

THE REALITY OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract

Globalization, as a worldwide movement has brought many economic, political, technological, social and cultural changes which had and are still having impacts on many aspects of peoples' lives, among which the linguistic one. Such a movement gives priority and control to the language of powerful nations and tends to uproot the remaining languages with the aim to dominate powerless states. The present work tries to shed light on the reality of the Arabic language and the challenges it is facing within the era of globalization. It starts, by highlighting the importance of the Arabic language in the world, before focusing on globalization as a concept, first, then as a movement. Following, the positive and negative effects of globalization on the Arabic language are discussed and finally some recommendations and prospects aiming at promoting and sustaining the place of the Arabic language worldwide, in the face of the challenge of globalization, are displayed.

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1- Introduction

Language plays an important role in the different nations' lives and histories, since it represents their past, present, future as well as their image, thought, spirit and destiny. No nation exists without its language; it is the vehicle of communication between its members, and the main tool through which concepts, ideas, and technology transfer (Rabiah, 2012). Therefore, language is the means through which they gain experience and skills and enrich their knowledge. It enables them, also, to connect with each other as well as with their heritage and civilization in order to follow the path of development. Hence, each language is seen in terms of its power and sovereignty, being one of the most visible manifestations of independence and freedom.

Today's world is witnessing the era of globalization, it is considered to be one of the contemporary issues that has become an obsession for each researcher and student and everyone deals with this issue from a certain angle (Davies, 2020). This phenomenon is impacting on most aspects of the different societies, including their languages, and the Arabic language is no exception.

Therefore, the present paper aims essentially at highlighting the state of the art of the Arabic language within the era of globalization, through answering the following questions:

- How does globalization affect the reality of the Arabic language?
 - What are the positive effects of globalization on the Arabic language?

- What are the negative effects of globalization on the Arabic language?
- How far can these negative effects and risks be reduced?

2-The Importance of the Arabic Language

The Arabic language has a prominent place worldwide, holding the fifth place of the five most spoken languages in the world (Ibanez, 2020). It is the lingua franca of Arab world people living in the Arab world; enclosing the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East, and North Africa; as well as those living in the diaspora, mainly in Latin America (Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile and Colombia) and Western Europe (France, Spain, Germany or Italy). Arabic is being the mother tongue of more than one hundred sixty million Arabs, and the sacred language of more than a thousand million Muslims around the world (Kamusella, 2017). To put it differently, it is the mother tongue of the Arab world people, the second language of the Islamic world people and the third language in the world in terms of its spread. Besides, it is one of the six languages used by the United Nations and most importantly, it is the language of the holy Koran, Prophetic hadiths and Islamic faith (Morrow & Castleton, 2007). The table below gives a detailed overview of the Arabic Speaking countries.

Table 1: Countries where Arabic is an Official Language

Number	Country	Population	Number of Arabic Speakers
1	Egypt	100,000,000	82,449,000

2	Algeria	41,701,000	40,100,
3	Sudan	40,235,000	28,164,
4	Iraq	36,004,552	22,908,
5	Morocco	35,250,000	25,003,
6	Saudi Arabia	30,770,375	27,178,
7	Yemen	23,833,000	14,671,
8	Syria	20,956,000	17,951,
9	Tunisia	10,982,754	10,800,
10	Somalia	10,428,043	3,788,0
11	Chad	10,329,208	1,320,0
12	United Arab Emirates	9,346,129	3,607,6
13	Jordan	6,655,000	5,083,3
14	Eritrea	6,380,803	5,083,3
15	Libya	6,380,803	249,70
16	Lebanon	6,244,174	4,526,0
17	Palestine	4,484,000	3,762,0
18	Oman	4,055,418	2,518,8
19	Mauritania	3,359,185	3,140,0
20	Kuwait	2,789,000	1,735,0
21	Qatar	2,155,446	1,215,9
22	Bahrain	1,343,000	690,30
23	Djibouti	810,179	97,900

Source: Adapted from Salameh (2021)

www.tarjama.com/how-many-countries-that-speak-arabic-around-the-world/

Scholars have always been aware of the importance of the Arabic language and focussed their attention and efforts on the purity, enrichment and preservation of this language. Nowadays the Arabic language, as other living languages, is facing the challenge of globalization, which seeks to eliminate the linguistic diversity in the world and give control to languages with major achievements in the scientific, economic, technical and economic fields, and dominate other cultures. In this light, Holton (1998,p.163) advocates that globalization is a threat to cultural diversity. Hence, the relationship between any language and globalization determines the future of that language and its development, and the prospects for its survival, regression or demise, which necessarily reflects the prospects for the survival, regression or demise of its speakers. The possession of self-power and technical and scientific capabilities, are important tools in the supposed confrontation between the strongest and the weakest. Therefore, the state of the Arabic language in the context of globalization has become dangerous and darkened in many locations, despite its ease, lack of ambiguity and ability to communicate what needs to be communicated clearly and accurately.

