Literacy Practices in Contrast:
Adult Arab Literacy vs. Native English Literacy

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Abstract: *The paper addresses the issue of adult Arab literates' practices and products which exhibit specific communicative strategies and persuasive literacy styles. The author characterizes the adult Arab literates' communicative strategies revealed in the following literacy products: Academic essays, cross-cultural communication studies, genres in contrast, translational versions of Arabic source texts and L2 reading strategies. The author attempts to frame the communicative strategies employed in the above-mentioned literacy products in terms of: orality/literacy traditions and culture. The author shows how adult Arab literates' literacy practices run counter to the targeted Anglo-American literacy practices. The sharp contrast has to be addressed in view of the extensive pressures on adult Arab literates to publish in English, and to communicate in English in different disciplines. The contrast between the strategies of those on the periphery and those of the center-based is the major thrust of the paper. Finally, the author calls for an approximative system of biliteracy.*

Overview:

The examination of the issue of adult Arab literates' practices and products in academia has not, up until now, been adequately researched. One can think of several reasons for this unwarranted neglect. First, the traditional view of literacy, perceiving it solely as reading and writing, separated from their social contexts and the social practices within specific social institutions can be one contributing factor. Second, the belief held by some scholars and researchers that the studies conducted solely on reading and writing are in themselves studies of literacy. Third, the fact that most studies in contrastive linguistics and contrastive rhetoric, no matter how limited, particularly in the latter, have overshadowed the readily opaque identity of literacy studies.

It is no surprise then that research on literacy studies with reference to adult Arab literates' practices and products in English in particular have never had any visibility nor voice among Arab scholars and researchers in EFL and Applied Linguistics. The situation as of now at best is that we are employing a transmission style of literacy in which students have been encouraged to reproduce conventions of language in use (genre) without questioning the dominant assumptions and values underpinning texts. I think it is about time that the literacy practices and products be the foci of some researchers in the Arab world. Such practices and porducts cannot be adequately explored and explicitly

characterized if they are not looked at from the perspectives of new approaches to literacy. I call for an integrated socio-culturally-based approach to literacy research. A few remarks on the concepts *literacy, approaches to literacy* and *the consequences of literacy* will be in order here.

The Traditional View
The traditional view of literacy has defined it in rather simple terms: literacy is the ability to read and sometimes to write. This definition touches only the tip of the iceberg. It simply reinforces all those misinformed conceptions about reading as checking comprehension by the most traditional exercises used in reading comprehension examinations, namely fill-in-the blanks, complete sentences, grammar and vocabulary exercises and so on. Such a view of reading misses out on the **multiple ways of reading the multiple and multifaceted types** of texts. In this respect the testing of reading continues to be reflective of this misguided view of reading as the **mere testing of informational content**, **vocabulary** and **grammar**. This view does not represent reading as a process involving employment of bidirectional top-down and bottom-up text processing to reconstruct the author's intended message(s).

The non-traditionalist view
From a non-traditionalist perspective, literacy has to do with reading, and reading must be spelled out, at the very least, as **multiple abilities to read texts of certain types in certain ways or to certain levels.** Gee (1990) explains that a way of reading a certain type of text is acquired, when it is acquired in a **'fluent'** or **'native-like'** way, by being embedded (apprenticed) as a member of a social practice wherein people not only read texts of a certain type in a certain way, but also talk about such texts in certain ways, hold certain attitudes and values about them, and socially interact over them in certain ways.

Literacy and Socialization Institutions
How one reads a certain text type is bound with one's experience in settings where texts that type are read in a certain way. These settings are various sorts of social institutions, like schools, banks, government offices or social groups with certain sorts of interests, like comic books, chess, politics, movies, novels. The social institutions to which the social groups belong develop the **literacy practices of the members in those social groups.**

Schools for instance are a crucial instance of these social institutions. It is in school that each of us is socialized into practices which go beyond the home and peer group. Schools mediate between what is called community-based social institutions and their literacies and official governmental institutions and their literacies.

Why the emphasis on literacy (i.e. written practices)
According to Canagarajah (2000: 147), *"to be academically literate in English, second language students have to acquire not only certain linguistic skills, but*

also the preferred values, discourse conventions, and knowledge content of the academy."

In writing in English to the academy, periphery scholars face the need to take on an identity and subjectivity constituted by the discourses. The conflict facing students from non-English backgrounds, then, is that they often face pressure and/or temptation to give up their community-based indigenous discourses and adopt the academic discourses which enjoy power and prestige.
Periphery writers experience conflicts in having to indulge in a communicative activity from which they have to keep out their preferred values, identities, conventions, and knowledge content.

