* **Good subject and new**
* **Language needs to be checked again**
* **Endnotes should not contain the details of books she refers to, this comes separately in list of references**

**The Impact of the Internet on the Language of Literary Discourse**

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**Abstract**

This study aims to show the impact of the Internet on the language of literary discourse by analyzing a number of texts published on the Internet by various Arab writers. This analysis highlights two main aspects of this impact.The first is new vocabulary that has infiltrated into literary texts while being modified to beconsistent with the language of literature; the second lies inthe use of colloquial Arabic in literary texts in order to keep the Arabic language on the internet and to protect it from the threat of extinction in the unending battle of languages.

**Key Words:** Internet & computer language, Virtual reality, Semantic field

**Introduction:**

David Crystal, author of *Language and the Internet*,[[1]](#endnote-1)wrote that “If the internet represents a revolution, it is likely to be a linguistic revolution.”He noted that the nature of the digital medium on the one hand, and the world-wide reach of the internet and the intensity of its use on the other hand, affect language in general and individual languages in particular. He also noted the large linguistic variety on the internet. There is a language for e-mails, another for chat groups,a different language for comments, and a different language still for literature; and so on. Each of these variations has its own characteristics and stylistic features, which makes it different from the others. Many of the findings in Crystal’s study can be applied to the Arabic language. Yet, Arabic studies relating to the use of Arabic in general on the internet are very limited, particularly with regards to literary writing. This is what prompted me to study this particular matter in this paper.

Based on Crystal’s study on the one hand, and a review of many literary texts published on the internet on the other hand, we can say that the use of computers in creative writing, and the decision made by some writers to publish their works on websites, has had a clear impact on the language of literary discourse, leading to the emergence of new linguistic and stylistic phenomena in literary writing. This effect is apparent on several levels, such as the use of new names, verbs and specialized terms relating to computers and the Internet; the use of punctuation marks and new icons within texts; the use of the English language and loanwords; and finally, the infiltration of the vernacular into creative writing. This study seeks to shed light on some of the new linguistic phenomena that have started to appear in different types of literary texts under the influence of the internet. This may constitute the basis for more detailed research and studies in the future.

The internet is an international, interactive and digital tool. Each of these characteristics has an impact on the type of language used therein. The most fundamental impact results from the medium’s digital nature. The most obvious of these characteristics is the physical computer we use to connect to the internet, which determines the user’s communication choices. Moreover, the nature of digital communication between sender and recipient or between sender and the network itself determines the type of language and vocabulary used.[[2]](#endnote-2)Though the examples used by Crystal in his study are taken from the English language, his findings about the special features of linguistic variations on the internet are more broadly applicable, and could be applied to other languages including Arabic, since the nature of the digital medium remains the same and is applicable all around the world. Therefore, we will review different aspects of this influence on Arabic literary texts and examine its advantages and disadvantages as well as various implications.

Various literary texts were used in this study. Our selection took gender into account by choosing texts by both male and female writers in order to present the subject from theviewpoints of both.Texts by authors of various Arab nationalities were also selected.Prose and poetry are both represented, as aredifferingattitudes toward the internet (negative and positive).

1. **New Linguistic Resources**

A major impact of the internet is the use of the language of computers and the internet in creative writing. Some authors have started to use new nouns, verbs and terms relating to the computer itself, orto the Internet, within the linguistic context of the text, leading to the assimilationinto both prose and poetry of new linguistic resources derived from online vocabulary.The Egyptian critic Nabīl ‛Alī agreed with Crystal that these linguistic resources are a natural result of the use of the machine in the process of writing and in dialogue,as the culture of the information age requires new forms oflinguistic creativity from both writers and readers. Communication is done now with and through the machine, and this human-machineinteraction requires a deep understanding of the relationship between natural human language and artificial machine language.This results in a new language inspired bythe nature of the medium that produces it.[[3]](#endnote-3)Nabīl ‛Alī’s hypothesis on the nature of language in the information age appears to have been largely borne outin many literary texts published on the web, which are replete with the vocabulary of the internet.

My analysis of words borrowed from the internet in a number of literary texts showed that these words can be classified into three groups: the first includes words and terms related to the computer and its programs, such aselectronic windows, CD-ROM, screen, wires, mouse, programming, keyboard, metal grid, etc.The second includes words and terms related to the internet, such as: internet, e-mail, chat, website, electronic message, virtual world, electronic communication, small village, Yahoo, Hotmail, Messenger, password, user name, link, .com, etc.The third includes verbs relating to the use of computers or the internet, such as: navigate, press, click, send, download, store, chat, e-mail and others.

The writers’ useof theseborrowed linguistic resources, so to speak, underlines that we cannot exclude daily language from literary language as we used to believe. The idea we have about the nature of literary language is as follows: literary language is an indirectlanguage expressing emotion based on images and imagination. This is in complete contrast with scientific language, characterized as descriptive and direct.We could not have imagined that the two languageswouldone day unite, with the former borrowingstructures and terminology from the latter that have seamlessly and effortlessly entered into the very core of literary discourse. Perhaps the anthology of the Moroccan poet ‛Adnān ṭah entitled *Wa lī fīhā‛AnākibuUkhrā*[[4]](#endnote-4) (I have other spiders) is the best proof of this, as illustrated by a passage from his poem entitled “*Ash-Shāshah‛Alaykum”* (Screen Greetings):

صباح الخير أيها العنكبوت

صباح الرضى يا زقزقة الكهرباء

أنا جاهز فخذني إلى عالمي الذي من الضوء

فلدي جيران طيبون في هوتميل

وأتراب ودودون في ياهو.

