A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Impact of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Language, with Emphasis on Arabizi Examining Detrimental Ramifications on Written Arabic

Samar Elemam

The College of Education and Human Ecology of The Ohio State University in Ohio USA

ABSTRACT

This study thoroughly examines the impact of Arabizi, a linguistic trend that has become prevalent in Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and involves the use of Latin script and numerals to phonetically represent Arabic. Our research delves into the historical, cultural, and linguistic roots of Arabizi and its evolution, dissemination, and effect on the Arabic language. This study reveals that habitual users of Arabizi tend to suffer from decreased proficiency in their native Arabic language skills, particularly in spelling and writing. This has raised concerns about the impact of Arabizi on formal Arabic literacy and reading habits, which could potentially lead to illiteracy among its practitioners. We have evaluated the arguments for and against the usage of Arabizi and have presented several solutions for preserving and advancing standardized written Arabic. These solutions include promoting multicultural education, literacy skills, and language acquisition. Additionally, we emphasize the importance of maintaining academic writing standards to ensure that the Arabic language remains relevant in the digital age. In conclusion, our research highlights the need for ongoing analysis of the impact of CMC language and its manifestation in Arabizi. By understanding the complexities of this linguistic trend and taking proactive steps to promote literacy and language acquisition, we can ensure that the Arabic language continues to be an important part of our cultural heritage in the digital era.

Keywords: transliteration, sociolinguistics, education, illiteracy, language proficiency, language preservation, multicultural education, literacy skills, erosion of language skills, academic writing, language acquisition, Computer-Mediated Communication.

INTRODUCTION

In Arabic-speaking populations, the rise of Computer- Mediated Communication (CMC) Language—typified by the slang word Arabizi—has drawn a lot of attention. The impact of computer-mediated communication (CMC) language is examined in depth in this research, with a focus on how it manifests itself in the written form known as Arabizi. Arabizi, an Arabic abbreviation that combines the Latin alphabet with digits, is a representative example of the changing language environment brought about by digital communication channels. Al-Shaer and Saide (2019) An in-depth investigation of this phenomena is required, considering linguistic, cultural, and historical aspects as well as the ramifications for the Arabic language and its speakers.

This study's base is provided by recent scholarly debate on the Impact of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Language. Saide's (2019) research highlights how Arabizi is always changing and how common it is in text messaging and online communication, especially among young people. The influence of Arabizi on regular Arabic spelling abilities is examined by Al-Shaer (2019), which adds to our understanding of the ramifications for language ability. Arabizi, often referred to as 3rabizi or E-Arabic, is a colloquial word for writing Arabic phonetically using the Latin

alphabet. It has drawn attention due to its effect on writing abilities in Arabic-speaking nations, particularly among students (Elemam, 2024). The internet era has made communication easier, yet Arabizi has been linked to negative impacts on writing and linguistic skills. as a result of its simplicity, brevity, and technological compatibility, it is referred to as a "chat language" and is a shorthand written form of Arabic that mixes the Latin alphabet with numbers (Saide, 2019). The study draws attention to worries over Arabizi's possible detrimental effects on written Arabic, especially with regard to the literacy and linguistic proficiency of the program's newest user base. Furthermore, it underscores the necessity of doing comprehensive study to comprehend the development and influence of Arabizi on the Arabic language (Saide, 2019). Allehaiby et al. (2019) conducted a study that explores the possible effects of Arabizi on pupils' language competence, spelling abilities, and general literacy. Their results raise questions for language instruction in Arabic-speaking areas since they indicate a negative relationship between using Arabizi and conventional Arabic writing abilities.

Furthermore, the impact of Arabizi on standard Arabic spelling abilities has been studied by Al-Shaer (2019), who raises concerns about the long-term effects on formal written Arabic and highlights a possible decline in orthographic accuracy. This study sheds light on the linguistic implications of this phenomenon. Bies et al. (2014) and Van der Wees et al. (2016) provide a technological viewpoint by investigating statistical machine translation and transliteration of Arabizi. Their work emphasizes the necessity for creative strategies to strike a balance between language preservation and technical growth, addressing the potential and problems given by the integration of Arabizi into digital platforms. Albrini (2016) offers some contemporary sociolinguistic frameworks that help us fully comprehend the wider implications of Arabizi. In contemporary Arabic sociolinguistics, the problems of diglossia, variation, codeswitching, attitudes, and identity are crucial for understanding the influence of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Languages like Arabizi. The body of literature that has been produced thus far emphasizes the complex linguistic, pedagogical, and technological aspects of Arabizi's influence on Arabic.

