

Representation of Contemporary Arabic in the Film *Al Rawabi School for Girls*

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ABSTRACT

This study to describe the representation of contemporary Arabic used in the dialogues of the film Al Rawabi School for Girls, given that communication is currently undergoing rapid development, particularly with the mass media serving as a communication channel. Today, the mass media has become an essential means of accessing information. The analysis focuses on how contemporary Arabic is represented in the film as the language used by characters or the narrator, without comparing it to other language varieties. The data collection techniques used are documentation and note-taking. The data analysis method employs qualitative descriptive analysis. The subject of the study consists of the dialogues or narration found in the film Al Rawabi School for Girls, specifically the use of contemporary Arabic as presented in the film. The research findings reveal that: (1) the Arabic language in this series exhibits a mixed linguistic style, blending formal Arabic (Fusha) and non-formal Arabic ('Amiyah); (2) The language used in this series tends to be easily understood by the audience, especially by learners of Arabic; (3) This film not only depicts the social reality of adolescents but also serves as a representation of the development of contemporary Arabic in modern audiovisual media.

Keywords: Representation, Educational interaction, Contemporary Arabic

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mendeskripsikan representasi bahasa arab kontemporer yang di gunakan dalam dialog film Al Rawabi School for Girls yang dimana pada zaman sekarang ini, komunikasi mengalami perkembangan yang sangat cepat terutama adanya media massa sebagai penghubung komunikasi. Saat ini, media massa menjadi salah satu kebutuhan untuk mengakses informasi. Analisis difokuskan pada bagaimana bahasa arab kontemporer di representasikan dalam film tersebut sebagai bahasa yang di gunakan oleh tokoh atau narator, tanpa melakukan perbandingan dengan ragam bahasa lainnya. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah teknik dokumentasi dan teknik catat. Metode dan teknik analisis data menggunakan metode analisis deskriptif kualitatif. Kemudian yang menjadi subjek penelitian berupa dialog atau narasi yang terdapat dalam film Al Rawabi School for Girls khususnya penggunaan bahasa arab kontemporer yang di tampilkan dalam film tersebut. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa: (1) bahasa arab dalam serial ini memiliki kebahasaan campuran, antara bahasa formal (Fusha) dan nonformal ('amiyah); (2) Bahasa yang di gunakan dalam serial ini cenderung mudah di fahami oleh audiens, terutama bagi pembelajar bahasa arab; (3) Film ini juga menunjukkan bukan hanya memperlihatkan realitas sosial remaja, tetapi menjadi representasi perkembangan bahasa arab kontemporer dalam media audiovisual modern.

Kata kunci: Representasi, Interaksi Edukatif, Bahasa Arab Kontemporer

المخلص

يصف هذا البحث تمثيل اللغة العربية المعاصرة المستخدمة في حوارات فيلم «مدرسة الروابي للبنات»، حيث تشهد وسائل الاتصال في عصرنا الحالي تطوراً سريعاً للغاية، لا سيما مع وجود وسائل الإعلام كوسيلة للتواصل. وقد أصبحت وسائل الإعلام اليوم إحدى الضروريات للحصول على المعلومات.

تركز التحليلات على كيفية تمثيل اللغة العربية المعاصرة في الفيلم كلغة يستخدمها الشخصيات أو الراوي، دون إجراء مقارنة مع أنواع اللغات الأخرى. تقنية جمع البيانات المستخدمة هي تقنية التوثيق وتقنية التسجيل. تستخدم طرق وتقنيات تحليل البيانات طريقة التحليل الوصفي النوعي. ثم كان موضوع البحث هو الحوار أو السرد الموجود في فيلم ”مدرسة الروابي للبنات“، ولا سيما استخدام اللغة العربية المعاصرة التي تظهر في الفيلم. توصلت نتائج البحث إلى ما يلي: (١) تتميز اللغة العربية في هذه السلسلة بمزيج لغوي بين اللغة الرسمية (الفصحى) واللغة غير الرسمية (العامية)؛ (٢) اللغة المستخدمة في هذا المسلسل تميل إلى أن تكون سهلة الفهم من قبل الجمهور، خاصة بالنسبة لمتعلمي اللغة العربية؛ (٣) لا يقتصر هذا الفيلم على إظهار الواقع الاجتماعي للمراهقين فحسب، بل يمثل أيضاً تطور اللغة العربية المعاصرة في الوسائط السمعية البصرية الحديثة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: التمثيل، التفاعل التربوي، اللغة العربية المعاصرة

