Arabs Without Arabic!

The Silent Threat to Identity, Politics, and Security

اللغة العربية

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Abstract

Language plays a fundamental role in preserving cultural identity and passing down traditions, but the rapid changes in today's World have led to the decline of many languages. Arabic, despite being one of the most spoken languages globally, has shown signs of attrition in recent years. The study addresses the pressing issue of Arabic language attrition, exploring its causes, implications, and measures of preservation. Arabic language attrition is not a mere linguistic issue but it goes beyond that, it has implications on the national security, political stability, and Arab identity. As younger generations increasingly adopt global languages, particularly in the Gulf countries, the cultural legacy and intellectual contributions of the Arab World are at risk of diminishing. The study highlights several factors contributing to this phenomenon, including political instability, migration, urbanisation, economic development, and intermarriage, all of which are intertwined with globalisation. These forces push people toward adopting dominant languages, further marginalising Arabic.

The consequences of language attrition could lead to significant political and security consequences, including potential regional fragmentation and the rise of secessionist movements. However, the study emphasises that these scenarios can be mitigated through targeted measures. Promoting the Arabic language through education reforms, cultural exports, soft power strategies, and government policies are essential to preserving its usage and prestige. By fostering Arabic's relevance in modern society, particularly through technology and media, the Arab World can reverse the trend of attrition and ensure the language's future vitality.

Introduction

Maintaining cultural identity and guaranteeing the transfer of knowledge, customs, and values from one generation to the next depends heavily on language which is essential for identifying the history and sense of identity of a country. Languages can change, though. Many languages undergo changes in usage in a World that is changing quickly; some even go through a steady decline or become endangered. When a language loses speakers or its use declines in favour of more dominant languages, it is referred to as language attrition. This phenomenon is frequently brought on by social, economic, and political pressures.[1]

Language attrition, the process through which native speakers progressively lose skill in their language over time, has affected many languages worldwide. Several reasons, including globalisation, migration, economic pressures, and the dominance of more commonly spoken languages, frequently combine to drive this phenomenon. The less commonly used language begins to disappear as people move toward utilising a more dominant language for social integration, employment, and education. In addition to having an impact on individual speakers, this attrition may cause the language's cultural legacy, customs, and sense of identity to gradually fade away.

The topic of Arabic language attrition has generated a great deal of discussion in this context, which has prompted a closer look at the factors behind this phenomenon. To comprehend their unique effects on Arabic, it became imperative to pinpoint the main causes of language attrition since it has shown increasing signs of attrition in recent years. Even while it is still one of the most widely spoken languages in the World, concerns about its future are becoming more and more prevalent, especially considering contemporary issues like migration, globalisation, and shifting social standards. Arabic usage in daily life has noticeably decreased as a result of the influence of foreign languages, primarily English and French, in schools, media, and business. This is especially the case for younger generations, who may choose these international languages due to their perceived social and economic benefits.

The Arabic language attrition has significant effects on national security, cultural cohesiveness, and Arab identity in addition to being a language issue. One of the main pillars of national unity is language, and its decline can exacerbate social division, especially in an area where political unrest and violence already represent serious risks. The cultural and intellectual legacy of the Arab World may be compromised by the decline of Arabic, which would lessen the influence of Arab contributions around the World.

Consequently, by examining factors, such as migration, changes in educational systems, globalisation, gaps in communication between generations, and economic development, this paper aims to investigate the multifaceted nature of Arabic language attrition. It will also explore the wider ramifications for Arab societies, including how it will affect national identity and geopolitical stability. In addition, strategies and measures for maintaining and reviving Arabic language use will be examined in this paper. Reversing the tendencies of attrition requires concerted efforts to improve Arabic education, encourage its usage in media and technology, and cultivate a sense of cultural pride. In an increasingly globalised World, these actions will help to strengthen Arab identity while also protecting the language for future generations.

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1. Yew KIEU, Chin. "Is Language Attrition a Form of Loss and Decay in Language Ability? A Fundamental Guide to 3 Essential Questions on Language Attrition According to Research." Language Educators Assemble, May 2023 ,7. https://www.languageeducatorsassemble.com/language-attrition/.

Fading Words: Decoding the Arabic Language Attrition

Languages are not just means of communication but also vessels of identity, culture, and history; however, many languages are in danger of becoming extinct in today's quickly globalising World. Since each language carries with it a distinct perspective, the disappearance of one language results in the degradation of cultural legacy and diversity.[2] In this context, language attrition, commonly caused by the progressive loss of a language's proficiency in individuals or groups, is a significant concern. This phenomenon occurs when a language is either replaced by another dominant language in importance. Numerous language aspects, including grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation might be impacted by this phenomenon. In bilingual or multilingual atmospheres, language attrition frequently takes place as a result of one language becoming more prevalent than the other. Reduced exposure to the language, practice deficits, migration, and cultural integration are some of the factors that lead to language attrition.[3]

Consequently, language attrition refers to the loss of first language components brought on by the impact or predominance of a second language, which manifests as an incapacity to generate, perceive, or distinguish certain rules, lexical items, or concepts.[4] Two perspectives exist on attrition: that of a process and that of a phenomenon. The procedure is simple in and of itself: attrition is the term for a person's non-pathological language acquisition drop. This means that attrition studies circumstances in which a speaker becomes less proficient in a language, but not because of mental deterioration brought on by disease, age, or injury; rather, it is a consequence of a shift in linguistic patterns brought on by a severance from the community in which the language is used. This concept creates two conceivable scenarios: one in which the speaker encounters fierce competition from a different language system, and the other in which all contact with the language completely disappears, resulting in no linguistic input or communication. Language knowledge is proposed to be divided into two stages: pre-attrition stage A and attrition stage B. The distinction between these two phases, resulting from the attrition process, embodies the attrition phenomenon.[5]

The crisis of language attrition has far-reaching consequences where communities are becoming more and more integrated into dominant cultures, frequently embracing major languages like English, making indigenous languages especially vulnerable. When compared to many indigenous languages, Arabic, which has over 400 million speakers, is not endangered, nonetheless Arabic confronts difficulties that make its survival uncertain, especially given the variety of dialects spoken within it. Arabic is not a single language but has many dialects that differ greatly from one another in different regions.[6]

The formal, classical form is becoming less prevalent due to the emergence of modern dialects, globalisation, and the growing impact of foreign languages in education, media, and business. There is concern over the preservation and ongoing relevance of classical Arabic in the modern World as younger generations choose Colloquial Arabic or other languages for communication, eroding the profound link to this unified linguistic

2. "Multilingual Education, the Bet to Preserve Indigenous Languages and Justice." 2024. UNESCO. March 2024 ,5. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/multilingual-education-bet-preserve-indigenous-languages-and-justice.

3. Schmid, Monika S. Language Attrition. of Key Topics in Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

4. Sebina, B. (2014). (PDF) first language attrition. Research Gate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307903295_First_language_attrition

5. Schmid, M. S. (2008b). (PDF) defining language attrition. Research Gate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282851959_Defining_language_attrition

6. "17 Facts & Statistics About the Arabic Language & Industry Arabic." Industry Arabic. March 2023 ,14. https://industryarabic.com/arabic-facts-statistics/.

tradition. In addition, concern over the general drop in Arabic use in daily life, especially among young people in the Arab World, is becoming more widespread than the dialect problem.

To fully comprehend the dynamics and underlying reasons for this linguistic shift, the variables that are potentially leading to the attrition in the use of the Arabic language will be examined. We sought to determine the political, social, cultural, educational, and economic factors that have potentially contributed to the decline in the use of Arabic in media, education, and daily communication by looking at several studies. Our study is essential to understanding the wider ramifications of language attrition, especially considering globalisation, shifting social values, and migration, all of which have potentially had an influence on the status and use of Arabic in various regions.

Navigating Literature

For the purposes of this study, a comprehensive literature review was conducted. Numerous studies have addressed the issue of language decline, with some focusing on languages in general and others specifically examining Arabic as a case study. These studies have explored various causes of language decline, and while each study identified different contributing factors, factors were categorised into one main trend which is globalisation, the primary catalyst for language attrition, encompassing a multitude of contributing factors: migration, education, intermarriage, communication, urbanisation and economic development.

One notable gap in the existing literature is that most academic research tends to focus solely on the decline of languages themselves, without addressing the economic, societal, or security implications of this decline. This study aims to address this gap by exploring not only the factors contributing to language decline but also their manifestation in the Arab World which could lead to the continued attrition of the language and its potential replacement by another in the long run.

English has expanded to become a global language; this growth has coincided with the endangerment and extinction of many indigenous languages. In response to these trends, scholars have started recording and categorising endangered languages. For instance, while arguing that Arabic is not endangered yet, the physical and cultural influence of the West in the Middle East makes this issue relevant and significant. The dominance of some languages has increased as a result of economic globalisation. Crystal argues in "English as a Global Language" that speakers of minority languages may shift to the dominant language in order to take advantage of better economic opportunities. The younger generation frequently gives up on their mother tongues in favour of the universal language as a result of this change.[7] [8]

The current era of globalisation is also marked by a decrease in the ability of states to enforce national identities, leading to the rise of alternative forms of identification, such as those based on indigenous heritage, regional location, and immigrant status. These shifts in power, along with the emergence of new identities, have important implications for understanding modern linguistic ideologies and practices. Changes in identity contribute to the creation of hierarchical spaces, which are reflected in the ranked use of local languages. Using Hawaii as an example, it is suggested that there are fundamental connections between global processes and cultural identity, which are crucial for understanding linguistic change.[9]

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7. Crystal, David. English as a Global Language. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

8. Muro, Denise. n.d. "Languages Killing Languages: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Media Portrayal of the Struggle Between English and Arabic." UNCOpen. https://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj/vol5/iss7/2/.

9. Friedman, Jonathan. "Globalizing Languages: Ideologies and Realities of the Contemporary Global System." American Anthropologist 105, no. 4 (December 52–744 :(2003. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2003.105.4.744.

In an effort to understand what factors contributed to the decline of Welsh, studies found out that rapid industrialisation and migration in certain key areas were the most significant. Industrialisation led to the attraction of large numbers of immigrants, both Welsh and English, into South and North East Wales.[10] Since English has become the most widely spoken language in the World, several nations have given it precedence over their national tongues. Less than 20% of people in Wales, for instance, are bilingual in Welsh and English. It is argued that national languages are endangered and would eventually diminish as a result of younger generations' extensive adoption of global languages.[11]

Moreover, several studies pointed out significant changes which took place in the economy, transportation, commerce, culture, education, health, and communications. For example, the previously closed Anong society in China suddenly opened its doors, welcoming other ethnic groups to settle among them, leading to intermarriages between the Anong and other ethnic minorities. Simultaneously, some Anong people began travelling freely from their villages to pursue education, seek employment, and engage in business activities. The interactions and communications between various ethnic groups expanded to an unprecedented extent, and these social changes have been reflected in the Anong language.[12]

Marriage and migration are then considered as factors of languages' decline, especially in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic relationships. Arabic's status as the primary language in homes and communities has declined as a result of the dynamics of these marriages as well as larger cultural trends. Linguistic compromises within the household are common among mixed-married couples, where one partner speaks Arabic natively and the other does not. The pair may frequently decide to speak to each other in a third language that they can both comprehend, such as English or French. For instance, mixed marriages frequently adopt English as the primary language in countries like Qatar, where expatriate communities are sizable and diverse. This trend contributes to a generational decline in Arabic proficiency by decreasing the use of Arabic in daily communication and influencing the language acquisition of children born into these families, who frequently speak Arabic at a poorer level than English or the mother tongue of one of their parents.[13]

Furthermore, studying the reasons behind the decline in language use, taking Kalasha as a case study, factors like tourism, marriage, conversion to other religion, travelling or immigration, and influence of mother tongue in the Kalasha Valleys are reasons for the decline of the Kalasha language. Marriage is a significant factor contributing to the decline of the Kalasha language. When a Kalash marries outside of their community, which is common, they tend to adopt another language. As a result, children are more likely to learn the other language as their first language rather than Kalasha, accelerating the process of language extinction for Kalasha. Tourism is another reason behind the steady decline of the Kalasha language. The government has designated the Kalasha Valleys as a tourist destination, attracting numerous visitors from around the World. This influx of tourists directly impacts the Kalasha language, as the tourists do not speak the local language, and the Kalash people are expected to communicate with them in a different language, usually Urdu. Consequently, the Kalash people become bilingual, often mixing Kalasha with Urdu, Khowar, or English in their speech.[14]

10. Lewis, Glyn. «6. Migration and the Decline of the Welsh Language» In Advances in the Study of Societal Multilingualism edited by Joshua A. Fishman, 352-263. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 1978. https://doi.org/9783111684376.263/10.1515

11. Crystal, David. English as a Global Language. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

12. Hongkai, Sun. «The Anong language: studies of a language in decline» International Journal of the Sociology of Language 2005, no. 157-143 :(2005) 173. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2005.2005.173.143

13. Hillman, Sara, and Emilio Ocampo Eibenschutz. "English, Super-diversity, and Identity in the State of Qatar." World Englishes 37, no. 2 (April 47–228 :(2018 ,26. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12312.

14. Younus, Junaid, Perveen Akhter Farhat, and Azhar Ahmad. 2023. "Analyzing the Factors Involvement in Declining Kalasha Language". Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 3529–3520:(3) 11. https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2023.1103.0633.

Marriage is not the only factor contributing to language decline where it has been significantly impacted by forced migration, such as that which results from political unrest and violence, throughout the Arab World. The pressure placed on refugee groups to linguistically integrate into their host communities frequently results in the endangerment of their original languages. One such country is Lebanon during and after the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), which resulted in a large-scale relocation within the country as well as worldwide, giving rise to a sizable Lebanese diaspora, especially in countries like Canada. This caused a change in which French started to predominate in these Lebanese communities' daily life. Younger generations of Lebanese living abroad gradually started to replace Arabic as their first language with French.[15]

Consequently, the linguistic landscape of the Arab World has been significantly shaped by migration. Language diversity frequently decreases as a result of the changes that dialects and languages go through when people migrate across borders. Arabic is the common language among the many languages and dialects that make up the Arab World, but there are a multitude of regional dialects and minority languages hidden behind the surface of linguistic unity. Migration has had a significant impact on this linguistic diversity, both inside and outside of the Arab World. The Moroccan diaspora in France, for instance, offers a clear illustration of language shift brought about by migration. The second and third generations of Moroccan immigrants are more likely to speak French as their first language, while the first generation frequently continues to speak Arabic and Berber fluently. El Aissati claims that the necessity to assimilate into French society, where Arabic is frequently stigmatised and proficiency in French is required for social and economic mobility, is what is causing this language shift. The younger generations' use of Arabic and Berber languages is thus declining.[16]

Additionally, studies pointed to the Arab Spring and the subsequent influx of Arab migrants into Jordan have intensified Jordanian nationalist discourses and fostered a sense of pride in Jordanian identity. This has led to greater recognition of the Colloquial Jordanian dialect as a key marker of Jordanian identity. Simultaneously, the aftermath of the Arab Spring has weakened pan-Arab nationalist discourses and symbols, including Standard Arabic. This decline may be attributed to the association of pan-Arabism with regional conflicts, political instability, and economic challenges. As a result, Standard Arabic has diminished in prominence in important social contexts, such as formal settings, while English and Colloquial Jordanian Arabic are increasingly prominent, particularly in domains like education. In addition, Standard Arabic is experiencing a socio-affective decline, as evidenced by the less enthusiastic attitudes of Jordanian youth toward this language compared to their attitudes toward English and Colloquial Arabic. Although some of these trends may have been developing before the Arab Spring, they have become more pronounced in the post-Arab Spring era, likely due to the significant socioeconomic and demographic changes in the region.[17]

According to a study, there are a lot of reasons why Arabic is becoming less common in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), primarily the high proportion of expats who communicate mainly in English. Due to this, Arabic is now sidelined in a complex language environment, which could result in the loss of Islamic principles, values, and culture. Even Arabic speakers frequently use poor Arabic or English in everyday interactions in an attempt to communicate with non-Arabic speaking co-workers. English has an even greater impact on education, as private schools give English priority over Arabic,

15. Murphy, Kara. 2017. "The Lebanese Crisis and Its Impact on Immigrants and Refugees." Migrationpolicy.Org. March 2, 2017. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/lebanese-crisis-and-its-impact-immigrants-and-refugees.

