  
النسيم، نلون مائة وخمسين بيضة كاملة ونتبارى جميعا في أكلها... لم يكن للأشياء ثمن  
وقتها. تنهد وأشعل سيجارة، سعل بعدها قليلاً وامن على كلام امي قائلاً:  
- الناس جاءت في الزمن الملعون هذا... وأولاد الحرام لم يتركوا شيئاً لأولاد الحلال،  
تصوري... عيال سعدون الحاوي، صار عندهم الآن عمارات؟ ناس تقول مخدرات، وناس  
تقول الشقق المفروشة، وشغل الحرام.. والله أعلم.

-al-Hayaah Saarat bi-laa Ta?m ya-saliim... wa an-naas lam ta?adu  
naas...atadhakru yaa saliim ?indama kanna fii shamm an-nasiim, nalaun mi'a wa  
khamsiin baida kaamila wa natabaara jami?an fii akaluha...lam yakun li-l-ashya'  
thaman waqtaha. tanahada wa asha?ala sigaara, sa?ala ba?daha qaliilan wa amuna  
?alaa kalaam ummi qaa'alan  
-an-naas jaa?at fi-z-zaman al-mal?uun hadha...wa aulaad al-Haraam lam yatraku  
shay'an li-l-aulaad al-Halaal, taSawwuri...?iyaal sa?aduun al-Haawii, Saara  
?indahum al-laam ?imaaraat?? naas taqulu mukhaddiraat wa naas taqulu al-  
shuqaq al-mafruush, wa shughl al-Haraam...wa allaah a?alim.

Life has become without flavor, Salim. People are no longer the same. I remember, Salim, during shamm an-nasiim (a popular Egyptian holiday celebrated the Monday after Greek-Coptic Easter), we colored 150 eggs and competed in eating all of them. Nothing was expensive then. He sighed and lit a cigarette. Then he coughed slightly and agreed with mother's words saying, People are starving in this damned time. The bad people don't leave anything for the good....Imagine... the children of Sa'dun the juggler have become owners of

real estate? People speak of drugs and prostitution in furnished apartments. Only God knows.

The first section of the conversation is written in MSA and refers to the past. It states an opinion and then relays past events. The use of MSA in this part of the conversation gives the past a more distant feel in contrast to Nousa's memories being played out in the dialect, which bridges the gap between the past and present. There is a shift at this point in the story where, instead of Nousa being enveloped in her fond memories of the past, Nousa, Salim, and her mother feel separated from this past which they have such fond memories of, and are trapped in a present that they don't feel any happiness toward. Because of the formality of the MSA and its tendency to distance readers, it is not surprising to see the MSA used in this passage which expresses the character's separation from the past and unhappiness towards the present.

The second section of this conversation is written in dialect and expresses the characters' opinions about the present. This is a present that neither Nousa, nor Salim nor Nousa's mother appreciates or enjoys. However, this is the present that they are dealing with in their everyday lives. The familiarity of the dialect in this part of the conversation helps connect the reader to the present reality of Nousa's everyday life and helps the reader experience the dissatisfaction that Nousa lives from day to day. In addition, this conversation contrasts concrete facts and events recounted through the use of MSA to more abstract concepts like feelings and opinions recounted through the dialect.

### **“Zainat at the President’s Funeral” (*Zinaat fii janaazat al-ra’iis*)**

“Zainat at the President's Funeral” is written in narrative style with very little dialogue. It illustrates a series of events, which creates a concrete type of text, which describes the events that occur in the story with no abstract narrative. In this story, I expected the least amount of dialect because it was written as a narrative. However, this story had the greatest amount of dialect. The participants were also more in agreement about what was considered dialect in this story than in the others. This means there was less variation as to which words and phrases were highlight by the participants throughout the story as being dialectal. Overall, there were 73 examples of dialect with at least three out of six participants agreeing that these examples were dialect, and nine of these examples had all six of the participants agreeing that this was dialect. The use of the dialect in this story can be seen in the word choice, word structure or spelling, sentence structure, and idioms that Bakr uses.