According to Mauranen (1993:1) "*academics who need to publish in a foreign language may find that their positions in trying to win over an audience with a different language are not limited to knowing the lexicogrammatical system of the foreign language. They may unintentionally engage in counterproductive rhetorical practices which transcend the level of grammar and lexis, and produce poor rhetoric for at least two reasons: their inadequate manipulation of the target language resources (i.e. English) and their different persuasive strategies".*

We have first and foremost to characterize the features of adult Arab literates' practices and literacy products in English. The findings on adult Arab literates' practices and products and their distinctive features can be the threshold to a better understanding of misfires in cross-cultural communication, of low research output in certain academic circles and the agonies of failing to position oneself in the discourse community of a different nature.
Before I proceed to an examination of adult Arab literates' practices and products, the following parameters of this theoretical review have to be established:

1) an identification of adult Arab literates,
2) an explanation of literacy practices, and 3) literacy products.

The three components can set the grounds for further literacy studies research with reference to Arab academic literacy.

1. Adult Arab Literates

Specifically, adult Arab literates referred to here are college students, M.A. and Ph.D. students in EFL, trainee translators and professional translators and a good number of Arab researchers who are under pressure to publish in English, Arab researchers in their early years of academia. In my opinion this wide spectrum of Arab literates plays a major role in the development of literacy practices; they are the movers and shakers of literacy movement in academia in the Arab world.

2. Literacy Practices

The expression refers to communicative strategies in L2 writing, L2 reading, persuasive styles, modes of expression and thought processes.

3. Literacy Products

The literacy products cover academic essays produced by college students both graduate and undergraduates. In addition, all types of other registers and genres are included. Translational versions are also the type of literacy products included in the study. Specifically, while range of literacy activities constitute the following literacy products: academic essays, registers and genres, letters, editorials, complaints and finally translational versions.

The pressures for Anglo-American literacy practices
In almost every academic field, English language has become the dominant language for scholarly publishing. Curry and Lillis (2004: 663) point out that in 2003 Ulrich's Periodical Directory indexes 40؍770 scholarly periodicals, and 74% were published in English. In many academic institutions world-wide, English-medium publications enjoy higher status and constitute a major criterion for promotion and / or supporting scholars' research grant applications.
In view of the volume of scholarship produced outside the Anglo-Phone center and the value placed on it, knowledge **about writing practices in these areas is essential, particularly for informing teaching practices in English for academic purposes (EAP)**. The notion of writing to different discourse communities means more than orienting the text to different audience expectations; it requires sharing the **values, interests, and knowledge of the community intimately.**

Tension and identity conflicts arise due to the fact that the second language writer belongs to other discourse communities with different values and interests.

As in foreign language acquisition, the target of writing is conceived as pushing students from one end of the continuum to the other. So, we have to remember that the discourses of post-colonial subjects are multiple, hybrid, and overlapping. This means that second language students have to work with a range of competing discourses in order to find ways of gaining voice and agency in academic literacy.

4. Components of Adult Arab Literates' Literacy Practices

4.1. Features of Arab literates' literacy practices and products (i.e. academic essays)

In an attempt to develop an understanding of the most salient features of L2 writers' composing processes, features of their written texts and discourse structure, Silva (1993: 661-667) presents the following findings from 72 reports of empirical research on L1 & L2 writing:

4.1.a. Reader Orientation
Silva (1993: 666) reports that Atari (1983) found that his L2 subjects (native Arabic speakers) more often preceded their topic sentences with a broad statement about a general state of affairs.

4.1.b Stylistic Features
Silva also reports that their L2 writing was found to be less complex (Park, 1988, cited in Silva 1993: 663), less mature and stylistically appropriate, less consistent and academic with regard to language, style and tone. They produced more but shorter T units (Kamel, 1989 cited in Silva, 1993: 667).

4.1.c. Lexicosemantic Features
At the lexicosemantic level, Silva reports that Mahomoud (1982, cited in Silva, 1993: 667) found that his subjects' essays show fewer lexical ties, few variety in their use of lexical cohesion. Shorter and vaguer words and that their texts exhibited less lexical variety and sophistication.

4.1.d. Argument Sturcture
Silva (1993: 664) reports that Mahmoud (1982) reported that his L2 subjects (native speakers of Arabic) did less reporting of conditions, less defining, and less exemplifying, but used more warning and phatic communion than their native English speakers peers. Silva reports that Mahmoud indicates that the L2 writers less often stated and supported their position fully and were inclined to develop their arguments by stating their position. Native English Speakers preferred to develop their arguments by stating a rationale for their position. According to Silva (1993) Mahmoud (1982) also reported that the L2 writers' arguments exhibited less paragraphing, less rhetorical connectedness and more looser segmental structure (introduction, discussion, conclusion), less variety and more errors in the use of conjunctive elements, and less explicit formal structure.

