Is Standard Arabic Dying?

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Abstract
This paper aimed at investigating the issue of the future of the Arabic Language with special attention given to exploring the following questions: (1) What are the factors that enhanced the prominent Arabic Language status in the past?(2)What are the phenomena that anticipate the death of the Arabic Language?(3) What are the factors that influenced the Arabic Language and led to the likelihood of its deterioration? (4)What are the best strategies to revive the past prominent status of the Arabic language and to stop its deterioration? More specifically, the paper discussed the status of the Arabic Language with regard to the different chronological stages it experienced during different historical eras. It also explored the influence of colonialism, globalization, current educational systems in the Arab countries and the political Arab scene on the status of the Arabic Language. The paper highlighted different linguistic and social phenomena that anticipate the "death" of the Arabic Language, such as "Arabization", "Englishization", "Diglossia", and "Code-Switching" Authentic visual examples of these linguistic phenomena were provided to elucidate their negative impact on the Arabic Language. More focus was directed to the status of the Arabic Language in the Gulf Countries: conferences and recommendations suggested to protect the standard Arabic Language.In conclusion, this paper, by closely analyzing the current status of the Arabic Language, shed light on the little-recognized issue of strategic plans to protect the identity of the Arab nations.
Keywords: Arabization, code-switching, colonialism, diglossia, Englishization, globalization, Arabic

Introduction:
       "Language is one manifestation of progress or regression of nations' identity." Gibran Khaleel Gibran (cited in Haydar, 1999). The future of the Arabic Language is an *argumentative issue that has aroused a critical controversy among researchers and linguists (*Maamouri, 1998; *Haydar, 1999; Bader, 2003*; Al-*Omari, 2013; *Al-Ateeha, 2013). Some believe that Arabic is the best mode of manifestation of literature and science. Others are lamenting the status Arabic Language is having these days.* Arabic has recently faced several challenges that require exerting all efforts to overcome them. These challenges have implicitly influenced the Arab culture as "Language is the hardest rib in the trilogy: Language - Culture - Identity." Sheikha Moza Al-Thani (cited in Al Kuwari, 2012).

       There are two forms of the Arabic Language. The first form is *al-fuṣḥá*, a word translated into English as 'the most eloquent.' This has two types: Classical Arabic (CA), the Quranic Arabic and literary Arabic, the form of the Arabic Language used in literary texts during the 7th to the 9th centuries. The other form of *al-fuṣḥá is* the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). It is the form used today in writing and in formal speaking, such as prepared speeches, some radio broadcasts, and non-entertainment content.

       In addition to *al-fuṣḥá, there are* Modern **Spoken Arabic** – known by the name 'ammiyyah or darijah, commonly used for daily life communications; it usually varies from one Arab country or region to another (Sbait, n.d.). Still, all spoken Arabic varieties (referred to as dialects) are mostly connected with the Standard Arabic, and they all are inter-related; thus, it is relatively easy for an Arab of a particular country to understand an Arab of a different country when they communicate in standard Arabic. Consequently, contemporary standard and spoken Arabic have the phenomenon of diglossia (Alshamrani, 2012), a linguistic phenomenon that will be discussed in the following pages of the current review. There are phonological, lexical and syntactical differences among these vernaculars and between them and the Modern Standard Arabic. (Miller, 2004).

       Classical Arabic was a prominent language in the past centures. **The Arabic** language is Semitic in origin. It is the language of the Holy Qur'an. **Classical Arabic** emerged in the 5th century A.D. or earlier. Arab poets, historians, scholars, scientists, and philosophers used it for many centuries, especially during the Golden Ages of the prosperous Poetry and Literature, the beginning of the Islamic civilization in the Pinensula (Sbait, n.d.). Besides, it is the language of the Arabs' contributions to all areas of epistemology. Arabic books were translated into many languages and are now taught at foreign universities; Al-Khwarizmi's, Al-Bairuni's, Ibn Sina's and Al-Razi's are few examples. The American President Obama, in his June 4, 2009 speech in Cairo praised Muslims for their historical scientific and intellectual contributions to civilization: he said,

    It was Islam that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe's Renaissance and Enlightenment. It was innovation in Muslim communities that developed the order of algebra; our magnetic compass and tools of navigation; our mastery of pens and printing; our understanding of how disease spreads and how it can be healed. (Ofek, 2011: 4).