*Good morning spider [[5]](#endnote-5)*

*A morning of gratification to you, electric tweet*

*I am ready; take me to my world made of light*

*I have good neighbors in Hotmail*

*And good friends in Yahoo*

Every single line of the passage aboveincludes words and expressions related to the internet or computers. This is also true of every poem in the anthology. These words were not previously used in the context of poetry; but, as the subject of the poem is the internet, the poet was forced to use its language and words to describe it. These words read smoothly and effortlesslyand are not jarring to the reader. Perhaps this is the most noticeable aspect of the invasion by the language of the internet into literary texts and the field of poetry itself. We all know that poetic language has its own characteristics and features, which makes it different from the language of any other discourse. ‛Umar ūgān refers to this subject in his book *Language and Speech*:[[6]](#endnote-6) “The language of poetry is distinguished from any other language by being a ‘displaced’ language. Poetry is distinguished from prose by being ‘displaced’ from standard language, and this standard is not present in regular language, but in scientific language."[[7]](#endnote-7) Accordingly, poetic language is a language of ‘displacement’ with multiple semiotic and symbolic dimensions. It is far from the descriptive language of science with one clear and approved dimension of semantic denotation. Given thatwe cannot do without thelinguistic resources that have been forcefully imposed on all aspects of our lives by technology and the internet, and given the strict and scientific language from which it originates, it became necessary for poets to adapt and modifyit to suit the language of poetry. This processreached its zenithwithcombination of the scientific language of the internetand rhetoric. Poets started to create metaphors, images, comparisons and other artistic images and rhetorical styles from the language of the internet and its strict scientific terminology, which haveseamlessly infiltrated poetry without affecting the beauty of its language or its ‘displacement’.

In the poem “*WaḥīdanAh̟furu fī Jalīdin ḥayy”* (“Alone, I carve into a living ice”) from above-mentioned anthology, *ṭah*wrote:

"أكتب عن الشعر في الزمن الافتراضي

وعن الحب في عصر الذكاء الاصطناعي

وعن مواعيدي الغريرة

في حدائق الإنترنت

ضيعتني الإنترنت

بددت دفئي الباقي

ولم أجن منها سوى الوحدة

والقلق

فأصدقائي تائهون

في سوق المضاربات الغرامية

منهمكون في كتابة الرسائل العابرة للقلوب

والقارات

يعرضون حرارتهم الفصيحة

ولواعجهم المترجمة

على ماكينات النوافذ الإلكترونية القارسة".

*I write about poetry in the virtual era*

*about love in an age of artificial intelligence*

*about my reckless appointments*

*in the gardens of the internet.*

*I was lost in the internet*

*I wasted the remainder of my warmth*

*and found only loneliness and anxiety.*

*My friends are wandering*

*in the speculation market of love*

*engaged in writing messages
that cross hearts and continents,*

*offering their eloquent warmth*

*their converted ardent love*

*on the windows of a frigid electronic machine.*

The poet here used more than one artistic image to describe his condition after he became addicted to the internet and tried to write about it. He says that he maderomantic appointments on internet dating sites, which he described allegorically as gardens in which lovers can meet. But these dates and appointments only made him worried and lonely, like his friends, whorovearound sex and love sites and are engaged in writing international letters; a metaphor for e-mail messages sent throughcoldwebsites. In this metaphor, the poet wants to say that though the Internet has created opportunities for young people to practice passion and love, it remains cold because it is not real.

Among the anthologies in which this phenomenon is apparent is *Taghrīd aṭ-ṭā’ir al-‛ālī*(The Song of the Automated Bird), byAḥmad Faḍil Shablūl. A substantial part of this anthology was published on the forumsof the web site of *WATA* in 2007.[[8]](#endnote-8) The collection is full of computer and internet terms, and includes eighteen poems in which the poet endeavorsto humanize the machine. He treats the computer like a human being with hopes, feeling, sensations, desires and a spirit:

حبس الشاعر فوق نوافذه

أرسل كل أوامره

للحاسوب

ارتجف الحاسوب وقال:

يا ألطاف الله

كيف أجيء إليك من الآفاق تعيسا

وأكحل شاشاتي

بدموع ملفاتي

لطفا يا الله

فغبار الأوهام

يفتت كل خلاياي الضوئية

آه

روحي لا تسمو لخيال الشعراء

أدركني بزجاجة ماء.