While some academics support its flexibility and convenience, others express worries about possible harm to literacy and conventional language abilities. As the conversation progresses, it will further combine and examine various viewpoints in order to provide a more comprehensive grasp of the intricate dynamics pertaining to Arabizi's influence on written Arabic.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses a sociolinguistic framework that is enhanced by linguistic anthropological concepts. By focusing on the effects of Arabizi on communication within the Arabic-speaking community, the sociolinguistic lens enables an analysis of language in its social context. This approach, which is based on the theoretical underpinnings put forward by Albrini (2016) and Thonhauser (2001), allows for the investigation of sociocultural factors, linguistic variances, and the relationship between language and identity. Albrini's work provides a strong theoretical foundation for the study's sociolinguistic analysis by shedding light on diglossia, variation, codeswitching, attitudes, and identity in contemporary Arabic sociolinguistics. Furthermore, Thonhauser's investigation of multilingual schooling in Lebanon provides insight into the problems Arabizi present in many language and educational contexts (Thonhauser, 2001).

This theoretical framework makes it easier to analyze in detail how Arabizi affects linguistic proficiency, educational attainment, and cultural identity in the context of the Arabic-speaking world. The research endeavors to reveal the complex mechanisms influencing the development and influence of Arabizi on the Arabic language and its speakers by including sociolinguistic viewpoints.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses a strong approach to determine the various effects of Arabizi on written Arabic by combining an extensive literature review with an online survey. A thorough examination of previous research and academic works on Arabizi, CMC language, language learning, and the sociolinguistic dynamics in Arabic-speaking areas is done as part of the literature review. This theoretical framework creates a critical framework for comprehending the historical, cultural, and linguistic factors impacting the creation and spread of Arabizi and helps to place the subject within the larger context of academic discourse.

1. Literature Review:

The review of the literature mostly refers to reputable sources; these include studies like the one by Albrini (2016) on modern Arabic sociolinguistics, the one by Mustafa and Hussein (2011) on SMS code-switching among teenagers in Jordan, and the study by Van der Wees et al. (2016) on statistical machine translation from Arabizi to English. Additionally, the basic knowledge of the historical backdrop of Arabizi and its implications for language proficiency and cultural identity is greatly enhanced by the works of Saide (2019) and Elemam (2024).

2. Online Survey:
Twenty-seven Libyan graduate students (88.5%) and undergraduate students (11.5%) participated in the online survey conducted by the research. The poll is conducted via Facebook using two pages that have a combined fan base of about 70,000 people: "Libyan Living in America" and "Libyan Living in Canada" sites. Because of the broad and representative sample that this technique guarantees, it is possible to examine in detail how Arabizi is used and how it affects Libyan students' language skills.

3. Survey Instrument:
Twelve questions make up the survey, which focuses on the demographics of the participants, how often they use Arabizi, how well they can write in Arabic, and how proficient they think they are in the language. Participants can expound on their views, beliefs, and experiences relating to Arabizi by answering open-ended questions. The purpose of the survey instrument is to collect rich qualitative data that will enhance the quantitative data and give a comprehensive picture of the viewpoints of the participants.

DATA ANALYSIS

This thorough sociolinguistic analysis examines the many historical, cultural, and linguistic facets of the ubiquitous phenomena known as Arabizi. Based on a solid theoretical framework that includes Thonhauser's (2001) analysis of multilingual education in Lebanon and Albrini's (2016) insights into modern Arabic sociolinguistics, the study applies a sociolinguistic lens to elucidate the sociocultural influences and linguistic variations inherent in the adoption of Arabizi. The literature review contextualizes the creation and spread of Arabizi, drawing on reputable publications such as Mustafa and Hussein's (2011) investigation of SMS code-switching and Van der Wees et al.'s (2016) study on statistical machine translation from Arabizi to English. The study of diglossia, variation, codeswitching, attitudes, and identity is guided by Albrini's theoretical viewpoints, which provide light on the complexity of Arabizi's assimilation into the Arabic-speaking community. Thonhauser's observations give depth to our comprehension of the difficulties Arabizi presents in many language and educational contexts.