16. El Aissati, Abderrahman. Language Loss Among Native Speakers of Morrocan Arabic in the Netherlands. Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, 1997.

17. Albirini, Abdulkafi. "Language-Identity Dynamics in Post-arab Spring Era." Essay. In The Routledge Handbook of Arabic and Identity, 1st ed., 93–176. London: Routledge, 2020.

which hinders children's ability to acquire the language. Due to the necessity for worldwide recognition, English is also preferred in higher education in the UAE. The move away from Arabic and toward English is attributed to globalisation, which has led to a decline in Arabic's use in education, commerce, tourism, and other fields. The author points out that English predominates even in professional contexts like conferences, which further undermines Arabic.[18]

When it comes to education as a factor contributing to language use decline, several studies point out that people might start studying and using languages that provide better opportunities for employment. As a result, especially in multilingual communities where one language predominates in the economy, languages linked to restricted economic prospects may witness a drop in popularity.[19]

Consequently, various studies focused on the decline of Arabic in education used the UAE as a case study. Arguments usually find that the rapid spread of globalisation and the dominance of 'global English' have led to a prevalent acceptance of English, often overshadowing native languages. In the UAE, this is evident as English increasingly penetrates all sectors of society, particularly the education sector, where English as a medium of instruction is becoming more common. Concurrently, Arabic literacy — defined as the ability to read and write in Arabic — is declining among UAE youth. Despite the continued use of Arabic in daily conversations, there is clear evidence that Arabic literacy is significantly diminishing.[20] [21] [22] [23] [24]

The change in favour of English usage in some fields, such as business and education, is one detrimental impact of globalisation on Arabic language in the Gulf countries. This is caused by several factors, such as the influence of Western education and culture and the necessity of communicating with the increasingly globalised World. For instance, English is frequently used in business in the UAE, where many employers require that their staff members speak the language fluently. The usage of Arabic in the workplace has decreased as a result, particularly among younger generations.[25]

Another major issue is code-mixing, which is the introduction of foreign terms into Arabic speech. Research conducted by Jaran and Al-Haq revealed how common code-mixing is among Jordanian university students, where Arabic and English are mingled together, especially in science classes. The study incorporated qualitative and quantitative methods, and involved 150 students from Yarmouk University representing a range of faculties, age groups, and educational levels. It was discovered that the majority of students are open to using English in their Arabic interactions, and many of them prefer using a combination of the two

18. Al Allaq, Wissal. "Arabic Language in a Globalized World: Observations from the United Arab Emirates." Arab World English Journal 5, no. 3 (November 23–113 :(2014 ,3.

19. Grin, François. "Language Planning and Economics." Current Issues in Language Planning 4, no. 1 (January 66–1 :(2003 ,1. https://doi.org/14664200308668048/10.1080.

20. Carroll, Kevin S., Bashar Al Kahwaji, and David Litz. 2017. "Triglossia and Promoting Arabic Literacy in the United Arab Emirates." Language, Culture and Curriculum 32–317 :(3) 30. doi:07908318.2017.1326496/10.1080.

21. Al-Issa, Ahmad. "English as a Medium of Instruction and the Endangerment of Arabic Literacy: The Case of the United Arab Emirates." Arab World English Journal 8, no. 3 (September 17–3 :(2017. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3053550.

22. Solloway, Anthony Jonathan. "English-Medium Instruction in Higher Education in the United Arab Emirates: The Perspectives of Students." English-Medium Instruction in Higher Education in the United Arab Emirates: The Perspectives of Students. Dissertation, University of Exeter, 2016.

23. Troudi, Salah. "The Effects of English as Medium of Instruction on Arabic as a Language of Science and Academia." Essay. In Power in the EFL Classroom: Critical Pedagogy in the Middle East, 216–199. Cambridge Scholars, 2009.

24. Carroll, Kevin S., Bashar Al Kahwaji, and David Litz. 2017. "Triglossia and Promoting Arabic Literacy in the United Arab Emirates." Language, Culture and Curriculum 32–317 :(3) 30. doi:07908318.2017.1326496/10.1080.

25. Al-Jarf, Reima. "Impact of Social Media on Arabic Language Deterioration." Eurasian Arabic Studies 15 (September :(2021 ,30 34–16.

languages for education. According to the study, hybrid phrases are preferred by both male and female students, especially those in the 18–20 age range, who see them as a hip way to communicate. The results also demonstrated that these phrases are frequently used in casual contexts among classmates and even professors, and that their use is unaffected by a student's major or educational background.[26] This is not unique to Jordan; in Lebanon, instructors at American-style universities frequently use code-switching in the classroom to improve student learning.[27]

Studies focusing on Arab youth reveal that they primarily utilise mixed and local Arabic online, frequently mixing Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) with other languages, especially English. This preference stems from a need to draw attention, communicate ideas more clearly, and stick to established communication patterns. Very few people use classical Arabic; prefer their regional dialects or Arabizi, an Arabic-English mashup that they believe is better for communicating intimate ideas and feelings. Young people who attend private schools are more likely to utilise Arabizi or other foreign languages, which is indicative of a new type of diglossia. According to the study, there is a generational change occurring as young people embrace new communication methods that are more impacted by their educational background than by demographic characteristics like gender or country of origin. They acknowledge that using mixed languages and Arabizi could harm the Arabic language, but they do not consider these things to be threats to their identity.[28] In his study Al-Jarf claims that shifts in the way people communicate online, like the removal of vowels, the reduction of definite articles, and the replacement of long vowels with short ones, are signs of language erosion.[29] Although code-mixing is frequently seen as a symbol of modernity, education, and social class, it also raises questions about how it may affect pupils' language acquisition and usage. Al-Jarf pointed out that the problem has spread to television programs, ads, and literature, raising questions about the Arabic language's future. The Arabic language is distorted by this technique, called "code-mixing," particularly when foreign words are changed to reflect Arabic syntax.

It is especially worrying in the media, where the predominance of English vocabulary can make it difficult for non-native speakers of the language to understand, especially in specialised sectors like real estate or automotives. Teenagers who are exposed to code-mixing may acquire a distorted version of Arabic, which could hinder their linguistic development by preventing them from learning necessary vocabulary.[30]

The present literature review concludes by highlighting the role that globalisation has in the attrition of languages, especially Arabic. An important threat to the preservation of Arabic is the economic opportunities that have led to the spread of English, while linguistic identity is further undermined by sociological changes such as marriage and migration. Although case studies show how some factors lead to linguistic marginalisation and link between one or two factors, they did not completely address how these factors are interrelated and reinforce one another collectively.

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26. Jaran, Samia, and Fawwaz Al-Abed Al-Haq. "The Use of Hybrid Terms and Expressions in Colloquial Arabic Among Jordanian College Students: A Sociolinguistic Study." English Language Teaching 8, no. 12 (November 86 :(2015 ,16. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n12p86.

27. Bahous, Rima N., Mona Baroud Nabhani, and Nahla Nola Bacha. 2013. "Code-Switching in Higher Education in a Multilingual Environment: A Lebanese Exploratory Study." Language Awareness 68–353 :(4) 23. doi:09658416.2013.828735/10.1080.

28. Darwish, Elsayed B. "Factors Influencing the Uses, Diglossia, and Attrition of Arabic Language in Social Media: Arab Youth Case." Journal of Education and Social Sciences 7, no. 1 (June 2017).

29. Al-Jarf, Reima. "Translation Students' Difficulties with English Neologisms." Annals of Dunarea de Jos University of Galati 24 (September 37–431 :(2010.

30. Al-Jarf, Reima. "Arab Preference for Foreign Words Over Arabic Equivalents." Ala-Too Academic Studies, March 62–158 ,2016.

The Anatomy of Arabic Language Attrition

Political stability has been introduced as a crucial element to the conceptual framework for understanding language attrition, given its special significance in Arab nations along with the other factors that were examined in the literature review. Language dynamics and migratory patterns have been profoundly impacted by the political unrest, violence, and forced migration that have plagued the Arab World. Globalisation and political stability are intimately related where in unstable countries, migration, and displacement cause disruptions to language continuity because displaced populations are under pressure to adapt to new linguistic contexts.

Globalisation

Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness of the World's economies, cultures, and populations, driven by the cross-border exchange of goods and services, technology, and the movement of investments, people, and information.[31]

Globalisation can be operationally defined through various interconnected variables that reflect its impact on different aspects of society.

Economic Development

Economic development is the progress in an economy, typically measured by increases in income, employment, industrialisation, and improvements in the standard of living.

Globalisation has significantly contributed to economic development. These countries have leveraged global trade, foreign investments, and an influx of skilled expatriates to diversify their economies beyond oil dependence, leading to rapid economic growth and urbanisation. In the Arab World the GCC countries have managed to benefit the most from globalisation to drive economic development for their populations.

Education

The language in which early education is delivered plays a crucial role in shaping linguistic preferences and cultural identity. Analysis will focus on measuring the impact of education in private and international schools in which a foreign language is the medium of instruction. Impact on identity, perception on utility of the Arabic language, and socioeconomic dimensions will be measured.

Marriage to Another Nationality

Marriage to a person of a different nationality is a social phenomenon that has become more prevalent with globalisation, leading to increased cultural exchange and diversity. As people from different countries interact more frequently through work, travel, and migration, marriages between individuals of different nationalities have become more common. This contributes to the blending of cultures and languages, often resulting in multilingual households where children may grow up speaking a language different from their parents' native tongue. Accordingly, measurements will focus on the percentage of marriages to different nationalities and its relation to the decline in the use of Arabic language.

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31. "What Is Globalization?" 2024. PIIE. August 16, 2024. https://www.piie.com/microsites/globalization/what-is-globalization.

Migration

The presence of expatriates in a community or workplace can influence the local language usage, often leading to the adoption of English as a common language of communication, especially in multinational corporations and global cities. Moreover, when individuals migrate to foreign countries, they are often required to learn and use a new language, leading to a gradual shift away from their first language. Over time, this can result in language attrition, particularly among the second generation born and raised in the host country.

In the GCC countries, large expatriate communities have led to the widespread use of English in both professional and social settings, sometimes at the expense of Arabic. Similarly, children of Arab emigrants in Western countries often lose proficiency in Arabic as they grow up speaking the dominant language of their new environment.

Urbanisation

The geographic location, whether rural or urban, also affects language use. Urban areas tend to have a higher prevalence of foreign languages usage compared to rural areas, where traditional language practices may be more preserved. In urban centres like Dubai and Riyadh, wealthier residents and expatriates often communicate in English, while in rural areas of the same countries, Arabic remains more dominant.

Language of Communication

The language used in everyday interactions varies depending on the social setting, with English often preferred in professional and formal contexts, especially in multinational companies and urban environments. The language of media, including television, radio, and online news outlets, reflects societal language preferences. In many Arab countries, English-language media outlets might be on the rise, catering to a global audience and influencing local language practices.

Additionally, social media platforms often reveal the language preferences of different age groups and social classes. Younger users, particularly those who are educated in a foreign language or live in urban areas, tend to use foreign languages more frequently on social media, while Arabic remains prevalent among older users or those in more rural regions.

Political Stability

When a government operates consistently and predictably, there is no major civil unrest, violent conflict, or sudden changes in the leadership or the structure of government. This is known as political stability. Generally, it entails safe institutions, respect for the rule of law, and efficient governance.[32] Political stability affects language attrition in a variety of ways and is crucial to language preservation. On the other hand, as is the case in most Arab countries, political instability frequently causes language attrition, particularly in areas impacted by displacement, conflict, or regime changes. Because political unrest can disrupt educational systems, uproot communities, and foster conditions where cultural and linguistic traditions are subordinated to urgent survival requirements, it can accelerate language attrition

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32. Singha, Komol, and M Amarjeet Singh. "Political Stability and Its Effect on Economy: Some Lessons from Sikkim Himalaya." Journal of social and economic development, 2022. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9427090/.

Contextualising the Factors of Language Attrition in Arab Countries

The factors that have a profound and interconnected influence on the linguistic dynamics within Arabic-speaking communities- globalisation, education, economic development, marriage, migration, political stability, language of communication, and urbanisation — have been chosen as the factors contributing to the attrition of the Arabic language. Globalisation contributes to the dominance of global languages like English and French, which marginalises Arabic, especially in the fields of technology and business. Regional dialects may become less important in society since economic progress frequently places a higher priority on fluency in these global languages. Arabic language attrition is exacerbated by education institutions' growing preference for global languages over Arabic.

Furthermore, when people from different linguistic origins marry, it encourages the adoption of the prevailing language in the household, impacting the transmission of Arabic to subsequent generations. People assimilate into new contexts because of migration and urbanisation, and social and economic integration frequently requires the use of a national or international language. Cultural identity preservation is influenced by political stability, or the lack of it; in unstable areas, groups may give up speaking their language in favor of a more frequently spoken language to feel safer and have more opportunities. Finally, the language used in social interactions and the media shapes language choices; global languages are becoming more and more important in daily life. As such, each factor will be analysed in the subsequent sections.
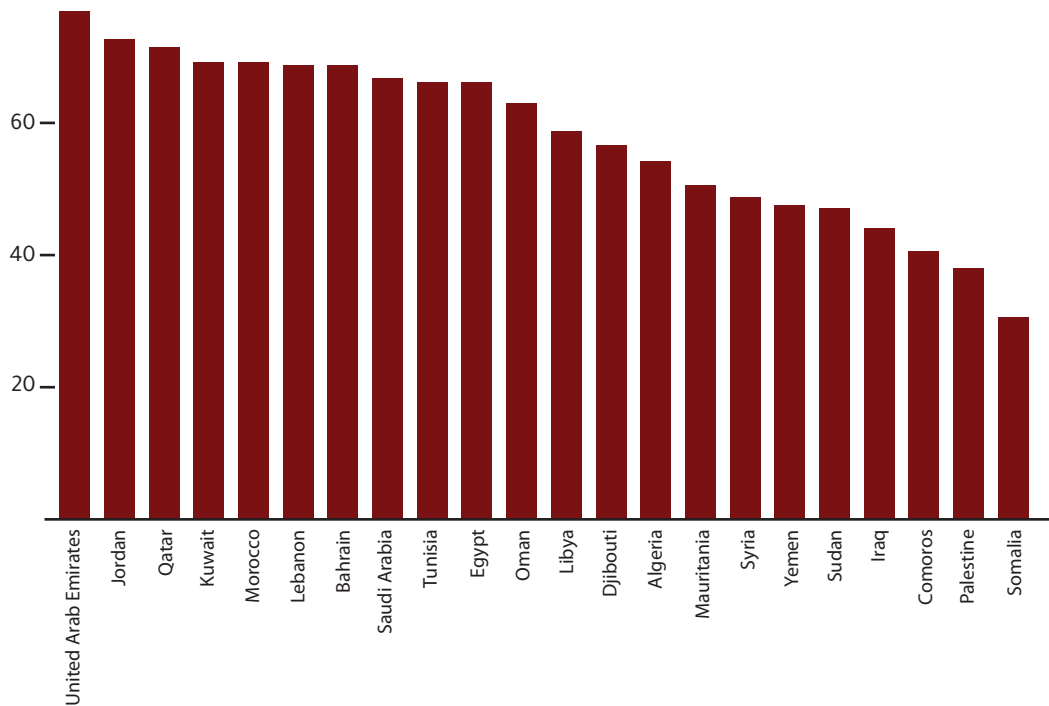
Globalisation

As mentioned earlier, globalisation is one of the main factors that contribute to language attrition. A decrease in the use of smaller or less dominant languages may result from pressure to adopt the dominant language in order to increase their opportunities as cultural exchange and economic interdependence grow. Dominant languages, like English, frequently become more prevalent in international communication, business, and education, while Arabic becomes less relevant in professional and academic settings as more Arab countries integrate into the global economy and dominant languages become necessary for education, employment, and international communication. We evaluated the degree of globalisation in Arab nations using the KOF Globalisation Index by the Swiss Economic Institute at the University of Zurich. This index is commonly used to measure how integrated a nation is with the global economy, and provides a thorough analysis based on three primary dimensions: political, economic, and social.