*He captured the poet over his windows*

*sending all his orders*

*to the computer.*

*The computer shuddered and said:*

*O merciful God*

*How can I come to you, disheartened and from distant land?*

*I eye-line my screens*

*with the tears of my files*

*O Merciful God*

*the dust of fantasies*

*has shattered my optical cells*

*Ah*

*my soul does not transcend to the fantasies of poets*

*pass me a bottle of water*

The computer in the passage above admits defeat in the face of the strength of humans. He trembles because he cannot keep up with his owner’s imagination and vision. Whatever his computing power, he will not be able to reach the spiritual heights required to respond to the poets’ fantasies. He facesfailure and destruction, and his memory can be erased at any moment. Therefore, he feels miserable and asks for a glass of water.

In a poem entitled “*A‛tāb min Sawālib al-Aslāk”*(Reprimands from the negative wires) from the same anthology, he writes:

منحتها السرور والغضب

وهبتها الذكريات

سألتها

تخزين كل لحظة

تمر بالشموس والنفوس

تسجل أجمل الثواني

وأضخم المعاني

وأروع الأغاني

فعاتبت

سوالب الأسلاك عاتبت

تراجعت

وأصبحت حديدا

آه من الحديد عندما يخون

تبرمجت

تحولت جليدا

الكمبيوتر الذي علمته الحنان والأمان

خانني

لأني أدخلت في اللغات والشرائح الممغنطة

عواطف الأزهار والأشجار والأنهار

ورقصة الأغصان والأحلام والمطر.

*I gave her joy and anger*

*offered her my memoirs*

*and asked her*

*to store every moment*

*that passes by the spirits or the stars*

*to record the most beautiful instants*

*that which is most significant*

*the impressive songs*

*and I reprimanded*

*the negative wires, I reprimanded*

*I retreated*

*and became like iron*

*Ah... when iron betrays*

*I was programmed*

*and turned into ice*

*the computer that I taught compassion and safety*

*betrayed me*

*because I was converted into languages and magnetized chips;*

*passions of trees, rivers and flowers,*

*a dance of branches, dreams and rain.*

The poet deals with the computer as an unfaithful person or companion. He entrusted itwith all of his beautiful and sad memories. When he asked it to reveal them,it betrayed him, because it was liable to breakdown and could not be like human. It is worth noting that in this poem, like in the other poems of the anthology, the poet used words and verbs related to computers, like: magnetic chips, wire, computer, programmedand storage, and included them in the linguistic context of the poem. He stripped them of their scientific meaning and wovethem into the poetic fabric in an expressive and natural way.

In the poem “*Min ‛Alyā’ al-Internet”* (From the Heights of the Internet) the poet writes:

كنت أسير مع الشمس

وفي جمجمتي قرص صلب

يتمايل مثل الأشجار

إذا مرت تحت الأغصان

امرأة من ريحان.

*I was walking with the sun*

*with a hard drive in my skull*

*swaying like trees,*

*if I walked under the branches,*

*a basil woman passed.*

Here the poet used the term “hard drive” as a metaphor for the human mind, which in the far future will function like a computer.

In the poem “*Muḥādathah ‛alal-Massinger”* (Conversation on Messenger) by Syrian poet Juliette Badir, published on the web site*Aliffor Freedom of Expression in Writing and Human Life* in 2007,[[9]](#endnote-9) the poet writes:

لما دخلت فلم أجد لك أحرفا

في جعبة الإيميل صحتُ مرددا

هل هاجرتْ عصفورةُ الصُّبح التي

كانت تلوِّن من شذاها الموعدا

تتابع التواصل إلكترونيا

بكل رومانسية

صدق

جمال

شاعرية.

*When I entered, I did not find word from you*

*in the e-mail pouch, I repeatedly shouted:*

*Did the morning bird migrate?
she colored my rendezvous with her fragrance*

*and her continuous digital connection*

*with romance*

*truth*

*beauty*

*and poetry*

The poet used the word ‘pouch’ coupled with ‘e-mail’to form a metaphor by using the language of the internet. The use of the Arabic article ‘the’ with the foreign word ‘e-mail’ shows how the poet used the language of the internet spontaneously with an Arabic flavor,as well as the extent of adaptation of this language in the text. It also demonstrates the overwhelming impact of the language of the internet on creative thinking when the subject at hand relates to the internet.

The influence of the language of the internethas also reached love poetry. Classical Arab poets flirted with their sweethearts by describing their physical traits, while the poets of the internet flirt with their virtual sweethearts by using the language of the internet. In an anthology entitled *Tamazzuqāt ‛Ishq Raqamy* (Ruptures in a Digital Love), Moroccan poet ‛Abdulnūr Idrīswrote several digital love poems dealing with the theme of digital love and its virtual world on the internet. He posted large sections of it on the web site *Forum of the Arab Story* in 2009.[[10]](#endnote-10) Let us consider the following passage from the poem “*Imra’a min Silicon*e” (The Silicone Woman):

"يأتيني المساء مشنوقا
تركَبُني حاسة السفرحبلى بالضوء
يمتطيني الصِّفرمحمولا بالدعوات
يمتشقني الواحد المعتّقعلى جبينا لماء
أراك متسربلة بقفطان عرسنا السيليكوني
تتأوّدين لوني السلطاني في العناق
وخصركِ تثنّى ...
مننظرتي المُتيّمة في أضواء النيلون
والشاشة الفضية تعكس مشيتك القَطاةْ
وقارئة الفنجان تراقص بعضها
وتكتب لي عقوصا من الرقم
وتخط نقوشا تشفيني منكِ
فكنت لي كأس نبيذ
وسيفا يرشقني أنا المتدثر بالورق....