    Recently, the status of the Arabic Language is influenced by different sociolinguistic phenomena that anticipate its deterioration. These include: code-switching, diglossia, Englishization, and Arabization.

Code-switching

Awan and Sinka (2007) say that definitions of code-switching vary. Code-Switching is the individual's use of two or more languages in the same speech event or exchange' (Woolard, 2004). Myers-Scotton (1988: 157) describes code-switching as "the use of two or more languages in the same conversation without a noticeable phonological assimilation from one variety to the other" (cited in Yletyinen, 2004: 13). In general, one can say that a prerequisite for code-switching is a juxtaposition of elements from two codes (Winford 2003: 103). Switches can be either intra-sentential (switches within the same sentence, from single morpheme level to higher levels) or inter-sentential (switches from one language to the other between sentences) (Yletyinen, (2004). Code-switching can emerge at different linguistic levels: lexis, morphology, and syntax. There are numerous examples of code-switching in advertisements, TV commercials, songs, TV fashion programs and day-to-day conversations. The young Arabs can code switch between colloquial Arabic and English. Code-switching is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that serves several functions. Bader (1995:22) emphasized that code switching might have a negative effect on the Arabic language and it can make "society lose its identity."

Following is an excerpt on code-switching extracted from a long recorded conversation between two cousins who are at their early thirties. Both of them know Italian, Arabic and English. Sara had just arrived from Italy to Qatar. As their aunt, I know that they will use code-switching, so I recorded their first conversation without telling them. Later, I let them hear it. They did not feel any embarrassment as they were used to code-switch since they were at their twenties. Their conversation went like this:

Suhad: Hi. Ana kteer happy ini see you mara taneihe. Anna ma shuftek for a long time.Welcome back.

Sara: Hi, I miss you kteer. How is your daughter? Inshalla everything is ok. I arrived Qatat imbareh billeil. It was six lama weselit to my home.

Suhad: How is my uncle? Lama hakeit ma3kum a week ago, hakali inu he is a bit mareedh. Hope he is ahsaan these days.

Sara: Yes, thanks God. 3am bithassan. Gibtelek a regalo(Italian word means "gift"). Anna ba3raf you will like it. Look, hadi a kind of Spagetti I think shwai expensive in Qatar.

Suhad: Oh. It is really delicious. Rah A3malah tomorrow.

Sara: This is a dress lalamoura Carla (Suhad's daughter). Rah tedal3 very beautiful with it.

Suhad: Thank you, Hada too much.

Sara: Do you still remember Hada lektaab about cooking. I think rah yekuun helpful for you. This is for you. Enjoy it.

Suhad. Thank you, habeebti. Let's have some cappuccino. Anna ba3malu very delicious. Rah tebeeh. (Going to the kitchen), excuse me.

Appel and Muysken (1987: 119-120) sum up six major functions served by code-switching

- The "referential" function: A speaker switches code when his language involves "lack of facility" on a certain subject (p.118)
- The "poetic" function: involving switched puns and jokes (p.121).
- The metalinguistic function: to impress other participants with a show of linguistic skills, common among performers, circus directors, and markets salespeople

(p.120). The young Arabs speaking English in different settings **feel superior when using English.**

- The metaphorical function: "to indicate a change in the tone of the conversation" (p.119). An example on this function is when a comedian switches from one variety to another. Holmes (2000) states that code-switching is used to attract attention and to persuade others.

- The expressive function: to emphasize a mixed identity through the use of two languages in the same discourse" (p.119);

- The directive function: to use code-switching when a speaker intends to involve the hearer only, excluding certain persons from a conversation.