There are nine spoken phrases that occur in the story. Theses phrases are separated from the rest of the text by parenthesizes, and there are no other words or phrases enclosed in parenthesizes in the story outside of these spoken phrases. I expected that these phrases would be written in dialect similar to how they would be spoken in everyday life. The participants confirmed this in that at least three of six participants agreed that all of these phrases were written in dialect. All six of the participants agreed that two of the phrases were dialect; five out of six participants agreed that four of the phrases were dialect, and four out of five participants agreed that two of the phrases were

dialect. With respect to the final phrase, two of the participants identified the entire phrase as dialect and two other participants identified part of the phrase as dialect. The reason there was a disagreement as to how much was dialect in the phrase was that this phrase is very similar in the dialect and in MSA. Sometimes Bakr uses phrases that are in the Egyptian dialect but when the readers read them, they understand them in the MSA with the same meaning even though the phrase could also be read as belonging to the dialect. (Personal Interview with participant, November 2006)

Because there were so many examples of the dialect in this story, I chose to analyze examples for which at least five of the six participants agreed that these examples were dialect. This left 28 examples of language, which either five or all six of the participants agreed were dialect. From this group of 28 examples, I analyzed seven different examples, however, two of the examples I analyze were an exception to this rule with only three of the participants agreeing that they were dialect. I chose these two examples because I had MSA equivalent of these examples and was able to compare the two language varieties.

In terms of thinking about Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, I argue that all the examples of dialect that I will be discussing from this story are marked, indexing the Egyptianness of the characters and in many cases the social class of Zainat, while the MSA is unmarked. These examples mark the Egyptianness of the characters because they are words and phrases, typical of the Egyptian dialect, that are used to describe the characters. The use of the dialect also signifies the lower, illiterate classes of Egyptian society and the switch to the dialect in the story indexes Zainat's social class.

For the first example of dialect that appears in the story, three out of the six participants identified this example as dialect. This example refers to the name of the barber who helps Zainat write letters to the President of the Republic. His name appears within the first paragraph of the story and is mentioned several other times throughout the story. Each time his name is mentioned, it is in a paragraph written mainly in MSA.

المفروض ان اسمها ((زينات)) لكن الكل كانوا ينادونها ((زنات)) حتى عبد المزين،  
عندما كان ينتهي من خط رسالة، بالنيابة عنها، الى رئيس الجمهورية... كان يذيل ما يكتبه  
باسم ((زنات محمد علي))...

al-mafruuD anna ismaha ((zinaat)) lakin al-kull kaanu yanaadunaha ((zanaat))  
Hatta ?abdu al-muzayyin, ?indama kaana yantahi min khaTT risaala, bi-n-niyaaba  
?anha, illaa ra'iis al-jumhuuria...kaana yadhyilu ma yaktubuhu bi-ism ((zanaat  
mahmud ?ali))

Her given name was ((Zainat)), but everyone called her ((Zanaat)) even Abdou the barber. When Abdu finished writing a letter to the President of the Republic on Zainat's behalf, he wrote her name, ((Zanaat Mahmud Ali)), at the end.

In this passage, the word “muzayyin,” which connotes the occupation of a barber, is used to describe Zainat’s friend, Abdu, rather than the common MSA word, “halaq.” The use of this dialect word makes Abdu appear much more Egyptian than the more common MSA word would have. It also casts the relationship between Abdu and Zainat as less formal, which brings the character of Abdu closer to the readers and makes

him appear more accessible to Zainat. The use of MSA in labeling Abdu's profession would have made the language more formal and could have had the effect of distancing Zainat and the readers from Abdu. Because the relationship between Zainat and Abdu is very important to the story, the use of the dialect helps strengthen their relationship and make it seem less formal and more familiar. The familiarity in the relationship between Zainat and Abdu also contrasts the distance in the relationship between Zainat and the President.

The second example of dialect that I analyzed is a phrase that appears at the end of a passage written almost exclusively in MSA. Five out of six participants identified this phrase as dialectal. It frames the passage of MSA and provides a commentary at the end of the passage.