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INTRODUCTION

Film is a form of literature, and as a product of human creativity, literary works in the form of films are inseparable from language, which is the primary medium of literature. Literature and humanity are closely intertwined because the existence of literature often stems from problems and issues, fueled by a rich imagination. Authors channel the issues surrounding them into their ideas and transform them into literary works (Mubasyira, 2017). Films themselves serve as a highly beneficial learning tool to enhance the process of studying literature, which includes poetry, drama, and prose. With the help of films, students can gain numerous benefits, such as ethical values, mastery of the four language skills, deeper knowledge about literary authors, and an understanding of the elements of literature itself. Why do people still watch films? Film is no longer a novelty to society. A common reason is that film is an integral part of modern life and is available in various forms, such as in movie theaters, on television, on videotapes, and on laser discs. Film not only offers an entertaining experience but also presents everyday life experiences packaged in an engaging way (Mudjiono, 2011). Films have their own artistic value; their existence is a response to the “discovery” of leisure time outside of work and a solution to the desire to enjoy cultural elements. Therefore, when viewed from the perspective of the development of this phenomenon, films play a significant role in fulfilling unseen needs. On the other hand, language is a key element in films (Ganjar, 2019). This phenomenon is found in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls*, a Jordanian teen drama series produced by Netflix, set in an all-girls school named *Al Rawabi* and exploring the lives of teenagers. In terms of language, the *Al Rawabi School for Girls* series uses contemporary Arabic that is close to the daily lives of Jordanian society. The characters’ dialogue largely employs the Jordanian Arabic dialect (‘ammiyah), which is communicative, casual, and natural, a language frequently used in informal

or non-formal daily activities. This language is more commonly referred to as “everyday Arabic.” In addition, in some formal situations, Standard Arabic (fusha), the language used in the Qur’an, the Hadith, and scholarly writings, is also used ([Latifah, 2021](#)). In sociolinguistic studies, language use cannot be separated from the social context of its speakers. Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that examines the relationship between language and society, including how language variations emerge and are used in accordance with communicative situations, relationships among speakers, social status, and the functions of language in everyday life. One of the key concepts in sociolinguistic studies is diglossia, which refers to a situation where two language varieties are used side by side within a single society for different functions ([Ferguson, 1959](#)). In Arab society, diglossia is characterized by the use of Fusha Arabic as the high variety, used in formal situations such as education, government, official media, and religious activities, while ‘Amiyah Arabic functions as the low variety (Low Variety), which is used in everyday communication. These functional differences indicate that the choice of language variety is influenced not only by linguistic factors but also by social context and communicative purpose. Therefore, the theory of diglossia serves as a relevant framework for analyzing the representation of Contemporary Arabic in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls*, as the film depicts the alternating use of Fusha and ‘Amiyah Arabic depending on the situation, the social relationships between characters, and the communicative functions intended to be conveyed. Audiovisual media such as film have also been shown to be effective in Arabic language learning ([Abna & Nawawi, 2018](#)), which further justifies examining the representation of language in film from a language education perspective. The gap between the formally taught Fusha and the everyday ‘Amiyah frequently poses a distinct challenge for Arabic language learners in Indonesia ([Adawiya & Saputro, 2026](#)).

There are several articles relevant to this study, including:

First, an article written by Alia Yasmin, Rohanda Rohanda, and [Isma Fauziah \(2024\)](#) titled “Representations of Social Interaction in the Film Series *Al Rawabi School for Girls* Season 2 by Tima Shomali.” This study is a journal article employing a descriptive qualitative approach using Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic analysis method. The research subject is the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* Season 2, while the analysis focuses on associative and dissociative social interactions. The results indicate that the *Al Rawabi School for Girls* series consistently presents a profound depiction of social challenges within the school, such as bullying, power hierarchies, solidarity, and cooperation ([Yasmin et al., 2024](#)).