Similarly, other sociolinguists state that people refer to switch languages to show solidarity. Holmes (2000) points out that a speaker may switch to another language as a signal of group membership and shared ethnicity within an addressee. Shabt (2007) argues that cod-switching is sometimes used when the speaker wants to sound elitist and classy. Al-Khatib (2003) says that speakers switch codes to show power over the less powerful. Code-switching is also used to express feelings, such as happiness, anger, sadness, disapproval and excitement

Englishization and Arabization

Englishization is "making use of the English language as a *lingua franca* and converting material in the local language into English in an international corporation or other organization." (Dor, 2004: 97). Englishization is an inevitable result of globalization and it may lead to" linguistic consequences" and "language loss." (Dor, 2004:97). Any attempts against the process of Englishization are said to be a way of "local resistance to economic (and cultural) globalization" (Dor, 2004: 98). Thus, the Arab countries are attempting to spread English as a medium of instruction in schools and higher education institutions. The countries which are using Arabic in educational institutions are few. Syria is one of them. Englishization has also influenced the Arabs chatting and texting via the information technology devices, such as the mobile and the Internet. The young Arabs are using English alphabets in texting.

Another sociolinguistic phenomenon that has recently spread in the Arab world and that has negatively influenced the purity and eloquence of the Arabic language is the Arabic chat alphabet, also known as Arabish, Moaarab, Arabizi or Franco-Arabic. The Arabic chat alphabet uses the Latin script to spell out words phonetically, with the special addition of **7 numbers,** which represent those **Arabic characters not found in English** (Richards, n.d.). This sort of orthographic symbols is mostly used by young people for writing messages especially when there is unavailability of some alphabets in Arabic. The excessive use of such invented symbols (Appendices A & B) to denote language is too risky to Arabic as the young will gradually forget their language, leading to forgetting their identity. The following excerpt is an example on Arabizi language with the English equivalent.

Sender: Mr7ba.. kefek ?   (Hello. How are you)
Recipient: Ahlan . ana mnee7a.. ente kefek ?   (Hello, I am fine. How are you?)
Sender: mnee7a. $o 3mlete el youm ?   (Fine. What have you done today?)
Recipient: ana 3'bet 3n el jam3ah .. $o a3tako el doctor ?   (I was absent to university. What
                                                                                              did the doctor give you today?)

Sender: el youm ma 3mlet e$e jdeed.. bs bl uni.. kan feh kteer mo7adraat . ana ktabet kol el notes ..   (Today, I didn't do anything new. But, at the university there were many lectures. I   wrote all the notes.)
Recipient: bt2dare teb3teele el notes?!   (Can you send me the notes?)
Sender: ra7 a3teeke ?yahom bokra..   (I will give them to you tomorrow.)
Recipient: Oh ma a7sanek, 3n Jad $okran.   (Oh. How kind you are. Really, thank you)

Sender: Walaw ma n7na s7baat   (God!. But, we are friends.)

Diglossia

Diglossia, in Arabic (?izdiwaajiyyatu llugha) (El-Hassan 1977:112), is defined as the coexistence of two codes of varieties of a language used in different social situations. Diglossia represents a sociolinguistic phenomenon introduced nearly fifty years ago by the French Arabist William Marcaise who wrote a paper entitled " La diglossia arabe." In 1959, the American Linguist. Charles Ferguson elaborated the term diglossia and was responsible for spreading it in the English-speaking world. In Arabic, This linguistic duality refers to the phenomenon of using Modern Standard Arabic with colloquial varieties of Arabic in one social situation. Diglossia is now used in all areas of life: in advertising, in university lectures, in songs, in literature, in prayers and religious preaches, in political speeches and billboards, in TVs' news bulletins and in social occasions (El-Hassan 1977:112; Sabbah, 2010:60; Alshamrani, 2012). Following is an example of a university lecture in Kuwait as quoted in El-Hassan (1977:118).

" ma9alee∫i ?ihna mina l?aan fa saa9idan ya(a) jamaa9a mi∫ 9aawzin nista9mil kilmit huruuf ?ilhuruuf tuma€€il iljaanib ikitaabi lissoot . ?ihna hanista9mil kilmit ?aswaat li?anna bnidris 9ilm il-?aswaat mi∫ 9ilm il-?aswaat mi∫ 9ilm tani ."

The English equivalent of this part of the **lecture** is:

"Never mind! From now on, everybody, we do not want to use the word / huruf / nor /?ahuruf / " letters" . Letters are orthographic representations of sound. We will use the term/?aSwaat/ " sounds" because we are studying phonology , not another science."

