
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Translanguaging on Social Media by Educated Arabs

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| ABSTRACT

Translanguaging is the ability to move smoothly between the languages that a person knows. A sample of Facebook posts written by a sample of educated Arabs was collected. All the participants are native speakers of Arabic and have a good command of English or French as English/French was the medium of instruction in their major area of specialization such as medicine, computer, and engineering. The study aims to find out whether educated Arabs are capable of communicating equally well in both English/French (L2) and Arabic (L1) especially that Arabic is diglossic having a standard form used in school textbooks, print material and formal situations and a colloquial form used in daily communication with family and friends. Data analysis showed that most educated Arabs are incapable of translanguaging. They communicate better and are more proficient in English/French than Arabic. Their weaknesses are manifested in their use of slang and Colloquial Arabic rather than Standard Arabic. Many completely ignore Standard Arabic spelling and grammar rules. They spell words the way they pronounce them in their local dialect. Many make agreement, definite article attachment, plural formation, and derivation errors. They code mix, i.e., transliterate English/French words and insert them in Arabic posts (cases الكيسر, schemes اسكيمز, share شير). They do not seem to know the Arabic equivalents of simple general and specialized English/French words (center سنتر, neuro نيورو, maps المابس). They even substitute simple Arabic words with English ones (shoes, fans, café, like, comment). It seems that educated Arabs are unable to think in L1 and L2 simultaneously. Their knowledge of English/French surpasses that of Arabic. They transfer the foreign pronunciation and structures to Arabic. Recommendations for reinforcing the native language and enhancing translanguaging skills are given.

| KEYWORDS

Translanguaging, bilingualism, educated Arabs, social media language, Facebook, national language, foreign language, code-switching

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 February 2023

PUBLISHED: 06 February 2025

DOI: 10.32996/ijls.2025.5.1.1

1. Introduction

The term *translanguaging* appeared in the 1980's, when Williams used it to describe the practice of using two languages in the same lesson, which differed from many previous methods of bilingual education that separated languages by day, time or class. Currently, translanguaging is a multi-faceted concept that refers to various aspects of multilingualism and the way bilinguals and multilinguals use their linguistic abilities to make sense of and interact with the world around them (Wei, 2017). It is the ability to move smoothly between the languages that a person knows. It also refers to pedagogical approaches that utilize more than one language within a classroom session (García & Wei, 2015). García, among others, added that translanguaging is an extension of the concept "*languaging*" in which language speakers simultaneously switch between multiple languages. In this dynamic process, multilingual speakers navigate complex social and cognitive demands through a strategic utilization of multiple languages.

In addition, translanguaging is a major theory in applied linguistics that has affected policy and practice in a number of fields, as bilingual and multilingual education, language teaching and learning, multi-literacies, language attitudes, language and identity, language and ideology and others. It covers issues of language production, effective communication, the function of language, and the thought processes behind language use in pedagogical settings and any situation experienced by multilingual speakers, who constitute most language communities in the world (Wei, 2014).

Being a major theory in applied linguistics, and with the latest advancements in technology and AI, especially social media platforms, new language practices on social media have evolved. A review of the literature revealed numerous studies in some countries such as Rwanda, Italy, China, Turkey, Malaysia and Hong Kong that investigated translanguaging, in general, and translanguaging on social media sites such as WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat, TikTok, Facebook, and instructional videos, in particular. The first line of research focused in translanguaging on social media as in translanguaging and social media (Tankosić, Dryden & Dovchin, 2022); English language and social media (Tagg, 2020); Vlog as a multimodal translanguaging space in a Turkish social media influencer corpus (Misir, 2023); translanguaging dynamics in the digital landscape with insights from a social media corpus (Misir & Işık Güler, 2024); translanguaging on Facebook as a conduit to communicate (Oliver & McCarthy, 2019); translanguaging in the Rwandan social media as a new meaning making practice in a changing society (Niyibizi, Niyomugabo & Perumal, 2021); translanguaging in self-praise on Chinese social media (Ren & Guo, 2024); translanguaging practices in the promotion of products in business-related Instagrams (Karunakaran & Luan, (2021); translanguaging strategies and online self-presentation through internet slang on Douyin (Chinese TikTok) (Li, & Wang, 2024); translanguaging creativity and subversiveness in Kongish Daily (Wei, Tsang, Wong & Lok, 2020); translanguaging and refusal strategies, distribution, and functions on Chinese social media (Ma & Li, 2024) and others.