انها عبيطة لانها تصورت انهم سيسمحون لها بالاقتراب، الى هذه الدرجة من رئيس  
الجمهورية،... ثم هل نسيت العسكر والمخبرين والحرس، الذين يحيطونه من كل ناحية،  
مطرح ما يروح!؟

anaha ?abiiTa li-anaha taSawwirat anhum sayasamuHun li-ha bi-l-iqtiraab, illaa  
hadhihi ad-daraja min ra'iis al-jumhuuria...thumma hal nasiyat al-?askar wa al-  
mukhabiriin wa al-Haras, alladhiin yaHawwaTunahu min kull naaHiya, maTruH  
ma yaruH?!

She was foolish to imagine that they would allow her to approach the President of the Republic to the degree that she did. Did she forget the troops, secret service, and guards who surrounded him on all sides everywhere he went?!

The passage that this phrase appears in explains how Zainat planned to approach the President personally, but was unable to do so due to the President's security detail. Abdu tells Zainat that she should have known she would not have been able to approach the President because he has guards everywhere he goes. At this point, the language of the text switches from MSA to Egyptian dialect; however, the switch occurs just at the end of the statement "everywhere he goes." Switching to dialect at this point emphasizes this phrase, punctuates the end of the paragraph, and frames the MSA. By using the dialect to frame the MSA, Bakr gives a clearer distinction to what is MSA and what is not MSA. The use of the dialect in this phrase also acts as a commentary on the narrative creating, for the reader, a feeling of being told about the events rather than reading about them. The sudden switch from MSA to dialect gives readers the feeling that they are with the characters listening to what was being said, drawing the reader into the story and bridging the distance often created by MSA.

The third phrase that I analyzed occurs in a passage that is written mostly in MSA mixed with some dialect. Five out of six participants identified this phrase as dialect. Like the example above, this phrase also serves as a commentary on the events that took place at this point in the story. However, this example occurs in the middle of the passage rather than punctuating or framing the end of the passage.

وكانت زينات تشوف الحادث على اساس انه جرى من وراء ظهر الرئيس، لانه لو درى  
ان اولاد الحرام، اياهم، منعوها من السلام عليه وتسليمه الورقة، لكان، ولا بد، يروحهم  
وراء الشمس، فهو يفهم، ويعرف نية زينات

wa kaanat zinaat tashufu al-Haadith ?alaa asaas anhu jaraa min waraa'a Zahr ar-  
ra'iis, li-annahu lau darii an aulaad al-Haraam, iyyahum, mana?uha min as-  
salaam ?alaihu wa tasaliimuhu al-waraqa, la-kaana, wa la budda, yaruhHum  
wara'a ash-shams, fa-huwa yafhim, wa ya?rif niyya zinaat

Zainat saw the incident as occurring behind the President's back, because if he  
knew that those bastards, all of them, prevented her from greeting him and  
delivering the note to him, he certainly would have sent them to the far ends of  
the earth because he would have understood and known Zainat's intentions.

This phrase emphasizes and reinforces Zainat's dislike for the President's guards.

The use of the dialect as commentary in the story makes the comments personal as if the  
reader is hearing the comment directly from someone who doesn't know MSA rather  
than through an impersonal medium like text, or the radio, which generally uses MSA.

The fourth phrase I analyzed is a phrase that occurs in the middle of a passage  
written in MSA. It occurs in the middle of the sentence and is the only dialect phrase  
used in this sentence. Five out of six participants identified this phrase as dialect.

لم تحل دون استمرار علاقتها بالرئيس، ولم تغير نفسها، من ناحيته، ابداء، كما ان صوره  
في عشتها بقيب في مطرحها، كما هي، تلك الصور، التي لم يكن اي شيء سواها يزين  
...العشة،

lam taHall duuna istimraar ?alaaqataha bi-r-ra'iis, wa lam taghyyar nafsaha, min naaHiyatihu, abadan, ka-ma an Suwarahu fii ?ushshataha baqiyat fii maTruHha, ka-ma hiya, tilka aS-Suwar allati lam yakun ayy shay' sawaaha yazzyin...al-?ushsha

After that, she wasn't determined to discontinue her relationship with the President nor would she ever change her opinion regarding him. Even his pictures, which were the only things decorating her shack, remained in their place.