................................................
وكنتِ لي مدينة الظل
تمزق جسدها كلّما ذراني غبار النت في انفعالات الغمام
وكنت أنتِ امرأة تستحضرها ابتهالات فأرتي المرقّطة
وكنتِ خدعة بصرية
وكنتِ لي معبودة من سيليكون..

*The evening comes to me hanged*

*The sense of traveling hunts me, pregnant with light*

*The Zero drives me, loaded with prayer*

*The aged One lashes me on the forehead of water*

*I see you dressed in our silicone wedding garment*

*twisting in my royal color when embraced*

*Bending your waist….*

*From my captivated regard in the nylon lights*

*the silver screen reflects your sand grouse walk*

*The cup reader dances alone,*

*writes a braid of numbers for me,*

*and draws an inscription to cure meof you.*

*You were for me like a glass of wine*

*a sword that strikes me, wrapped in paper*

*……..*

*You were the town of shade for me*

*tearing her body whenever the dust of the net covered me in cloudy emotions.*

*You were a woman invoked by the prayers of my speckled mouse*

*a visual trick*

*and a silicone goddess for me*

This passage shows us how the image of the female body began to form through the immersion of the poet in the light paths of the internet. This is reflected in his mentioning the numbers zero and one, which form the basic equation on which computer programs are based. By clicking on the mouse, visual tricks are formed in front of him, through which he produces the image of a silicone woman according to his wishes and desires. The poet is invoking a virtual Scheherazade using words and terms that he drew from dictionary of the internet, like: silver screen, nylon lights, dust of the net, prayers of the mouse, visual tricks and numbers. Thus, the poet flirts with his sweetheart through a novel style of love poetry drawing on the internet.

It is interesting, in this instance, to notice the expansion in the denotation of words as a new linguistic phenomenon. Many words gained new meanings with the advent of the Internet. Take for example, the change in meaning of the word “window” in the following passage from a poem entitled“*‛Alā Mashārif at-Ta’wīl”* (On the Outskirts of Interpretation) by poet ‛Abbūd Jabārī:[[11]](#endnote-11)

الستارة السميكة

والزجاج المظلل

والشبك المعدني

كيف إذن سأفتح على العالم نافذتي

وأمد رأسي

كيف سأومئ للعابرين

وأصطاد فراشة شاردة

كيف سيرى جاري

جلبة الأضواء في بيتي

كيف سيعرف أني ما زلت في الحياة

كيف سأعرف وجهي خلل هذه النافذة

بل كيف سأسرق باقة الضوء

من قمر سلبته النوافذ تاريخه

وإذا مت

فكيف لروحي أن تصعد إلى بارئها.

*Thick screen*

*Shaded glass*

*Metal grid*

*How will I open my window to the world*

*How will I extend my head*

*How will Isignal to passers-by*

*and hunt an errant butterfly.*

*How will my neighbor see*

*the fanfare of lights in my house.*

*How will he know that I’m still alive.*

*How will I know my face through this window.*

*How will I steal a bouquet of light*

*from a moon whosepast was stolen by the windows.*

*If I die,*

*how will my soul ascend to its creator.*

The word “window” is a familiar word with a specific meaning, however, after the information technology revolution it has gained new meanings. The reader must understand the new meaning of the word in order to interpret the poem correctly. The word “window” here refers to the computer screen, or the windows that open in front of readers through hyperlinks on websites. The poet says here that this window is different froma normal window, whichlets him to see the moon, light, and butterflies, communicate with his neighbors and so on. And while this windowopens up the whole world to him, he remains isolated to the point where no one would know if he died,and his spirit would not be able to reach hiscreator through it. It seems like an open and closed window at the same time.

In *“ash-Shāshah ‛Alaykum”* (Screen Greetings)”, *ṭah ‛Adnān* writes:

سأحمل روحي على فأرتي

وألقي بها في مهاوي الكوكيز

*“I will carry my soul on my mouse*

*I will throw it into the Cookies chasms”*

The word mouse here refers to a computer mouse, with which the poet has associated his destiny. This indicates the impact of virtual reality on our lives and its dominance over true reality. The expansion of the denotations of words is considered aform of evolution of language and its interaction with social and cultural change surrounding it. However, this requires an update of modern language dictionaries with the new meanings of words and terms. This important process should be carried out by Arabic language academies in order to allow the language to better respond to the requirements of our time.