Both of these articles were authored by [Alfiah Rohmah \(2022\)](#) under the title “A Portrait of Bullying in the Madrasah Al-Rawabi Li Al-Banat Series: A Semiotic Study Using Charles Sanders Peirce’s Approach.” This study is a journal article employing a qualitative approach with Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic analysis method. The research focuses on how physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying are represented through the plot, characters, and dialogue in the Madrasah Al-Rawabi Li Al-Banat series. The findings indicate that the series depicts bullying acts, such as negative behaviors in the form of verbal abuse, or physical contact like hitting, pushing, kicking, and others ([Rohmah, 2022](#)).

The third study was conducted by Wilda Ningrum, Muhamad Abdul Halim, and Khomisah, titled “Representations of Moral Values in the Series ‘Alrawabi School for Girls’ by Tima Shomali and Shirin Kamal: A Literary Sociology Study.” This study aims to analyze the representation of moral values in the “Alrawabi School for Girls” series by Tima Shomali and Shirin Kamal through a sociological approach to literature. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method with text analysis to identify the moral messages contained in the dialogues and interactions between characters. The findings in the journal indicate that the series contains various moral values, including gratitude, honesty, courage, self-awareness, self-respect, discipline, responsibility, friendship, empathy, compassion, justice, and solidarity ([Ningrum et al., 2025](#)).

Fourth, a study conducted by [Febyanti Fadhliatul Rizqi \(2023\)](#) titled “Gaya Bahasa Perempuan Arab Saudi dalam Film *Wadjda*: Kajian Sociolinguistik Bahasa dan Gender” examined the language style of Saudi Arabian women in the film *Wadjda* from a sociolinguistic perspective of language and gender. This study found that language style in the film represents social and gender relations among the characters ([Rizqi, 2023](#)).

The four previous studies focused solely on semiotic analysis and moral values. No study has specifically examined the sociolinguistic phenomenon of diglossia (Fusha and ‘Amiyah) in these films. Therefore, this study aims to examine the differences between Fusha and ‘Amiyah Arabic as they appear in a sociolinguistic context, both in terms of changes and usage by speakers as well as from a phonological perspective. Thus, this study is expected to serve as a reference for examining the use of Fusha and ‘Amiyah Arabic varieties in linguistic contexts, which can help reduce errors when interacting with people from diverse social backgrounds.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative research project with a descriptive approach, aimed at understanding and explaining language variations, specifically Fusha and Amiyah Arabic, in literary works, particularly in the Alrawabi School for Girls series ([Sugiyono, 2013](#)). Based on the title presented, the author employs a linguistic research method with research boundaries that are systematic, controlled, empirical, and critical toward the target object, which consists of spoken language sounds ([Mahsun, 2017](#)). This study was not conducted in any school or institution but was carried out within the digital space of Netflix, which served as the research setting. According to the linguistic research book I used, data collection techniques can be carried out using the Listening Technique, Note-Taking Technique, Documentation Technique, and Transcription Technique ([Mahsun, 2017](#)). The data, consisting of dialogues and scenes from the series Al Rawabi School for Girls, was analyzed to uncover the nature of educational interactions and the use of Modern Standard Arabic depicted in the film. This process comprises four stages: data collection and reduction, data presentation, and the final stage of drawing conclusions and verification ([Fiantika et al., 2022](#)). After all the information was collected through observation, transcription, documentation, and note-taking, the next step was to code the research data. This coding was conducted in stages to identify, categorize, and explain each expression that embodies the principles of Contemporary Arabic in the film Al Rawabi School for Girls. This process begins by transcribing all the dialog under study into Arabic text format, complete with details regarding the episode, scene, characters, and context of the expressions. Next, the data is reduced by selecting dialogues that demonstrate the use of Fusha Arabic, ‘Amiyah Arabic, or a combination of the two, in accordance with the research focus. This data analysis method employs a descriptive qualitative content analysis approach based on Stuart Hall’s theory of representation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Representation of Contemporary Arabic in the Dialogue of the Film Al Rawabi School for Girls

Based on the results of listening, transcription, note-taking, and data analysis of the dialogues in the film Al Rawabi School for Girls, it was found that Contemporary Arabic is represented through the use of two language varieties: Fusha Arabic and ‘Amiyah Arabic. These two language varieties are used alternately depending on the communication context, the social relationships between characters, and the situations unfolding in the story. as shown in Figure 1:



Figure 1, Maryam delivers an opening narration

In the opening scene of the film, the character Maryam delivers an opening narration (prologue) describing her school life before she experienced bullying. The narration reads: “المدرسة كانت مكاني المفضل، كنت كثير أحب أروح المدرسة كل يوم” which means “School was my favorite place; I really loved going to school every day.”