The second line of research explored the relationship between translanguaging and identity as translingual Englishes, Facebook and authenticities (ideologies) on social media (Fang, 2024); translanguaging and the liquidity of identity (Wei & Lee, 2023); the construction of heterogeneous and fluid identities in translanguaging on WeChat (Li & Huang, 2021); translanguaging practices and identity construction in multilingual Malaysian university graduates in digital media (Ng & Lee, 2019); the relationship between online translanguaging practices and Chinese teenagers' self-identities (Zhang, 2018) and others.

The third line of research examined translanguaging practices of children, teenagers, older students and teachers in educational settings as young Chinese immigrant children's language and literacy practices on social media from a translanguaging perspective (Zhao & Flewitt, 2020); Italian youth's translanguaging practices on social media (Casiraghi, 2024); pragmatic translanguaging as shown in multilingual practice in adolescent online discourse (Nightingale & Safont, 2019); Chinese young people's attitudes towards translanguaging in self-praise on social media (Ren, Guo & Wei, 2022); the construction of translanguaging space through digital multimodal composing as exhibited by students' creation of instructional videos (Ho, 2022); translanguaging as transnational spaces as revealed by Chinese visiting scholars' language practices on WeChat (Han, 2020); creativity nurtured language play in the context of a Chinese digital social media as revealed by Chinese university students' translanguaging hybrids on WeChat (Qi & Li, 2023); translanguaging on social media as an output for FLT didactics (Dumrukci, 2020) and translanguaging/trans-semiotizing in teacher-learner interactions on social media (Chen, Zhang & Huang, 2022).

The fourth line of research specifically investigated Arabic speakers translanguaging practices on social media. For example, a study by Warschauer, El Said & Zohry (2006) analyzed Arabic and English language use in online communications by a group of young Egyptian professionals and found that English is overwhelmingly used on the Web and in formal e-mail communication, whereas a Romanized version of Egyptian Arabic, i.e. Colloquial Arabic (CA) written in Romanized script is extensively used in informal e-mail messages and online chats.

In a similar study in Jordan, Al-Saleem (2011) examined how social media might affect the identities and language of undergraduate Jordanian students, especially their online written language, and Facebook's impact on language and identity. The researcher reported that English is the dominant language used online. Standard Arabic in Arabic Script was rarely used by any of the participants in their Facebook chats. Rather, online communication on Facebook featured a new and unusual diglossia between a foreign language vis English and Colloquial Arabic.

In Algeria, Chelghoum (2017) surveyed 78 Arab users of Facebook (32 English language Algerian students and 46 Facebook users from different Arab countries between 18-34 years old to find out their use of Arabic language on social media, specifically, Facebook, and the extent to which it can affect Standard and Colloquial Arabic. The students reported that they seldom use Standard Arabic on Facebook. English, Colloquial Arabic and sometimes French are mostly used. Arabic dialects dominate most Facebook posts using both the Arabic alphabet and/or Romanized script.

In the UAE and Egypt, Darwish (2017) explored diglossia and language attrition on social media. He found that local Arabic dialects are the dominant form used by Arab youth. Standard Arabic written in Arabic Script is not common among Arab youth. Most Arab youth who went to private schools prefer to use either English or French, a mixture of languages or Colloquial Arabic in Romanized script. Darwish (2017) concluded that social media have a great impact on language use by young people, language attrition and identity. Moving from one language to another within the same conversation denotes a shift from one identity to another.

Moreover, Khedher, Abandah, Al-Anati, Ababneh, Zghoul and Hattab (2015) explored the effect of the topic on the use of Standard vs Colloquial Arabic. They analyzed a sample of 8,538 religious, scientific, sports, arts, social, political, economic, and academic texts collected from five forums according to the language used (Arabic, English, or mixed); the alphabet used (Arabic, English, or Romanized); the dialect used (Standard, Colloquial, or mixed); the style used (normal, metaphorical, cynical, vulgar, or other); the use of symbols; and text cohesion level. Findings showed that Standard Arabic is common in serious topics such as religious and political texts, whereas Colloquial Arabic and weak cohesion, with Romanized script, are more common in casual social and academic topics.

A similar study by Qudah (2019) examined the effect of topic, age, gender, and social context on the use of Standard Arabic and the conditions under which Arabic diglossia appears on Facebook and Twitter. It was found that the young generation tends to use the Jordanian Arabic dialect more than Standard Arabic. Standard Arabic is used in tweets and posts discussing news, political issues, and religion. On the contrary, Colloquial Arabic is used for discussing informal topics related to sports, personal activities, fashion, and music. Age and topic were found to be the most important factors affecting the choice of linguistic code on social media. Standard Arabic is used by educated Arabs to show seriousness and value, whereas Colloquial Arabic is used in talking about everyday activities and interacting with each other.