We conclude from examples above that the language of the internet has greatlyaffected the language of literary discourse. In fact, Arab writers, consciously or not, have carried out the recommendations of the editors of the book *Wired Style* (1996),[[12]](#endnote-12) which recommended the use of the language of our time in creative writing, provided that it is given new denotations and usage, in order to avoid rigid technology:

"Transcend the technical: Jargon gets a bad rap among literary types. As a pejorative catchall for plain lack of eloquence, jargon is often equated with pretentious technical terms stuck where they don’t belong, with highfalutin words calling attention to themselves when a single syllable would do, with strings of noun clusters and prepositional phrases that gum up a sentence like spilled Jolt on a keyboard.[[13]](#endnote-13)

This is exactly what we see in new literary writings on the Internet. Despite the vast distance between the rigid language of technology and the dynamic language of literature, contemporary writers have been able to reconcile the two and draw a new vocabulary from the world of technology which they recast in new forms to create new artistic images. This confirms that literature cannot be isolated from reality,but rather flows from its essence and expresses it in a literary style that make it different from other forms of expression and communication.

1. **Rich Graphic Symbols and Tools:**

According to Crystal, what makes the language of the internet distinctive is its rich graphics, which grant users access to a largevariety of colors, punctuation marks, and word processing tools as a means of linguistic expression. These far exceed the options available to writers of traditional texts. For example, different ways of speaking and different emotions can be expressed by repeating letters or by using punctuation marks, such as in “Ahhhhhh, what are you saying????? Are you crazy!!!!!”Putting spaces between letters (cutting words) can be used to express a higher pitch,like“l i s t e n t o m e”.[[14]](#endnote-14) This results from the rich characters, shapes and icons available on the keyboard, which enables language withthe push of a button. It offers different possibilities than usinga pen.[[15]](#endnote-15) Thus, it seems clear that by using keyboards as an alternative to pens, writers have expanded and increased the use of punctuation marks. Furthermore, the keyboard allowed writers to express their emotions, emphasis and intonation in innovative ways. Like others, Arab poets have benefited from the advantages of the keyboard and used its potentialin the service of meaning. “Chat”[[16]](#endnote-16) by Moroccan poet Idrīs ‛Abdulnūris a good example.[[17]](#endnote-17)The poem resembles chat room talk in terms of its presentation and style, with the poet transposing marks and digital codes in the poem, and reiterating letters in some words in order to give the impression to the reader that he is really reciting the piece from a “chat room”. The poem used icons including @, ♥, ←, and ∏.There is no doubt on behalf of readers that the poet used a keyboard to write these marks, rather than using a pen, as in traditional writing, because of the graphic richness that distinguishes the poem and draws the reader’s attention from the start. The use of a keyboard has led us to writing words as we hear them orally, not as dictated by the traditional rules of writing. This means that writers have started to compensate for the absence of our tongues and earsby using hands (keyboard) and eyes. This is due in my opinion to the influence of how people talk in internet chat rooms, where dialogue is written rather than verbal.

In summary, we can say that writers have not overlooked the possibilities of the keyboard, and have benefitted from it in order to deliver better texts, with graphic richness, which expresses vocal emotion, emphasis and different symbolic connotations. It can be said that this phenomenon has exploded in recent years with the transition from writing by clicking on a keyboard attached to a computer, to writing by touch on mobile phone and smart device keyboards, which abound with varied icons, which can shorten phrases or sentences or even an entire paragraph. This also extends to smileys and other icons provided by social media networks like Viber, Whats App and others. We must note here that the use of these icons and how to employ them in communication is considered a digital literacy skill in modern times.[[18]](#endnote-18) This means that the phenomenon must be taken into consideration by school teachers from an early stage in order to educate an enlightened digital generation.

1. **Use of the English Language**

One of the most important changes that have occurred in public intellectual life in recent decades is the spread and use of a large number of English words and terms by intellectuals and others of all ages in various non-English speaking communities. This is due to the use of the internet as a quick and easy means of accessing information. Since the language of the internet is characterized by the use of English, it was natural for this language to impose itself over other languages. The internet is initially of American origin. It was at first entirely in English, butas it became a global phenomenon, other languages began to find space on the internet too. In spite of this, English remains the most commonly used language on the internet.[[19]](#endnote-19)

An important number of intellectuals predict that English will dominate the whole world in the future because of globalization, a principal objective of which is the globalization of language. Muwaffaq Zāzawī in his article “Globalization and the Arabic Language” says: “If globalization means universality; turning the world into ‘one village’ through the domination of the culture of the developed world, represented by the United States of America, over the rest of the world, and the transition from local to global; it can be said that the English language moved from local to global in order to become the language spoken by the whole world despite the use of various native languages. There is no doubt that this is true and clear of the English language.”[[20]](#endnote-20) Barbara Wallraff believes that one of the main reasons that English is qualified to become a universal language and has the legitimacy to spread more than other languages is the fact that it forms the largest proportion of material circulated on the Internet.[[21]](#endnote-21)