This statement demonstrates the use of Contemporary Arabic, which tends to be closer to the spoken language of modern Arab society. The sentence *المدرسة كانت مكاني المفضل* still exhibits a structure closer to Fusha Arabic because it is grammatically structured and easily understood by all Arabic speakers. However, in the phrase *كنت كثير أحب أروح المدرسة كل يوم*, the verb *أروح* is used, which is more commonly found in colloquial Arabic (‘Amiyah) compared to the Fusha form *أذهب*. Therefore, this data represents a blend of Fusha and ‘Amiyah elements, a hallmark of Contemporary Arabic.

In the prologue accompanying that scene, Maryam says: *كان عندي صاحبات كثير، وكانت الحياة حلوة*, which means “I had many friends, and life was beautiful.”

The word *صاحبات* indicates the use of vocabulary commonly used in everyday communication among Arab teenage girls. Additionally, the use of the word *حلوة* to describe a pleasant life is a hallmark of modern Arabic colloquial speech, which is more communicative than the use of Fusha words like *جميلة*. This data shows that the film strives to present language that is close to the lives of teenagers, making it feel more natural and realistic.

The next scene shows Maryam receiving a message to come to an old bus at a certain location. Upon arriving at the location, she is approached by three female students named Layan, Rania, and Ruqayyah. The three characters then physically assault Maryam. After Maryam is attacked and falls, bleeding, the perpetrators begin to panic. One of the characters, Rania, says: “لنذهب من هنا قبل أن يلمحنا أحد” which means “Let’s get out of here before someone sees us.” as shown in Figure 2 :



Figure 2, Layan, Rania, and Ruqayyah then physically assault Maryam

Unlike the previous dialogue, this utterance is closer to Fusha Arabic. The use of the phrase *لنذهب* and the structure *قبل أن يلمحنا أحد* demonstrate a formal syntactic structure that conforms to the

rules of standard Arabic. Although spoken in an emotional situation, the use of this linguistic form indicates a linguistic representation that still retains elements of formality.

Maryam then continues her narrative by saying, “وبس مش بعد اليوم,” meaning: “But not after today.” The word “بس” is a key feature of Colloquial Arabic, meaning “but” or “however.” In Classical Arabic, this word is typically replaced with “لكن.” The use of “بس” indicates that the film extensively employs the everyday conversational language used by modern Arab youth. Therefore, this utterance is a representation of ‘Amiyah Arabic.

After the sound of an ambulance is heard and Maryam is taken to the hospital, the next narration goes, “هالا المدرسة صارت كابوسي,” meaning, “Now school has become my nightmare.”

The word هالا is a colloquial form commonly used in the Levant region, particularly in Jordan and Palestine, meaning “now.” In Standard Arabic (Fusha), the equivalent is الآن. Additionally, the verb صارت is more frequently used in everyday conversation than its more formal Fusha counterpart. This dialogue highlights the local dialectal identity, which is one of the defining characteristics of Contemporary Arabic in the film.

The film then continues with a scene set two weeks before the incident, where Maryam boards the school bus and greets her friends by saying, “صباح الخير يا ميسمية.” Meaning: “Good morning, Maysam.” The expression “صباح الخير” is a general greeting used in both Fusha and ‘Amiyah. Therefore, this utterance indicates the presence of standard language elements that are still preserved in everyday communication. When Maryam sits next to her best friend, Dina responds to the greeting with: “صباحة,” meaning “Good morning.” The form “صباحة” is an informal variation commonly used among Arab teenagers. This form is not found in Fusha Arabic and thus falls under the category of ‘Amiyah Arabic. The use of such abbreviated forms reflects the tendency of youth to use simpler and more familiar expressions.



