

Elite (Foreign) Language in Arabic Media Discourse: Impacts and Implications

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Abstract: *The objective of this paper is to examine the spread of the use of English expressions in Arabic media as a symbolic marker of elite discourse. The bulk of the data consists of Kuwaiti newspaper headlines including foreign language segments. These headlines are examined with an eye to checking whether the incorporation of English items in them is justified and whether the messages intended are effectively conveyed to the public audience at large (Arab readers in general and Kuwaiti readers in particular). To systematize the data, English segments are classified into five categories: code-switching, culture-bound expressions, acronyms/abbreviations, idiomatic expressions, and blended forms. The discussion shows clearly that the media writers' attempt to sound elite and gain more prestige by employing English in Arabic discourse fires back in terms of comprehensibility on the readers' part and the naturalness of Arabic texts. The implications of this phenomenon can be far-reaching on two accounts. Firstly, the promotion of a hybrid Arabic discourse would affect the integrity of the Arabic language as well as contribute to the decline of Arabic language competence in the young generations. Secondly, the intrusion of English expressions on Arabic texts would render many of them incomprehensible to a large sector of Arab readers.*

Introduction

With the evolution of the global digital revolution came the basic modern necessity for all citizens of the world to become media literates. Media Literacy is defined as an informed, critical understanding of the mass media which involves examining the techniques, technologies and institutions involved in media production. Media Literacy enables citizens to critically analyze media messages and recognize the role audiences play in deriving meaning from those messages (Shepherd, 1993). It empowers citizens and makes them capable of active, critical engagement to challenge the traditions and structures of a privatized, commercial media culture, and find new avenues of citizen speech and discourse (Bowen 1996).

One major outcome of this global revolution was the proliferation of foreign expressions derived mainly from English in the Arabic media texts, which is a phenomenon representing one manifestation of Master Discourse, i.e. English presenting itself as a *de facto* international *lingua franca*. Thus, English has become a well-known medium for educated Arab journalists, editors, TV presenters, celebrities and intellectuals, especially those educated in the west, to employ in their writing or speech in order to maintain a certain degree of priority and prestige over the public and their own peers in the specific field of knowledge, albeit at the expense of the native language text and a sizeable sector

of Arab readers. In this way, the Arab journalists' employment of English expressions in Arabic media discourse functions symbolically as a marker of identity (i.e. by embodying eliteness, power, and prestige). However, such symbolic loadings work against instrumentality (the primary function of language). If the media are a form of mass communication, the use of English for the symbolic purposes of display and posture cuts out many Arab readers from the reach of mass communication, making the switch to English as a communicative act self-defeating (for more on this, see Suleiman 2003, 2011).

Arab educated elite have tended to employ culturally exotic phrases and literally interpreted English catch phrases and expressions in the Arabic oral and written contexts through a variety of means including Code-switching, Culture-bound Expressions, Acronyms, Idiomatic expressions and Blended forms. This practice, in many cases, indirectly affects the Arabic text and renders it incomprehensible by the public, the majority of whom has a slight acquaintance with foreign language forms of discourse. English words/phrases such as *charisma*, *scoop*, *nominee*, *prime*, *hit*, *album*, *super star*, *star academy*, *agenda* have become very common in the writing and speech of the educated Arab elite. In this article, we shed light on some of these techniques in order to show how inappropriate this form of intertextuality is and how taxing it is on Arab readers *vis-à-vis* capturing the meaning intended by writers. We suggest that these readers and the Arabic language alike would be in a better position linguistically and culturally if the original Arabic equivalents of these expressions were used instead.

One central idea of contemporary literary and cultural theory is *intertextuality*, which has its origins in 20th-century linguistics, particularly in the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). The term itself was coined by the Bulgarian-French philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva in the 1960s. Intertextuality is defined as the interdependent ways in which texts stand in relation to one another (as well as to the culture at large) to make meaning. It is claimed by theorists that in the Postmodern epoch, originality or the uniqueness of the artistic object in a painting or a novel no longer exists since every artistic object is so clearly assembled from bits and pieces of already existent art (Allen, 2000).