Thus, Arab navigators of the internet find the mselves in front of a sweeping torrent of English words. This forces us to choose from three options: translate English words and terms into Arabic, Arabize them, or accept them as loan words. There is no doubt that important effort shave been made by specialists to translate and Arabize computer and internet terminology, such as the creation of special dictionaries like*The Comprehensive Dictionary of Computer Terms*.[[22]](#endnote-22) However, our concern here is how to deal with foreign words in literary texts. The analysis of a large number of literary texts showed that Arab writers did not see any harm in accepting the third option in their literary writings, which is a troubling development because of the ideological aspects of the matter. The Jordanian critic Brīhān Qumq called this phenomenon “Arablizieh”, referring to the useof English language vocabulary by writing it in Arabic letters without translation or brackets, so that it looks like part of the original language of the text. She commented on this phenomenon by saying: “This distorted language—if I may use the term language—was unfortunately used before we had the World Wide Web or the internet, but differently. It was used in homes, universities, streets, shops, addresses of investment companies, everywhere. This is an example of the deformation and civilizational poverty of the Arab World. In realistic, not pessimistic, terms, it is simply (and without simplifying), the expression of the shattering of the nation within us, and our shattering within the nation.”[[23]](#endnote-23)

Here are few examples, starting with the novel *Banāt ar-Riyāḍ* (Girls of Riyadh) by Saudi author Rajā’ aṣ-ṣāni‛. The author drew on the structure of electronic messages. She did not only use the fixed English words that are fundamental to the e-mail system, but also included many English phrases and terms in the novel, transliterated into Arabic so as to look natural to the reader. She used English spontaneously in dialogue between characters,who would browse the internet for many hours, such as: “He told her once that he dreamed of marrying a girl that would be his *best friend*”. She wrote the words ‘best friend’ in Arabic letters and added the Arabic article ‘*al*’ instead of ‘the’ to the English word ‘best’ as in‘*al-*best’ in order to give the expression an Arabic form. In the following sentence: “I did not expect all this interaction with *my e-mails*”. The writer added the pronoun “*ya*” (ي) to the foreign word “e-mail” and added the suffix “*āt*” (ات) to the same word to make it feminine plural,*ī-mīlātī* (ايميلاتي). The author put words and sentences written in English in the mouths of her characters, such as when she used the expression ‘*emotionally intelligent.*’ The use of the English language in this way leads to the assumption that the expression in English is more convenient for the author, or that she expects that the reader is used to reading English and will not find it difficult to understand the term or see any irregularity in its use. Here are some other examples in which authors use English within text, but in Arabic letters:

* *They have no idea what is going on****out there****.
 (“out there” was written in Arabic letters).*

ليست لديهن فكرة عما يدور *أوت ذير*.

* *I swear by God that it is* ***attractive.*** *(“attractive” was written in Arabic letters)*

والله إنو أتراكتيف.

* ***ActuallyI like it*** *(“Actually I like it” was written in Arabic letters).*

آكتشولي آي لايك إت.

* *I went and saw the* ***security****for myself, no one can enter.*

*(the word “security” was written in Arabic letters).*

أنا رحت لها وشفت بعيني السيكيورتي اللي ما يدخل أحد.

These phrases were not spoken by foreigners or foreign-educated persons, but by Saudi Arab girls, indicating the hegemony of a foreign culture on the culture of the new generation, which places importance on the use of the English language.

The strangest phenomenon remains the infiltration of the original language of the internet into poetic texts, as is shown in the following stanza of the poem “Screen Greetings”:

”غود مورننج بيتر

.................

سأحمل روحي على فأرتي

وألقي بها في مهاوي *الكوكيز*

.................

أما أنا فلا خارج لي

*الويب والواب والنتسكايب* تعرفني"

***Good Morning Peter***

…………….

*I will carry my soul on my* ***mouse***

*I will throw it into the* ***Cookies*** *chasms*

*……………*

*But I have no outlet*

***The web*** *and* ***the Wab*** *and* ***the Netscape*** *know me*

(The words in **bold** were written in Arabic letters)

In the poem “Elegy to Maldo Diallo,” the poet says:

”حيث الموظفات النشيطات

يرتدين بدلا كلاسيكية أنيقة

وأحذية رياضية سميكة

حيث البدينات يأكلن *الهوت دوغز*

ولا يتجشأن"

*The active employees*

*are wearing elegant classic costumes*

*and thick sport shoes*

*while the obese eat* ***Hot Dogs***

*and do not burp*

In the poem “I Love You,” the poet includesthe e-mail addresses of some of his friends within the poem as follows:

".........أن يعرف Christian@yahoo.fr

و jamal@maktoob.com

و dai-ping@nirvanet.net

وعناوين إلكترونية أخرى

كل تفاصيل حياتك

..............

أن تحب عشيقة حمراء

تفوح منها روائح فيليب موريس

عشيقة بكعب خبير

في سحق أعقاب المارلبورو لايت"

*…..if* *Christian@yahoo.fr**,*

*jamal@maktoob.com**,*

*dai-ping@nirvanet.net*

*and other electronic addresses*

*know all the details of your life*

*…………*

*To adore a red mistress*

*who smells of* ***Philip Morris***

*A mistress with a heel*

*Expert in crushing* ***Marlboro Light*** *butts*

The use of the English language is a wide spread phenomenon in all languages, not just in Arabic. In an article published in the newspaper *Haratez*, Tamara Traubman suggested that Israelis have begun to worry about the fate of their language, because the use of English as a universal language has led to the destabilization of the status of the Hebrew language in their country. In addition, the supremacy of the English language does not just mean that everyone speaks English, but that they also think in English.[[24]](#endnote-24) The concern expressed by Traubman toward the Hebrew language reflects that of many Arab and foreign intellectuals toward their own languages. This linguistic infiltration may be a fundamental threat to national languages because information technology in general and the internet in particular may put an end to cultural diversity, which is based on the diversity of languages. Language is the receptacle for culture and thought through which cultural heritage is transmitted and preserved. Words carry a lot of the features and elements of a culture; therefore, the spread of the English language outside its national borders is an ingredient for the spread of ideas, concepts, perceptions, and also values of the culture it reflects; thereby subjugating cultures that accept these words and terms.[[25]](#endnote-25)