Along these lines Harfman (2004) found that the Arabic texts he examined often feature repetition and parallelism; contain sagacious utterances which are of a universal character. His subjects' essays exhibit reference to external physical and temporal situation and refer more directly to the reader.

5. Strand 2: Cultural Thought Patterns[1]
Feghali (1997) reviews the existing and even the contradictory research on cultural communicative patterns in the Arab world. She does this in an attempt to overcome barriers in research in the Arab region. She reports the findings of research on cross-cultural communication issues, concluding that Arabic communicative patterns are typically associated with:
a) Repetition, b) indirectness, c) elaborateness, and d) affectiveness

5.1. a. Repetition
Johnstone Koch, (1983, cited in Feghali 1997: 357-358) suggests that repetition, a major feature of Arabic discourse, occurs at the phonological, morphological and lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels.

5.1. b. Indirectness
The second characteristic of Arabic communicative style refers to a speaker's concealment of desired wants, needs, or goals during discourse. This characteristic is often associated with little information coded explicitly in a message, but present in the physical context or internalized in the interactants.

5.1. c. Elaborateness
This refers to rich and expressive language use "where a North American can adequately express an idea in ten words, the Arabic speaker will typically use one hundred words". Two rhetorical patterns contribute to the perception of elaborate Arab communicative style: exaggeration and assertion. These two patterns serve a crucial function of regulating credibility during interaction (Samovar & Porter, 1991a cited in Feghali; 1997: 359).

Feghali, (1997: 360) indicates that statements which Arabs view as firm or strong may sound exaggerated to Americans. What Americans perceive as firm assertions may sound weak or doubtful to Arabs.

5.1. d. Affectiveness
The fourth characteristic of Arabic communicative style is "intuitive-affective style of emotional appeal" (Glenn, Witmeyer & Stevenson, 1977 cited in Feghali 1997: 360). This relates to organizational patterns and the presentation of ideas and arguments. According to Johnstone Koch (1983 cited in Feghali, 1997: 361), Arabs use predominately "presentation" persuasion, in which people and not ideas are responsible for influence. "Arabic argumentation is structured by the notion that it is the presentation of an idea… that is persuasive, not the logical structure of proof which Westerners see behind the words."

Johnstone (1989 cited in Feghali, 1997: 361) suggests that presentation persuasion is most often employed in cultural settings in which religion is central, settings in which truth is brought to light rather than created out of human rationality.

In applied research, Adelman & Lustig, (1981 cited in Feghali, 1997: 361) found that the affective style, particularly in relation to organizing ideas, presents international communication difficulties between Saudi Arabian and American managers. Americans perceived that their Saudi cohorts had difficulty "displaying forethought and objectivity in decision-making". Both groups rated "identifying main ideas in messages"

and "organizing ideas for easy comprehension" as problematic for Saudi Arabian managers.

Anderson (1989/1990 cited in Feghali; 1997: 361) analyzed Saudi and American advocacy ads to explain the 1973 Arab oil boycott. The ads resulted in misunderstanding as a result of competing persuasive styles. As she writes, "the Saudi ad circled around issues rather than proceeding in a linear fashion from one topic to the next… Americans were likely to view such an approach as deliberately deceptive." In their ad, the Americans failed to address the broader historical issues surrounding the immediate crisis, which contributed to "Arab complaints that American portrayals are arrogant, one-sided, and simplistic".

6. Strand 3: Conflicts of identity through translating

Trainee translators and professional translators alike find themselves sometimes in the uncomfortable situation whereby they have to assume the native English reader's/recipient's identity in their strenuous far-reaching endeavor to adapt an Arabic ST into English. The conflict of identity is reflected in those trainee translators' and professional translators' failures to come up with ideologically-loaded modes of expressions that measure up to the Anglo-American readers' expectations. In other words, the mismatches between translators' renditions in English and the Arabic source text reflect neither a presentation of the source text author's cultural identity nor the target text recipients' identity. The translation tends to suppress the ST identity but with nothing close to the targeted readers' cultural identity. Dickins, et al (2002), point out:

> "adjustment or the gradual moveaway from form-by-form renderings and towards more dynamic kinds of equivalence is an important translation technique. In dealing with texts that are likely to produce a dense translation, for instance, we may opt for building in redundancy, explicating or even repeating information when appropriate. Alternatively, we may opt for gisting a technique. This is most useful in dealing with languages characterized by a noticeably high degree of repetition of meaning. Also as part of adjustment, we may at times have to re-order an entire sequence of sentences if the ST order of events, for example, does not match normal chronology, or proves to be cumbersome to visualize".

At this point, one would wonder as to whether trainee translators and professional translators can successfully employ such critical and subtle transfer strategies. Specifically, are they capable of handling such transformations?

Examples

Here is a translation into English of a welfare organization's publishing leaflet originally addressed to Muslim donors.