According to Daniel Chandler (1995), meaning has a continuum that ranges between *determinate meaning* and *completely open interpretation* as follows:

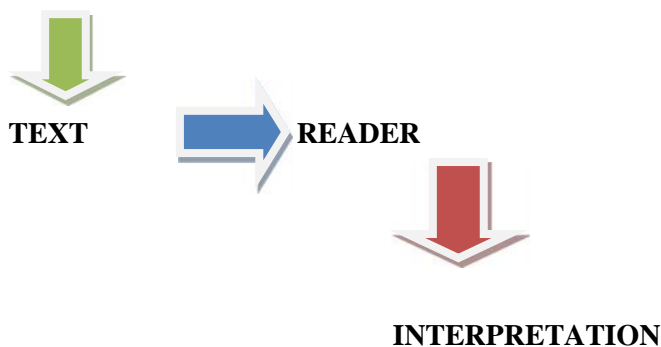
- Objectivist: Meaning entirely in text (transmitted);
- Constructivist: Meaning in interplay between text and reader (negotiated);
- Subjectivist: Meaning entirely in its interpretation by readers (re-created).

In formalist theories meaning resides in *texts* (Olson, 1977); in dialogical theories meaning is a *process* of negotiation between writers and readers (Holquist, 1983). For experienced readers, reading is a continued process of making inferences, evaluating the validity and significance of texts, relating them to prior experience, knowledge and viewpoint, and considering

implications. Hence, for them meaning resides in their interpretation of the text in view of their knowledge and experience. In this way, one can generally argue that a text does not speak for itself; it needs both a writer and a reader.

The process of making meaning may be illustrated by the following schemata:

WRITER



According to this diagram, a text does not have a single, unchanging meaning; individual readers may either accept, modify, ignore or reject a certain preferred reading for a text in light of their experience, attitudes and purposes (Bartlett, 1932). This whole attitudinal spectrum towards meaning-making in texts parallels that which is pertinent to the nature of reality: ranging from objectivism, via intersubjectivity, to subjectivism.

In addition, two major principles related to psychology are of relevance in the context of meaning-making. One follows the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (1958 [1929]), which argues that “the language we use influences our perception”, thus rendering language as a pair of glasses through which we *see* the world in a particular way. Another principle relates to the mechanism of information retrieval by the human memory, which works like the memory of a computer in the sense that 'you cannot retrieve information from memory if it was not stored in it'. A major important concept here is to see how language users recognize a lexical item's meaning, which is a main concern for models of lexical access in cognitive psycholinguistics which attempts to explain how individuals access words and their related meanings in their mental lexicons. Two of these models are Forster's 1976 *Autonomous Search Model* and Morton's 1969 *logogen model* (Morton and Patterson 1998). In these two models of lexical access, individuals use all available input (i.e. orthographic, phonological) in order to recognize targeted words, and a major principle here is that high-frequency words are accessed more quickly than low-frequency ones.

The massive advancement of technology and its various tools and applications have recently introduced the concept of Media Literacy (ML) as a basic requirement for people of all age groups. In other words, following the mechanism of 'Supply and Demand', there has been a growing demand for ML.

This demand has created a proliferation of excessive use of foreign language (i.e. English) in the media at the expense of Arabic, which has become a global phenomenon in most languages. In this paper, we examine this excessive use of English expressions mainly in newspaper headlines and commercial advertisements in private and public daily newspapers published in Arabic in Kuwait such as *Al-Qabas*, *Al-Watan*, *Al-Siyasah*, *Al-Jarida*, etc. We focus on five major linguistic practices implemented by writers in these newspapers that involve the following:

1. Code Switching
2. Culture-bound expressions
3. Acronyms and Abbreviations
4. Idiomatic expressions
5. Blended forms

Code Switching

One of the most common phenomena in Arabic newspapers in Kuwait is the intensive use of code-switching. Code switching mainly involves the practice of moving back and forth between two different languages, though the concept is extended to cover shifting between two dialects or registers of the same language, which is often referred to as code-mixing. It can be motivated by different reasons including gap filling, solidarity, prestige, emotional status, professionalism, etc. (For more details, see Holmes 2008). Typically, code switching occurs far more often in Arabic conversation than in writing, but what is surprising these days is the rapid spread of this phenomenon in the Arabic written media. Let us consider the following newspaper advertisement:



Obviously, this advertisement targets readers who are bilingually fluent in both English and Arabic as the advertising company moves back and forth between Arabic and English selectively in the text. The main segment (the type of job advertised) is given in both Arabic and English in large fonts. The producer of this advertisement does not seem content with using Arabic alone and, consequently, supplements it with an English version. This kind of twinning between the two languages is probably motivated by the company's need to sound professional and to gain more prestige by the use of English, a highly valued language in Arab countries. As for the other supplementary segments in the advertisement, they are mainly given in English. While gap filling is a justifiable motivation for using the English version of the electronic address because Arabic does not possess one (the English version being internationally used), there is no good reason for the employment of English when referring to the confidential treatment of CVs by the company. It is more effective to offer this kind of information in Arabic in order to render it interpretable by a wider Arab audience. Excluding the gap filling case, therefore, the use of code switching in the above advertisement may be motivated symbolically rather than instrumentally by pointing to prestige and professionalism in the company's psychology.

Following is another advertisement extracted from a Kuwaiti newspaper Arts page:

سام شيبارد في Blackthorn
 رجل مسنٌ يعود إلى مغامراته
 مينيابوليس- نيومان
 دخل سام شيبارد بصورة بارزة إلى عالم السينما بعد أدائه المزارع الرومنسي في فيلم Days of
 Heaven لتيرنس ماليك، الذي لقي صدى إيجابياً لدى الجمهور والصحافة. في رصيد هذا الممثل
 40 فيلماً متنوعاً أنجزها منذ سطوع نجمه في عام 1978. أيقونية)
 يبغر، الطيار التجريبي الشجاع، في فيلم The Right Stuff)، وأدواراً صغيرة)
 فاليري بلايم في فيلم Fair Game)، وجسد في أفلام كثيرة شخصية مأمور الشرطة.

Two code switching phenomena can be observed in this advertisement. Firstly, the advertiser makes no effort in translating into Arabic the names of the films being referred to; s/he simply gives the names in English, leaving many Arab readers bewildered as to what they mean in English. It should be noted that these converted proper nouns lend themselves readily to translation, e.g.

for 'Blackthorn' and أيام النعيم for 'Days of Heaven' (for more details, see Al-Hamly and Farghal 2013). While it is justifiable to supplement the Arabic name with the English one to cater for the needs of an elite audience, it is not acceptable to keep many Arab readers in the dark as to the import of the English names. Secondly, while it is acceptable to transliterate central proper nouns (e.g. names of people and names of cities), it is not so in the case of words which classify things and should be translated unless they are familiar borrowings in Arabic such as راديو and . In this way, the producer of the text above has been misguided when transliterating the English adjective 'iconic' into أيقونية. We

believe that most Arab readers would be unfamiliar with this rendition. It would even be better to employ the English word 'iconic' as it would reach an elite audience, but the transliteration would confuse both the elite audience as well as the wider sector of audience.

The excessive employment of transliteration (borrowing English words using Arabic alphabet) has become a growing phenomenon in Arabic media discourse. Consider the following telephone advertisement coming from *Orange* in Jordan:



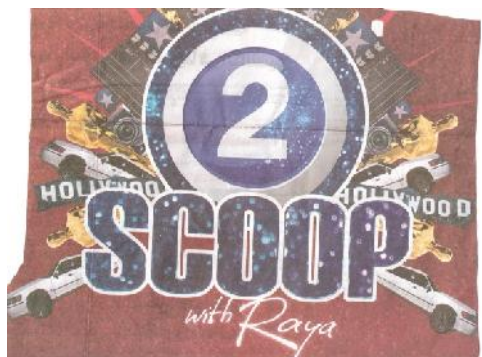
The Arab reader would be shocked by the use of the Arabicized verbs *عيشها* and *من الآخر* in this advertisement and many readers would not be able to get the message. This transliterated code switching affects both varieties of Arabic: the High variety (Standard Arabic) and the Low variety (vernacular Arabic). This text can be written much more effectively in both Standard as well as Vernacular Arabic without switching to English in disguise. One would wonder what motivates this kind of code switching. The only explanation would perhaps lie in the notion of innovation which, supposedly, would attract more readers. But innovation has its own rules and constraints; otherwise, it would fire back. For instance, while one would accept reluctantly the innovation behind the causative verb *عاشها* based on the familiar borrowing *عاش*, the causative verb *عاشها* cannot be subjected to any kind of logic in the context of mobile phones. If it were to be analyzed in terms of Arabic derivation, it would mean 'producing music', which does not apply here as the reference is to 'listening to music'. Consequently, it is not only the language that is flawed in this text, but the logic is fallacious as well.

Below is a sample of code-switches to English lexical items that have become so frequent in Arabic TV programs and relatively familiar in written Arabic media:

Scoop	()
Star Academy	ستار أكاديمي (أكاديمية/كلية النجوم)
Super star	(/)

Arab Idol	آراب آيدول ()
Arabs' got talent	(أصحاب المواهب العرب)
Jeopardy	جيبيردي ()
LOL	()
Nominee	نومييني ()
Star	()
Wow	()
Chat	()
Net	()
Website	ويب سايت ()
Talk show	()
Twitter	تويتير / تويت (تغريد /)

This influx of English words into Arabic discourse is not justified as Arabic has enough resources to cater for these vogue words. We believe that the promotion of such vocabulary in the Arab media, especially the written one, does more damage than good to the status of the Arabic language. Media writers ought to promote native counterparts as well as newly coined ones in order to reach a larger audience and serve Arabic simultaneously. Consider the following advertisement in a Kuwaiti newspaper promoting the TV show "Scoop" aired on the Arabic channel MBC 2 and hosted by the smart anchor Raya, who speaks English fluently and makes interviews with Hollywood celebrities:



Culture-bound Expressions

Culture-bound expressions refer to those expressions which are deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of a certain community. Such expressions will not be understood by members of other communities without exposing the background lying behind them. Therefore, it is extremely risky to employ such expressions in media discourse relating to important public issues because, in the best of worlds, they would only reach an educated elite. Let us have a look at some newspaper headlines that employ culture-bound expressions in the Arabic text:

- "الوسمي غيت" وكتلة نهج الفساد
- "تويتر بارك" منفذ الكويتين إلى حرية التعبير
- دون كيشوت المالكي والحرب ضد العلمانيين
- القذافي هالاوين

The culture-bound English expressions in the headlines above are not comprehensible by a wide sector of the public, especially the young generation. Hence, their relevance is restricted to an educated elite. In this way, for readers who do not have the required linguistic and cultural knowledge, such expressions would be extremely difficult to understand from the title, and they would need a close reading of the context of the article in order to make sense of the headline, if that's possible at all.

First, the Arabic expression *الوسمي غيت* employs the surname of a member of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, namely Obeid Al-Wasmi, who is a lawyer involved in a campaign targeting politicians and influential personalities, in order to expose their financial corruption. The parent English expression refers to the political scandal of "Watergate", an incident during the 1972 U.S. presidential campaign, when a group of agents employed by the re-election organization of President Richard Nixon was caught breaking into the Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate building, Washington D.C. The consequent political scandal was exacerbated by attempts to conceal the fact that senior White House officials had approved the burglary, and eventually forced the resignation of President Nixon. Since then, the folk stem 'gate' has become input for words denoting any political scandal, viz. *Iran-gate* and *Monica-gate*. Such an expression in the Arabic headline should address all the public and not just the educated elite, because it correlates to the political trend that concerns all members of Kuwaiti society. Hence, there is a conflict between the objective of media discourse and the linguistic tool employed to communicate that objective to the public.