In this phrase, Bakr uses the dialect word "maTraha" meaning "its place" instead of the MSA word "makaanaha." This passage explains how Zainat's feelings for the President haven't changed and how she still keeps his pictures in the same place as where they have always been, despite his guard's harsh treatment towards her. Bakr writes about Zainat's feeling for the President in MSA, and because of the formality of MSA, its use while discussing Zainat's feelings toward the President reinforces the distance within their relationship. However, she then uses the dialect word "maTraha" instead of the MSA word, "makaaniha," when referring to the location of the President's pictures in Zainat's shack. The use of the dialect here gives the President a physical place in the room with Zainat, and reinforces the central role that the President has in Zainat's life and the feelings that she has for him, even though the relationship is imaginary. It also blends the formality of the President's position with the shabby everydayness of Zainat's house.

The fifth phrase that I analyzed occurs in a long passage written mainly in MSA with some dialect mixed into the passage and gives a more precise meaning to the text.

All six of the participants agreed that this word is dialect.

وكذلك ديونها غير المنظورة، والتي هي عبارة عن عدة دعوات من اخيها، صاحب العيال،  
لاكل اللحم...

wa ka-dhaalika duyuuniha ghair al-manZuura, wa allati hiya ?ibaara ?an ?idda  
da?waat min akhiha, SaaHib al-?iyaal, li-akl al-laHm, ...

...as well as the unexpected debt, which consists of several invitations from her  
brother, the father of many children, to eat meat, ...

In this passage, Zainat is thinking about her brother who has many children to support. The word “?iyaal” is used to refer to her brother’s children. “?iyaal” actually means “dependents,” but is commonly used in Egyptian society to refer to children. In contrast to the dialect, the most commonly used word in MSA for children is “aulaad.” By using the Egyptian word “?iyaal” instead of the MSA word, the children become not just children, but dependents, and more specifically, Egyptian dependents. The use of the dialect in this phrase gives a more specific meaning to the word and also reinforcing the economic struggle most Egyptian families have in supporting their children. The more general MSA word, “aulaad,” doesn’t convey the economic burden that children provide as strongly as the Egyptian word “?iyaal.” Accordingly, many of the words that Bakr uses are commonly recognized as dialect by the readers. This recognition makes the meaning of the dialect words used in the stories much more accurate; in some cases,

there is no equivalent of these phrases in the MSA. (Personal Interview with participant, November 2006)

As the story continues, it moves between Zainat's relationship with the President, her struggle to survive and ways that her life has improved since she started receiving her pension; which she directly credits to the President. Zainat is marginalized in society. She is alone and widowed with no children in a society that values family and one where children take care of their parents because society can't provide for them. She is uneducated and poor, unable to contribute anything that would improve society or raise herself out of her situation. Because of her position in society, the dialect is the only language that Zainat has access to, as opposed to the characters in both "The Smile of Death" and "The Beautiful Time," who have access to MSA as well as the Egyptian dialect. Since Zainat mostly likely would not be able to understand MSA, the use of MSA in the text distances Zainat from readers at this level of society, and in a sense from parts of her own story. As a result, the switch between the MSA and the dialect contrasts the illiterate and marginalized social classes with the literate, higher classes and reinforces Zainat's social status within Egyptian society. In addition, the use of the dialect mixed with MSA in the text draws the reader into Zainat's everyday life and reminds them of her current situation. Zainat is not someone in a remote country, but someone in contemporary Egyptian society who needs to be acknowledged. The use of the dialect serves as this reminder. For example, the use of the dialect in the passage below indexes, and reminds the reader, of Zainat's social standing by juxtaposing the MSA with the dialect. It does this by using the dialect to describe Zainat sitting by the

side of the road, waiting for students to come by so she can sell them candy and toys, but using MSA when the story tells about Zainat building and decorating her home, an activity that doesn't focus directly on her low standing in society.

بعد ان استولت على بضعة امتار من ارض الحكومة، على جانب الطريق العمومي، حيث تجلس امامها، مناوبة، من الصبحية، حتى قرب غروب الشمس، ...

ba?da an istawalat ?ala biD?a amtaar min arD al-Hukuuma, ?ala jaanib aT-Tariiq al-?umuumi, Haithu tajlisu amaamaha, munaawiba, min al-SubHia, Hataa qurb ghuruub ash-shams, ...

