

## Attitudes towards Arabic Romanization and Student's Major: Evidence from the University of Jordan

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### Abstract

This paper seeks to unveil the attitudes of a sample of students at the University of Jordan towards the use of romanized Arabic in computer-mediated communication (CMC). In particular, it provides answers to two questions. First, do the subjects encode Arabic characters, including numbers, in a romanized version in their CMC? If yes, how often and why? Second, does the students' major and the language of instruction used therein (i.e. English or Arabic) affect their choice of Arabic romanization and their attitudes towards it? The data are collected by means of a questionnaire completed by students from four different majors: (1) Applied English, (2) Arabic, (3) Medicine, and (4) Islamic Sharia. While the majority of students of Applied English and Medicine tend to use Romanized Jordanian Arabic, the students of Arabic and Sharia show a clear preference for the use of Arabic letters. The users of Romanized Arabic cite a number of reasons for their choice. Some believe that Romanized letters are easier and faster to type than Arabic letters. Some posit that English is the language of the Internet and technology and, thus, the use of romanization gives communication a special flavor. A third group report that their devices do not support Arabic language. This study is expected to contribute to identifying the youth attitudes towards the use or avoidance of romanized Arabic, which in turn may help develop a better understanding of this issue and assist cyber Arabic users to make the right choice when interacting with others in Arabic online.

*Keywords:* Arabic, Arabizi, attitudes, chatting, CMC

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