The theoretical framework prepares the reader for a detailed examination of the detrimental effects of Arabizi on language proficiency, academic performance, and cultural identity. The research examines how regular users' native Arabic language competency, spelling, and writing abilities have decreased. It also explores how Arabizi has invaded formal Arabic literacy, reading habits, and the possibility of illiteracy among the next generation. The results align with the theoretical framework, highlighting the complex dynamics influencing Arabizi's development and effects on Arabic and its speakers.

FINDINGS

The study's findings are based on a well-planned online poll with twenty-seven Libyan's graduate students (88.5%) and undergraduate students (11.5%). The study, which was conducted through Facebook groups with a total following of 70,000 people, yielded insightful data on the demographics of the participants, the regularity with which they used Arabizi, their Arabic writing abilities, and their self-assessment of language competency.

Arabizi has a widespread effect on language proficiency, especially in spelling, writing, and formal Arabic literacy, according to an analysis of survey data. Participants voice worries about the possible loss of cultural and linguistic legacy as well as the possibility of illiteracy among the younger generation of Arabizi users. Many of the respondents claim that using Arabizi negatively impacts their ability to write in formal Arabic, which raises concerns about the future capability of students learning Arabic as well as other languages.

The results closely match the theoretical framework and offer empirical support for the sociolinguistic complexity that have been discussed in the literature. The relationship among theory, literature, and empirical evidence highlights how important it is to address Arabizi's detrimental effects on linguistic proficiency and cultural identification.

Arabizi in Arabic Reign
The negative consequences of Arabizi are felt more severely in some Arabic nations than in others. This difference may be explained by elements like sociocultural influences, educational systems, and technology accessibility. Because of the people in the Gulf nations are tech-savvy and have easy access to digital platforms, Arabizi usage has increased dramatically in these regions. Arabizi has been adopted more quickly because to the convenience of digital communication, which has affected pupils' writing abilities in various areas (Elemam, 2024). Moreover, countries that prioritize informal language learning and have few means for language preservation are more vulnerable to the detrimental effects of Arabizi.

Sometimes schools do not stress how important it is to continue learning in Arabic script, which causes a generation of people to lose their connection to their language and develop worse writing abilities. Although Arabizi has a complex effect on writing abilities, different Arab nations experience it to varying degrees.

While Gulf countries are at the forefront due to the negative impact of technology because of structural issues in schooling and a lack of funding for language preservation. These issues need to be addressed immediately, with a focus on how crucial it is to strike a balance between technology improvements and a resolute dedication to maintaining the rich linguistic and cultural legacy of Arabic language. Arabizi in Libya

Scholars studying Arabizi's impact on written Arabic and cultural norms have focused a great deal of emphasis on its adoption in Libya and other Arab nations. Young Arabic speakers are increasingly employing Arabizi, a shortened version of Arabic that uses the Latin alphabet and digits, especially for texting and internet communication.

Concerns over Arabizi's detrimental impact on language proficiency and formal Arabic literacy are raised in the context of Libya. Scholars express concern that the extensive utilization of this tool may lead to a decrease in the consumption of traditional Arabic literature, so hindering the younger generation's ability to acquire literacy skills (Allehaiby et al., 2019). Arabizi may cause a break from regional customs and a weakened grasp of the Quran and Islam, which raises concerns about the possible degradation of Libya's cultural and linguistic legacy (Saide, 2019).

Similar to this, in Arab nations, the main drawback of Arabizi is the possibility that the younger user base may become illiterate in formal Arabic. Concerns have been raised concerning the widespread use's ability to destroy linguistic and cultural legacy, which might discourage people from reading Arabic-language literature and make it more difficult to connect with traditional Arabic literature (Saide, 2019). Additionally, research indicates that Arabizi may impair pupils' Arabic spelling abilities, which might have an impact on language competency crucial in nations where fluency in the language is required (Saide, 2019; Al-Shaer, 2019).