3-The Concept of Globalization

If we return to the origin of the term Globalization, we find that it first appeared in the United States of America. This term is derived from the word "globe," meaning the Earth which we live on. Hence, globalization revolves around the idea of subjecting the entire globe to a new economic, political and

social world order based on the electronic mind, the information revolution, mechanization and technological creativity, without regard to civilizations, cultures and values prevailing in societies and geographical boundaries.

The world is witnessing a high dominance of the economic segment of globalization which stresses the uncontrollable forces of state markets and multinational corporations (Steger, 2020). As far as the political dimension of globalization is concerned, it is a new colonial recipe that eliminates the concepts of the national sovereignty of states through the consolidation of the concepts of democracy, human rights, freedoms of individuals and societies, which, in their view, means the elimination of national sovereignty in the interest of loyalty and belonging to supranational global institutions and ideas.

In general, the term globalization means the removal of borders and the elimination of divides between cultures, states and peoples in various political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual spheres (Scheuerman, 2018). This has therefore contributed to the explosion of knowledge as well as the proliferation of many subjects and areas of research in many fields. Actually, our times have also witnessed a rapid development in media and communication that has exceeded all perceptions, and this has been reflected in all aspects of the different nations' intellectual, cultural and social lives, as reflected in their behavioral patterns, and primarily in their languages.

This brings us to focus on linguistic globalization which means that language goes beyond its regional and local sphere to other countries and geographically distant regions, to be spoken by individuals and communities outside its scope (Hamdi, 2013). It is one of the most dangerous types of globalization, that aims at swallowing the cultures of most powerful nations and peoples and the elimination of worldwide linguistic diversity, leading to the dominance of English over other languages and cultures, and this affects

behavior, education and thinking. The West has planned to remove Arabs from their long-standing heritage, history and language. Hence, Globalization had had and is still having an impact on Arabs in general and on Arabic in particular.

3-1- The Positive Effects of Globalization on the Arabic Language

Even though it has not advanced to being a universal language, it must be emphasized that the Arabic language has widely benefited from the various developments of the means of communication brought by globalization, in particular Internet and TV satellites, and from modern and special audio-visual means of teaching Arabic through modern laboratories; that facilitate the process of voice and image education (Redkin and Bernikova, 2016).

Subsequently, computers have become compulsory in many Arab schools, institutes, universities, and even homes; and this has greatly contributed to their wide dissemination in the Arab countries. The Arabic language, culture and literature have also greatly benefited from the tools of rapid printing and copying, enabling Arab scholars and authors to complete large numbers of books, research and studies in Arabic, thus making them easily accessible to the largest number of readers at affordable prices, and facilitating the transmission of the Arabic language from one society to another. In the same line of thought, Arabic has also benefited from technological techniques and automated audio-visual means in its dissemination and the spread of its virtues out of Arabic speaking countries' boundaries. Consequently, there has been an increase in the demand for Arabic language and culture, and the number of institutes and academies teaching Arabic to non-speakers has increased. Thanks to all these factors, the Arabic language has been able to expand worldwide (Abdoussalam, 2003).

However, such positive aspects will remain dependent on specific conditions that ensure a move away from radicalism and intolerance and the development of thought in a modern spirit, in which closed systems are freed, and schools, universities and sciences are open to each other.

3-2- The Negative Effects of Globalization on the Arabic Language

By examining the phenomenon of globalization, it is noticed that it does not only increase the flow of goods, wealth, services, and ideas without borders or restrictions, but also means the rapid flow of the most influential language that possesses power, supremacy and control over other languages and nations, especially those that have long suffered from English and French colonialism (Shiyab, 2013). These nations and their peoples continue to make exhausting efforts to free themselves from the many restrictions imposed on them but their movement is made more difficult by their unstable economic and educational situations, which constitute an obstacle to their tendencies to be free from the restrictions of the colonizers. In the area of Internet distribution, it is difficult to create Internet networks in Arabic in a fully technical sense, because the systems that created Internet established English as a fixed language in a technical sense.