Afterwards, she took over a few meters of government land on the side of the public road, which she dutifully sat in front of from the early morning to sun set...

In addition, the dialect is used for many of the items that Zainat buys when she begins receiving her pension. As can be seen in the example below, all of these items are food, common household items and clothing and the names Bakr gives them were identified as dialect by all six of the participants.

تشتري وابور جاز، وحلة المونيا لتطبخ في كلما هفت نفسها لاكلة لحم، كما ستقوم بشراء جلابية قطيفة زبدة، وقمطة بالخرز، بدلا من جلابيتها المقطعة.

tashtari waabuur gaaz, wa Halla alamonia li-taTbakh fii kullamaa haffat nafsuha li-akla laHm, ka-maa sataqum bi-shira' gallaabia qaTiifa zubda, wa qamTa bi-l-

kharaz, badlan min gallaabiataha al-maqTa?a.

She bought a gas stove (Fr.) and an alluminum cooking pot so that she could cook whenever she desired to eat meat, just as she bought a very fine velvet gallabia/dress and a kerchief with beads instead of her torn gallabia

The use of the dialect here brings the reader into the reality of Zainat's everyday life and helps the reader experience what Zainat experiences. It also helps the readers to experience the story as specifically Egyptian and local. This makes the story richer and more personal for the reader. The reader can smell and experience the culture through the dialectal words. The dialect gives more feeling to the situation, and the reader can get a lot of information from the dialect because these words and phrases are commonly understood and do not need to be explained in the text of the story. In this way, the dialect adds flavor to the MSA. (Personal Interview with participant, September 2006) Additionally, the use of the dialect makes the story more expressive and more Egyptian. This can be characterized as the locality of the universality. The closer the reader is to the environment in the story, the more universal and human the story appears to be. (Personal Interview with participant, October 2006) The dialect makes the events and objects in the story more real and tangible rather than remote or removed as the MSA would likely do.

This passage also shows the linguistic differences between the dialect and MSA. Some of the dialectal forms in Bakr's stories are written the same as the MSA equivalent, but pronounced differently in the dialect and the MSA; that is the dialectal and MSA

forms appear identical when written. For example, the phrase from the passage above, “qamTa bi-l-kharaz.” In MSA the letter ق is pronounced as a uvular stop, but in the dialect it is pronounced as a glottal stop. When some of the readers read the stories, they reported experiencing these words and phrases as Egyptian dialect even though the writing was identical with the MSA forms. (Personal Interview with participant, November 2006)

For other phrases it was not clear whether the forms were dialectal or MSA. For example, the status of the phrase “li-mask shaghla” in the sentence below is ambiguous. (Personal Interview with participant, November 2006)

وكان آخر هذه المحاولات، التقدم لمسك شغلة عاملة نظافة في المدرسة القريبة لسكنها،...

wa kaana aakhar hadzihi al-muHaawalaat, al-taqdim li-mask shaghla  
?aamala naZaafa fii al-madrasa al-qariiba li-sakiniha

These other attempts, finding work cleaning the school near her residence...

One of the readers originally said that this phrase was not expressed this way in the MSA. However, when she looked in the dictionary, she discovered that it was expressed in MSA in the same way as the dialect with the same meaning, but with a different form of the same root. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that for some idiomatic phrases used in the dialect and the MSA, the same root is used, but with a different form of the word. As a result, Bakr uses words and phrases in her stories whose

origin is not clear with respect to whether they are MSA or dialect. (Personal Interview with participant, November 2006) However, the effects of this fact on the reader are still unclear.

The story of Zainat is written from the perspective of a third-person omniscient narrator with very little dialogue. The nature of this style of writing is that it objectifies the characters in the story by talking about them from an external perspective. As a result, this style of writing can make the story appear more distancing than if it were written in first person or with a great deal of dialogue, just as the formality of the MSA can make the story appear distancing. However, the familiarity and everydayness of the dialect helps to draw the reader closer to Zainat and her personal struggles. Through her use of language and writing style, Bakr creates a situation where the readers feel removed from Zainat's life, but are also aware of Zainat's desires to become part of accepted society. Bakr's use of language creates a sense of reality between the class differences for the reader and tries to bridge the gap by using the dialect to make Zainat's life more real and tangible to the readers.