According to our research, the GCC countries are the most globalised among Arab countries, with the UAE coming in first place. The UAE's high ranking comes as a result of its openness to foreign trade, sizable expatriate community, and strong political participation with international organisations. Jordan comes in second position thanks to its strategic location, investments in human capital and education, and economic openness that have improved its integration with the rest of the World.

Due to its economic globalisation, which is fuelled by natural gas exports and foreign investments, Qatar also ranks high in the third. Among Arab countries, Kuwait is ranked fourth, and Saudi Arabia is ranked somewhat highly. Egypt's size and position in regional diplomacy allow it to remain one of the more globally integrated countries in North Africa, even though it ranks lower than the GCC countries. However, because of their economic challenges, unstable political environments, and low levels of participation in social and political globalisation, countries like Algeria, Yemen, Sudan, and Iraq score lower on the KOF Globalisation Index.

The KOF Globalisation Index

As of 2021

Source: KOF Swiss Economic Institute

An additional economic metric for measuring globalisation is the export-to-GDP ratio. With countries with high export-to-GDP ratios typically having more diverse economies, and a high export ratio emphasises a country's openness and reliance on the larger global market, indicating its level of globalisation.

Despite being the top-ranked country on the list, Djibouti's high export-to-GDP ratio can be attributed to its unique location at the Red Sea's southern entrance, which serves as a bridge connecting the Middle East and Africa. Services account for a large portion of the nation's exports compared to products. Although Djibouti's economy is heavily dependent on this service-based export model, it nevertheless has a somewhat undiversified economy and has not yet undergone a thorough or varied integration into the global economy.[33]

Furthermore, increased levels of foreign direct investment, increased participation in international markets across a range of industries, and deeper integration into global supply chains are all common benefits of globalisation. After a thorough analysis of the export-to-GDP ratio in Arab countries, it is revealed that exports account for a sizable share of GDP. Again, GCC countries are the most globalised according to this indicator, with exception to Djibouti, which suggests that globalisation has a significant impact on these nations. Due to exposure to a wide range of languages and cultures, this high level of globalisation may cause language attrition, possibly causing native language use to decline in favour of more frequently used languages like English.

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33. "Djibouti." World Bank. Accessed August 2024 ,15. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/djibouti.

Exports of Goods and Services as a % of GDP

As a measure of globalisation
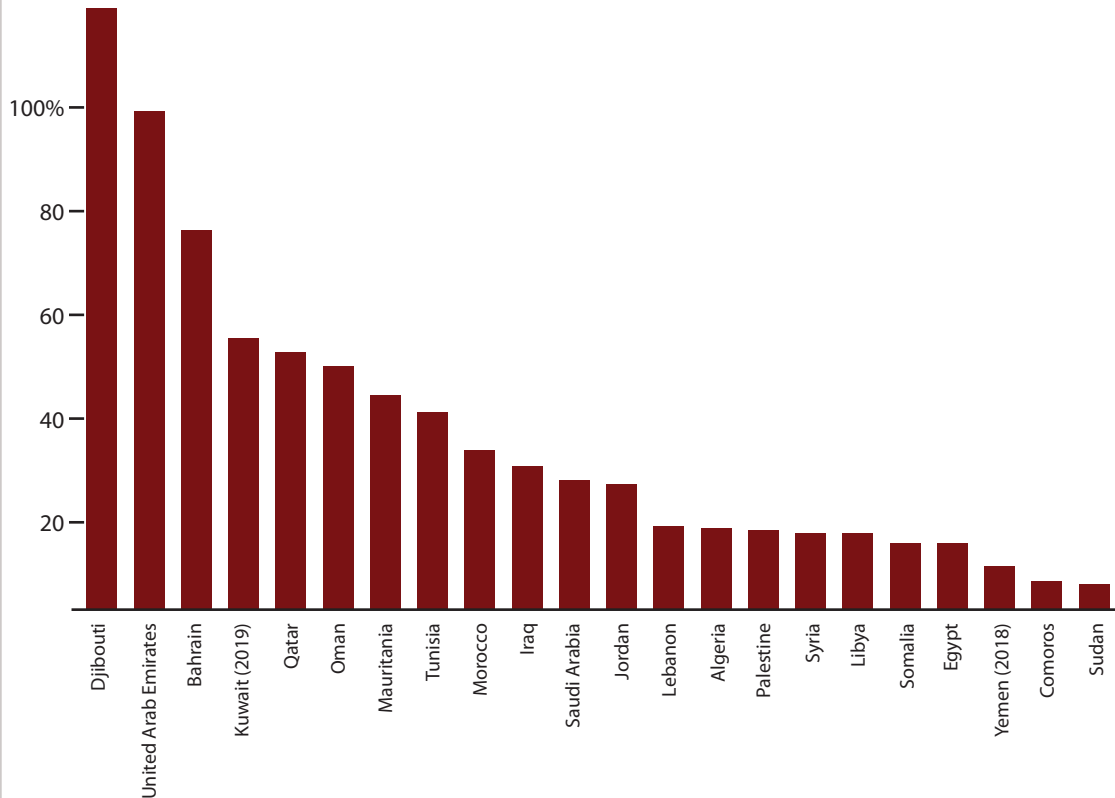
Source: The World Bank

Political stability and globalisation are intimately related and have a variety of mutually reinforcing effects. International trade, investment, and communication are encouraged by globalisation, and these activities can boost national prosperity, generate jobs, and accelerate economic progress. Political stability may increase as a result of this economic growth since governments will be able to uphold social order and offer better services.

Political Stability

While having its independent field of study known as linguistics, language cannot be separated from the study of political science. Language is inherently political; some might even argue that language is an exclusionary means used in distinguishing allies from enemies. Similarly, others locate the origin of a language in the need to form coalitions of a critical size, representing the initial form of social and political organisations. Political stability is thus an important factor to be considered when measuring language attrition. Internal political stability, wars and other forms of conflict, and forced migration and displacement create interconnected causes and consequences of political instability and language attrition[34]. Political stability is then a variable which intersects with many of the other variables such as globalisation, migration, and education.

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34. Libraries, UNT. "Language Endangerment and Political Instability." UNT Digital Library, 2024. https://digital.library.unt.edu/explore/collections/LEPI/.

Political stability is related to power, power is also related to globalisation. People tend to use the language that will offer them the perceived greatest amount of opportunity, in fact, this ties into power structures as well. It is connected with power structure, and that is when globalisation is thought of as an important factor in determining whether or not a language flourishes. Globalisation more or less reduces diversity and leads to more homogenisation. And it also suggests more or less speaking the same kind of language everywhere, the same way it suggests using almost the same products everywhere, or producing things in the same way. There is an invisible drive that dictates everything everywhere, and people are being manipulated by that invisible but powerful drive. Migration is linked to political and economic stability. People tend to emigrate from less stable countries heading to more stable and affluent ones. Education as well has a direct relationship with political stability and its impact on languages and their usage. Language preferences are significantly shaped by the language of education. Native language promotion and preservation are common in politically stable countries with implementable education systems. On the other hand, unstable environments may cause educational systems to collapse and foreign languages to take centre stage, marginalising national languages.

According to the World Bank Indicator Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism which measures perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically motivated violence, including terrorism, Arab countries are among the least stable in the World[35].
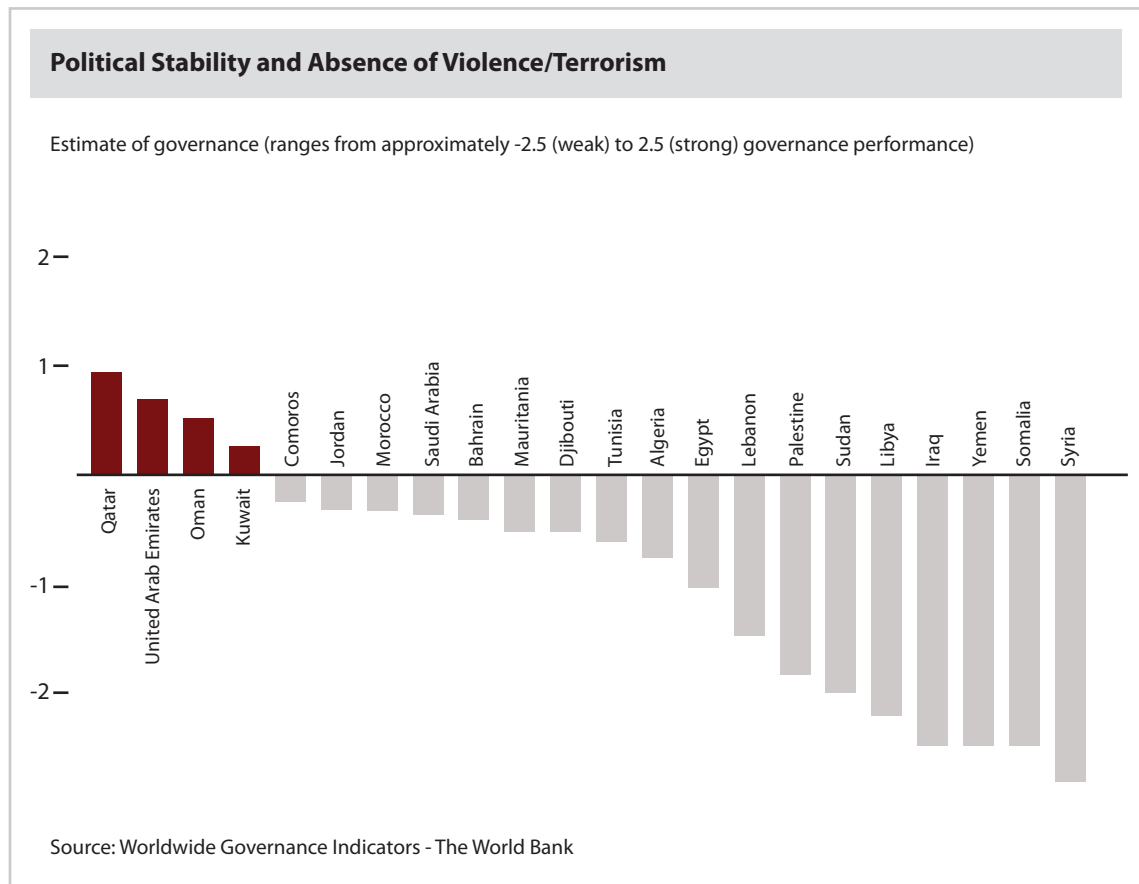
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism

Estimate of governance (ranges from approximately -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong) governance performance)

Source: Worldwide Governance Indicators - The World Bank

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35. Bank, World. "Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism." Databank, 2022. https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/worldwide-governance-indicators/series/PV.EST.

This political instability manifested in the form of wars, conflicts, and civil wars, leads to the overall diminishing of regional power and prestige which lead to Arabic language attrition.

Economic growth and political stability are closely related. The former generates favorable conditions for the latter by enforcing laws, defending property rights, and boosting investor confidence, all of which draw in capital.

Economic Development

Language attrition may be impacted by economic development, notably as indicated by GDP growth, particularly in Arab countries. GDP growth is an important measure of economic development, an increasing GDP is a sign of advancements in industries such as financial services, tourism, and infrastructure, all of which raise living standards and create jobs. Foreign investment is drawn due to this growth, which boosts global competitiveness, regional economic integration, and modernisation. The demand for global market integration resulting from economies growing and modernising frequently drives a growth in the usage of prominent international languages like English or French in business, education, and technology. Because speaking an international language is linked to professional opportunities and economic mobility, it may diminish the use of local language. When societal values shift due to economic development, people may become less appreciative of their local languages, which will lead to language attrition as economic objectives take priority over cultural and linguistic legacy.

Several Arab countries have seen significant GDP growth over the last 50 years primarily as a result of the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the GCC, a mix of strategic economic reforms, and recently, diversification initiatives. According to the World Bank Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Economic Update, GDP growth is predicted to be high in 2024, particularly in the GCC countries.[36] Hence, global languages like English are frequently necessary and may replace Arabic as a means of continued economic growth. This can cause a slow attrition of Arabic speakers as Arabic is viewed as less important for social and economic progress. Regions that experience high economic growth tend to see a rapid increase in their urban populations, and the process of urbanisation often goes hand in hand with economic development.
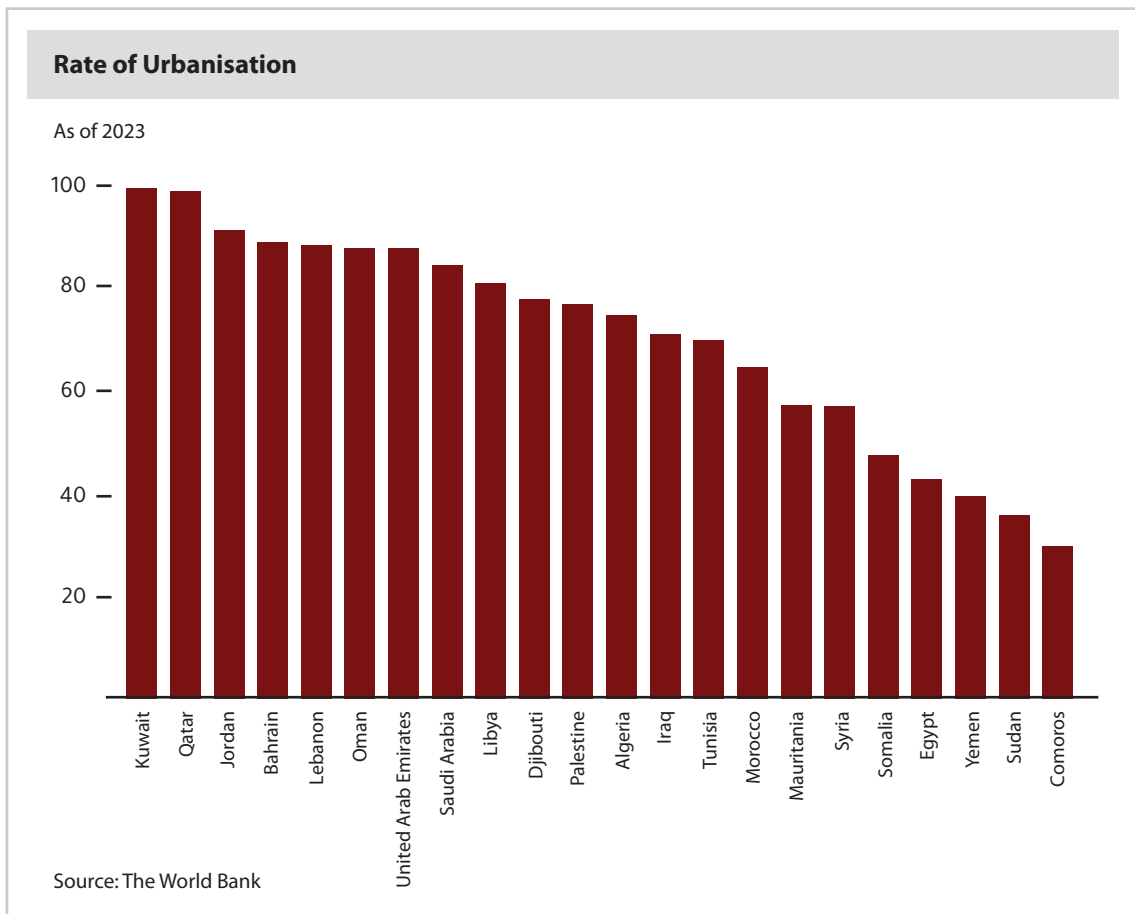
Urbanisation

Language attrition is significantly influenced by urbanisation, especially when there is dialectal diversity within a language. People who move from rural to urban areas frequently come across a dialect that is dominant and seen as more prestigious and is preferred in urban settings for communication, education, and social mobility. Regional dialects tend to disappear while this urban dialect, or standardised form of the language, spreads more widely. The demands of modern urban life, such as the need to assimilate into wider, more diverse societies, frequently forces speakers to give up their local dialects in favour of the urban norm in order to be accepted in both social and professional contexts.[37] For instance, when people from various linguistic backgrounds move closer together due to urbanisation, regional dialects are progressively being displaced by a prevalent urban dialect in several Arab countries. The collapse of regional variants is further

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36. "Middle East and North Africa Economic Update - April 2024." World Bank. Accessed June 15, 2024. https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena/publication/middle-east-and-north-africa-economic-update.