In addition to the linguistic phenomena that have been mentioned in the first pages of the current article, there are other different cultural, educational, and economic factors that contribute to the likelihood of the deterioration of the Arabic language. These factors include the deterioration in Arabic literature, the globalization and media, the blind imitation of the west, the weak educational systems, the foreign labor, and the current political scene.

The decline in the Arabic poets' imagination and the power of invention that the Arabs had in the previous centuries may leave a negative impact on the Arabic language. Gibran Khaleel Gibran pointed out "It is the nations' inventors that keep the prominence for their language."(cited in Hydar, 2010). By inventors, Gibran meant every discoverer in any area of literature and science.

Another reason for the liklihood of the deterioration of the status of the Arabic language is colonialism. Colonialism in the 18th and 19th centuries influenced the social, psychological, economic, political and educational systems of the Arab world. A large part of higher education

in almost all Arab countries (except Syria) has been conducted in a colonial language, with English being the medium of instruction throughout most of the Middle East, and French in the Arab Maghreb: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

The Moroccan scholar Al Faheri (2013) described the situation in Al-Maghreb Al-Arabi where the "national languages" of both Arabic and Amazigh (or "Berber") are in conflict against the language of the former occupier, France. Al-Faheri stated that,

"There are efforts under way to invest French officially as the language of the ruling elites,   of powerful economics, political and cultural groups and conversely, to keep Arabic in its present position of being the language of the toilers." The Arabic Language: DNA of a Nation". Paper presented in the First Annual Conference of the Social Sciences and Humanities (ACSSH) in Doha in 2013.

Globalization and Media or "Al-awlaama" in Arabic has a great impact on the Arabic language. Globalization refers to the spread throughout the globe of mostly western ideas, customs, institutions, traditions, conventions and attitudes *(Al-Attiyah, 2013).* Among the many impacts of globalization on the Arab countries are:

1. The "e-language" where the Arab youth use of English letters and numbers to represent the Arabic language is just one consequence of globalization (Hopkyns, 2014).

2. Code-switching: The young switch English with Arabic in everyday communication (Al-Attiyah, 2013).

Related to globalization is the problem of blind imitation of The West. As a result of Globalization, religious expressions which form a unique feature of the Arabic language are now being Englishized. The following are some examples taken from Castleton & Morrow, 2007.

insha' Allah = God willing,
alhamdulillah = Praise be to God,
subhan Allah = Glory be to God,
masha Allah = It is the will of God,
baraka Allahu fik = May God bless you,
jazaka Allah khayr = May God reward you,
inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un = From God we come and to Him is our return.

In addition, the GCC countries encourage the large presence of foreign labor in the Gulf, which could eventually lead to a loss of the national identity (*Al-Najjar, 2013).* Al-Najjar (2013:4) states some statistics of the dramatic increase in population in the Gulf countries. For example, Qatar's population rose from less than 500,000 in 2002 t0 1.8 million in 2012; while Bahrain's population almost doubled from 650,000 in 2005 to 1.25 million in 2012. This population increase, which was due to the rising demands for foreign labor, has led to major social, cultural, linguistic, and political transformations. To communicate with the foreign work force, some GCC inhabitants use English; while others create a variety of colloquial Arabic that the expats can understand. Some others switch Arabic with English to facilitate their communication.

The educational Systems in the Arab Countries play a role in aggravating the problem. In their papers, Maamouri Mohamed and Idriss Maqboul, speakers in the ACRPS event (2013) criticized the educational structures of some Arab countries. Maqboul (2013) pointed out that many educational institutions which are "profit-driven" are now spread in the Arab countries.

Being incredibly culturally influential, they have promoted the use of foreign languages and even foreign syntactic styles at the expense of the Arabic language. Magboul (2013) highlighted the following points in his description of the educational systems in the Arab countries.

1. The English language has become the language of off-campus communication between students.

2. The use of foreign languages is promoted at the expense of the Arabic Language.

3. Private schools and foreign instructors dominate the educational scene in most of the Arab countries.

4. Instructors of Arabic courses at schools and universities are using colloquial Arabic rather than Standard Arabic.

Al-Omari (2013), added that the society itself is encouraging the use of other languages. The names of shops and restaurants are written in English; and the job seekers requested curriculum vitaes to be written in English.