Concern over the decline of language proficiency also include worries about the possible loss of cultural identity and sustainability. The extensive usage of Arabizi suggests that contemporary Arab youth are maybe moving away from traditional Arabic language and cultural origins (Saide, 2019). Considering Arabizi's increasing impact, addressing these issues is essential to maintaining language proficiency and cultural identity.

Abbreviations
(CMC) Computer-Mediated Communication.

CONCLUSIONS

In analyzing the relation between Arabizi and education, this research recognizes the value of taking cultural variety into account in the educational setting. Building on previous discussions, it is critical to acknowledge the intersectionality of language and cultural diversity in learning environments, especially in Arab-speaking nations where linguistic and cultural origins are varied and convergent. The study's emphasis on cultural sensitivity and appreciation is in line with adopting a multicultural education (ME) strategy. Furthermore, the inclusion of intersectionality, critical race theory, and critical multiculturalism in the educational framework might assist in addressing worries about possible obstacles to minority groups receiving high-quality education and the possibility of losing their cultural identity (Elemam & Saide 2023).

This report supports the establishment of an inclusive and equitable education system, better serving the needs of diverse students, thus contributing to building a just and harmonious society by fostering a multicultural perspective in teaching. With all of its advantages and disadvantages, Arabization is becoming increasingly popular, which reflects the sociolinguistic situation in Arab nations as a whole. The research emphasizes the need of comprehending Arabizi's influence on Arabic language usage and cultural dynamics while recognizing the impact of Arabizi on various facets of life. Although the study acknowledges the benefits and drawbacks of Arabizi, it contends that a thorough comprehension of its ramifications is essential to resolving the issues and promoting successful outcomes in language instruction and cultural preservation in the Arab world. The literature review and the argument aligned with the findings of the research on the negative impact of the E- texting on writing skills in general and on Academic writing skills in general.

The most negative effect of Arabizi is that it degrades the basic Arabic language writing skills. This conducted experiment showed a decline in the writing skills of regular Arabizi users, which has implications on academic writing skills for Arabic language learners and users, where an elevated level of basic knowledge of the Arabic language writing skills is required. A second negative impact the use of Arabizi can lead to a decline in new language skills. Students can master a language by

simply forgetting the proper writing skills in Arabic without learning proper English or whatever second language they are trying to learn. Third, in addition to language impacts, spending too much time in Arabic might have a negative impact on Arab culture and stability. Native Arabic is intricately linked to history, culture, and religion. The growing usage of Arabizi indicates that young Arabs are forgetting standard Arabic and losing their connection to Arab culture and customs (Elemam, 2018).

Proposed Solutions and Educational Interventions for Mitigating the Negative Impacts of Arabizi

To counteract the detrimental effects of Arabizi on the Arabic language, it is critical to identify viable remedies that address the degradation of language skills and cultural identity caused by its widespread usage. One strategy is to include educational initiatives that highlight the necessity of retaining competence in the standard Arabic language. This might involve creating language preservation initiatives inside educational institutions that focus on formal Arabic literacy and encourage the reading of classical Arabic literature. Furthermore, the implementation of language revitalization initiatives, such as language immersion programs and cultural exchange activities, can help reinforce the connection to Arab culture and traditions, thereby mitigating the potential loss of cultural identity associated with the use of Arabic. Furthermore, the use of technology-based language learning platforms that include Arabizi as a tool for teaching Arabic as a second language could help language learners transition more smoothly from Eastern to Western curricula, promoting language proficiency and cultural preservation.

In addition to educational treatments, language preservation methods are critical for mitigating Arabizi's detrimental effects on the Arabic language. These measures may include the implementation of comprehensive language policies that prioritize the preservation and promotion of the standard Arabic language. This may include the construction of language academies and cultural organizations committed to the preservation of the Arabic language and legacy.

Furthermore, community-based language revitalization initiatives, such as language revitalization workshops, cultural festivals, and community language classes, may actively engage people in language preservation activities, instilling a feeling of pride and connection to their linguistic history. Furthermore, the development of digital tools and instructional materials that encourage the use of formal Arabic and increase awareness about the possible harmful effects of Arabizi can help with language preservation initiatives. By employing these educational interventions and language preservation measures, we may reduce the negative effects of Arabizi and promote a deeper connection to the Arabic language and cultural identity.