In Saudi Arabia, Albawardi (2018) analyzed female university students' WhatsApp interactions to find out how they use language especially Arabic, in their digitally mediated interactions, how they enact their cultural identities and how they manage their social relationships. Results showed that Saudi female students were not simply switching from one code to another, or from one mode to another; rather, they were engaged in fluid language practices embedded in social relationships. The digital media use of language had an effect on the literacy, cultural values, and social relationships of female students studying English as their major.

Another study by Alenazi (2023) examined the effect of social media on Arabic vocabulary to find out why Arabic speakers use English words instead of Arabic words in their speech and writing. Results of a questionnaire administered to 388 Saudi men and women of different ages, and educational backgrounds revealed a significant effect of social media on Arabic vocabulary. Social media platforms contribute to the spread of English words, rather than Arabic words, in the Saudi society.

Regarding spelling and transliteration variations, inaccuracies, and deviations on Facebook, a number of studies were conducted by the author such as non-conventional spelling in informal, colloquial Arabic writing on Facebook (Al-Jarf, 2023f); variant transliterations of the same Arabic personal names on Facebook (Al-Jarf, 2022d); absence of vowels in the English spelling of Arabic personal names (Al-Jarf, 2023a); gemination errors in transliterating Arabic names to English. (Al-Jarf, 2022c); variations and deviations in the English transliteration of Arabic personal names with the definite article /al/ (Al-Jarf, 2022b); variant and deviant English transliteration of the glottal stop and voiced pharyngeal fricative in Arabic personal names (Al-Jarf, 2023c); variant and deviant transliterations of Arabic compound personal names containing the prefixes عبد abd, أبو abu, and the suffix الدين -ddine to English by educated Arabs on Facebook (Al-Jarf, 2023b). Other studies that reported some linguistic weaknesses in Arabic users of Facebook are word formation with foreign affixes and, the emergence of hybrid lexemes containing foreign affixes as used in the media and names of stores (Al-Jarf, 2023e) and peculiar pluralization of borrowed English words in colloquial Arabic as in adding the Feminine Sound Plural to borrowed words with foreign plural nouns as in fans فانرات /fanz-a:t/, shoes شورات /ʃuz-a:t/; Jeans جينرات /dʒi:nz-a:t/ (Al-Jarf, 2023g).

The above prior studies that explored the effect of social media on Arabic focused on a specific group of users namely the young generation in some Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, and UAE. They investigated variables that determine the use of Standard versus Colloquial Arabic, English or Arabic, Arabic written in Arabic script or Arabic written in Romanized script. They mainly used questionnaire-surveys. However, none of the prior studies investigated social media users' ability to move smoothly between the languages that they know, namely English or French and Arabic and whether they are proficient in both Arabic (L1) and English/French (L2). Therefore, the present study aims to examine the effects of social media sites, specifically Facebook on educated Arabs' translanguaging ability and whether they are capable of communicating equally well in both Arabic (L1) and English/French (L2) taking into consideration that Arabic is diglossic having a standard form used in school textbooks, print material, news TV, and formal situations and a colloquial form used in daily communication with family

and friends, while shopping, talking about daily activities and others. Specifically, this study aims to shed light on the following: (i) the decrease in Arabic language proficiency among educated Arab adult Facebook users; (ii) educated Arabs' ability to use Standard Arabic; (iii) the common use of Colloquial Arabic whether written in Arabic or Romanized script; (iv) whether they use Romanized script more than Arabic script; (v) whether they use foreign words (English or French), although Arabic equivalents exist, i.e., mixing Arabic words with foreign words in communication; (vi) their spelling competence in both English and Arabic, i.e., whether they make Arabic spelling errors, and (vii) why educated Arab adult Facebook users prefer to use those linguistic and paralinguistic devices.

Findings of the present study will be based on a content analysis of a sample of Facebook posts and comments. A sample of adult Arab Facebook users will be surveyed to find out the reasons for this new socio-linguistic phenomenon while translanguaging on Facebook.

Results about the negative effects of Facebook on educated Arab users' translanguaging ability will help Facebook users of all ages, in all Arab countries discern how the different linguistic behaviours in Facebook communication are affecting their linguistic competence. Findings of this study will also draw the attention of educators, policymakers and linguists to an alarming reality and will provide evidence regarding educated Arabis' translanguaging weaknesses on social media that show the need for setting educational policies for enhancing students' translanguaging ability and proficiency in both English and Arabic.