Honorable Benefactor

After Greetings

[….] The organization hopefully appeals to you, whether nationals or expatriates in this generous country, to extend a helping hand…

We have the honor to offer you the chance to contribute to our programs and projects from your monies and alms so that God may bless you…

In this example of what in English would be a fund-raising text, Hatim & Munday (2004) explain how "making a donation" is seen as an honor bestowed both on the donor and on those making the appeal. There is a certain opaqueness and far too much power for a text of this kind to function properly in English. This communicative practice runs counter to the expectation of native readers of English as the text does not come across as a convincing letter of fund raising. Hence, unless the translator adapts it according to the norms and conventions of native English communicative practices, the translation will not be a felicitous act of convincing or persuading the targeted recipients to donate. More important is the challenge for Arab translators who have to be empowered to perform the required adaptations. To move from a societally-based value system for convincingness in an Arab community is an arduous task for more trainee translators who cannot see any inadequacies in the source text as it is semiotically typical of fund raising texts within their discourse communities. To be able to predict what adaptations are required to meet the requirements of native English discourse community norms difficult. Consider the following excerpts from another source text (see appendix):

" نتوجه إليكم و نحن على يقين بأنكم أهل الأيادي الندية التي تجود بما لديها في سبيل المساعدة و مد يد العون لكل مشروع يخدم أبناء هذا الوطن المعطاء. من هنا نوجه ندائنا إليكم لمساعدتنا في خدمة أبناءنا الطلبة بما تجوده أيديكم. "

Use of parallelism
في سبيل المساعدة in quest of your help
و مد يد العون stretching the hand of help
التي تجوده أيديكم ... whatever help you may offer

Use of Indirectness
There is no mention of the true purpose of this fund raising letter – no mention of a specific channel for the aid, no mention of how the money will be used. The whole excerpt is based on the shared assumption that the money to be donated will be spent on the pupils at this school; but for which activity of pupils' scholastic life the donation will be used is not stated.

Clyne (1987: 211-247) points out that in German-speaking countries it is considered the reader's responsibility to understand a text. The writer is expected to provide knowledge, theory, and stimulation, which places the emphasis on content rather than form. In English, the writer is responsible for understanding the needs of the reader by attending to them. Readers in English-speaking countries expect a tight topic link and a logical ordering of events that they are likely to experience in some kind of hierarchy.

The adaptations of Arabic SL texts that simulate parallel English texts is quite a formidable task for most trainee translators and professional translators as well. All things being equal, the process of adapting an Arabic SL text to what is dynamically and idiomatically equivalent is inevitably imbued with a blockage to the indigenous SL cultural identity. To illustrate, consider the adaptations of the following SL text: the first adaptation is typical of most Arab trainee translators and even professional translators which fall far short of the targeted English text particularly at the level of communicative practices:

ST

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حلقة عن قانون العمل العماني بالكلية التقنية بصلالة

بهدف تنمية قدرات وميول الطلبة و ربط الدراسة الأكاديمية بالمجتمع المحلي و سوق العمل و من أجل زيادة إدراك الطلبة بقانون العمل العماني حتى يكونوا على دراية بحق العامل والمؤسسة. أقامت صباح أمس الكلية التقنية بصلالة حلقة عمل عن قانون العمل العماني و ذلك على مسرح الكلية حاضر فيها محمد بن أحمد الشحري محام و مستشار قانوني حيث بدأ محاضرته بتعريف بقانون العمل العماني و أحكامه العامة و كيفية تطبيقها و تطرق المحاضر إلى عدة محاور من أهمها كيفية تشغيل المواطنين و تنظيم عمل الأجانب و الأجور و ساعات العمل و تشغيل الأحداث النساء، بالإضافة إلى النزاعات العمالية في السلطنة و الإجراءات القانونية لإنهائها و المساواة في الجنس و مكان العمل من حيث الحقوق والواجبات. بعد ذلك تم عرض تطبيقات أخلاقيات العمل في السلطنة، و في نهاية الحلقة تم توجيه الأسئلة من قبل الحضور للمحاضر وتبادل وجهات النظر وسط تفاعل من الجانبين، حضر هذه الحلقة عدد متميز من الطلبة و أعضاء الهيئتين الإدارية و الأكاديمية بالكلية.

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Unedited TT1: Seminar on Omani Labour Law at Salalah College of Technology

> Aiming at developing students' potentials and attitudes, and bridging the academic study to community and labour market, and rising the students' awareness of the Omani Labour Law (LLO) to realize the workers' and establishment's right, the Technical College, Salalah, organized yesterday morning a seminar on OLL at the College Theatre. Mr. Mohammed M. A'Shahri, lawyer and legal consultant, delivered a lecture starting with explanation of the OLL and its general rules besides means of validation. He also spoke about many other major aspects such as employing citizens, regulating foreigners' employment, wages, working duration, employment of young women, labour quarrels and their legal solutions, gender equality, work place conditions as well as rights and duties. Later the lecturer demonstrated some practices of labour morals in the Sultanate. Finally the audience had their turn to ask questions and exchange Opinions with the lecturer. The students and teaching administration staff showed really great interaction.