It is true that the Arabic language is flexible and sophisticated, and these positive attributes have allowed our language to keep up-to-date and embrace new terms. However, excessive borrowing from other cultures and the removal of barriers between the original language and the foreign language is worrisome and has serious political, cultural, social and ethnic consequences. Iraqi critic Aḥmad Muḥammad Ma’tūq pointed out in his book “*The Theory of the Third Language*”[[26]](#endnote-26)that normal and stable borrowing from living foreign languages is considered in modern linguistics to be an important source of growth, enrichment, development and strength for languages and civilizations, past and present. Therefore, the introduction of foreign words is neither a new invention nor a danger that should be feared, if the users of the language deal with it cautiously. Nevertheless, the call to throw the doors open and borrow into Arabic at all levels does not mean accepting that half the language be borrowed. Just as there are many advantages to borrowing, there are also drawbacks, such as the loss of the expressive value of Arabic forms; the modification of the Arabic phonetic structure by introducing strange sounds; confusion in Arabic vocabulary; the difficulty of adjusting inflective words, violating Arabic morphological rules, and losing properties of the Arabic language.[[27]](#endnote-27)Therefore, we must deal with borrowing with great caution. We must allow foreign words, structures and idiomatic expressions to enter into the Arabic language as-is or after minor changes according to parameters set by linguistic experts and asrequired by public preference.[[28]](#endnote-28) Therefore, we can say that the infiltration of English into literary texts is not only a linguistic danger, but has more serious intellectual and cultural dimensions. The domination of one language over another is a form of cultural invasion, which must be addressed, especially at this time when the most important aspects of national identity, of which language is an essential component, have begun to fade.

1. **Writing in Dialect:**

Every language in the world has different linguistic levels. There is the religious language used in the religious texts, media language, scientific language, literary language, and the language of the common people. The question here is to what level does the language of the internet belong? According to Crystal’s study, language of the internet is amixture of different linguistics levels or layers, foremost of which is the language used by the public. Therefore, he called it “written speech”.[[29]](#endnote-29)While there is no comprehensive study of the Arabic linguistic landscape on the internet, it is plain to users that the vernaculars occupy a considerable space on the internet, especially in the numerous non-official sites. The question remains, to what extent has the dialect infiltrated into literary texts? The use of dialect alongside the classical language is a well-known phenomenon in literary texts in both Arabic prose and poetry. However, this was limited to the presence of certain words, phrases and sentences that served the content of the text, especially dialogue. Yet, the publication of literary works on the internet appears to have increased the spread of this phenomenon to the point where we are beginning to find specialized sites on the web that publish novels, stories and poems written entirely in colloquial Arabic. This literature and these sites have a readership that actively follows and engages with them. Take for example the site *‛Alam al-Imārāt* in which we find complete novels in colloquial spoken dialect. Some of these texts have an incredibly large number of readers and visitors, which confirms their acceptance and the desire to read them by the public. Just as some of these sites specialize in publishing works of literary prose in colloquial Arabic, other sites specialize in publishing poetry in colloquial Arabic, suchas *Abyāt* (Verses), which specializes in publishing poetry from the Arab Gulf region, where poets write in the dialect of their area. Their works can be read or listened to through this site.

Personal blogs have also contributed to the spread of writing in colloquial Arabic. It is worth mentioning here the novel *‛Ayiza Atjawwaz*[[30]](#endnote-30) (I Want to Get Married), by the young Egyptian writer Ghāda ‛Abdel ‛āl, who started putting the chapters of the novel on her personal blog in Egyptian dialect. When she found the novel was well received by readers, she published it in hard copy, leading to a media frenzy. The reasons that push writers to publish in colloquial language on the internet differs from those who do soin hard copy. In the view of Fāṭima al-Brīkī, a critic from the United Arab Emirates, the reason for the spread of colloquial Arabic on the Internet is the age of most internet users in the Arab world. They are young people and not necessarily good writers. They are familiar with the language of text messages on their mobile phones (SMS),with the language of the short messages on TV screens and with the language of chat rooms, all of which are often in colloquial Arabic. They have been trained to read and enjoy these kinds of texts. This has created the environment necessary for the emergence of texts written in colloquial Arabic. These young people are mainly novice internet users, and it was easier for them to write in colloquial Arabic for their audience.[[31]](#endnote-31). In an article entitled “*The Language and the Internet”*,[[32]](#endnote-32)Nādhim as-Sayyid argued that the keyboard has made everyone a writer. The printed word in the past used to belong to professionals, to writers and the like. Today, however, anyone who owns a computer can be considered a writer. And since these writers are not concerned with the fate of the language, they do not care about the type of language they use in writing, so long as they are able to communicate their ideas to a wide range of readers.[[33]](#endnote-33)