37. Oloumi, Ebrahim, and Ali Sabbaghian. "Globalization, Intensification of Urbanization and Decline of Linguistic Diversity." The Political Quarterly 51 (November 2021, 24): 763–88. https://doi.org/10.22059/JPQ.2021.292458.1007517. Tören, Hatice. "Urbanization, Standard language, Dialect". Türk Dili Ve Edebiyatı Dergisi 50, no. 50 (March 2015): 113-20.

accelerated by the tendency of the younger generation, in particular, to adopt a metropolitan dialect which is perceived as more prestigious than regional dialects.

Rate of Urbanisation

As of 2023

Source: The World Bank

Accordingly, the majority of GCC countries have the highest levels of urbanisation amongst Arab countries. Kuwait is at the top with a 100% urbanisation rate, closely followed by Qatar at 99%. 90% of Bahrain's population lives in urban areas, with Lebanon at 89%, the UAE at 88%, and Saudi Arabia at 85%. As a result of their emphasis on modernising their cities, the development of their infrastructure, and quick economic growth, the GCC countries have high rates of urbanisation. Over 80% of countries, including the UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, have urbanisation rates that are greater than average. This is a result of people moving from rural to urban areas in quest of better economic opportunities, improved living standards, and access to modern amenities. Hence, the process of urbanisation creates conditions in which foreign languages frequently predominate. Additionally, Arabic, particularly in its formal form, is increasingly marginalised, which exacerbates language attrition.

The process of urbanisation has also been accelerated by the migration of foreign workers, drawn by job openings in sectors like services, construction, and oil.

Migration

Migration is considered an independent variable contributing to the process of languages' attrition in general. Arab countries experience both immigration and emigration and it can be argued that both cases have their impact on language.

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To begin with, migrants arriving to a given region can impact its culture in general and language in specific. In 2020, 41.4 million international migrants and refugees were hosted by the 22 Arab countries.[38] While it is not argued that immigrants living in Arab states are legally assimilated, legal frameworks organising their presence in these countries are usually absent, it is the case that they are fully integrated within the job market especially in countries with higher levels of economic development such as GCC countries. In the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar, migrants made up approximately 88%, 73%, and 77% of the national populations, respectively. A considerable portion of migrants in 12 Arab countries[39] are migrant workers whose number in 2019 amounted to 24.1 million persons, representing 14% of all migrant workers worldwide. The integration of migrants in the job market necessitates dealings with English or at least, a simplified form of Arabic. This simplified form of Arabic, which is usually a mix between Colloquial Arabic and MSA, represents the language attrition caused by the necessity of communication with migrant workers who don't usually have the capacity to communicate in Arabic. In GCC countries, most migrants — many of whom come from countries such as India, Egypt, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Kenya — work in sectors such as construction, hospitality, security, domestic work, and retail.[40] Nationalities and sectors are then detrimental factors to the Arabic language, as many of the expats come from non-Arabic speaking countries and work in sectors such as hospitality and domestic work in which they have to engage with the wider population.

Emigration is the second dimension as many people in the Arab World, especially in lower income countries, tend to migrate for several reasons such as for work or for seeking political refuge. Data on net migration, showing both immigrants and emigrants, reveals that the majority of Arab migrants are either in, or want to migrate to non-Arabic speaking countries.

Net Migration in the Arab World

Source: United Nations Populations Division
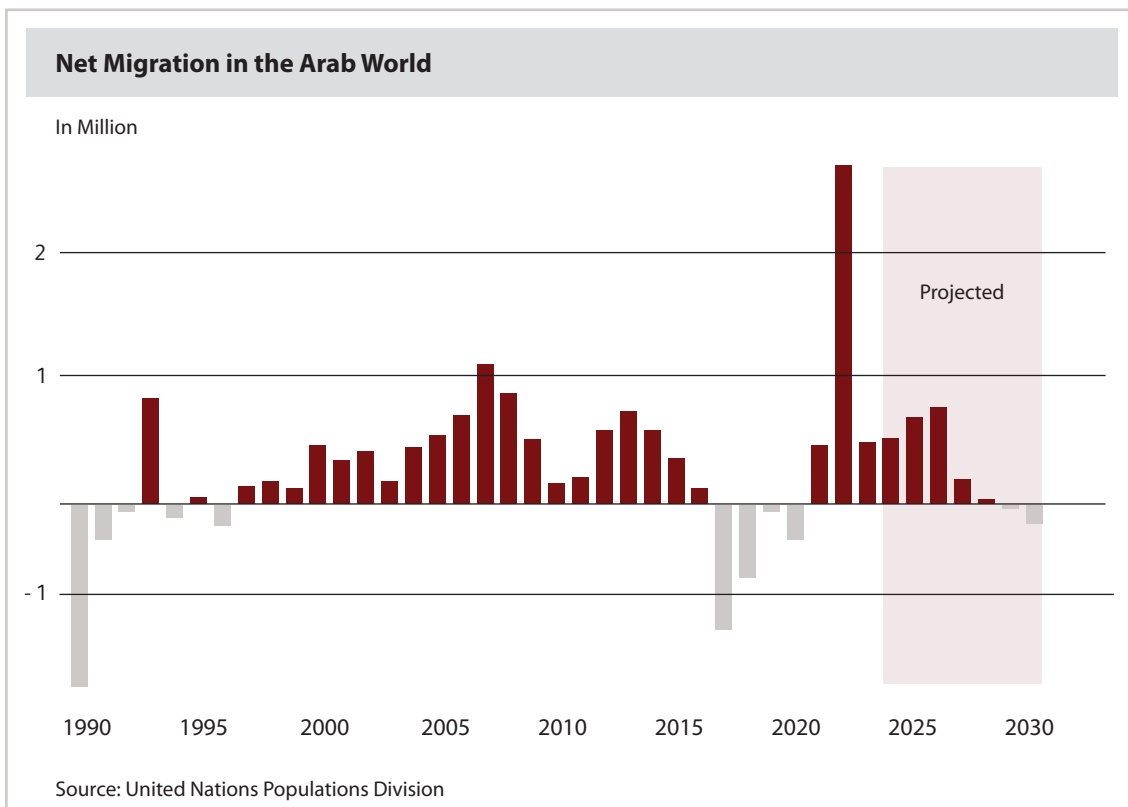
38. "Labour Migration." 2024. International Labour Organization. August 2024, 8. https://www.ilo.org/regions-and-countries/ilo-arab-states/areas-work/labour-migration.
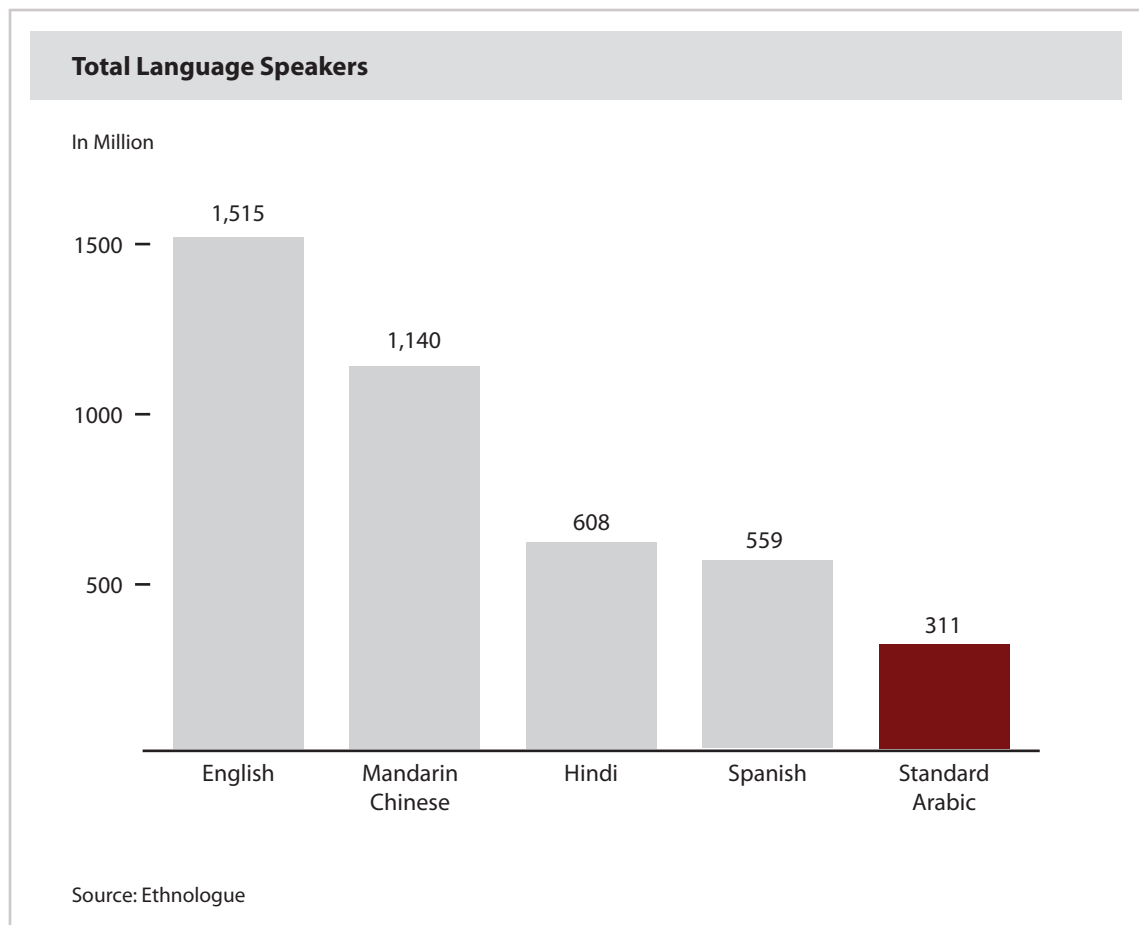
39. Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

40. World Migration Report 2024. International Organization for Migration, 2024.
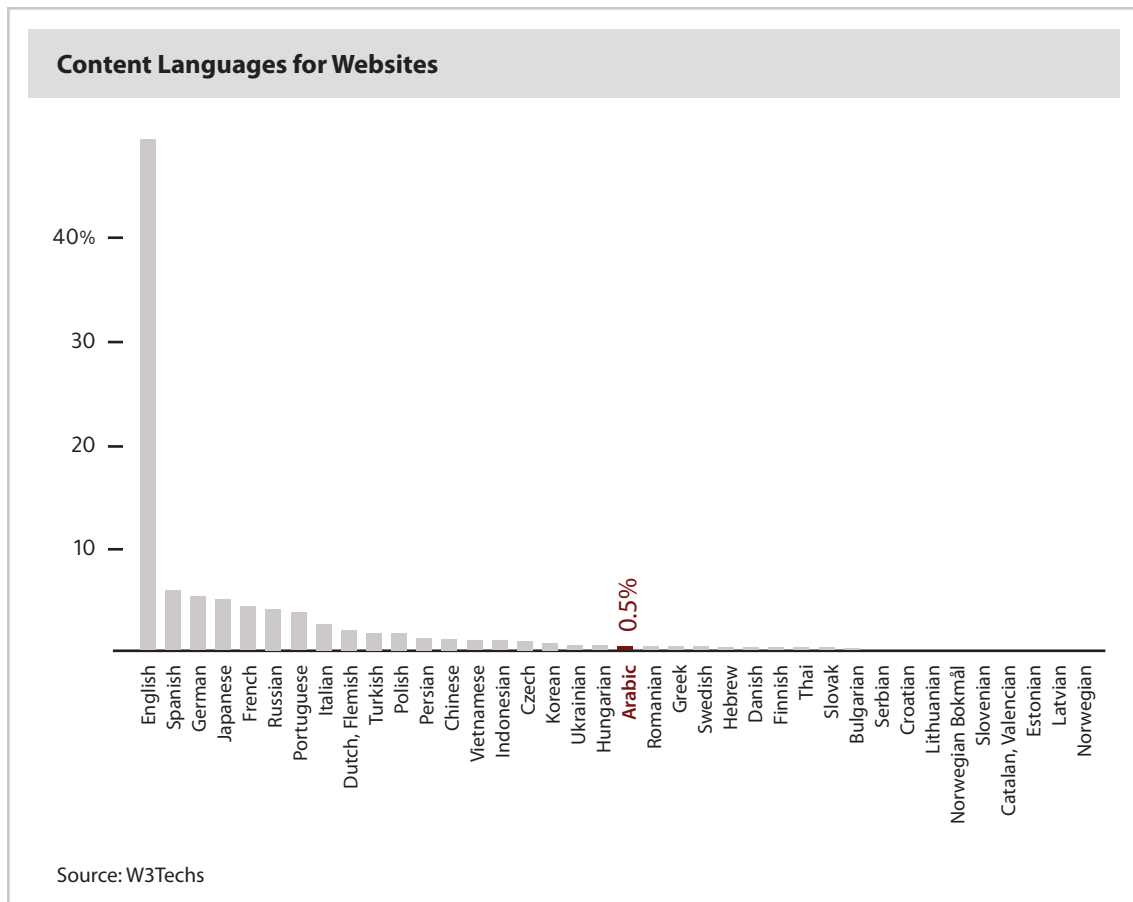
While GCC and MENA[41] regions are ranked among the top four destinations for current and potential Arab emigrants, Europe, North America, and other regions constitute a larger portion. For instance, the majority of emigrants from North African countries prefer Europe as their destination while countries such as Egypt and Sudan usually opt for choosing GCC countries. Still, even among countries in which GCC remains the top destination, considerable portions of the population still prefer Europe and North America. While adults' migration does not mean the loss of language, danger lies with second generations who would grow up in a foreign country ending up with a mixed and distorted identity in which Arabic language would not be their native language while they still maintain their parents' Arab nationalities. As a result, migration represents a strong catalyst for communicating in a new, different language.

Communication

While English remains the most spoken language globally, it is also the most represented language when considering the content languages of websites across the broader web — specifically, those with substantial content or functionality. Mandarin Chinese, despite being the second most spoken language worldwide, is underrepresented in comparison. Though Mandarin is spoken by over a billion people, it accounts for only 1.2% of website content, whereas Spanish, with fewer speakers, holds a 5.9% share of content languages.

Total Language Speakers

In Million

Language	Speakers (Million)
English	1,515
Mandarin Chinese	1,140
Hindi	608
Spanish	559
Standard Arabic	311

Source: Ethnologue

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41. GCC countries are excluded from the MENA category.

Content Languages for Websites
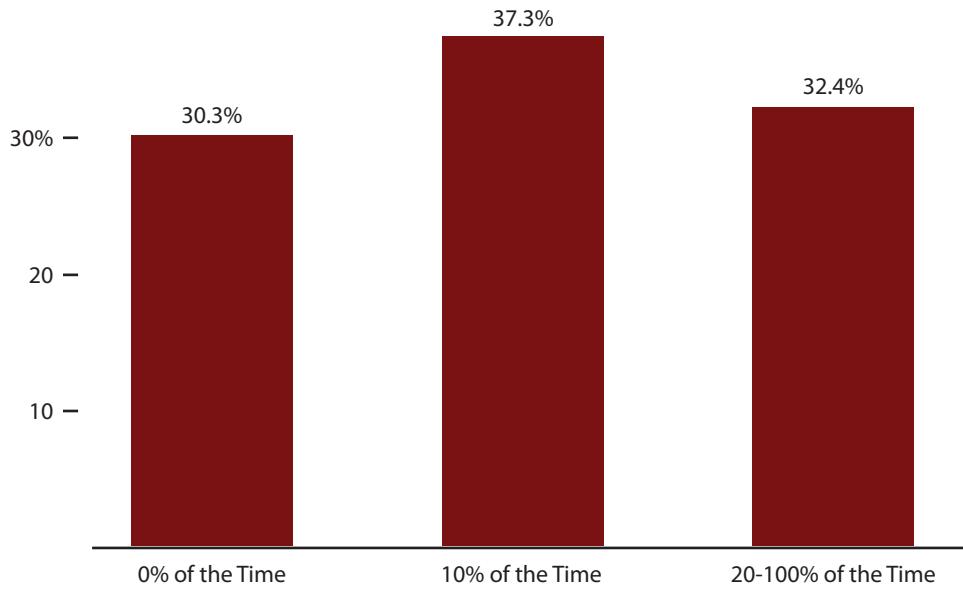

Source: W3Techs

Although there has been a gradual introduction of support for non-Latin scripts, the early dominance of Latin scripts gave those languages a lasting advantage and led to two key challenges for Arabic speakers engaging with the internet. First, they had to become familiar with the Latin script, not only to access information but also to communicate with fellow Arabic speakers who were facing the same issue. Second, due to the lack of support for Arabic script in many early digital platforms, Arabic speakers had to find a way to communicate in their native language without being able to write it in its original form. This led to the adaptation of Arabic to fit the limitations of digital communication, resulting in the romanisation of the language, known as Arabizi, Franco-Arabic, or simply Franco. Arabizi is a blend of Arabic words written using Roman letters, often supplemented with numbers to represent sounds that do not exist in English and which represents the spoken Arabic dialect wherever it is used. For example, Arabizi in Egypt would be a transliteration of Colloquial Egyptian Arabic while Arabizi in Jordan would represent Colloquial Jordanian Arabic used in Jordan.