The following translational version (TT2) was produced by only one subject from the whole group. This subject in particular has an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from an Australian university. The researcher presents it as the translation that all other subjects could not come up with:

Revised TT2: A Workshop on Omani Labor Law at Salalah College of Technology

Salalah College of Technology held a workshop on the Omani Labor Law yesterday morning at the theatre of the college. The workshop aims at developing students' abilities and interests. and linking their studies with the local community and the labor market. It also endeavors to raise students' awareness of Omani Labor Law so that they will realize the workers as well as the institutions' rights. Mohammed Ahmed AI-Shuhri, an attorney and legal advisor, gave a lecture that started with defining the Omani I.abor law. its provisions and applications. He also talked about several other topics most important of which arc Omanisation and regulating expatriates' employment. Mr. Al-Shuhri also pointed to other issues like wages. Work hours and female delinquents' employment. In addition, he touched on workers' disputes and the legal measures taken to settle them.

Equality between men and women at job opportunities, work place and rights and duties was also addressed by the speaker. Later on, there was a presentation of the applications of work ethics in the Sultanate. At the end of the workshop the floor was opened for audience to ask questions and exchange their views. A number of students as well as staff members from both the administrative and academic faculties attended the workshop.

6.2 Researcher's Comments:
The first segment of TT1 is a mere reproduction of the Arabic ST. It offers a global introductory statement to the theme of the seminar. Hence this sounds alien. It does not read as the opening section of a typical parallel English newsreport. Furthermore, the Source Text exhibits the use of parallelism due to overuse of coordinated structures: (i.e. **aiming at developing …. attitudes, bridging the academic study…. market; raising the student awareness…. law**). Also, notice the use of lexical repetition: **to ask questions and exchange opinions; lawyer and legal consultant**. These examples reveal the type of literacy that some postgraduate trainee translators possess – a restricted type of literacy that does not empower such trainees to perform the necessary mediation by integrating major/minor ideas within one chunk. Trainees with this type of literacy do not split up sentences from the source text to make them approximate the target English sentences. Trainees who are used to employ

orally-based strategies as is evidenced in the small letter text may not break up sentences to integrate ideas by using more subordination than coordination. Notice the second translation version executed by the M. A. student who is less orally-dominated. In it one can see a more literate-based strategy employing subordination, integration and variation within one chunk of the text.

In most Arabic newsreports, like this one, the opening section functions as a rationale for the hosting of a conference and its theme. This is untypical of most English original newspaper reports. The latter opening section establishes the theme and the nature of the activity rather than a threshold for that. It goes straight to the news item itself; what it is and who the participants are and the topic, etc. As a genre which shares the same communicative goals with the English newsreport, the Arabic newsreport language use, layout and textual material vary dramatically from their English parallel texts. Newsreports in Arabic are the by-product of the sociocultural and ideological values of the Arab discourse community to which the Arabic newspaper report belongs. In the Arab discourse community, the newsreport has to have a rationale, a justification which is reflective of the values of that discourse community and the norms for news worthiness. The specific individual event in itself is not worthy of dissemination unless it is associated with a communal societal value system; hence, the rationale at the beginning. To an English reader, the newsreport is the event itself devoid of any societal values attached to it, such as reference to the role of the government and its contribution or linking the event to public figures as an expression of their own concern about the well-being of their own people, etc. These are untypical of English newsreports.

6.3. Another Genre:

ST (Borrowed from Dickins's et al, 2002:25)

ST

وتميـز حكم المحـافظين بـنزوعـه الأكـثـر وضـوحـا ومـبـدئيـة الى قـيـم الرأسمالية الغربية وبتبنيهم بـرنامـجـاً تدريجيـاً شـامـلاً من اجل الفصل بـين الدولـة والمجتمـع وبدء مشروع التـخـلي التـدريجي للـدولـة عن مهمـة الرعاية الاجتماعية وفسح المجال امـام حركة الاستثمار ورؤوس الاموال عن طريق تقليل الضـرائب. وقـد انطلقت تـاتشـر من تصـور فلسـفي ايديولـوجي متصلب حـاربت بـه النقابـات وكسرت شـوكـتـها ثم نقلت ملكيـات الدولـة العـامـة في الشـركـات الكبـرى وحولـتـها الى القطاع الخاص وفتحت البـاب امـام المواطنـين لاقتنـاء اسهمهـا وشمـلت سيـاسة التـخصيـص اكثر من عشرين شركة كبيرة منهـا شركة الحديد الصلب وشـركـة الغـاز والكهـرباء والهـاتف والنفط والمطارات. كـمـا اعطت لمستأجري المساكن الحكومـية الحق في شراء وتملك مساكنهم وغيرها من الاجراءات التي اجبرت فيها الدولة على التنازل عن ممتلكاتها لصالح المواطنين. فكانت النتيـجـة هي ان شـهدت بريطانيـا في الثـمـانينات حـركة اقتصـادية وانتـعاشـا نسبيـا وتدفق رؤوس الاموال الاجنبيـة وتكونت قناعة النـاخب البـريطاني بـالفـوائد المبـاشـرة الملمـوسة لحكم المحافظين.