Figure 3, Layan invited Maryam to talk

Then, in Figure 3, Layan calls out to Maryam, saying, “هالا أبو الشباب، إنت عم بحكي معاك,” which means, “Hey, champ, I’m talking to you.” This utterance contains several very strong elements of colloquial Arabic, namely the use of the words هالا, إنت, and the construction عم بحكي. The phrase عم بحكي is a progressive aspect marker commonly used in the Syam dialect to indicate an ongoing activity. In Fusha Arabic, this form is equivalent to أتحدث معك الآن. Therefore, this data clearly demonstrates the Jordanian ‘Amiyah Arabic that serves as the film’s primary setting.

Maryam then replied: “شو مشكلتك يا ليان?” Meaning: “What’s your problem, Layan?” The interrogative word شو is one of the most distinctive markers in Levantine ‘Amiyah Arabic. In Fusha Arabic, this word is equivalent to “ma” or “maza.” The use of this word demonstrates that communication among students in the film relies more on everyday conversational language than on formal language.

Layan then replies: “Antî mashkaltî.” Meaning: “You are my problem.” The use of the pronoun “Antî” is a dialectal form commonly found in conversational Arabic. The equivalent Fusha form is أنتِ, with a more formal pronunciation. This utterance further emphasizes the dominance of ‘Amiyah Arabic in social interactions among the teenage characters in the film.

Based on the excerpts above, it can be concluded that the representation of Contemporary Arabic in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* is demonstrated through a blend of Fusha Arabic and ‘Amiyah Arabic. Fusha Arabic generally appears in more formal and structured speech, while ‘Amiyah Arabic dominates everyday conversations among the characters. The dominance of ‘Amiyah Arabic demonstrates the film’s effort to authentically portray the reality of modern Arab youth communication, making the language used feel more natural, communicative, and in line with the social life of contemporary Arab society.



Figure 4 & 5, contains a quote from a teacher

The next image, Figure 4, contains a quote from a teacher: the phrase “يجب أن تحترمن قوانين المدرسة,” which means “You must respect school rules.” This quote demonstrates the use of a linguistic structure that conforms to the rules of Standard Arabic. The use of the words يجب (must), تحترمن (respect), and قوانين المدرسة (school rules) highlights the characteristics of Fusha Arabic, which features a structured and formal grammatical framework. Another excerpt (Figure 5) shows the teacher conveying the rules to the female students. The teacher says:

“على جميع الطالبات الالتزام بقوانين المدرسة واحترام النظام,” which means “All female students are required to comply with school rules and respect discipline both inside and outside the classroom.”

This utterance demonstrates the characteristics of Fusha Arabic, marked by the use of formal vocabulary such as الالتزام (compliance or adherence), قوانين المدرسة (school rules), and احترام النظام (respecting discipline). Additionally, the sentence structure is systematically organized and conforms to the rules of standard Arabic. No elements of the dialect commonly used in everyday conversation were found, so this utterance can be categorized as Fusha Arabic. Furthermore, the use of Fusha Arabic in the film also serves to convey an educational and academic impression. This language generally appears in the context of learning, the communication of school rules, or communication involving educational authorities.

The presence of Fusha speech amidst the dominance of ‘Amiyah dialogue indicates that the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* represents the linguistic reality of modern Arab society living in a diglossic situation. Fusha is used in formal and institutional settings, while ‘Amiyah is used in everyday social interactions among students. This illustrates how these two language varieties are used side by side according to their respective communicative functions.

To provide a more concise overview of the research findings, the results of the analysis of the use of Fusha and ‘Amiyah Arabic vocabulary in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* are presented in summary form. The following table summarizes the language variety categories,

examples of vocabulary found, the frequency of occurrences based on the research data, and their functions in the film’s dialogue.