Second, the alien Arabic expression *تويتر بارك* falls back on the English proper noun *Hyde Park*, which refers to one of the Royal Parks of London, famous for its Speakers' Corner, where people can express their opinions freely. The author's intention here is to argue that the social networking site "twitter" has become a free platform for Kuwaitis like *Hyde Park* in London where freedom of expression is entertained. One should note that readers who are not familiar with this park or who have not heard about it will not be able to grasp the intended meaning from the title without reading the whole article. One may even claim that the title would remain an enigma for many readers even after reading the article.

Third, in the Arabic headline *دون كيشوت المالكي* the columnist replaces the first name of the Iraqi Prime Minister "Nour" by "Don Quixote", the title of a novel written by Miguel de Cervantes about a legendary hero who fights windmills, in an attempt to communicate a strong message to the public that the

prime minister is an illusionist in his dealing with the serious issues in his country. This media message will not be understood from the title as the author employs the title of a foreign novel in the Arabic text depending in this on the cultural background of the elite group who are assumed to be able to decode the intended meaning from the title. Apart from the great importance of this message to the public, titles such as *المالكي يحارب طواحين الهواء* or :

would be much more influential for all kinds of readers, whether elite or otherwise. This kind of alien, sophisticated allusion is one of the most prominent forms of cultural intertextuality that is implemented by the educated Kuwaitis in most of their writings. However, we expect that young readers, not to mention the public at large, will not be able to understand such expressions since there is a big cultural gap between elite writers and the young audience. Meaning here does not reside in the text itself; it requires a deep understanding of the cultural knowledge in the foreign language in order to comprehend the conveyed message.

Finally, we have the headline *القذافي هالالوين* where the author employs the eve of all saints' Day celebrated on Oct. 31 by masquerading (celebrating by wearing masks and costumes) to refer to the disguise costumes that were designed to ridicule the character of the Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi during the peoples uprising against his regime. This expression is generally understood, particularly among the youth, due to the huge number of western horror films produced about Halloween; nevertheless, such an expression remains vague and incomprehensible to a relatively wide sector of Arab readers.

The question that poses itself here is: Are there any justifiable reasons to use such English culture-bound expressions in Arabic newspaper headlines? We believe the answer to this question is in the negative, as we find no actual need to use such expressions since Arabic is a rich language and has a good potential to create equivalents to foreign expressions which might become - if used frequently - as popular as the foreign expressions themselves. Yet, the Arab journalists' tendency to expose their linguistic skills and knowledge of foreign cultures by using a hybrid language, together with their reluctance to exert effort towards creating new Arabic terminology that would keep abreast of the advancement of science and the requirements of media literacy, would have a tremendous damaging effect on future generations who already suffer from a deteriorating decline in their Arabic language skills. This would also produce a hybrid version of Arabic that would eventually lead to further deterioration and decline in the translation movement. Hence, Arab writers are supposed to retrieve the repertoire of their cultural heritage and employ it in their writings instead of falling back on alien allusions that can hardly make sense to most Arab readers.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

Acronyms and abbreviations are two similar manifestations of reduced lexical forms in English where a word is usually formed from the initial letters of a phrase, such as the acronym *WAC* for *Women's Army Corps* and the

abbreviation UN for United Nations (for more details, see Kreidler 1998). The difference between an acronym and an abbreviation has to do with the way the reduced form is pronounced: an acronym is pronounced as a word, whereas an abbreviation is pronounced as individual letters. While this type of lexical reduction is widely used in English for the purpose of economy, in addition to indicating professionalism and euphony (Newmrak 1988), Arabic uses this lexical resource sparingly and when it does Arabic just borrows the English versions either in Arabic or English alphabet (for more details, see Al-Hamly and Farghal 2013). Consider the following acronyms and abbreviations:

	KUNA	وكالة الأنباء الكويتية
	SANA	وكالة الأنباء العربية السورية
	CIA	وكالة الاستخبارات الأمريكية
	KFAS	مؤسسة الكويت للتقدم العلمي
	DNA	

As can be noted, the Arabic versions exactly mirror the English ones. One wonders whether it is possible sometimes to employ the first Arabic initials in the creation of some Arabic acronyms (excluding the definite article) as follows:

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)
() وكالة الأنباء الكويتية

Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA)
() وكالة الأنباء السورية

In this way, instead of using KUNA we would be using the Arabic acronym () and instead of SANA we would be using (). Some Arab linguists believe that Arabic is not so prone to adopting this lexical resource and that Arabic acronyms like these may not gain popularity. However, we believe that creating such reduced forms may not be popular at the beginning, but with marketing and promotion through continued use, they may gain the required familiarity and become widely acceptable as is the case with some blended forms which will be discussed later on in this article.

In Arabic media discourse in Kuwait, there occurs a countless number of English acronyms and abbreviations that are used intensively and with tremendously growing frequency, particularly the expressions relating to the digital world. These reduced forms are employed for two major reasons: first,

for economy, ease of use and popularity of such expressions, and second, for the lack of Arabic equivalents for such expressions.

Let us start with acronyms which are usually borrowed formally employing Arabic alphabet, as can be illustrated in the two newspaper headlines below:

- الفيفا يحذر البرازيل
- (()) : تراجع إنتاج مصنعنا في هولندا بسبب إضراب العمال

The two acronyms الفيفا and (()) stand for 'The Federation Internationale de Football Association' and 'Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation', respectively. While the first acronym is quite familiar among the young generation and educated people in general, the second one may not make sense to most people, regardless of their age and education. While some may argue that the employment of familiar English acronyms in Arabic alphabet such as 'AIDS' and 'NATO' should be acceptable in Arabic texts, it remains true that the use of Arabic equivalents such as and would be more compatible with Arabic discourse and would reach a wider audience. One should note that employing the Arabic equivalent along with the English acronym may be adopted at the beginning of promoting an Arabic equivalent. Having said that, however, popularity and familiarity should never be lost sight of as media discourse correlates with what the public (consumers) want, especially that Arabic is flexible enough to accommodate many English acronyms as well-established borrowings.

Abbreviations, for their turn, are much less compatible with Arabic discourse than acronyms, because they are pronounced as individual letters rather than words. Consider the following newspaper headline:

الحل المفاجئ لمجلس الأمة أصاب بورصة الأسعار بالجنون
قاعات الVIP تبدأ من 23 ألفاً وحتى 38 ألفاً

In this example, the writer uses the English abbreviation VIP without the slightest attempt to translate it or even introduce an Arabic equivalent. While this abbreviation may be transparent to many Arab readers, it may be opaque to some of them. We argue here that media writers should exert every effort possible to come up with Arabic alternatives and attempt to market them in the media rather than use readymade abbreviations that intrude upon Arabic texts. A translation like قاعات كبار الشخصيات or even experimenting with something like قاعات كاف شين would be more compatible with the Arabic text.

Following is another newspaper headline where an English abbreviation occurs in Arabic alphabet:

ريف بخدمات البلدية وانتهاء المعاملات " " :

Regardless of how familiar the English abbreviation SMS (for Short Message Service) is in the speech of the young generation, given the fact that the newspaper is reporting what a Kuwaiti official said about this service necessitates the use of an Arabic equivalent, viz. خدمة الرسائل القصيرة, in order to account for the formality of the context. The Arabic expression would sound more formal and natural in this context. In addition to linguistic considerations, which are in favor of the use of Arabic instead of English abbreviations in newspaper headlines, media writers need to be aware of the formality of the context when employing foreign abbreviations. For example, it would be tolerable to some degree to use the abbreviation SMS or in an advertisement given the informal nature of this genre, whereas such an abbreviation would be completely inappropriate when reporting a government official's statement.