The impact of these necessities was illustrated in a 2009 survey of 502 students from the American University in Cairo (AUC) which found that most respondents not only did not read Arabic characters online but also did not write in the Arabic script, opting instead to use Arabizi for digital communication.[42]

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42. Abdulla, Rasha A. The Internet in the Arab World, (New York, United States of America: Peter Lang Verlag, 2007) accessed Sep 2024, 22, https://www.peterlang.com/document/1104007

I Read Arabic Letters or Characters on the Internet

37.3%

32.4%

30.3%

30% —

20 —

10 —

0% of the Time   10% of the Time   20-100% of the Time

Source: The Internet in the Arab World

I Use Arabic Letters or Characters to Write on the Internet

77.1%

60% —

40 —

20 —

13.9%

90%

0% of the Time   10% of the Time   20-100% of the Time
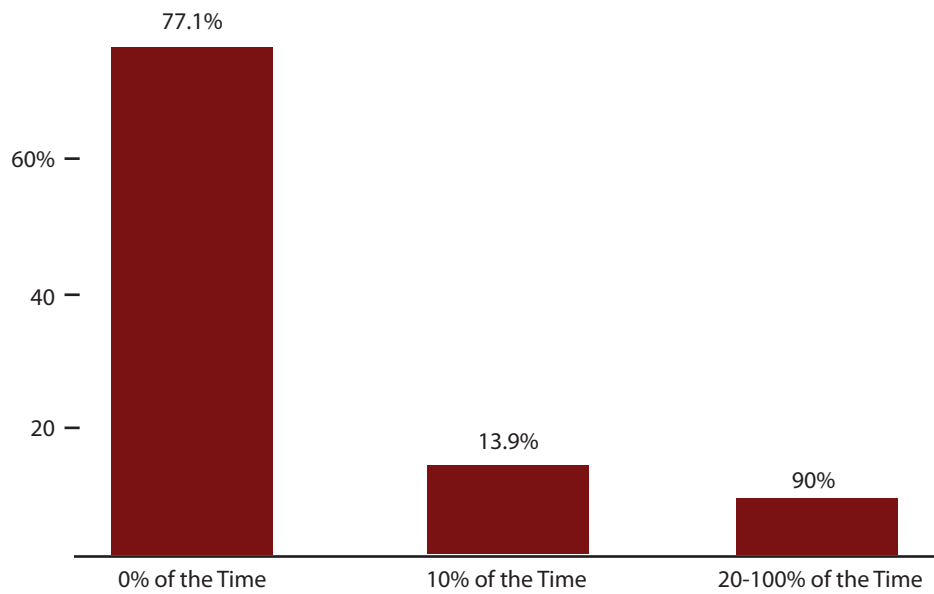
Source: The Internet in the Arab World

Additionally, the survey sheds light on the socio-economic barriers to internet access at the time. The respondents, all students at the AUC, a private higher education institution where English is the primary language of instruction, were mostly using dial-up connections. Internet access was more readily available to those with higher incomes, who could afford both the connection, a computer, and most likely attended private institutions of education. As a result, access to the internet was largely confined to those who could afford it either at home or through their educational institutions.[43]

Given their access to the internet and their enrolment in AUC, many of these students likely came from socioeconomically privileged families and before their enrolment attended private schools where instruction was primarily in a foreign language. Their proficiency in another language, combined with the limited availability of Arabic content and the lack of digital support for the Arabic script, further reinforced their use of a language other than Arabic to access information, while Arabizi became entrenched as the preferred method of communication online when choosing to communicate in Arabic.

However, as the internet has become more widely available and diverse, the inflow of Arabic speakers from differing socio-economic levels, who are not familiar with English or the Latin script has provided more diversity in the usage of Arabic and provided insight into the differing usage of Arabic across socio-economic levels in the Arab World.

In a 2024 survey of 107 Egyptians aged 18-23 found that Arabizi is still widely used in Egyptian youth across all educational backgrounds. In particular, international and national school graduates were more likely to use Arabizi and English when communicating online compared to government school graduates who preferred Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. There was also a significant divide between government and international school graduates on the perceived benefits and risks of the use of Arabizi with government school graduates feeling that it threatens the Arabic language and Arab identity, while international school graduates believed it to be more efficient and modern.[44]

Additionally, there was a generational divide among users with younger generations using Arabizi with their peers and reverting to Arabic when communicating with older generations. With younger generations preferring to use Arabizi for its ease of use and convenience. These findings were not unique to Egypt but mirrored similar results from research conducted in Kuwait[45] and Saudi Arabia.[46]

Although developed as a necessity for Arabic speakers to be able to communicate when there were no other options, it would have been expected that with the ability to communicate in Arabic now widely available that the use of Arabizi would decrease or halt altogether, and yet it has persisted across the Arab World and especially among younger generations who have grown accustomed to it.

Before Arabizi developed, the Arabic language was already characterised by diglossia, with MSA used in official contexts and Colloquial Arabic spoken by the general public. Arabizi emerged as a solution to the lack of digital support for Arabic and was widely adopted by Arabic speakers, reflecting its adaptability.

43. Ibid.

44. Wafa, Muhammad. n.d. "Arabizi (Franco) in Egypt: A Study of Features, Reasons, Attitudes, and Educational Influence Among Youth in Online Communication." AUC Knowledge Fountain. https://fount.aucegypt.edu/etds/2395/

45. Akbar, Rahima, Hanan Taqi, and Taiba Sadiq. 2020. "Arabizi in Kuwait: An Emerging Case of Digraphia." Language & Communication 74 (August): 16–204. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2020.07.004.

46. Alsulami, Ashwaq. 2019. "A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Use of Arabizi in Social Media Among Saudi Arabians." International Journal of English Linguistics 257: (6) 9. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n6p257.

This development adds a new layer of complexity to the language, introducing not just diglossia but also digraphia; the existence of different writing systems for the same language.

Although the impact of the usage of Arabizi is yet unclear, it is evident that the preference of Arabic speakers to use either Arabizi or English outright is determined to a large degree by their socio-economic status and in their ability to afford private or international education where the language of instruction favours foreign languages rather than Arabic.

Education

Quality of education in Arab countries could be considered one of the main threats to the Arabic language. Even though the majority of public schools and universities across the 22 Arab countries offer education in the Arabic language, private and international education is expanding though quality of education remains a threat to Arab identity of which Arabic language is a component.[47] A major socially based issue remains problematic for most Arab societies, which is the disparity in access to quality education between learners from low and affluent socioeconomic backgrounds. Bilingual language education remains property of the socioeconomically able families who can send their children to private and missionary schools while families with low socioeconomic backgrounds can only send their children to public schools.[48]

Examining the quality of education in the Arab World using a list of indicators including test results of the Program for International Student Assessment, Trends in International Mathematics and Science and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, has shown that common characteristics of education in Arab countries are generally negative.[49] [50] Education in the Arab World suffers from the absence of Arab universities from lists of World's top tier universities, lagging literacy rates, and poor preparation for labour markets' requirements. While it is an already acknowledged problem, little is being done. For instance, the Egyptian Constitution mandates that at least 4% of GDP be spent on education, this threshold has not been met yet.[51]

Citing other indicators such as the 2023 Global Innovative Index which measures technological, scientific and cultural innovation, Arab countries have scored below predicted levels when compared to their GDP.[52] In a 2019 study by the World Bank, education in MENA countries was found to be lacking features essential for the building of human capital. Counterproductive measures used in education such as memorising rules of mathematics and natural sciences were found to be twice the international average, autonomy of teachers is found to be very low, and average time devoted to religious education is also found to be more than twice the international average. Indicators revealed that in Morocco, for instance, only over a third of four-grade students have minimum reading literacy levels. While low quality education makes it difficult to transform

47. Mustafawi, Eiman, Kassim Shaaba--n, Tariq Khwaileh, and Katsiaryna Ata. "Perceptions and Attitudes of Qatar University Students Regarding the Utility of Arabic and English in Communication and Education in Qatar." Language Policy 21, no. 1 (July 2, 2021): 119–75. https://doi.org/10.1007/s4-09590-021-10993.

48. Alaoui, Hicham, and Robert Springborg. The Political Economy of Education in the Arab World. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021.

49. Guhn, Martin, Anne Gadermann, and Amery D. Wu. "Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)." Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research, 39–6737, 2014. https://doi.org/3063_5-0753-007-94-978/10.1007.

50. "Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)." 2023. UNESCO. March 24, 2023. https://www.unesco.org/en/basic-sciences-engineering/stem.

51. Alaoui, Hicham, and Robert Springborg. The Political Economy of Education in the Arab World. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021.

52. World Intellectual Property Organization. Global Innovation Index 2023: Innovation in the Face of Uncertainty. Edited by Soumitra Dutta, Bruno Lanvin, Lorena Rivera León, and Sacha Wunsch-Vincent. World Intellectual Property Organization, 2023.

knowledge, much the same can be said about difficulties of implanting national identity.[53] Additionally, low quality of public education in Arab countries has led a considerable portion of the population to resort to private education in which the main medium of instruction is either English or French which in turn has an impact on the overall Arab identity. Relationships between learners and the target language determines the construction of their social identities which means that learning is the construction of identity and not just the construction of academic knowledge.[54]

Studies on the impact of private bilingual education on the identity of students have been conducted in Arab countries such as the UAE and Qatar. Indeed, three surveys were conducted in the UAE to elicit students' views on the impact of bilingual education on students' identities. Surveys were conducted in two private English medium schools in Abu Dhabi. The group of participants was composed of 140 Arab male and female students from grades 8 to 11. Another study was carried out examining Qatari university students' perceptions on the utility of Arabic and English on 861 participants, among which 53% were females and 47% males. The nationality distribution was 59.3% Qatari and 40.7% Non-Qatari.[55]

Findings in both studies support the same argument stipulating that bilingual education could have a negative impact on Arabic language in both countries. For instance, asking UAE students about which language they prefer to read and write in, English scored 85% and 90% respectively. Findings from the survey focusing on the impact of the English curriculum on Arab identity reveal that English curriculum and school regulations seem to fail to reinforce students' Arabic language usage and Arab identity in general. Similarly, findings revealed that 34% of students believe that English curriculum reinforces Western identity, 36% disagreed while 27.5% remained neutral.[56]

53. Kohstall, Florian. "University Reforms in Egypt and Morocco." Essay. In The Political Economy of Education in the Arab World, 86–67. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021.

54. Alaoui, Hicham, and Robert Springborg. The Political Economy of Education in the Arab World. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021.

55. Belhiah, Hassan, and Arua Al- hussien. "Instruction through the English Medium and Its Impact on Arab Identity." Arab World English Journal 7, no. 2 (June 57–342 :(2016 ,15. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol7no2.23.

56. Zakharia, Zeena. "Bilingual Education in the Middle East and North Africa." Bilingual and Multilingual Education, January ,1 13–1 ,2016. https://doi.org/2-21_3-02324-319-3-978/10.1007.

Students' Views on English Curriculum and Arab Identity					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The English curriculum exposes me to the Arab history and heritage.	0.0%	14.3%	41.4%	25.0%	19.3%
The English curriculum exposes me to the Arab literature.	0.0%	9.3%	22.9%	42.9%	25.0%
The lessons taught in the English curriculum expose me to the Arabic culture and values.	1.4%	10.0%	30.7%	40.0%	17.9%
The English curriculum reinforces my Arab identity.	2.1%	10.0%	31.4%	36.4%	20.0%
In school, I am encouraged to use Arabic.	7.9%	13.6%	39.3%	22.1%	17.1%
In school, I am encouraged to celebrate National, Arab, and Islamic festivities.	42.1%	40.0%	15.0%	1.4%	1.4%

Source: Belhiah & Al-Hussien (2016)

Students' Views on English Curriculum and Western Identity					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The English curriculum exposes me to the Western history and heritage.	26.4%	52.9%	13.6%	5.0%	2.1%
The English curriculum exposes me to the Western literature.	40.0%	42.9%	12.1%	3.6%	1.4%
The English curriculum exposes me to the Western culture and values.	22.1%	55.0%	17.1%	3.6%	2.1%
The English curriculum reinforces my Western identity.	13.6%	33.6%	37.9%	10.7%	4.3%
In school, I am encouraged to use English.	42.1%	36.4%	16.4%	2.9%	2.1%
In school, I am encouraged to celebrate Western festivities (90 - Halloween, Christmas, etc.)	7.1%	27.1%	32.1%	25.0%	8.6%

Source: Belhiah & Al-Hussien (2016)

In Qatar, students were asked about their perception of the utility of Arabic in education and communication. Despite the high percentage of those who responded with 'neutral', a third of respondents perceived Arabic as difficult to learn, hated Arabic classes, felt Arabic literature was boring, and studied Arabic mainly because it is a requirement. Results also showed that the more languages a student spoke the more they favoured English to Arabic. It is also worth mentioning that non-Qatari nationals favoured English to Arabic subjects, while Qatari nationals favoured Arabic subjects which means respondents are attached to their native tongue, however, they realise that the way Arabic is taught makes learning the language less enjoyable than learning English. This shows that though the role of Arabic as a medium of instruction is appreciated, respondents are not satisfied with the educational system and not the language itself.

Students' Perceptions Regarding the Utility of English and Arabic (In Education and Society)			
	Disagree	**Agree**	**Neutral**
Standard Arabic is too difficult because it is not a spoken language.	45.0%	35.0%	20.0%
I like classes of Arabic more than classes of English.	30.0%	44.4%	25.6%
I enjoy reading Arabic literature.	26.3%	52.3%	21.3%
I'm obliged to study Arabic in school as part of the curriculum	54.8%	30.4%	14.9%
I like learning English better than learning Arabic	35.3%	45.4%	19.3%
Arabic literature is boring	51.8%	28.6%	19.6%

Source: Mustafawi, Shaaban, Khawaileh & Ata (2021)

The following table also shows results claiming that English cultural identity along with the Arabic identity have strong presence in the Qatari society manifested in relevant festivals, musical concerts, sport tournaments, art exhibition, and professional conventions with 48% agreeing that English enjoys a better status in Qatari society than Arabic.

Students' Perceptions Regarding the Utility of English and Arabic (Manifestations of Sociocultural Identity)			
	Disagree	**Agree**	**Neutral**
English identity is clearly evident in some cultural aspects in Qatar.	20.0%	53.7%	26.3%
Qatari society respects and highly appreciates the Arabic language.	17.7%	62.2%	20.1%
English enjoys better status than Arabic in Qatari society	28.0%	48.0%	24.0%
Arab identity is clearly evident in some aspects of the cultural arena in Qatar	13.4%	63.3%	23.4%

Source: Mustafawi, Shaaban, Khawaileh & Ata (2021)

Marriage

Marriage between individuals of different nationalities has become more common with global interconnectedness. While this trend has been studied in many parts of the World, it remains under-researched in the Arab World. However, a 2018 study on Qatar offers insights into this pattern in the GCC, and possibly the broader Arab World.

Following the discovery of oil, significant social and economic shifts occurred in Qatar and the GCC, including changes in marriage patterns. The study found that in Qatar, cross-national marriages — those involving non-Qataris — increased from 16.5% of total marriages in 1985 to 21% by 2015. These rates surpass those in countries like the United States and South Korea, although they have also seen increases. Despite Qatar's rise in cross-national marriages, neighbouring GCC countries show even higher rates, with the UAE at 28.8% and Bahrain at 28.9%.[57]

One concern about increased cross-national marriages is the potential impact on the Arabic language. Marriages between native Arabic speakers and non-speakers may lead to children being raised in multilingual households, potentially diminishing their use of Arabic.