Table 1. Rekapitulasi Temuan Kategori Kosakata Bahasa Arab Fusha dan ‘Amiyah dalam Film Al Rawabi School for Girls

Kategori Ragam Bahasa	Contoh Kosakata yang Ditemukan	Frekuensi Temuan	Fungsi dalam Dialog
Bahasa Arab Fusha	المدرسة، لنذهب، يجب، الالتزام، احترام، قوانين	6	Digunakan dalam situasi formal, seperti dialog guru, penyampaian aturan sekolah, dan narasi yang bersifat resmi.
Bahasa Arab ‘Amiyah	أروح، صاحبات، حلوة، بس، هلا، صارت، صباحة، إنتِ، شو، عم بحكي	10	Digunakan dalam percakapan sehari-hari antarsiswi untuk menunjukkan hubungan yang akrab, spontan, dan informal.

Based on Table 1, ‘Amiyah Arabic vocabulary was found to be more dominant than Fusha Arabic vocabulary. This finding indicates that the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* primarily represents the everyday communication of Arab society through the use of the ‘Amiyah variety, while the Fusha variety is used in formal contexts related to authority and the educational environment. This synthesis reinforces the analysis’s findings that the use of both language varieties in the film reflects the phenomenon of diglossia in Arab society, as described by [Ferguson \(1959\)](#).

Characteristics of Contemporary Arabic Language Use in the Film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* as Viewed from the Levels of Standardization and Audience Comprehensibility

Based on the data analyzed in the previous subsection, it was found that the Contemporary Arabic used in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* exhibits diverse characteristics. This diversity is evident in the level of standardization of the language used by the characters as well as the level of comprehensibility of the language for the audience. The use of Arabic in the film serves not only as a means of communication but also reflects the linguistic conditions of modern Arab society, which uses both Fusha Arabic and ‘Amiyah Arabic side by side.

Language Characteristics Examined in Terms of Standardization

The level of language formality in the film can be observed through word choice, sentence structure, and the context of usage. Based on the research findings, most of the dialogue used by the characters consists of Colloquial Arabic, which is non-standard and used in everyday communication.

One example can be seen in Layan’s utterance to Maryam: “شو مشكلتك يا ليان؟” Meaning: “What’s your problem, Layan?” The interrogative word شو is a characteristic of Colloquial Arabic used as a substitute for the words ماذا or ما in Standard Arabic. The use of this word indicates that communication between the characters is casual and not bound by formal linguistic rules.

Another example is seen in Maryam’s utterance: “بس مش بعد اليوم.” Meaning: “But not after today.” The word بس is a colloquial form commonly used by modern Arab society. In Fusha Arabic, this word is typically replaced with لكن. The use of this form indicates a simplification of language aimed at facilitating communication in daily life. In addition to the use of Colloquial Arabic, the use of Standard Arabic is also found in formal situations. This is evident in the teacher’s statement when conveying school rules:

“All female students must adhere to school regulations and respect discipline both inside and outside the classroom”

Meaning: “All female students are required to comply with school regulations and respect discipline both inside and outside the classroom.” This statement demonstrates the characteristics of Standard Arabic through the use of formal vocabulary such as *الالتزام* (compliance), *قوانين* (regulations), and *احترام* (respect). The sentence structure used also conforms to the rules of Standard Arabic. The use of formal language in an educational context indicates that Fusha Arabic is still maintained in situations requiring authority and clarity of information.

Based on this data, it can be concluded that the level of language formality in the film is contextual. Fusha Arabic is used in formal situations, while ‘Amiyah Arabic is used in everyday interactions between characters.

Language Characteristics in Terms of Audience Comprehension

In addition to the level of formality, the characteristics of Contemporary Arabic usage in films can also be observed in terms of how comprehensible it is to the audience. The language used by the characters tends to be simple, communicative, and closely tied to everyday life, making it easy for viewers to understand.

One example is seen in the dialogue: “*إنتِ مشكلتي*,” meaning “You are my problem.” This sentence consists of simple vocabulary and is easily understood through the context of the conversation. Although it uses the colloquial form “*إنتِ*,” the intended meaning remains clearly understandable to the audience because it is supported by the ongoing conflict.

Another example is the greeting, “*صباحو*,” meaning “Good morning.” Although it is an informal form not found in Fusha Arabic, the meaning of the utterance remains easily understood because it is used in a morning greeting context. The simplicity of such language forms makes the dialogue feel more natural and relatable to the lives of teenagers.