In some cases, the abbreviation may be familiar only to bilingual specialists in the concerned field and may be completely opaque to other categories, as can be illustrated in the following headline of a newspaper advertisement:

CFA معهد الدراسات المصرفية: برنامج تحضير شهادة

The abbreviation CFA (for Certified Financial Analyst) is uncommon and difficult to process by most Arab readers. Obviously, this advertisement targets people in the banking and financial sector. However, given the fact that it advertises a training program, the writer works with the false assumption that all workers in this sector are familiar with this abbreviation. It would be more effective and natural to employ the Arabic equivalent or, alternatively, supplement it with the English abbreviation. The way it is, this headline can be self-defeating, i.e. it may fail to instrumentally accomplish what it is meant for by opting for an alien initialization.

To conclude this section, it can be argued that the use of Arabic equivalents instead of English acronyms and abbreviations, whether in English or Arabic alphabet, would make them more accessible to a larger sector of Arab readers. This would also activate the process of translation and subsequently market the Arabic language worldwide, especially that the on-going socio-political Arab Spring can be hoped to embody a linguistic Spring as well.

Idiomatic Expressions

An idiom is a set expression of two or more words that means something other than the literal meaning of its individual components. Observe the following English idioms, along with their Arabic literal counterparts:

التعابير الاصطلاحية Idiomatc Expressions	
رأس جبل الجليد	Tip of the iceberg
يكسر الجليد	Break the ice
	A snowball rolling downhill
	Lame duck
سياسة العصا والجزرة	The carrot and stick policy
	Put the cart before the horse
	Deeds not words
	The ball in your court

Examining the above Arabic idiomatic expressions which mirror their English original counterparts readily reveals that they do not hold equal status in Arabic discourse. While some of them (e.g. "يرطب الأجرء") يكسر الجليد and "سياسة الترغيب والترهيب") سياسة العصا والجزرة have successfully established themselves as part of educated Modern Standard Arabic and have become so popular in Arabic, especially in media and political discourse, a few others (such as "رئيس أو مسئول من دون") رأس جبل الجليد and "أول الغيث") have remained alien to Arabic discourse. Therefore, it is the media writer's job to judge what is acceptable and comprehensible by the Arab reader based on naturalness, familiarity and frequency. Misjudgments in this regard can damage the comprehensibility and naturalness of Arabic discourse. Witness the following newspaper headline:

خلاف السلف والإخوان رأس جبل الجليد فالتياران يعيشان فوق برميل بارود

By all measures, be it linguistic or otherwise, the employment of the alien expression رأس جبل الجليد renders the Arabic headline awkward and unintelligible to most Arab readers. The writer has been misguided by opting for a literal translation that remains far from being acceptable in Arabic discourse, especially when it is directed by the media to the body of Arab readers at large. It is true that this Arabic calque is sometimes heard from few Arab intellectuals when they are at a loss of words on TV programs and interviews, but it has not reached the status of being employed in the written media as a well-established borrowed idiomatic expression that has been integrated into Arabic discourse. The headline would be effective and natural if it read :
الغيث فالتياران يعيشان (يقفان) فوق برميل بارود. Whereas the Arab reader's cultural background and cognitive environment (Sperber and Wilson 1986) readily support this suggested headline, they fail to do so in the existing newspaper headline.

The above headline can be contrasted with the following headline where a generally familiar idiomatic expression mirroring an English one is employed:

: سياسة " " لم تعد تنفع مع الحركة النقابية

The idiomatic expression سياسة العصا والجزرة is highly integrated and enjoys a high frequency in educated Arabic discourse. Some might argue, however, that it is still not fully understood by all Arab readers in its original meaning, which is based on the concept of “reward and Punishment”; hence, a native Arabic counterpart like سياسة الترغيب والترهيب would be more comprehensible to a larger Arab audience.