Moreover, the use of the Internet and computers in the Arab world has considerably expanded and many transactions can be completed only through this means, whether at the governmental level or at the personal one. Consequently, foreign language has begun to creep into the Arabic language space in its countries, and this will undoubtedly lead to the domination of non-Arabic terms and their tyranny over the Arabic language, and favor their circulation in educational and teaching curricula, among intellectuals, performers and scholars, and even among the general public. This has led the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)

to express its concern at the marginalization and exclusion of the Arabic language at many instances.

Under the rule and force of globalization, many English words have already entered daily Arabic use such as Supermarket, Internet, Academy, Computer, Taxi, Mobile, etc. Furthermore, Writing in Arabic through the Internet faces challenges under a variety of obstacles, including: the many versions of Arabic and the disappearance of Arabic characters as well as numbering marks on computer keyboards.

Moreover, Arabic is being removed from the daily life of many Arab nations, whether in speech, in the media or even in the language of education. English names and expressions are increasingly used in shops signboards and restaurant menus (Barhouma and El Anati, 2007, p.79); besides, more and more young Arabs tend to draw on English to write Arabic mobile or Internet messages using Latin letters when communicating and texting others (Sabbah, 2015; Dahou, 2016; Suwaiyan 2018) . In the area of employment, as well, English proficient people are always advantaged. This fact is preventing many Arab citizens from having a living in Arab regions and is opening the doors to large numbers of foreigners who replaced the original citizens at work. The Arab countries are, then, experiencing a crisis of identity (Babran, 2008). As a result of the changes in the political, economic, social and cultural composition, numerous programs have been developed to preserve the Arabic language as the identity of the nation, as well as the national and religious identity of society so as to prevent the decline of the Arabic language worldwide and reinforce its effective dissemination and support mechanisms (Yajoui, 2012).

4. Recommendations and Prospects

What has been previously cited provides a clear indication of the reality of today's Arabic language. All of this will lead to a state of decline and disintegration of the mother tongue if globalization is not used in a correct and civilizational manner, which helps to expand the language's perspectives and bring it into line with technical progress and development through the development of educational curricula.

The following perspectives may help promote and sustain the place of the Arabic language within the era of globalization:

- Expanding the use of the Arabic language in various Arab States through the visual, reading and audio media. To that end, it is essential to prepare qualified staff who can communicate the sound Arabic language to all receivers.
- Coordinating between the organizations and the Arabic-language communities in the Arab world in order to develop a comprehensive plan for the teaching of Arabic and to take care of the Arabic curricula, books and literature issued by the Arabic publishing houses.
- Providing financial and moral incentives to Arab publishers in Arabic in general, especially those focusing on the bases of Arabic language teaching, learning and dissemination.
- Taking greater care to prepare Arabic teachers focusing on a systematic scientific basis, enabling them to refine their scientific personality so that they can perform their duties to serve the Arabic language, its culture, values and civilization.

- Using the teaching of Arabic through modern audio-visual means, language laboratories, listening devices, video tapes, slides and computer tablets, and use space technologies to disseminate Arabic through distance education programs.

5. Conclusion

Globalization has undoubtedly opened up broad horizons for international communications, as the world has had an information revolution that seeks to eliminate borders between states and facilitate the widespread movement of people and information. There is no doubt that the world's dominant languages have an important role to play in the effectiveness of these contacts, however, Arabic is in danger and is fighting a necessary war against globalization, which is aimed at uprooting it and thus affecting the Holy Koran, the sacred book of not only Arabs but of all Muslims around the world.

Besides, the problem of the Arabic language in the face of globalization is due to the isolation and self-immolation of Arab societies, as well as to the fact that the authorities are subject to political and economic pressures that have established this isolation and led to a pattern of thinking, practice and reactions that are largely separate from the world and its norms. Accordingly, Arab speakers are at the end of the race of nations towards knowledge and political, economic and military power.

But the openness that is nowadays taking place in Arab speaking nations; after decades of isolation, under the pressure of external conditions and forces, and without distant vision and social control; is remarkably dismantling and even exploding all existing pressures, from the regional to the social systems. Here

lies the opportunity to use globalization and all that it offers in the different fields in a correct and civilizational manner in order to help expand the Arabic language's perspectives and bring it into line with technical progress and development. This may be achieved through the development of educational curricula and the elaboration of adequate strategies and practices that facilitate the transmission and dissemination of the Arabic language to other nations, and give it; in the present and future; opportunities for development and expansion, especially that it will always stand as the official language of Arab countries and governments, as well as the language of the Islamic religion, sermons and imams in mosques.

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