Language comprehensibility in the film is also reinforced by the visual elements accompanying the dialogue. Facial expressions, voice intonation, body movements, and the plot help the audience understand the intended meaning even when some dialectal vocabulary is unfamiliar. Therefore, audience comprehension relies not only on linguistic aspects but also on the audiovisual context presented in the film.

Based on the results of this analysis, it can be concluded that the Contemporary Arabic used in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* has a high level of comprehensibility. The use of common vocabulary, relatively simple sentences, and visual support make the messages conveyed by the characters easily understandable to the audience.

Discussion

The results of this study show that the representation of Contemporary Arabic in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* is not only reflected through the use of the Fusha and ‘Amiyah varieties of Arabic, but also reveals linguistic variations influenced by the speakers’ social context. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the choice of language variety is not random but is influenced by factors such as the speech situation, social relationships among speakers, social status, and communicative goals. Thus, the linguistic variations that appear in the film represent the language practices of modern Arab society.

This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of diglossia proposed by [Ferguson \(1959\)](#). According to Ferguson, Arab societies use two language varieties that serve different functions: Fusha Arabic as the High Variety (H) and ‘Amiyah Arabic as the Low Variety (L). The Fusha variety is generally used in formal contexts such as education, government, official media, and religious activities, while the ‘Amiyah variety is used in informal, everyday communication. The results of this study show that this functional division is also represented in the film. The teacher character uses Fusha Arabic when conveying school rules because the situation demands a formal, standard, and authoritative language. Conversely, the female students use ‘Amiyah Arabic when interacting with their peers because their social relationships are close and informal.

Similar tension between Fusha and ‘Amiyah in Arabic narrative media has also been found in other Arabic dramas, showing a comparable shift toward the everyday variety ([Chaldun et al., 2024](#)). The phenomenon of diglossia in Arabic-speaking communities has been widely examined from a sociolinguistic perspective ([Astuti, 2017](#)).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of ‘Amiyah Arabic in interactions among female students serves not only as a means of communication but also as a marker of the group’s social identity. The language variety used reflects the speakers’ age, the closeness of their relationships, and the cultural background of Jordanian society. This aligns with the view that language choice is a form of social identity that speakers use to demonstrate their membership in a speech community. Therefore, the predominance of ‘Amiyah Arabic in the film reinforces the sense of authenticity regarding the lives of Arab teenagers as represented through audiovisual media. A similar approach to examining language-variety representation through film dialogue has also been applied to Javanese ([Ajie et al., 2023](#)), reinforcing that film generally functions as a medium for representing language variation. Another study likewise confirms a similar pattern in regional-language films, in which language variation is used to mark social closeness among characters ([Dharmawan & Basir, 2024](#)).

Conversely, the use of Fusha Arabic in the teachers’ dialogue indicates the existence of a power relationship. In sociolinguistic studies, speakers who hold status or authority tend to use a more formal language variety to establish legitimacy, authority, and uphold institutional norms. Therefore, the use of Fusha in the context of learning and the communication of school rules serves not only to convey information but also to represent the teacher’s social position as an authoritative figure within the educational environment. Studies on language and gender in film similarly show how the choice of language variety can mark power relations among characters ([Salbiah & Sumardi, 2021](#)).

In addition to being influenced by social relationships, language variation in films also demonstrates that language always adapts to the context of communication (language choice). The shift between Fusha and ‘Amiyah occurs because each situation has different communicative demands. When communication takes place in a casual setting among friends, the ‘Amiyah variety is more dominant because it fosters emotional closeness and more natural communication. Conversely, when communication takes place in formal situations, the Fusha variety is chosen because it conveys a formal, clear, and authoritative impression. Thus, the choice of language variety in the film not only reflects linguistic differences but also demonstrates the close relationship between language and the social context in which it is used. A similar study on contemporary Arabic diglossia has also been conducted on popular music media ([Nailurrahmi et al., 2025](#)). A comparable study of the sound patterns of two Arabic varieties has also been conducted on popular song lyrics ([Imtiyas & Kholisin, 2022](#)). Studies of language style in film using a sociolinguistic approach have also been widely conducted on films in other languages ([Daulay et al., 2025](#)). Formal and informal language variation in film has also been found in studies of Indonesian films ([Latifa et al., 2024](#)), reinforcing the pattern that the choice of language variety relates to the social context of the characters.