In contrast to "Zainat at the President's Funeral," "The Smile of Death" is written as a stream of consciousness in first person. The first person narrators help the reader to identify with the characters and allow the readers the opportunity of being privy to the character's understanding of her actions. This writing style draws the reader into the story and helps the readers connect to the characters. Finally, of the three stories I analyzed, "The Smile of Death" had the least amount of dialect in it as compared to "Zainat at the President's Funeral," which had the most amount of dialect in it. Writing

“The Smile of Death,” and also “The Beautiful Time,” in mainly MSA shows that the characters in these stories have access to MSA, which tells the reader something about the character’s education and social status, indexing a higher education level and social standing that someone in Egyptian society who does not have access to MSA. Therefore, in these two stories, telling the story in first person in dialect would misrepresent the language the characters have access to. This demonstrates a possible correlation between the characters and the language used by the characters or to talk about them.

Furthermore, “The Smile of Death” focuses on the intimate relationship between the characters, while “Zainat,” focus on an imaginary relationship between Zainat and the President. The fact that the relationship between Zainat and the President is very weak, or non-existent, could have a distancing effect on the reader and it is possible that the dialect bridges that distance. This fact could suggest a correlation between the degree of intimacy between the characters and the amount of dialect found in a story.

The fact that very little dialect is used in many passages of Bakr’s stories is significant considering the fact that much more dialect could actually have been used, and more justifiably, the dialogue could have been written entirely in dialect. However, this study showed that this is not the case; rather we find instances of isolated items in the dialect. Using Meyer-Scotton’s model, it is possible to demonstrate the power of the ideologies that are associated with diglossia. For example, the dialect indexing what is specific and local, and in particular, specifically Egyptian, or the use of the MSA to illustrate which language variety the characters have access to and, therefore, indexing the social class of the characters. One of the strongest ideologies associated with Arabic

diglossia is the idea that the written text should only include MSA due to the fact that they believe the dialect is for spoken communication only. Many Arab readers are sensitive to any transgression of this idea, even if, in many cases, they can't agree on what constitutes the dialect, as compared to MSA.

## Chapter 5 - Conclusion

The fact that many people have written about Bakr's literature and her use of the language situation shows that her writing is able to pique the interest of people from many different arenas. Bakr's strategic use of the diglossic situation in the Arab world has enabled her to give a unique voice to her characters and an overall uniqueness to her writing. She aims at speaking to a broad audience who relates to the universality of her writing. Furthermore, her unique development of al-Amiyya al-Fusha represents Bakr's attempts to move out of binary thought in order to draw on broader issues relevant to the whole society. Bakr's use of the dialect provides a bridging between different ideologies and expresses the need to bring together the various elements of society, through its gender, ethnic, religious, and political issues.

While many scholars and individuals view Bakr as a feminist writer and believe that her stories should be analyzed in this context, I feel that to put Bakr in this context is limiting to the universality of her writing. She herself says that she does not write stories based on gender issues, but on overcoming the limitations of convention and conformity, whether from political, social or religious institutions. As a result, Bakr's stories are universally appealing for various genders, religious and ethnic groups because she writes about struggles and difficulties which move beyond issues that revolve strictly around gender. Putting her into the genre of feminist writing seems to be reductive and limiting to her universal appeal; restricting her writings to gender discourses and overlooking the linguistic implication in her writing.

In addition, analysts of Bakr's writings focus on how her characters are portrayed in their efforts of overcome externally imposed limitations. They discuss the fact that the reader's common assumptions are challenged by Bakr's stories and that her strategic use of the diglossic situation could be viewed as a way to enhance the message she wants to communicate to her readers throughout the story. However, prior to this study, I had not come across any research or writings which took an in-depth look at the reader's response to the themes in Bakr's stories and, in particular, their response to the way Bakr blends the two language varieties. As a result, this study was designed to add to the scholarship of Bakr's literature by using Myers-Scotton's model to examine how both the dialect and MSA are used as either marked or unmarked language choices and what each of these varieties index. This study was also designed to examine how Bakr's use of language challenges the reader's conventional thought process regarding how they view institutionalized structures in their own society.