However, a closer look at the data shows that most cross-national marriages in Qatar in 2015 involved partners from other GCC countries (11.4%) or other Arab nations (7%), with only 2.6% involving non-Arab countries.[58] This trend may hold true across other GCC nations, suggesting that cross-national marriages within the Arab World are currently not a major threat to the Arabic language. As such cross-marriages are not considered a significant variable for the potential attrition of the Arabic language given that they have largely remained concentrated within Arab countries. However, should the share of cross-marriages to non-Arab countries

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57. Alharahsheh, Sanaa & Meer, Feras & Aref, Ahmed & Camden, Gilla. 2020. "Marrying out: Exploring Dimensions of Cross-National Marriages among Qataris." 10.5339/difi_9789927151866.
58. Ibid.

increase significantly it would become relevant. Furthermore, as the GCC is largely the most globalised region of the Arab World it presents a potential trend that may arise within the larger Arab World as it becomes more globalised.

The Arab World is affected by several variables, such as globalisation, the primary factor encompassing political stability, economic development, urbanisation, migration, education, communication, and marriage, all of which have an impact on how Arabic speakers relate to their mother tongue, especially among the GCC countries. The basis for comprehending the wider ramifications of this decline on Arab societies is the factors that contribute to the attrition of the Arabic language. Cultural and national identity, security, and even political stability are all negatively impacted by the declining usage of Arabic due to globalisation, migration, and changes in educational institutions. It is essential to identify how the decline of Arabic as a language has profound implications for the social structure and destiny of the Arab World, going beyond merely linguistic issues.

Security and Identity Implications: Political Instability and Disintegration

Language attrition has profound implications for political identities. The interplay between language attrition and identity is complex, as language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a source of cultural heritage and a marker of political affiliation. One of the critical aspects of language attrition is its impact on identity.[59] The political dimension of language attrition cannot be overlooked. Language learning policies can significantly affect opportunities for democratic participation.[60] In contexts where certain languages are privileged over others, speakers of marginalised languages may find themselves excluded from political discourse and economic opportunities. This exclusion can exacerbate feelings of disenfranchisement and contribute to a fragmented national identity.[61] Moreover, language attrition when it is evolved into decline and then death can exacerbate existing social divisions and fuel conflict. In multilingual societies, language often serves as a marker of group identity, and when one group perceives that its language is being devalued or threatened, it can lead to heightened tensions. For instance, in Ukraine, the Russian-speaking population has been at the centre of political conflicts, with the language being used as a tool for political mobilisation and identity formation. The destabilising influence of language conflicts is further compounded by external actors who may exploit these divisions for their geopolitical interests, as evidenced by Russia's involvement in Ukraine.[62]

Language attrition contributes to political instability through the erosion of linguistic identity. As individuals or groups experience language loss, they may feel a diminished connection to their cultural heritage, which can lead to feelings of alienation and grievance. This phenomenon is particularly evident in regions where language policies favour a dominant language at the expense of minority languages, as seen in the case of Sri Lanka, where the marginalisation of Tamil speakers has been linked to ethnic conflict and civil unrest. Additionally, the loss of a language can then translate into the loss of political agency, as individuals may struggle to articulate their grievances or mobilise for their rights in a language that is not their own.[63]

Political lobbying and advocacy also intersect with language issues, particularly in contexts where language rights are contested. Lobbying efforts aimed at promoting the interests of specific linguistic groups can lead to increased polarisation, as competing groups vie for recognition and resources.[64] This competition can manifest in political instability, as groups mobilise to assert their linguistic rights, sometimes resorting to protests or other forms of political action. The relationship between language and political mobilisation is further complicated by the fact that language grievances are often linked to broader socio-economic disparities, which can exacerbate tensions and lead to instability.[65] [66]

59. Riaz, Muhammad Sohail, Aneela Gill, and Sara Shahbaz, 2021. "Language attrition and its impact on culture – a case of Saraiki in Dera Ghazi Khan region", Global Language Review (III), VI:64-56. https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2021(vi-iii).06

60. Osler, Audrey and Hugh Starkey, 2000. "Intercultural education and foreign language learning: issues of racism, identity and modernity", Race Ethnicity and Education (221-3:207 ,(2. https://doi.org/13613320050074041/10.1080

61. Fedinec, Csilla and István Csernicskó, 2017. "Language policy and national feeling in context ukraine's euromaidan, 2016-2014", Central European Papers (100-5:81 ,(1. https://doi.org/10.25142/cep.2017.005

62. Imran, M.,Murtiza, G., & Akbar, M. S. (2024). THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT: HISTORICAL CONTEXT, GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS AND PATHWAYS TO RESOLUTION. Remittances Review, 434-409 ,(4)9.

63. Perera, S. (2001). The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka: A historical and sociopolitical outline. The World Bank, 29-1.

64. Fedinec, Csilla and István Csernicskó, 2017. "Language policy and national feeling in context ukraine's euromaidan, 2016-2014", Central European Papers (100-5:81 ,(1. https://doi.org/10.25142/cep.2017.005

65. Laitin, David D., 2000. "Language conflict and violence: the straw that strengthens the camel's back", European Journal of Sociology(137-41:97 ,(1. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003975600007906

66. Ringe, Nils, 2022. "The language(s) of politics", https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12080141

Moreover, the intersection of language attrition and identities can be observed in the context of ethnic conflict. In societies where language is closely tied to ethnic identity, the attrition of a minority language can exacerbate tensions between ethnic groups. The decline of the Saraiki language in Pakistan has led to a corresponding decline in cultural identity among its speakers, contributing to feelings of marginalisation and insecurity. This dynamic can create a feedback loop, where language loss leads to increased ethnic tensions, which in turn further accelerates language attrition as communities become more fragmented.[67]

In addition to these dynamics, the psychological aspects of language attrition must be considered. Language loss can lead to identity crises among individuals and communities, as they grapple with the implications of losing a key aspect of their cultural identity. This psychological impact can manifest in social unrest, as individuals seek to reclaim their identity and assert their rights in the face of perceived marginalisation.[68] The interplay between language, identity, and political action underscores the importance of addressing language issues in efforts to promote social cohesion and political stability. Hence, this part will explore the security and political implications of language attrition, and the future scenarios of our region. Language attrition has profound political and security implications that affect individual and collective identities, community cohesion, and social stability. Addressing the implications of language attrition requires an approach that recognises the connections between language, culture, and security.

Attrition, Death, and Political Failure?

The loss of language is not merely a linguistic phenomenon; it is intertwined with issues of identity, political engagement, and emotional well-being. For instance, in regions like Sudan, language policies have historically been linked to identity conflicts, with language serving as a battleground for power struggles between different ethnic groups.[69] Identity politics can destabilise national security, emphasizing that when communities lose their cohesion, they may also lose their collective identity, making them more vulnerable to external threats and internal discord. The decline of a shared language can foster feelings of alienation and disconnection, which can exacerbate tensions within and between communities.[70]

The role of language in shaping security identities is evident in the context of community resilience. Communities that maintain their linguistic heritage are often better equipped to navigate crises and challenges. Language serves as a vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge and practices that are essential for community cohesion and resilience. Language is a primary force in identity construction and transformation, particularly in multilingual contexts. When communities experience language attrition, they may lose not only their linguistic skills but also the cultural knowledge that contributes to their resilience and security.[71]

One of the primary political implications of language attrition is its potential to exacerbate societal divisions where language policies can either reinforce or diffuse conflicts among language groups. When a dominant language is prioritised in public life, some societal groups may feel marginalised. Marginalisation happens due

67. Hashmi, R. S., & Majeed, G. (2014). Saraiki Ethnic Identity: Genesis of Conflict with the State. J. Pol. Stud., 21, 79.

68. Smirnova, Anastasia and Rumen Iliev, 2016. "Political and linguistic identities in an ethnic conflict", Journal of Language and Social Psychology (211:225-36, 2). https://doi.org/0261927/10.1177x16643559

69. Zouhir, Abderrahman, 2015. "Language policy and identity conflict in sudan", Digest of Middle East Studies (283:24-302, 2. https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.12072

70. Zubaidi, Muhammad Iqbal, 2024. "Impact of identity politics on security and stability in medan", Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Teknologi(1539:5-1546, 4. https://doi.org/10.59141/jist.v5i4.1029

71. Hu, Adelheid, 5" .2014. languages and identities":102-87. https://doi.org/9783110302257.87/10.1515

to disparities in quality of education received and job market opportunities. Disparity leads to the creation of different societal groups whose division is based on opportunity and marginalisation which in turns creates grievance, unrest, and political violence which eventually leads to instability and a state of insecurity.[72]

Accordingly, it is evident that language attrition must definitely have political and economic causes. But an effect can turn into a cause, strengthening the original cause while producing the same effect in a reinforced form, over and over again.[73] Inequalities among societal factions tend to create societal groups segregated along economic and social lines. The gap is further widened by deepened inequalities causing grievances, and the loss of identity and sense of belonginess. There are two forms of inequality, vertical inequality which is inequality between individuals and/or between households and horizontal inequality which is economic, social and political inequality between different identity groups. Language attrition tends to produce the second form of inequality as a proxy to economic and social inequalities. It is argued that initial vertical inequality is usually turned into horizontal inequality. Vertical inequality among individuals will determine their social and economic belonging which will then turn them into non-cooperative groups and inequality among them will be horizontal which is argued to be associated with civil wars, coup d'etats, political violence, and instability in general more than vertical inequality which is more associated with other forms of violence. Economic, social and political inequality among different societal groups is a catalyst to violent conflicts within societies because growing economic and political inequality tends to lead to the collapse of cohesion between societal groups.[74]

When countries are divided along ethnic, linguistic, economic, societal, or religious lines, they are more prone to experience political violence. Inequality, exclusion, and a sense of injustice are main drivers of armed conflict. This societal fractionalisation leads to greater levels of political instability which imposes a political cost on the government as it risks being overthrown and losing its power. The government then tries to pacify marginalised groups by increasing the level of governmental consumption in an attempt to reduce the discontent in society which leads to the reproduction of instability caused by high economic costs. Governmental logic here is based on the premise of buying political stability. However, this premise is flawed because more spending means economic losses which also means more instability. It is a vicious cycle started by linguistic fractionalisation, political instability, economic losses and then further instability. Using spending as a buffer against political instability, governments tend to spend less on basic public goods such education and health.[75]

Social fragmentation occurs when groups are systematically advantaged or disadvantaged based on economic, political, or social factors. Grievances arising from exclusion in terms of access to power, resources, security, and justice are key drivers of violent conflict. Relative deprivation along societal lines can intensify these grievances, prompting group mobilisation for violence. The combination of political and economic inequalities is particularly prone to triggering such mobilisation. Exclusionary processes are directly related to the risk of serious armed violence and civil wars, especially when groups are divided and new identities are created. Conflicts in this case are driven by grievances rather than due to rational choice arguments based

72. Medda-Windischer, R., & Carlà, A. (2022). At the intersection of language, conflict, and security: Theoretical and empirical perspectives. Language Problems and Language Planning, 130-113 ,(2)46.

73. Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language." Homeplainlanguage.gov, 1946. https://www.plainlanguage.gov/resources/articles/politics-and-the-english-language/.

74. Houle, Christian, Damian J Ruck, R Alexander Bentley, and Sergey Gavrilets. "Inequality between Identity Groups and Social Unrest." Journal of the Royal Society, Interface, March 2022. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8941398/.

75. Annet, Anthony. "Social Fractionalization, Political Instability, and the Size Of ..." IMF, 2000. https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2000/wp0082.pdf.

on the feasibleness for organising costly violence.[76] Grievances from the context of inequality demonstrate the feeling of political unrest and populism, the feeling of the existence of an elite against the public, in this context, the elite is formed due to several economic, social, and political reasons. The linguistic factor is in play in this game since it is caused by factors mentioned beforehand while at the same time it is being reinforced by the same factors leading to it reaching more advanced phases till language death. Language attrition at the beginning is both a cause and a consequence of societal inequalities manifested for example in the quality of education received, opportunities offered at the job market, and the creation of an elite. When language death happens, societies go through deeper fragmentations based on new identities created over time through divisions over social class, identity and language.[77]

In this context, the Arabic language is currently undergoing a process of attrition, intensified by the factors discussed previously. Political instability, already present in the region, is both a cause and consequence of this language decline. The argument here is that the ongoing attrition of the Arabic language, combined with regional political instability, will accelerate the deterioration of the language, eventually leading to its death and the formation of conflicting socio-economic groups across societies. This decline would also trigger increased political violence, driven by horizontal inequalities, which could unfold in one of following possible future scenarios: Fragile Arab States and Arab Balkanisation.

Fragile Arab States

The interplay between language attrition and political fragility can lead to a scenario where certain Arab countries may evolve into fragile states, marked by weakened governance, social unrest, and increased violence. This scenario explains how the ongoing attrition of the Arabic language, exacerbated by political instability, could precipitate the emergence of fragile states in the Arab region. The Arabic language, with its rich morphological structure, has historically served as a unifying cultural and political force among Arab nations. However, the decline in its use, particularly in formal and educational contexts, poses a significant threat to national identity and cohesion. The erosion of language can lead to a fragmentation of cultural identity, which is essential for social stability.[78] When citizens begin to lose their connection to their linguistic heritage, it can foster feelings of alienation and discontent, particularly among younger generations who may gravitate toward more dominant languages such as English or French due to globalisation and educational opportunities abroad.[79] This shift not only undermines the Arabic language but also diminishes the cultural capital that is vital for fostering a sense of belonging and national pride.

Political instability in the Arab World has been a persistent issue, often exacerbated by economic disparities and social inequalities. The governance structures in some of the Arab states are fragile, characterised by a lack of legitimacy and widespread corruption.[80] This instability can lead to a vicious cycle where the decline

76. Soysa, Indra de, Krishna Vadlamnnati, and henning finseraas. "Group Grievances & Civil War: Some Theory and Empirics on Competing Mechanisms, 2017-1990 - Advance." Advance, 2021. https://advance.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.31124/advance.14958093.v1.

77. Grievances, C. Sun, R.B. Mwalyosi, B. O'Regan, K. Newman, F. Vommaro, W.B. Werner, et al. "Dynamics of Group Grievances from a Global Cohesion Perspective." Socio-Economic Planning Sciences, May 2023 ,2. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0038012123001064.

78. Bello-Schünemann , Julia, and Jonathan D Moyer. "Structural Pressures and Political Instability." Institute for security studies, 2018. https://www.politicalsettlements.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2018_ISS_Bello-Schuenemann-Moyer_structural-pressures-and-political-instability.pdf.

79. Batniji, Rajaie, Lina Khatib, Melani Cammett, Jeffrey Sweet, Sanjay Basu, Amaney Jamal, Paul H. Wise et al., 2014. "Governance and health in the arab world", The Lancet (355-383:343 ,(9914. https://doi.org/10.1016/s6-62185(13)6736-0140

80. Abu-Melhim, Abdel-Rahman, 2014. "The status of arabic in the united states of america post 11/9 and the impact on foreign language teaching programs", Advances in Language and Literary Studies (81-5:70 ,(3. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.5n.3p.70

of the Arabic language further weakens state institutions, as language is a critical tool for governance, education, and public discourse. The marginalisation of Arabic in favour of foreign languages can create a disconnect between the government and its citizens, leading to increased grievances and potential unrest.[81] As citizens feel increasingly disenfranchised, the likelihood of political violence escalates, driven by horizontal inequalities where certain groups feel excluded from the political process.

Moreover, the phenomenon of Arabization, as seen in countries like Algeria and Sudan, highlights the complexities of language policy in the context of national identity and governance. While Arabization aimed to promote Arabic as a means of fostering national unity post-colonisation, it often resulted in the marginalisation of other languages and ethnic identities, leading to social tensions and conflict.[82] This historical context underscores the delicate balance that must be maintained in language policy to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities and fostering further instability. The failure to adequately address these linguistic dynamics can lead to a scenario where the state is unable to effectively communicate with its citizens, further entrenching feelings of alienation and discontent.