2. Data Collection & Analysis

2.1 Samples of Facebook Users

A random sample of 100 male and female Facebook users who are native speakers of Arabic was randomly selected. The sample included Facebook users from different Arab countries: Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and UAE. They speak a variety of Arabic dialects. They represent different age groups: 18 to 60+ years old. They have studied English or French in their major area of specialization such as computer science, medicine, engineering, business and others. For each of these 100 users, written posts and comments posted on the timeline for a week were collected. Thus, the corpus of Facebook discourse included 1,370 posts and comments.

2.2 Sample of Arabic Language Experts

A sample of 5 Arabic language professors was selected and used to judge the linguistic correctness of the sample posts and comments and identify the linguistic weaknesses in them.

2.3 Questionnaire-Surveys

The sample of educated Arabs was surveyed. They were asked open-ended questions about the reasons for translanguaging, inserting English and French words in Arabic posts and comments, using Colloquial Arabic, transliterating Arabic messages in Romanized script, using invented spelling and making spelling mistakes when communicating on Facebook.

2.4 Data Analysis

The unit of the Facebook discourse analysis chosen was the single post or comment regardless of its length and number of sentences contained in it. To assess educated Arab Facebook users' translanguaging ability, i.e. ability to use and express themselves in English and Arabic using correct structure and spelling, and their ability to use Standard vs Colloquial Arabic, each post or comment was analyzed and categorized in terms of the following:

- language styles used (English, Colloquial Arabic, Standard Arabic, Romanized Colloquial Arabic, Colloquial Arabic written in Arabic script, mixed styles). Data in each category were tallied, and percentages were computed for the whole sample. Results of the analysis are reported quantitatively and qualitatively.
- Misspellings in the spelling error sample were broken down into words + initial particles, initial prepositions, attached prepositions, clitic pronouns, relative pronouns, and definite articles. Misspellings were also analyzed in terms of deletion, addition (insertion) of vowels and consonants, confusion (substitution), conversion, reversal, combining words and/or morphemes, detachment of prepositions and other word parts, reduction (lengthening) of vowels, faulty hamza, vowels, consonants, and graphemes. Percentages of misspellings in each category were computed.
- Foreign words inserted in the Arabic posts and comments were located in the Facebook discourse sample, whether transliterated in Arabic or written in English or French, especially those for which Arabic equivalents exist.
- Idiosyncratic pluralization of loan words and hybrid lexical items consisting of a foreign affix + an Arabic root were identified.

The sample of posts and comments was double-checked, and the errors were verified by the panel of professors and were compared with the author's analysis. Disagreements were resolved by discussion. There was a 97% agreement among all raters.

- رائع جدا .حفظا لكرامة المهنة .لكن هناك تعليق يخص البند ٧ ما دخل **اليورتر** والعمال بتغيير وضع المريض ؟ هذه مهمة تمريضية بحتة ارجو ألا يكون قد استعصى علي المقصود من **البند** واساءت فهمه؟
- سلسلة الكتب دي فيها مجهود سنين كثير اوي و أنا بجددها باستمرار. هتلاقي فيها الفكرة و **architecture** بتاع كل موضوع في صفحه واحده و تقدر تزود عليه التفاصيل في كتاب فيه الباطنه كلها في ٣٥٠ ص و في كتاب صغير حوالي ٣٥ ص لكل **يرانش** ف الباطنه لوحده.
- من اجل **الشو** الإعلامي و اللقطة
- ياريت الناس تتفاعل مع **اليوست** ده و **تشيره** على اوسع نطاق.
- أن شاء الله اخر **السشن** ده هنوزع جوائز **اليورشور** و الشهادات علي كل الحضور أن شاء الله.
- يعني طالب **البريتش** هياخد تاريخ الي لسه الوزارة لاغياه من الثانويه المصريه سواء هو علمي او ادبي !!!! و ياخد عربي و دين و يمتحنهم في الوزارة و هي ماشاء الله عليها ممتازة في تنظيم الامتحانات و منع الغش و التسريب و ممتازة في التصحيح و عمل نموج الاجابه
- **وجريد** ٩ ليه يلغي امتحانه و يخليه تابع للمدرسة؟
- هو ليه يكون عليهم درجات أصلا. ده ظلم أغلب طلاب ال **IG** بيكونوا ضعاف شوية في العربي و صعب جداً يحلوا تفس امتحان الثانوية العامة
- الناس دي ناقصهم يمشوا بال **approach** بتاع حضرتك والله
- والكارثة مش الحياة العادية و بس الكارثة تشجيع **ماتشات** الكره و حفلات **وترندات**