This interpretation shows that the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* does not merely present dialogue in Arabic but also represents the sociolinguistic reality of modern Arab society living in a situation of diglossia. Through the use of two language varieties according to their social functions, the film illustrates that language choice is a reflection of social relationships, speaker identity, and the communicative context underlying every interaction between characters. Language variation in film as a representation of characters’ social identity has also been examined in other national films ([Marinda et al., 2022](#)). Gender representation through language choice has also been examined in other narrative literary works outside of film ([Carly Rosyidi & Puspita, 2024](#)).

Based on an analysis of the dialogues in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls*, this study found that Contemporary Arabic is represented in the film through the use of two language varieties: Fusha Arabic and ‘Amiyah Arabic. These two varieties are used according to the communicative context, social background, and situations experienced by the characters.

‘Amiyah Arabic is predominantly used in everyday conversations among the characters, particularly in interactions between female students. This dominance is evident through the use of vocabulary and expressions such as *إنتِ شو، هلا، بس، حلوة، أروح، وعم يحكي*, which are characteristic of the conversational language of modern Arab society, particularly the Levantine dialect spoken in Jordan. The use of these forms indicates that the film strives to present communication that is natural, spontaneous, and consistent with the realities of contemporary Arab adolescents’ lives.

Meanwhile, Fusha Arabic is found in formal and institutional situations, such as when teachers give instructions or convey school rules. Dialogues such as *“يجب أن تحترمن قوانين المدرسة”* and *“على جميع الطالبات الالتزام بقوانين المدرسة واحترام النظام”* demonstrate the use of formal vocabulary, standard grammatical structures, and the absence of local dialectal elements. The use of Fusha Arabic in these contexts serves to convey authority, credibility, and an educational function within the school environment.

Based on the overall results of the analysis, this study found that the representation of Contemporary Arabic in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* is constructed through the use of two language varieties, Fusha Arabic and ‘Amiyah Arabic, each employed according to its respective social function. ‘Amiyah Arabic dominates the dialogue among teenage characters in everyday communication situations because it effectively represents intimate, spontaneous, and communicative social relationships. Meanwhile, Fusha Arabic is used in formal situations, particularly in interactions involving teachers or the communication of school rules, thereby reflecting the language’s function as a symbol of authority and institutional communication.

These findings indicate that the use of Arabic in the film serves not only as a medium for conveying messages but also as a representation of the sociolinguistic reality of modern Arab society, which still maintains a system of diglossia. The alternation between Fusha and ‘Amiyah varieties demonstrates that language choice is influenced by the communicative context, social relationships among speakers, and the purpose of communication. Thus, the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* successfully and authentically represents the linguistic practices of contemporary Arab society through the use of language variations appropriate to their social functions.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the portrayal of Modern Standard Arabic in the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* is shaped through the use of two varieties of Arabic, Fusha and ‘Amiyah, which are employed according to social function, communicative context, and interactions among speakers. The findings indicate that these two varieties do not replace one another but rather complement each other to create meaning in communication.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, this study emphasizes that language choice in the film is not merely a linguistic issue but also reflects social identity, power relations, and the context of the users’ interactions. The alternation between Fusha and ‘Amiyah reflects that language choice is influenced by the purpose of communication, social proximity, and the environment in which the interaction takes place. Therefore, the film *Al Rawabi School for Girls* authentically represents the language practices of modern Arab society, with patterns of language use that correspond to their respective social functions.

The results of this study indicate that Arabic-language audiovisual media can serve as a resource for sociolinguistic learning because they demonstrate the use of Arabic in real-world contexts, rather than solely in its formal form. For those learning Arabic, an understanding of the functions of Fusha and ‘Amiyah is crucial so that they not only master grammar but can also choose the appropriate language variety according to the communicative situation. Thus, the findings of this study contribute to the development of a more contextual and communicative approach to teaching Arabic, with a focus on communication skills across various social contexts, while also expanding sociolinguistic insights into the variations of modern Arabic in audiovisual media.

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DECLARATION OF AI USE

The author(s) did not use any generative AI tools in the preparation of this manuscript.

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