The implications of language attrition extend beyond cultural identity; they also have significant economic ramifications. The decline of Arabic can hinder economic development, particularly in sectors that rely on effective communication and cultural understanding. As the workforce becomes increasingly bilingual or multilingual, the demand for proficiency in Arabic diminishes, which can lead to a devaluation of the language in both educational and professional contexts.[83] This economic marginalisation can further exacerbate social inequalities, as those who are unable to navigate the linguistic landscape may find themselves at a disadvantage in the job market, leading to increased frustration and potential unrest.

In addition to economic factors, the role of education in language attrition cannot be overlooked. The educational policies in many Arab countries have shifted toward a multilingual approach, often prioritising English and French over Arabic This shift can lead to a decline in the quality of Arabic language education, further contributing to the erosion of linguistic proficiency among younger generations.[84] As students become less proficient in Arabic, their ability to engage with their cultural heritage diminishes, leading to a generational gap in language use and cultural transmission.[85] This gap can create a rift within society, as older generations may struggle to communicate with younger individuals who are increasingly disconnected from their linguistic roots.

Arab Balkanisation

What are now the Balkan countries were once united under a single state and leader. However, political and economic turmoil eventually triggered deepening divisions, especially in terms of identities, with language playing a central role in defining these distinctions. Political instability and identity conflicts fed into each

81. Batniji, Rajaie, Lina Khatib, Melani Cammett, Jeffrey Sweet, Sanjay Basu, Amaney Jamal, Paul H. Wise et al., 2014. "Governance and health in the arab world", The Lancet(355-383:343 ,(9914. https://doi.org/10.1016/s6-62185(13)6736-0140

82. Sharkey, Heather J., 2012. "Language and conflict: the political history of arabisation in sudan and algeria", Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism (449-12:427 ,(3. https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12009

83. Zouhir, Abderrahman, 2015. "Language policy and identity conflict in sudan", Digest of Middle East Studies (302-24:283 ,(2. https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.12072

84. Bouhdima, Mohamed Elhedi, 2022. "On arabic language maintenance among arabs living in western countries: a review of literature", https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202203.0226.v1

85. Smari, Ibtissem and Ildikó Hortobágyi, 2020. "Language policies and multilingualism in modern tunisia", Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov Series Iv Philology Cultural Studies (Special Issue), 232-207:(62) 13. https://doi.org/10.31926/but.pcs.2020.62.13.3.12

other, ultimately resulting in the complete disintegration of Yugoslavia. In the 1980s, after the death of Josip Borris Tito, the state of former Yugoslavia went through political and economic turmoil. Inter-Yugoslav wars which resulted in the fragmentation — also known as the Balkanisation — of Yugoslavia resulted in the formation of successor Balkan states, such as, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Kosovo.[86] Language played a crucial role in the case of disintegration of Yugoslavia, first, it helped in preserving the Serbian old ethno-national identity; second, it facilitated the establishment of a new group identity, Muslims; and third, it enabled Croats to separate themselves in terms of self-identification.[87]

Economic and political tensions were originally fuelled by ethnic and linguistic divisions inside the state. The disintegration of Yugoslavia demonstrates how political fragility can lead internal cohesion to break apart due to linguistic, national, religious lines, or a combination of them.[88] Language continued to become a dominant force of instability in the region even after the full disintegration of Yugoslavia and the formation of its successor nation states. Since the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, the division of the Serbo-Croatian language has become a deeply emotional and politically charged issue. In the years following, Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian — the three main successor languages — have been developing distinct identities. The Croatians have made significant efforts to establish a "pure" Croatian language, removing Serbian influences. Bosnian Muslims have worked on shaping a Bosnian language with many Turkish and Arabic loanwords, emphasising for example strict pronunciation of the consonant "h." Meanwhile, in Serbia and Montenegro, linguists have engaged in heated debates over the future of the Serbian language, discussing key matters such as official alphabets, orthographic rules, and which dialects should be recognised officially.[89]

A similar scenario is suggested for the Arab World. Although the Arab World is not one sovereign state, some parallels can be drawn with the Yugoslav case. Currently, the Arab World is grappling with political and economic instability, much like Yugoslavia in the 1980s. Crucially, this instability is coupled with language attrition, which could devolve into a political crisis and the loss of a unifying identity among Arabs. Language attrition may eventually turn into language death, leading to the collapse of shared identity and the emergence of competing groups formed around societal grievances, reinforced by distinct languages.

The loss of a common identity on both micro and macro levels, regionally and nationally, would likely result in further instability, conflicts, and a redrawing of regional borders. This would give rise to new states formed around newly created identities. Before this occurs, internal armed conflicts would likely become the norm, with secessionist movements clashing with national armies. Even after the region is re-mapped, stability would remain elusive, with ongoing conflicts between neighbouring states once united under a single government. These conflicts would likely persist as one state may refuse to recognise the independence of another, the case of Kosovo and Serbia is recalled here, leaving the region in a cycle of violence. It's important to note that this catastrophic scenario would not arise purely from linguistic differences but from deeper issues. The current attrition of the Arabic language, manifested in political, economic, and societal inequalities coupled with political instability, would accelerate language decline. Ultimately, this could lead to language death and

86. Taha Thomure, Hanada, 2008. "The status of arabic language teaching today", Education Business and Society Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues(192-1:186 ,(3. https://doi.org/17537980810909805/10.1108

87. Miller, Nicholas. Language and Political Destruction: The Case of Yugoslavia. Accessed October 2024 ,8. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235665814_Language_and_political_destruction_The_case_of_Yugoslavia.

88. Guazzone, Laura. "The Arab States in the Mediterranean and the 'Arab Spring.'" IAI Papers no. 12-1 :(2011) 11. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44983552.

89. Greenberg, Robert D. "Language, Identity, and Balkan Politics: The Struggle for Identity in the Former Yugoslavia." Wilson Center. May 1999. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/-216language-identity-and-balkan-politics-struggle-for-identity-the-former-yugoslavia.

the loss of a core identity. Once the Arabic language and its associated identity are lost, political instability would intensify, culminating in the complete disintegration, destruction, and Balkanisation of Arab states.

The necessity of maintaining Arabic language proficiency is highlighted by knowledge of its consequences, which include effects on national security, cultural identity, and regional cohesiveness. Considering these extensive ramifications, it becomes imperative to investigate the policies and measures that might be put in place to protect and enhance the Arabic language.

Fortifying Arabic: A Blueprint for Preservation

After examining the implication on Arabic language attrition earlier, the focus here shifts to identifying solutions and pre-emptive strategies which are designed to transform the challenges into opportunities.

Globalisation, one of the primary drivers of Arabic language attrition, encompasses factors such as economic development and the language of education. This section proposes solutions leveraging economic development to promote the Arabic language domestically and globally. Rather than viewing economic development as a threat to the language, it can be harnessed as a tool to elevate the prestige of Arabic.

This can be achieved through investments in art, cultural exchange programs, and the strategic use of business influence, framed as a form of soft power. Additionally, regulations regarding media communications between leaders and the public, and the job market should be implemented, targeting both domestic societies and the international community. Educational reforms are also discussed, focusing on encouraging younger generations to use Arabic and eliminating the social class divide. Finally, given the integral role of technology in today's globalised World, how technology can be adapted and used to support the Arabic language is addressed.

Soft Power as a Language Preservation Tool

Soft power is considered one of the vital tools in the process of enhancing the prestige of a language. The spread of any World language can happen as a result of a nation's soft power that makes people want to use the language rather than hard power which would force them to. Soft power persuades, not imposes, values and attitudes. The main two pillars of such a power are economic and cultural. The following points highlight the importance of empowering culture and using economic wealth for the sake of preserving the Arabic language.

Prestige and Art

Language prestige refers to the level of respect and social value attributed to specific languages by members of a speech community, particularly in situations of language contact. The prestige of a language is often influenced by factors like its rich literary heritage, degree of modernisation, or the social status of its speakers. In some cases, when languages of differing prestige come into contact, it can lead to diglossia. This is a situation where a community adopts a high-prestige language or dialect for certain contexts, while a less-prestigious language is reserved for other settings.[90]

To preserve languages, it is essential to elevate their prestige, especially when they are in competition with dominant languages. In the context of Arabic, its prestige faces challenges from English and French, the two main competing languages in the Arab World. Although Arabic claims certain prestigious elements, such as a rich literary heritage, it may lack in other areas, such as a high degree of modernisation, particularly when compared to English and French.

Enhancing language prestige is crucial in addressing the issue of language attrition on the national, societal, and international levels, and can be achieved through various methods. On the national level, Arabic's prestige

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90. Crystal, David. Language death. Cambridge, 2003.

can be strengthened by promoting its use in symbolic domains such as street signs, leaflets, entertainment events, and marketing campaigns. Its integration into business and the labour market is another critical factor. When a language is actively used in economic activities, it gains significance for individuals as it becomes intertwined with their relationship to the economic system.[91] Moreover, language prestige is closely linked to education. Although the role of education in preserving Arabic is further explored at another point, it is important to note that education is a foundational element in enhancing the prestige of a language, as it plays a key role in elevating the status of its speakers, as mentioned in the earlier definition of prestige.

While enhancing the prestige of the Arabic language on a national level is crucial, its position in the international arena is equally important. Historically, the spread of English was driven by British military expansion and hard power; today, however, its continued global dominance is largely backed by soft power. This soft power influence is facilitated by globalisation, which is reflected in the widespread use of English. Modern soft power efforts, such as cultural exchanges and educational programs, are key drivers of this expansion. Additionally, innovations such as technological devices and English-dominated platforms like the internet, further bolster the global influence of the English language.

While the case of English provides a good example for the usage of soft power in maintaining language prestige, other examples may be more applicable for Arabic. The experiences of Turkish and Korean languages offer a more relevant comparison. Unlike English, which had the advantage of spreading through both hard and soft power, Turkish and Korean relied primarily on soft power for their global dissemination, making them better models for Arabic. These languages demonstrate how strategic cultural diplomacy, and media exports, can successfully enhance a language's prestige on the international stage without the historical necessity of military expansion.[92]

Art, a keyword here, plays a pivotal role in enhancing the popularity of languages, as it is a fundamental component of culture. Film, TV, and music are powerful tools for promoting language spread. For example, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic gained prominence in the Arab World due to Egypt's large population and its cultural influence through those channels. By 2024, Turkish had become the fifth most studied foreign language globally, a rise often attributed to the surge in popularity of Turkish soap operas, whose global demand increased by 184% between 2020 and 2023.[93] This cultural appeal has boosted interest in Turkish culture, with the language being an integral part of it.[94]

Though Turkish series are often dubbed into other languages, it's suggested that as people become interested in a country's culture, they are more inclined to learn its language. While the success of Turkish soap operas is not the sole reason for the rise in Turkish language learners — factors such as the influx of refugees since 2015 also play a role — TV series have significantly contributed, particularly among audiences in regions like the Balkans, Latin America, and the Middle East.[95]

91. Glyn Williams, "Language Prestige," in Sustaining Language Diversity in Europe (London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Palgrave Macmillan, 49–134, 2005, https://doi.org/6_9780230514683/10.1057.

92. Mahmoud Altalouli, "Soft Power: A Driver of the Rise of the Treasury of a Language," Open Journal of Modern Linguistics 11, no. 04 (January 71–668: 2021, 1, https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2021.114052.

93. The Economist, "The Third-largest Exporter of Television Is Not Who You Might Expect," The Economist, February 2024, 15, accessed September 2024, 23, https://www.economist.com/culture/15/02/2024/the-third-largest-exporter-of-television-is-not-who-you-might-expect.

94. "Turkish Is the Fifth Most Common Language Learned as a Foreign Language in the World!," Near East University, November 2022, 30, accessed September 2024, 23, https://neu.edu.tr/turkish-is-the-fifth-most-common-language-learned-as-a-foreign-language-in-the-world/?lang=en.

95. The Economist, "Turkish Telenovelas Are Thriving in Latin America," The Economist, November 2021, 6, https://www.economist.com/the-americas/06/11/2021/turkish-telenovelas-are-thriving-in-latin-america.

Korean presents another interesting example of how pop culture can drive language popularity. One of the strongest pop global cultural phenomena is BTS, a seven-member music group that has attracted a diverse, international fanbase in the tens of millions since their debut in 2013. Beyond generating billions in annual revenue for the Korean economy, BTS has inspired fans worldwide to learn the Korean language. According to Duolingo's Global Language Report, Korean has steadily improved its global ranking among language learners.[96]

In 2021, Korean ranked as the seventh most learned language globally, with the number of learners continuing to rise in 2022. Duolingo reported a 29% increase in monthly active users learning Korean between June 2021 and June 2022. By 2023, Korean had surpassed Italian in the global language ranking, climbing to the sixth spot. The language is now among the top 10 most studied in several major countries, including India, where its popularity grew by 75% year-over-year. This surge in interest in the Korean language highlights the impact of cultural exports on language learning trends.[97]

Accordingly, leveraging Arabic films, TV, and music as cultural exports can be an effective strategy for spreading Arabic culture and language globally. As these cultural products gain international popularity, they can enhance the modernity and prestige of the Arabic language. The global exposure to Arabic media can contribute to its prestige, much like how other languages have benefitted from their own cultural exports.

Wealth

The second key element of soft power, as previously noted, is the economy. A nation's wealth can play a crucial role in its efforts to preserve and promote its language on a global scale. While globalisation and economic growth were previously mentioned as potential contributors to language attrition in favour of dominant market languages like English, economic development can also be leveraged to support and promote specific languages.

Wealth generated through economic development can be used to invest in cultural exchange programs, enabling students from around the World to study at Arab universities, thereby exposing them to Arabic culture and language. A prime example is the Erasmus+ program, the European Union's initiative that supports education, training, youth, and sports. Through this program, students from various universities globally receive funding from the European Commission to study at European institutions, fostering exposure to European languages and culture. Arab governments could adopt a similar approach by launching scholarship and cultural exchange programs that bring international students and youth to study at universities in the ArabWorld.[98]

In addition, investments should be directed toward establishing Arabic language learning centres. The spread and acquisition of a language are not limited to the formal education system; private companies and organisations also play a significant role. These institutions, whether publicly or privately funded, can operate either within the country where the language is official or abroad. A notable example is the British Council, which has been promoting Standard British English globally since 1934. This public corporation was created

96. Kayti Burt, "Meet the BTS Fans Learning Korean on Duolingo," Duolingo Blog, August 2022 ,16, accessed September 2024 ,23, https://blog.duolingo.com/bts-fans-learning-korean/.

97. Cindy Blanco, "The 2023 Duolingo Language Report," Duolingo Blog, December 2023 ,4, accessed September 2024 ,23, https://blog.duolingo.com/-2023duolingo-language-report/.

98. "Erasmus+," European Education and Culture Executive Agency, accessed September 2024 ,23, https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/grants/2027-2021/erasmus_en.

to promote British culture, civilisation, and the English language both within the UK and internationally. Currently, the British Council operates in 110 countries and territories, spanning 229 cities worldwide. Its approach to language diffusion is extensive, offering a wide range of programs tailored to the diverse needs of learners of all kinds, these programs cater to various goals, including personal interest, passing language exams, obtaining certifications, improving skills, or advancing in work and business, using different teaching methods and resources.[99]

Finally, Arab countries already hold a competitive edge in the business sector. Economically, these nations have experienced rapid growth in a relatively short period, with the Arab World collectively boasting a GDP of $3.49 trillion.[100] With a rapidly growing consumer base, promising trade opportunities, and lucrative business partnerships, the Arab region presents a significant opportunity for companies aiming to expand globally. Countries like the UAE are heavily involved in international trade and rank among the World's top exporters and importers. In this context, Arabic is crucial for foreign businesses looking to establish and sustain strong, long-term relationships with Arab consumers and organisations. Arab businesses should take advantage of the opportunities presented by their unique position in the global market. As competitive salaries and positions are increasingly available to those fluent in Arabic, the language will become an essential skill for job seekers. Although the push for Arabic language education in the Western World may take time, the foundations are set for supply to eventually meet the growing global demand.[101]

Governmental Regulations

Arab governments must enact regulations to ensure that Arabic is the primary language of communication within their entities. While this is the case in most Arabic countries, officials in some countries such as Tunisia may issue media statements in French. Additionally, about 63.6%[102] of the Tunisian population speaks French compared to about 34%[103] in Algeria, and some use it as the primary language of communication. To ensure that senior officials have a strong foundation in the Arabic language, governments must create specialised agencies to test the proficiency of the Arabic language for senior position candidates. While this requirement might be challenging for those who obtained their academic degrees in languages other than Arabic, it will enable those who have finished their education in Arabic and might be of a lower socioeconomic class to get a foot in the door and hold high positions in the government or wherever this policy is enacted, hence reducing the societal gap between classes in governmental positions. Furthermore, this requirement could motivate applicants willing to hold senior governmental positions to improve their Arabic language.