Another reason for the spread of the colloquial language on various websites is the need to maintain the presence of Arabic on the Internet by any means necessary since it has been invaded by many foreign languages. For example, Aḥmad Zayn, coordinator of the “Creators’ Club,”[[34]](#endnote-34) part of the website *Islam Online*, wrote the following comment on the underlying reason for opening a section entitled “Colloquial Poetry”: “We used to have many fears about ‘colloquial language’ in general and in its introduction into the Creators’ Club, however, after much discussion, the working team decided to include such texts.This was because we felt that the conflict is no longer between ‘classical language’ and ‘vernacular’.Unfortunately, it has become a conflict between the Arabic language in all its forms on the one hand, and foreign languages on the other”.[[35]](#endnote-35) Following on from his explanation, then, it can be said that fear of the extinction of the Arabic language due to the hegemony of other languages is one of the main reasons for the emergence of the vernacular across the internet, whether on literary or non-literary sites.

This is also linked to the idea of ‘the death of languages,’ which has become a source of concern for many intellectuals who care about the fate of languages on the internet, which they have started to call ‘the cemetery of languages.’ The internet is linked to the idea of globalization as we have previously said, and globalization is in return linked to the economic dominance of the major political and economic powers, which impose their languages directly or indirectly on underdeveloped countries. This means the decline of certain languages in favor of the growth of others. In his book entitled *Challenges of the Information Age*,[[36]](#endnote-36)Nabīl ‛Alī argued based on statistics that half of the world’s 6,000 languages are threatened with extinction, and that the rate of extinction, currently at one language every two weeks, is increasing. The Internet reflects a grim picture of linguistic diversity. Only 500 of the world’s 6,000 languages are represented on the Internet, and most of them have only a very weak presence. This situation points to a “language gap” between the languages of the developed world and the languages of developing countries, which are unable to support their languages in the fierce linguistic battle that is the Internet.[[37]](#endnote-37)Thus, fears of the extinction of the Arabic language, like the languages of underdeveloped countries, drives many to write in the colloquial language in order to ensure a place for Arabic with its different dialects on the internet, and to not allow other languages to replace it or dominate it.

We can conclude from the above that there are several reasons why writers use the colloquial language on the Internet. Consequently, the important questions here are: will the colloquial language one day occupy the bulk of what is written on the web, with the classical language becoming marginalized and the language of a minority? Does the fear of the absence of the classical language on the internet actually give legitimacy to the use of the colloquial? It is difficult to give immediate answers to these questions, because we need more in-depth studies. However, we wanted to draw attention to this worrying and confusing trend in literature, because the marginalization of the classical language has religious, social and national dimensions for Arabic speakers, because Arabic is the language of Qur’an and unifies the Arab peoples. This means that classical Arabic in particular rather than the Arabic language in general faces difficult challenges in the fierce battle of languages.

1. **Summary:**

Having dealt with the impact of the internet on the language of literary discourse from various angles, it becomes clear that this effect has two aspects: one positive, the other negative. The positive aspect is apparent through the new vocabulary that has infiltrated into the literary texts. The internet has added new resources to literary texts derived from its lexicon and from the computer vocabulary. Writer shave not merely used these resources as they found them, but have started to adapt them to be consistent with the language of literature. They rephrased these resources and created new artistic and rhetorical images. This influence led to the widening of the significances of words. Many words gained new meanings. All of this shows the flexibility of the Arabic and its ability to adapt to the new requirements of the time. In addition, we have seen that the use of the keyboard in writing has expanded the use of punctuation marks, and added new signs and possibilities for new expressions. It is now possible to use the repetition of characters resulting from pressing keys to express the emotions, emphases and intonations of oral speech, because the writer can now print their texts by themselves, something that was previously the domain of publishing houses.

The negative aspect of this influence lies in two basic phenomena; the first is the infiltration of the English language into literary texts without any justification other than the hegemony of the English language as the official language of the internet. Where this infiltration exceed sa natural rate of borrowing it becomes a form of cultural invasion, which many nations try to fight in order to maintain their specificity, heritage and civilization as reflected in their language above all. There is serious danger here, and the phenomenon must be carefully monitored and handled by specialists and those who are interested in Arabic instruction, especially Arabic language teachers in schools and universities, in order to curb the spread of this phenomenon among the young generation.The hegemony of the English language is an aspect of globalization, and the cultural invasion it entails has pushed numerous nations to fight back in order to protect their culture, heritage and civilization, which are reflected in their language above all else.The second disturbing phenomenon is the resort to the use of colloquial Arabic in literary writing through the allocation of special platforms and sites which encourage writing in colloquial Arabic and grant it legitimacy. This paves the way for the various Arabic dialects to become alternatives to classical Arabic, which, in addition to its sanctity as the language of the Qur’an, is the most important common denominator of the Arab peoples. Its extinction would represent the destruction of the most important link that unifies them intellectually, religiously, culturally and socially.

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