

## Acquisition of Modern Standard Arabic by Speakers of Different Arabic Colloquial Varieties: Resumption in Object Relative Clauses \*<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

It is often claimed that there are no native speakers of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) due to possible effect of late age of first exposure (AoE) and possible effect of the acquired colloquial variety of Arabic, which is considered as the first language (L1). This empirical study examined the impact of AoE and knowledge of the L1 on the ultimate attainment of resumption in MSA object relative clauses. 147 adolescent participants from Egypt, the Levant, and the gulf regions, were recruited to examine their underlying knowledge of resumption in MSA through completing an Acceptability Judgment Task. Using ANOVA and planned comparisons, the differences in participants' judgments to resumption were evaluated across 5 groups corresponding to different AoE and the colloquial varieties they speak. The analysis of the data showed no significant effect of AoE or of the L1, and post hoc tests showed no significant differences between the groups of participants. These results were discussed in relation to theories on L1 influence and to the critical period hypothesis.

**Keywords:** critical period hypothesis, first language influence, modern standard Arabic, resumption, second language acquisition

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