Unedited TT1:
The rule of the Conservatives was distinguished by its clearer and more principled striving for the values of Western capitalism and by their adoption of a gradual, total programme in order to separate the state and the society; and the start of the project of gradual relinquishing of /by the state of/from the task of social care and the clearing of the way in front of the movement of investment and capital by means of the reduction of taxes. And Thatcher set off from an unyielding philosophical-ideological conception with which she fought the unions and broke their power; then she transferred the public properties of the state in the great companies and converted them to the private sector, and opened the door in front of the citizens to buy their shares; and the policy of privatization covered more than twenty large companies, including the iron-steel company, the gas company, the electricity, the telephone, the oil, and the airports. She also gave the renters of government houses the right to buy and own their houses, and [she undertook] other measures in which she forced the state to give up its properties to the benefit of the citizens. And/So the result was that Britain in the eighties witnessed an economic movement and a relative revival, and the inpouring of foreign capital, and the conviction of the British voter came into being of the tangible, direct benefits of the rule of the Conservatives.

Revised TT2: (Dickins, et al, 2002)
The period of Conservative rule was most clearly characterized by the party's ardent desire to promote Western capitalist values and by the gradual setting up of a comprehensive programme intended to separate state and society, slowly but surely taking the burden of community care away from the state, and encouraging investment and capital through a reduction in taxes.

   Thatcher then proceeded to wage a relentless war on the Unions, a policy which significantly curbed their power, after which she disposed of a number of large state-owned utilities by transferring them to the private sector, allowing citizens to purchase shares. She privatized more than twenty major companies including the iron and steel industry, gas, electricity, the telephone company, oil, and the airports authority. Council house tenants were given the right to buy their own homes and other policies were implemented which forced the state to surrender its holdings to the benefit of the citizen. The result of this was that during the 1980s Britain witnessed something of an economic recovery with foreign capital pouring in, persuading the electorate of the obvious advantages of Conservative rule.

6.4. Dickins's Comments:
The translation should sound like an English magazine article on this subject. It is therefore important not only to mirror general structural features of political magazine articles in English, but also to attempt to use vocabulary which is typical of writing about the British political scene. One feature of political magazine writing in English is the combination of specialist political terms with

a degree of informality of expression (designed in part to keep the reader personally involved). The translator should therefore look for opportunities to use fairly informal phrases where appropriate. There is also a tendency for English political magazine articles to utilize fairly strongly emotive vocabulary (something which often correlates with informality). The translator should also look out for appropriate opportunities to do this.

The adaptations of the unrevised TT1 are within the reach and capacity of Arabic-speaking translator trainees. The adaptations to produce TT2, however, are obviously beyond the reach and capabilities of most Arabic-speaking translator trainees. As mentioned earlier, the proposed strategic adaptations are not within the realm of adult Arab literates' communicative practices.

7. Strand 4: Contrasting Literacy Practices: the complaints

Atari (1983) conducted a study on written complaints produced by a group of native Arabic speakers and another group of native English speakers. The written complaints were examined in terms of: a) the structure of the complaint, b) the topic development, and c) the role of the addressee.

7.a. Findings on the structure of the complaint

The most salient feature of a "complaint" is its convincingness (i.e. the complainers' ability to convince the readers or the authority/agency/person complained to.

6 out 30 Arabic-speaking students managed to request a resolution to the conflict or the injustice committed against them. The other 24 did not mention anything to that effect.

The native speakers of English (i.e. American graduate students) all included an explicit request for diminishing the injustice committed against them.

7. b. Addressee

All American students directed their complaints to a specific agency, authority or an individual. Here is an example…

Request for change (Arabs) 6 included implicit requests / 24 did not

Examples:

I hope this problem will be solved so soon as accounting won't be so incredible and dangerous to study…

…It is bad to complain and good to solve. If I want to solve we have to change the whole situation in our country and I hope we can achieve that…

…I wish it will be much easier in the future, please keep in touch.

…I hope that any letter finds listening ears.