Lately, many national companies in the Arab World have necessitated that their employees have a standard level of English for internal communication and external correspondence. While this policy motivates applicants to improve their English skills, it contributes to consolidating the belief that possessing a second language is a potential advantage from which employees can benefit. In a similar manner as before, governments could address this by issuing regulations that obligate its national companies to prioritise the

99. Iazzetta, Giacomo. "Giacomo Iazzetta | University of Essex." Department of Language and Linguistics University of Essex, 2023. https://www.essex.ac.uk/people/IAZZE99500/Giacomo-Iazzetta

100. "World Bank Open Data," World Bank Open Data, n.d., https://data.worldbank.org/region/arab-world.

101. Group, United Language. "The Growing Importance of Arabic in Business." United Language Group, August 2024, 2. https://www.unitedlanguagegroup.com/learn/growing-importance-arabic-in-business.

102. Trabbelsi, Karim. Do People in Tunisia Speak French? horizontunisia.org, April 2024, 7. Accessed 20 September 2024. https://horizontunisia.org/do-people-in-tunisia-speak-french/

103. TRT Afrika. Why Does Algeria De-emphasise French, Adopt English?. TRT Afrika, September 2023, 29. Accessed 21 September 2023.https://trtafrika.com/africa/why-does-algeria-de-emphasise-french-adopt-english15180439-.

Arabic language for internal and external communication, as long as these correspondences are directed to the local citizens of Arab countries. The ability to speak a second language should not be a barrier to progression in the levels of government or its national companies and can be limited to employees who are responsible for communication with the external World.

Issuing Arabisation Laws is another governmental measure that could be used to maintain the presence of Arabic language in daily life. Language has been identified by scholars such as Bucholtz & Hall and Norton as the main parameters of identity.[104] [105] If a given ethnic group loses its language, it is on the path identity loss and integration into a new society where they another language is spoken. Many countries recognise this and also identified the threat of the public using foreign languages for daily communication, and have issued laws to contain this threat. For example, France in the seventies and eighties recognised the usage of English language in French public life as a threat. As a result, France issued the Toubon Law in 1994 to protect the French language from decline. All lettering in English language was taken away from streets, and English names of companies were translated into French, with the law contributing to changing the social views of the city of Paris regarding the languages of French and English. Similarly, in 2002, Azerbaijan issued the Law on the State Language in the Republic of Azerbaijan.[106] According to this law, the state language should be used in all services and advertisings in Azerbaijan. Drawing on the previous experiences of countries that experienced similar problems, Arab governments should enact Arabisation Laws to Arabize shops' names, names of streets, and road names. Moreover, all local and international advertisements should prioritise the use of be in Arabic language if they are being advertised in an Arabic speaking country.

Education

Education has always been the key to the development of societies and the preservation of their national security. The teaching of languages is an indicator of the socioeconomic inequalities in the Arab society where those from higher socioeconomic levels emphasises education in a language other than Arabic, while those from lower socioeconomic levels have no luxury of choice and receive education in Arabic language in national schools, due to the high costs of private education which teaches in a foreign language and that they may not be able to afford. The presence of social inequalities in education can lead to social unrest, which undermine the national security of countries. To mitigate this, governments ought to adopt inclusive policies for all linguistic groups in its educational systems. In Algeria, for instance, estimates refer that between 25-30% speak Tamazight language.[107] As a result, the Algerian government has allowed teachers to communicate in Amazigh language with students while teaching Arabic content. The inclusion of Amazigh in the country's educational system preserves the socio-economic balance between ethnic groups and reduces the potential of conflict eruption. Arab countries that have ethnic minorities should implement policies similar to those adopted by Algeria and integrate minority groups in their educational systems to maintain coexistence between those factions.

Across the rest of the Arab World, where enrolment in international schools that teach in a foreign language is more prevalent, students should be incentivised to study varying subjects in Arabic. For example, the Egyptian

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104. Norton, Bonny. "Language and identity." Sociolinguistics and language education 23, no. 369-349 :(2010) 3.

105. Bucholtz, Mary, and Kira Hall. "Language and identity." A companion to linguistic anthropology 394-369 :(2004) 1.

106. Jafarov, Javid. "Language Safety in the Context of National Security." ResearchGate, February 2018 ,8. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358426067_Language_Safety_in_the_Context_of_National_Security.

107. Institut National Des Langues Et Civilisations Orientales .Berber (Berber Languages). Accessed 17 September 2024. https://www.inalco.fr/en/languages/berber-berber-languages.

Ministry of Education decreed that the grades of Arabic language courses be added to the cumulative grades that qualify students for universities. The added importance of performing well in Arabic language courses incentivises students and their families to place a greater focus on the quality of the Arabic language learned, which could potentially strengthen it in coming generations. Should this course of action show early results, other Arab governments should follow suit and adopt similar measures.

Reforming higher education is a core point in cementing the role of Arabic language in daily life and preserving its legacy. Arabic language must be the first language of instruction for all academic disciplines at public universities, with some exceptions for a limited number of academic programs taught in English or French to accommodate for varying demands for education. While this is the case in most Arabic countries, countries like Algeria use French as a language of education in high school for the natural sciences. This is continued further in Algerian universities which teach humanities in Arabic and natural sciences in French, which contributes to solidifying the educational gap between societal factions, and later has an impact on employment opportunities for each linguistic group. To mitigate this, in 2019, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research stated that it is necessary for Algeria to replace French with English at research institutions in Algeria.[108] Since Algeria has not taken effective measures in this regard, the country could go further and reduce the dependency of its universities on the French language by shifting to fully teach natural sciences in Arabic. Such a decision may not be welcomed by some in higher socioeconomic levels who choose to attend public universities, however, given their socioeconomic background alternatives to higher education in a foreign language are available. Even so, the process of replacing French with Arabic must be gradual with no exclusion for citizens who prefer to use French as the primary language of communication.

Technology and Social Media

The status of the Arabic language in the digital age can be enhanced by harnessing the power of technology. Online platforms, mobile applications, and social media campaigns can be used to greatly increase the visibility and accessibility of the Arabic language, especially among younger generations. In addition, technology can be used for language learning which enhance learners' proficiency and cultural understanding. Furthermore, the development of Arabic content in digital media can enhance its visibility and relevance in contemporary society.[109] By effectively integrating technology into the learning and promotion of the Arabic language, it can be ensured that it remains vibrant and attractive in an increasingly interconnected digital world. Before social media, Arabs used classical Arabic to communicate in writing. However, a new linguistic phenomenon has emerged among Arabs with the introduction of SMS on mobile phones, online discussion forums, and social networking sites. People, regardless of their age and educational level, have started using new forms and styles of communication such as Colloquial Arabic and non-classical Arabic, or even Arabizi, i.e., using their own dialects, when they communicate in writing on social media.[110]

Many studies have pointed to the impact of social media, especially Facebook, on the attrition of the Arabic language and the decline in linguistic proficiency, as manifested in the use of Colloquial instead of classical

108. Khaled, A. The Politics of Language in Algerian Education. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023. Accessed 19 September 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/07/2023/the-politics-of-language-in-algerian-education?lang=en.

109. Zayed, Manal, Hamdi Mousa, and Mohamed Elmenshawy. "Sentiment Analysis for Arabic Social Media." IJCI. International Journal of Computers and Information 7, no. 31-14 :(2020) 1. https://doi.org/10.21608/ijci.2020.16170.1004

110. Sadat, Fatiha, Farzindar Kazemi, and Atefeh Farzindar. "Automatic identification of arabic language varieties and dialects in social media." In Proceedings of the Second Workshop on Natural Language Processing for Social Media (SocialNLP), pp. .27-22 2014.

Arabic, the use of foreign words despite the existence of Arabic equivalents for them, and spelling errors. A sample of Facebook posts and a set of spelling errors on Facebook were randomly selected and analysed, while samples from university students and teachers were surveyed to find the reasons for this new sociolinguistic phenomenon. It was found that most educated adult Facebook users use Arabizi and Colloquial Arabic. Some Arabic posts are written entirely in Arabizi instead of written in Arabic script. English words are copied and inserted into Arabic posts. Many adult Facebook users completely ignore the spelling rules of classical Arabic. They spell words the way they pronounce them in their own dialects. Users seem to be unaware of word boundaries, cannot associate phonemes with the letter they represent, and cannot distinguish vowel lengths.[111] Participants reported that it is easier for them to express themselves in Colloquial Arabic. They feel that they are talking to others, not writing. Therefore, they write the way they speak and do not think about spelling and grammar.

The Arabic language is transforming which is indicated in standard forms and grammatical rules of languages have deteriorated due to social media and the new forms of communication it promotes.[112] When writing a text, punctuation is often neglected, and communication using emoji's, emoticons, and images instead of words has become common. Like other languages, the Arabic language used on social media is changing. A review of the literature has shown a number of studies that have investigated the impact of social media and online communication on Arabic.[113]

Additionally, there are challenges posed by the informal use of Arabic on existing platforms, often leading to the preference of dialects over MSA and the incorporation of foreign languages. To address these trends, new platforms can be designed to encourage the use of MSA and dialects in a structured manner, and foster a more robust language environment. The development of a dedicated Arabic social media platform represents a promising avenue to promote Arabic and alleviate language attrition.

One key strategy for creating these platforms is to integrate educational features that promote the use of MSA alongside colloquial forms. For example, platforms can offer language learning tools, such as interactive quizzes, vocabulary builders, and grammar checkers specifically designed for Arabic. These tools can be designed to engage users in an interactive way, making language learning part of their social media experience. Incorporating gamification elements, such as rewards for using MSA correctly or completing language challenges, can further motivate users to improve their language skills while engaging in social interactions. These communities could include discussion forums and moderated chat rooms where users are encouraged to communicate in MSA, thus enhancing their language skills through practice and peer interaction.

Furthermore, leveraging insights from studies on the impact of language environments on language proficiency can guide the design of these platforms. Where the favourable language environment significantly enhances language skills. Therefore, creating virtual communities within the platform where users can practice MSA in a supportive environment can be beneficial.

In addition to educational features, the platform could leverage advanced natural language processing techniques to facilitate effective communication in Arabic. For example, tools that automatically correct

111. Zayed, Manal, Hamdi Mousa, and Mohamed Elmenshawy. "Sentiment Analysis for Arabic Social Media." IJCI. International Journal of Computers and Information 7, no. 31-14 :(2020) 1.   https://doi.org/10.21608/ijci.2020.16170.1004
112. Al-Jarf, Reima. "Effect of Social Media on Arabic Language Attrition." Online Submission (2019).
113. Ibid.

spelling and grammar in real time could help users learn from their mistakes and gradually improve their Standard Arabic proficiency.[114]

Furthermore, the platform could integrate sentiment analysis tools to measure user engagement and satisfaction. By analysing user interactions and feedback, developers can continually improve the platform's features to better meet the needs of Arabic speakers.[115] This approach is in line with the growing recognition of the importance of sentiment analysis in understanding user behaviour on social media. By tailoring the platform to user preferences, it can foster a more engaging and supportive environment for Arabic learners and speakers. To ensure the platform's success, it is essential to address the challenges posed by the diverse dialects and linguistic differences within the Arabic language. Developing a system that can automatically recognise and classify different Arabic dialects will be crucial to creating a user-friendly experience.[116] This could include machine learning algorithms that analyse user-generated content and adapt platform features accordingly, providing users with relevant resources and connections based on their linguistic background. Such a system will not only enhance the user experience but will also promote inclusivity by recognising the linguistic diversity within the Arabic-speaking community.

114. Wang, Hao, Ayman Hanafy, Mohamed Bahgat, Sara Noeman, Ossama Emam, and Vijay R. Bommireddipalli, 2015. "A system for extracting sentiment from large-scale arabic social data", https://doi.org/10.1109/acling.2015.17

115. Al Ajrami, Muna. "The Dilemma of Arabicization in the the Arab World: Problems and Solutions." Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 5, No. 10, October 2015.

116. Albantani, Azkia Muharom. "Social media as alternative media for arabic teaching in digital era." Alsinatuna 4, no. 2 (2019): 148-161. https://doi.org/10.28918/alsinatuna.v4i2.2043

Conclusion

The main driver of language attrition is globalisation, which encompasses a wide range of interrelated issues that all have an impact on the loss of Arabic language proficiency. Fundamentally, globalisation promotes the domination of international languages like English and French while marginalising others, speeding up cultural interchange and economic integration. People's original languages gradually disappear as a result of them adopting the language of their new surroundings when they migrate in search for better educational or economic opportunities. The usage of regional languages declines even further because of urbanisation, as more people relocate to cities where national or international languages predominate in public spaces, workplaces, and educational institutions.

The adoption of a new dominant language for survival and social integration is accelerated by political instability, particularly in conflict zones where displacement causes entire communities to resettle in areas where their native language may not be spoken. Intermarriage between people of different nationalities is another effect of globalisation that encourages the use of a common, frequently global language in the household and reduces the likelihood of transmission of legacy languages to subsequent generations. Furthermore, widely spoken languages are given priority by the globalised media, especially through the internet, entertainment, and social media. This has led to a situation where proficiency in global languages is closely associated with social position, education, and communication. Moreover, global languages are being prioritised above regional ones in national education systems, which is another effect. The phenomenon of Arabic language attrition is thus primarily caused by the broader force of globalisation, of which all these factors — migration, economic development, political instability, urbanisation, communication language, education, and intermarriage, — are symptoms. Furthermore, these factors are interconnected and influence one another.

In this context, the Gulf countries are especially vulnerable to language attrition, especially among younger generations, which has been attributed to the influx of expatriate workers and the predominance of foreign languages, like English and French, in the business, education, and media sectors. Arabic, especially the classical form, is becoming less relevant in many Gulf states where bilingualism or even a preference for English is becoming more widespread. This change is accelerated by the region's strong reliance on international trade and workforce, which puts Gulf countries at the forefront of the linguistic issues endangering the Arabic language.

While the Arab World is witnessing a process of language attrition, implications go beyond mere linguistic losses. Language attrition is accompanied and strengthened by the existence of political instability. Language attrition is also caused by and manifested in inequalities in different realms including education and the job market. Inequalities leads to the formation of societal groups segregated along economic and social lines. The gap is further along the process of language attrition which might be evolved into language decline and then death causing grievance, and loss of identity and sense of belonginess. This situation will ultimately lead to a vicious cycle of violence coupled with continuous degradation of the Arabic language. In this case, two future scenarios are possible; the first one is that political instability will result in turning the region into a bunch of failed states mired in their internal political divisions. The second scenario, expected to be accompanied with language death, is a scenario of Balkanisation. In this scenario, regional map would be re-drawn based on a new reality created by the formation of deep divisions in the identity which in turn leads to the formation of violent secessionist groups calling for the creation of new states based on a new reality.

Nevertheless, such scenarios could be mitigated through several measures including the preservation of Arabic. A language's promotion and preservation depend heavily on soft power, which is the ability to change people's attitudes and values through cultural and economic methods. Languages can be promoted in symbolic domains, integrated into education and business, and promoted internationally through cultural exports to increase their prestige, which is crucial for language preservation. Promoting language is greatly supported by culture, especially art, music, film, and television. The success of Turkish soap operas and K-pop, for instance, serve as prime examples of how cultural exports can effectively promote language learning. A country's wealth can also be utilized to encourage language instruction, create language learning centres, and fund cultural exchange initiatives. The preservation of language also requires government regulations where Arab states ought to pass legislation making Arabic the official language of communication in public and government agencies. Arabic language should be given priority in education and higher education systems. The informal use of Arabic on social media might present difficulties, but technology can also be an effective instrument for language promotion through the creation of an Arabic social media platform. Arab states can guarantee the survival and expansion of the Arabic language by increasing linguistic prestige, employing soft power, and tackling the obstacles presented by technology.

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