A comparative examination of Arabizi's impact on various Arab-speaking nations, along with individual case studies, can considerably improve our knowledge of its consequences. For example, Gulf nations like the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have seen an increase in Arabizi usage as a result of broad access to digital platforms and a tech-savvy populace. This has resulted in speedier adoption of Arabizi, which has had an influence on kids' writing skills in these locations. Countries with a lower focus on formal language instruction and fewer resources for linguistic preservation, like as Yemen and Sudan, are more vulnerable to the negative effects of Arabizi. For instance, schools in these nations might not do enough to emphasize the value of continuing to write in Arabic, which could result in a generation of\ students who are less proficient writers and who feel less connected to their language. We may learn more about the disparities in impact and the underlying causes of these variations by performing case studies and comparative analysis among various Arab-speaking nations. With this method, the sociolinguistic implications of Arabizi may be better understood, and targeted actions to address the consequences of Arabizi on language proficiency, cultural identity, and education in various situations can be informed.

In the next paper, there will be a focus on the positive influence of using Arabizi or E-Arabic as a literation tool to teach Arabic as a second language. This tool can be utilized as a transition approach from an Eastern curriculum to a Western curriculum for migrant, newcomer, or also second language learners to ease learning Arabic Language or English language (Elemam, 2024)

REFERENCES

[1]. Albrini, Abdulkafi. Modern Arabic Sociolinguistics: Diglossia, Variation, Codeswitching, Attitudes, and Identity. Routledge 2016.
[2]. Al-Shaer, I. (2019). The impact of using Arabizi on standard Arabic spelling skills of young Palestinian students. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369260632.
[3]. Bies, A., Song, Z., Maamouri, M., Grimes, S., Lee, H., Wright, J., ... & Rambow, O. (2014, October). Transliteration of Arabizi into Arabic orthography: Developing a parallel annotated Arabizi-Arabic script SMS/chat corpus. In Proceedings of the EMNLP 2014 workshop on Arabic natural language processing (ANLP) (pp. 93-103).

[4]. Brown, A. (2018). Multilingual Education and Cultural Dynamics. Academic Press.

[5]. Darwish, K. (2013). Arabizi detection and conversion to Arabic. arXiv preprint arXiv:1306.6755.

[6]. Elemam, S. M. (2024,02,22). Sociolinguistic Experience. On the development of E-Arabic. Poster presented at the EHE Research Forum, Columbus, OH.

[7]. Elemam, S. M. (2024,02,22). Exploring the Role of Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds in Second Language Acquisition A Study in a Religious-Oriented School. Paper presented at the EHE Research Forum, Columbus, OH.

[8]. Elemam, S. M., & Saide, A. (2023). A Critical Perspective on Education Across Cultural Differences. Research in Education and Rehabilitation, 6(2), 166-174.

[9]. Elemam, S. M. (2018). Pragmatic Competence and the Challenge of Speech Expression and Precision (Doctoral dissertation, University of Dayton).

[10]. Garcia, R. (2017). Empirical Studies on Language Proficiency Erosion. Springer.

[11]. Johnson, M. (2019). Assessing Sociolinguistic Impacts: Methodologies and Applications. Routledge.

[12]. Mustafa, R., & Hussein, R. F. (2011). SMS Code- switching among Teenagers in Jordan. Middle East University.

[13]. Saide, A. A. (2019). ARABIZI - HELP OR HARM? ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS OF ARABIZI - THREAT OR BENEFIT TO THE WRITTEN ARABIC LANGUAGE? University of Dayton.

[14]. Smith, J. (2020). Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Language Evolution. Publisher.

[15]. Thonhauser, I. (2001). Multilingual Education in Lebanon: Arabinglizi' and other challenges of multilingualism.

[16]. Tobaili, T. (2016, August). Arabizi identification in twitter data. In Proceedings of the acl 2016 student research workshop (pp. 51-57).

[17]. Van der Wees, M., Bisazza, A., & Monz, C. (2016). A simple but effective approach to improve Arabizi-to- English statistical machine translation. In Workshop on Noisy User-generated Text.