Native speakers
All native speakers included a request for resolving the problem or the conflict. The main purpose of their writing is to get something done, to resolve the conflict.

Examples
…please send me a new complete set of plastic counter clips immediately, so that I can use the counters all at one time instead of in rotation.
…Because of this problem I expect you either to send me my sweater and skirt or reimburse me for the amount of money I designated on my complaint form…
… I would suggest that in the future, TAs be used only if hired by a professor for a particular class
…I feel that I should be reimbursed for both the meals and the activities which were promised but not delivered.
…I hope that you will use your influence to eliminate our involvement (particularly military in EL-Salvador)

The Addressee
The written texts produced by the Arab university students were less convincing as complaints to the native speakers of English. The native speakers of English who read the Arab students' complaints found them difficult to understand.
The addressee as a component of the complaint as a speech event to use is the individual or the institution, authority who is responsible for inflicting prejudice/injustice against the complainer.
Six out of 30 Arab students addressed the appropriate person or institution responsible for the conflict, whereas (7) addressed family or friends and (17) did not address anybody.

Native speakers
All native speakers categorically addressed the letter to the source of conflict and requested a prompt resolution of the problem.

7. c. The native raters' judgment of Arab students' complaints
The native referees of the Arab complaints judged them as acts of "whining" not as felicitous complaints. They lacked the conditions of sincerity and convincingness as they did not include a request for resolving the conflict nor did they address the source of the problem/conflict.

8. Strand 5 of literacy practices: L2 Reading Strategies
Atari (2003) in a study on Arabic-speaking subjects reading comprehension strategies revealed through an analysis of their performance on reading a text for comprehension found that those students failed to utilize their previous linguistic knowledge; furthermore, the students' L2 reading strategies did not reveal

awareness of top-level text structure such **comparison/contrast, cause/effect**, etc. nor did the strategies include anticipation of content, prediction and sampling according to Goodman's model of text processing (1967). Other studies came up with similar findings. Ghaith and Harkous (2003) concluded that their subjects from the American University of Beirut Language Center found the **coordination/description** pattern the easiest while the **cause-effect** was the most difficult. Carrell (1984) also concluded that her Arabic-speaking subjects, (EFL graduates/undergraduates and graduates from other disciplines, found the **coordination/ description** pattern more facilitative of recalls than the **problem/solution** and **cause/effect patterns**. Bahraini students in computer science found the **problem/solution** more facilitative than the **cause/effect**. (Rahim, 2005 personal communication)

9. The conflicts of the two types of literacies: Arab vs. American

The features of adult Arab literates' practices and products can best be seen and appreciated within the framework of: 1) Oral/literate tradition strategies as the mainstay of literacy practices, and 2) Discourse communities and their practices. Anthropologists have long studied the distinction between oral versus literate dominant societies. The print or literate dominant society relies more on the factual accuracy of a message than its emotional resonance. Literate societies favor evidence, reasoning, analysis over the less national, more intuitive approach. This contrast to the logic of oral cultural, where a single anecdote can constitute adequate evidence for a conclusion and a specific person or act, can embody the beliefs and ideas of the entire community.

Whereas literate cultures may place a higher premium on accuracy and precision than on symbolism, in the oral cultures the weights are reversed. In oral cultures there appears to be greater involvement on the part of the audience, and this in turn, affects the importance of style and devices that enhance audience rapport.

The numerous features of oral tradition include repetition as a means of keeping attention as well as making the speech "agreeable to the ear", in terms of the message comprehension. The listeners play a valuable part in constructing meaning within an oral exchange.

9.1. Linear and Non-linear

Similar to the oral/literate framework, intercultural scholars suggest linear versus non-linear thought framework. The linear cultural pattern stresses beginnings and ends of events, is **object-oriented** rather than **people or event-oriented**, and is empirical in its use of evidence; (i.e. one point followed by second point, followed by third etc. points or facts are presented sequentially).

In a linear progression, one builds an argument in a step by step fashion instead of throwing things all at once. In contrast, the communication message of non-linear cultures normally has multiple themes, is expressed in oral terms and heightened by non-verbal communication.

Repetition in Arabic is a decidedly positive feature. It is not uncommon to find a string of descriptive phrases or words all referring to one phenomenon.

Repetition, to repeat something over and over again or to be wordy or verbose, for Americans may have negative implications.

Repetition, even as a rhetorical device in public speaking, is used sparingly for emphasis, whereas an American may insert facts and figures to illustrate a point, an Arab speaker may use one strong, vivid example to convey a point. An Arab speaker also tends to be very generous in his use of descriptive adjectives and adverbs.