Even though many Arabic and non-Arabic speakers view Arabic as a binary system, where the dialect exists in a separate arena (or as a separate system) than MSA, the fact that the readers did not agree on what was identified as dialect and what was MSA showed that there is not a clear distinction between what is considered the Egyptian dialect and what is considered Modern Standard Arabic in the minds of many native speakers of Arabic. Though Arabic is viewed as part of a diglossic system, the lack of a clear distinction between what is dialect and what is MSA could show that these language varieties actually lie on a language continuum where many varieties and levels of Arabic are blended together.

While it was not within the scope of this study to look at Bakr's use of language beyond looking at these two varieties, it was noted by one of the readers that Bakr blends together various varieties of Arabic throughout her stories, including a very high level Arabic, and language variety that could be read as either dialect or MSA, as well as the Egyptian dialect and MSA. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, it might have been more beneficial to consider Bakr's use of language as drawing from a language continuum where the highly stylized Classical Arabic lies at one end, the Egyptian dialect lies at the other end, and Modern Standard Arabic lies somewhere in between the two with many other varieties and levels of Arabic falling at various points along the continuum. As the language in the text becomes more formal, it moves along the continuum towards the Classical Arabic and as the language becomes less formal, or more colloquial, it moves along the continuum toward the Egyptian dialect. Because I looked at only two of the language varieties that Bakr includes in her writing, I believe that the results I got were less comprehensive than if I had included a wider range of the varieties used in Bakr's texts.

Furthermore, there did not seem to be a consistent pattern in when the dialect was used and when MSA was used, or what was identified as dialect and MSA; however, there was a consistent pattern in terms of which language was marked and which was unmarked and what the marked variety indexed based on Myers-Scotton's model. For the three stories I discussed, the dialect was marked in all of the passages I analyzed while the MSA was the unmarked variety with the exception of one passage in which the dialect was the unmarked variety and the MSA was the marked variety for part of the

passage. In most cases, the marked variety, which was mainly the dialect, indexes the location, ethnicity and social status of the characters, and as such, emphasizes the Egyptianness of the characters and even the specific area of Egypt that they came from.

In addition, there was also a consistent pattern regarding the effect that Bakr's use of language had on the reader. Many of the readers commented that the way that Bakr blended the two language varieties together created a time and place for characters in the story and made the stories more real for the reader, even when the readers hadn't realized that the two varieties were blended together. They also commented that the use of local words and phrases in Bakr's stories made the characters and the stories more real and helped the readers to feel as if they were experiencing the story with the characters. These words marked the nationality of the characters, their Egyptianness, and the social status of the characters by allowing them to express themselves in the language that they had access to, showing a parallel between the language used by the characters and their social status. It also made the stories richer, more Egyptian and more local than the more generic MSA would.

Because Bakr's uses various language varieties in her writing, this focus on two of the language varieties that Bakr uses, likely limited the opportunity to fully examine Bakr's effects on the readers. In order to better understand Bakr's use of language, it would be beneficial to look at her use of language not in terms of two separate varieties, but by identifying all the varieties of Arabic that Bakr uses in her stories. This would allow for her use of language to be looked at as part of a language continuum rather than as a dual language system and is something that could be done in future studies in order

to further understand the full effect of Bakr's use of language on the readers. It would also be interesting to repeat the same study with Egyptian men who read Arabic in order to see if there is a difference between what men and women identify as dialect or how Bakr's use of language influences them.

Identifying the full array of language varieties that are employed by Bakr, and other Egyptian writers, opens the door to more possibilities of further understanding the Arabic language. There is still much more to do, as remarked by a participant who did not notice the blending of the two language varieties until we began discussing the stories, "I want to spend more time with this, to do more research. This is not done yet." (Personal Interview with participant, November 2006)

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