To close this section, below is a newspaper headline where a totally alien expression that has been used lately in the Arab media is instantiated:

على خلفية معلومات عن تسلم أحد الأشخاص 200 مليون ريال
كرة "التحويلات القطرية" تتدحرج....."
وحملة نيابية للجنة تحقيق برلمانية مع المشتبه بهم

In this headline, the author remodels (see Farghal and Al-Hamly 2010 on remodelings) parts of two English idiomatic expressions, namely:

1. “Start the ball rolling”, which means to ‘start an activity in which other people will join’.
2. “Like a snowball rolling downhill”, which means ‘a problem or risk is expected to grow bigger (increase in size)’.

The meaning of both idiomatic expressions is not evident in the Arabic text and, for them to be recovered, would need huge extra effort and relevant background knowledge on the part of the reader. In this way, the media writer's drawing on foreign idiomatic expressions would puzzle the Arab reader and impede the process of communication.

Blended Forms

A blend is a word formed from parts of two or more other words. The most common English blends are formed as follows: the beginning of one word is added to the end of the other. For example, the word *brunch* is a blend of *breakfast* and *lunch*. Below are more examples:

- Smoke + fog → *smog*
- Spoon + fork → *spork*
- Broiled + roasted → *broasted*

Some examples of blended words are found in Arabic Kuwaiti newspapers. The following promotional advertisement for the Regency Hotel in Kuwait is an example:

" في الريجنسي "

In this advertisement, the writer uses the English blend “brunch” in Arabic alphabet . When we asked a group of employees from the Ministry of Education in Kuwait and a number of university students about the meaning of the word , they had no clue! Hence, the use of such English blended words does not only reflect negatively on the naturalness of the Arabic language but also deprive a substantial number of the readers who don’t speak English from understanding the intended media message. The writer could have drawn on Arab culture to come up with something like , which approximates the intended meaning or, even experiment with a corresponding Arabic blend from + which, of course, needs a lot of promotion in media discourse before it becomes acceptable. This blending pattern, however, follows relatively well-established examples in Arabic such as from (smog), from and from . Such examples of Arabic blends may sound strange and vague in meaning. Despite their peculiarity, such expressions may gain acceptance if elite writers start investing them in their articles instead of marketing foreign expressions that usually involve both peculiarity and incomprehensibility.

Conclusion

The proliferation of foreign language expressions that have not yet been integrated into Arabic discourse has many negative impacts, the most important of which are the following:

1. Lack of originality, creation and innovation of Arabic expressions.
2. The symbolic use of language (as a marker of identity, power, and prestige) by Arab journalists seriously affects the instrumental use of language (as a primary means of communication).
3. Decline of Arabic proficiency among students and the public at large.
4. Loss of Arabic input and lack of comprehension.
5. Deterioration of the translation movement.
6. Bilingual code-switching might change to monolingual code (i.e. English) at the expense of Arabic.
7. Widening the communicative gap between old and young generation.
8. Superiority complex among bilinguals and inferiority complex among monolinguals.

This manifestation of Master Discourse (i.e. the use of English) in Arabic media as invested by elite groups, whether consciously or subconsciously, is spreading rapidly and, consequently, threatens the integrity of authentic Arabic discourse. Arab linguists and language planners should make substantial efforts to find Arabic alternative expressions and work hard towards promoting and

marketing them orally and orthographically. They should encourage the new digital generation to use them in order to avoid the emergence of a hybrid Arabic and overcome the phenomenon of Arabic language competence decline among the youth, as well as activate the movement of translation and Arabization to safeguard both current and future generations.

Master Discourse as manifested in the use of English has become linguistically dominant in the media in general and in commercial advertisements in particular, as we can hardly see a commercial or a promotion in Arabic without noticing some of these foreign segments implemented in the text. The question that may arise here is: “Is the discourse a commodity and the recipient a consumer? (see Fairclough 1995, 1996). Considering that we prefer to answer this question by “yes”, the commodity should be clearly described in order to gain acceptance by the consumers. This cannot be achieved, however, without avoiding the implementation and interference of peculiar foreign expressions in Arabic texts, thus allowing only those expressions that have been fully integrated into the Arabic language.

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