9.2. Direct vs. Indirect Communication Style

Zaharna, (1995: 2) reports that the American cultural preference is for clear and direct communication as evidence by many common American expressions: "say what you mean", "Don't beat around the bush", "Get to the point". He adds that direct style strives to accurately represent fact, technique or expectation and to avoid emotional overtones. In contrast, ambiguous communication is more indirect and the assumption that adult Arab literates' written communicative styles exhibit features of indirectness can be attributed to the orally-based strategies of communication. Although Arabs have an age-long tradition of literacy, twenty-first century Adult Arab Writers tend to draw heavily on shared assumptions with the readers and the immediate contextual features. Hence, language forms are not by themselves the message-carrying vehicles.

Conclusion

An understanding of the distinct nature of adult Arab literacy practices, discourses and the ideologies embedded in those practices can be of immense value to educationists, policy makers and researchers in cross-cultural communication and EFL pedagogy. This is an area that has not been adequately researched. The concerns about the pressures for publishing in English and the overwhelming dominance of global English in educational settings in the Arab world unequivocally require that kind of understanding as a prerequisite to future planning. Yet, what is quite noticeable is the contrasting nature of both types of literacy practices: the Anglo-American literacy practices versus those of the Arab literates. There are no **guarantees as to how adult Arab literates working outside the Anglo-American discourse communities can easily position themselves in those discourse communities and the discursive patterns of thought processes**. Yet, we cannot keep the adult Arab literates' practices on the periphery. Hence, I call for an "approximative bi-literacy" or a "hybridized literacy" as the ultimate goal of crossing the borders from one discourse community literacy practices to the other. The challenge, though, for policy makers, educationists including discourse analysts and ESL/EFL instructors and researchers is how to empower those adult Arab literates with the skills and strategies to become truly biliterates. A great deal has to be done on **contrastive rhetoric, Arabic discourse and the variety of discourse communities, their communicative styles and how to bridge the gap for a better understanding of the two worlds: the Arab world culture and the Western world culture.**

Appendix

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

سلطنة عمان
وزارة التربية و التعليم
المديرية العامة للتربية و التعليم
محافظة البريمي
مدرسة حفيت للتعليم الأساسي

السيد الفاضل/.. المحترم
السلام عليكم و رحمة الله و بركاته
قال تعالى: (و قل اعملوا فسيرى الله عملكم و رسوله و المؤمنون)
نتوجه إليكم و نحن على يقين بأنكم أهل الأيادي الندية التي تجود بما لديها في سبيل المساعدة و مد يد العون لكل
مشروع يخدم أبناء هذا الوطن المعطاء
من هنا نوجه نداءنا إليكم لمساعدتنا في خدمة أبناءنا الطلبة بما تجوده أيديكم
و أنتم سباقون لعمل الخير دائماً
و جزاكم الله كل خير

TT
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Education
General Directorate of
Education
AI-Buraimi Governorate
Hafeet School of Basic
Education

Dear sirs/madams,

Hafeet School of Basic Education students are energized and ready to take advantage of their educational opportunities. They have enthusiastic teachers, great classroom atmosphere and plenty of school spirit. Unfortunately, a lot of our students come from very poor families and can not afford for their needs. Textbooks, uniforms and stationary are much needed. Making matters even worse, the school has very limited funds to support those unfortunate little ones. We want Hafeet school students to have the tools they need to maintain consistent academic performance. This is too important a resource to go unfunded. Will you help us our goal of placing these resources in each student's hand?

We appeal to you to assist us in helping our students by giving some donations whether as gifts or cash. Any qmg1Jion amount is always welcomed we appreciate your support. We will recognize your gift with labels in each item that will tell all our students that it was you who invested in their academic success.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to whatever support you can provide.
Sincerely,

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[1] I am aware of the reservations expressed by some Arab scholars on the findings of the above-mentioned studies on cross-cultural communication (Feghali, 1997: 345-378). Guided by instinctive apprehension having to do with their Arab patriotism and self-image, some Arab academics tend to cast doubt on the validity of such findings. Unfortunately, such reactions are anecdotal as they are not substantiated by empirical research findings. The only non-anecdotal case has been Sa'adeddin's seminal, solitary though, work (1989: 37). In a study titled: "Text Development and Arabic-English Negative Interference" published in *Applied Linguistics*, *Vol. 10, No. 1, pp: 38-51*, M. Sa'adeddin argues that "*contrasts between texts written by producers from different language communities may arise from communal, sub-communal and even individual preferences for one mode of text development over others"*. In other words, Sa'adeddin claims that adult Arab writers can fluctuate themselves between one mode of text development to another. To him, adult Arab writers have at their disposal the strategies appropriate for orally-based texts and literate-based text as well. It looks like Sa'adeddin does not acknowledge the challenges facing adult Arab writers in their endeavors to position themselves in the others' discourse community and their social practices as he compares one text from the Hijri 8th century with a 20th century text. The gap is too wide to substantiate Sa'adeddin's conclusion.