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Abstract
This study investigates code choice, code-switching, and script-switching involving English and Arabic and the Latin and Arabic scripts within discussion forums within the English-language section of a Jordanian website. The research questions sought to: 1) define the various code and script pairings i.e. the distinct linguistic codes available on the website, 2) establish their distribution across text types, forum topics, thread length, text types, and author posting frequency, 3) determine the distinctive topical, stylistic and discursive functions of the most prevalent codes, and 4) analyse specific instances of identity-creation among forum contributors via strategic use of these codes. A purposive sample of discussion threads, representing roughly 10% of the English website forum content was downloaded and annotated into a WordSmith 5.0-searchable corpus, with a secondary version created for SPSS-analysis. A subset of 75 messages from a linguistically-atypical thread was also investigated using discourse analysis methods to explore identity-related language use. The findings question the notion that English is the preferred language of the internet since Latin-scripted Arabic intermixed with English and Arabic-scripted Arabic were more prevalent than English-only messages in the corpus derived from the English-language website. They also demonstrate that vernacular Arabic has become a written variety in CMC, challenging the primacy of Modern Standard Arabic as the only form of written Arabic. Topically, Arabic-scripted Arabic occurred most often within Poetry, Humour, and Local Culture forums, Latin-scripted English within professional and academic forums, and Latin-scripted Arabic within General Discussion and Hobby-related forums. Arabic-scripted Arabic was used most for third-person, narrative type discourse, while Latin-scripted Arabic and Latin-scripted English were used most for involved, first-person and second-person expressive and phatic discourse. English was also used for taboo topics such as religious dissent, sex, and sexual orientation. Discourse analysis demonstrated that a purposive sample of authors were able to create distinct identities through strategic code use, reflecting political biases with pro-establishment authors selecting formal language forms especially Modern Standard Arabic and Salafist-style English while anti-establishment authors preferred informal ones such as vernacular Arithmographemic Latin-scripted Arabic with English.

Keywords: Arabic-English bilingualism, CMC, code-switching, code choice, identity