The present Arab political scene also contributes to the deterioration of Arabic. During the Arab uprisings (Al Rabei Al Arabi), the colloquial Arabic dialects were used because they are easier and they do not need any literacy or knowledge of the phonological, morphological and syntactical systems of Standard Arabic. Chatting, facebook messages, political announcements, and billboards were mostly conducted in Arabic vernaculars.

Conclusion

It is time for the Arabs to take serious actions to stop any deterioration of their language as language represents their identity. It is the responsibility of all individuals and institutions to contribute to solving this problem. Parents should instill in their children strong feelings of loyalty to Arabic. Educational systems should be reformed so that adequate knowledge of Arabic will be a prerequisite to promote students to higher classes. It is also recommended that standardized Arabic tests should be set as university entrance precondition in all the universities in the Arab countries. Activities, initiatives, efforts, and conferences should be organized on national scales to promote or reinstate Arabic as the legitimate in all the governmental institutions in the Arab countries.

In a conference in Dubai, Dr. Al-Omari (2013) argued "A nation that gives up its language or disrespects it, gives up its soul and mind and loses what makes it different," she also stated, "Defending and protecting the Arabic language and bringing it back to the lead, especially in our day-to-day interactions, has become a religious and national duty." In fact, we are still optimistic that Arabic will one day regain its past prominence. Being the language of the Holy Qur'an and the language of our prominent past, there is still a great hope that it will revive stronger than before.

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Dr. Sabah Sabbah holds MA in TEFL and Ph.D. in English Language Curriculum and Instruction. She has worked as a teacher trainer, a supervisor and an assistant professor. She attended courses in English pedagogy in Jordan, Britain and U.S. She published research. She presented papers in Innovations 2014 Conference in Anaheim, U.S.A., in CCQ Humanities Conference, and in Qatar and Dubai TESOL, 2015.

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Appendix (A)

Letters	Arabic chat alphabet	Phonetic Value (IPA)
أ ؤ إ ئ آ ء	2 / '	ʔ
ا	a / e / é / è [1]	æ(ː)~a(ː)~ɑ(ː)~e(ː)~ɛ(ː)~ɐ
ب	b / p	b, p
ت	t	t~t̪~t͡s
ث	s / th	s~θ
ج	g / j / dj [1]	g~ʝ~ʒ~d͡ʒ
ح	7	ħ~ʜ
خ	kh / 7' / 5	x~χ
د	d	d~d̪

ذ	z / dh / th	z~ð
ر	r	r~ɾ, rˤ
ز	z	z
س	s	s
ش	sh / ch [1]	ʃ
ص	s / 9	sˤ~s~sˠ
ض	d / 9'	d~dˤ~d̪ˤ~d̪ˠ
ط	t / 6	tˤ~t~t̪ˤ~t̪ˠ
ظ	z / dh / t' / 6'	zˤ~ðˤ~ðˠ
ع	3	ʕ~ʕ̞
غ	gh / 3'	ɣ~ʁ
ف	f / v	f, v
ق	8	ʔ~g~ɢ~q
ك	k / g	k, g
ل	l	l~ɫ
م	m	m
ن	n	n
ه	h / a / e / ah / eh	h, æ~a~ɑ~e~ɐ
ة	a / e / ah / eh	æ~a~ɑ~e~ɐ
و	w / o / u / ou / oo	w, /o(ː)/, /u(ː)/
ي or ى [9][10]	y / i / ee / ei / ai / a	j, /i(ː)/, /e(ː)/, /a/

Appendix (B)

ؤ	2	Su2al (question) - S
ع	3	3alam (flag)
غ	3'	3'areeb (stranger) - F
ث	4	43lab (fox)
ط	6	6aleb (student)
ح	7	7leeb (milk)
خ	5 / 7' / KH	27'I (brother)
ق	8	8ala (said)
ص	9	9aba7 (sabah)
ض	9'	
ذ	dh	Dhaalika (that is)
ظ	6'	
و	w	Wadi (valley)
CU	See you	
U2	You too	
Be right back	Brib	برب
g2g	I have to go now	
IDK	I don't know	
AA	Assalam Alykom	السلام عليكم
ISA	In Sha2a Allah	إن شاء الله
MSA	Ma Sha2a Allah	ماشاء الله
JAK	Jazakom Allaho khayran	جزاكم الله خيراً