Sometimes, they insert Arabic Islamic expressions (compliments, prayers), politeness formulas, and kinship address terms as in:

- *Happy Mother's Day to the best mum ever. Proud of u...and looooooove u without limits **moaaaaaa7. Allah yikhliki Lina o ydeemik tag foog rasna***

Some Arab specialists as medical doctors, engineers and computer scientists who have studied in English, insert English technical terms, even the simplest ones, in their Colloquial Arabic posts and comments, whether transliterated or left in their English form, with or without their Arabic equivalent or explanation (cases الكيسر, اسكيمز share, شير). They do not seem to know the Arabic equivalents of simple general and specialized English/French words as *center سنتر, neuro نيورو, maps المابس*. They even substitute simple Arabic words with English ones as *shoes, fans, café, like, comment*.

Although such specialists write very well in English, their ability to write in Standard Arabic is poor, i.e., their translanguaging ability is poor as in the above examples which are typical of posts written in Colloquial Arabic, with Standard Arabic phrases (underlined), transliterated foreign words (bold underlined) and foreign words in the English alphabet. The posts are full of spelling errors in Arabic (between 2-7 misspellings per line).

In addition, Facebook users use numerous English Facebook terminology such as "*share, comment, mention, like, profile, account, post, message, timeline, tweet, hashtag, tag, update, messenger, social media*, and general English words such as *look, class, maps, presentation, break, location, term* although Arabic equivalents to those terms and general words exist. Sometimes the foreign words are transliterated as in *سيستر, قروب, جروب, سياتيل, قرامر, ريدنج, التيتشر, قروب, جروب, سيستر* or inserted in their English form as in the following examples:

- صباح العيون العسلية 🍷 مش ☺️ **Lenses**
- فته ملوخية هذه جديدة. وين **الريسبي** دكتوره؟

3. Many Arab Facebook users completely ignore Standard Arabic spelling, punctuation and grammar rules. They spell words the way they pronounce them in their local dialect. The same word or phrase, in the same dialect, is spelled differently by different users and two different words are sometimes spelled the same. The following are some examples:

- Deletion of graphemes (35%) as in: *بشام, ولبيل, حزباله, ع صف, والديكتور, لشايفينو, ياون, شدعوة عينادو, لميتحركش, يخلصو, كانو, وشوف, ياون, يولاد. ف المكتب, فالشرقية, وانشالله, نشالله, مشالله فسرك, يولاد, فمان, يسطي,*
- Combining 2 words, a word and a detached particle, or preposition (28%) As in: *بديلك, تسلميلي بقالو, قاللي, بكتبلو, حزباله, السنادي, بعتهالها, قالهاله, حدشاييف, منعندو, يدكتور, مواركش, عنجد, فمان, بضمنلك, متقلقيش, مبيحصلش, مجاش, اليفتكر, اليسئلني, ندعيولهم, ولادايقي الهايكلو, مسالف, الفي, البلقطوا, البشعدوا, لشايفينو, شورائيه, الشخسامي*
- Substitution of graphemes with the same sound (27%) as in: *العظيم, فطيعة, ضروف, دهبت, دهري, ذبادي, تربيتج, اوي, مضبوطة, نضيف, وضهرج, استعملتو, اتو, اهلو, ح اقراهو, لاحقتو, لروحو, لشايفينو, منعندو, الهايكلو, دايمن, كشافن, البلادن, هتبنأ, شكران, شوكرن, حقيقتا, فتات, مصرياة, وخلصه, ردة, لقلت, لوفات, وقدمه, بقه, مسمه, اشاعه, حرجه, احلا, بتمنا, بقا, مستنى, ومرضى, ويتامي, سبتو, وبطنوا, وعمله, يتكلمه, بكارا, فكارا, للدرجادي, معانه, وربنه, ويحكلنه, كلنه, عليه/علي.*

- Confusing graphemes (19%) as in: الألف التتوين والنون، الفتحة والهاء، التاء المفتوحة والمربوطة، الألف والتاء المربوط، المدة والهمزة، المد الألف المقصورة، والياء المقصورة والتاء المربوطة، الهاء والتاء المربوطة، الياء والتاء المربوطة، الياء والهاء، الألف والألف المقصورة والهاء، الواو والهاء، الفتحة والهاء،
- Addition of vowels (16%) as in: با النص، بأمتياز، ماماتك، حيليتي، خلانتي، فا برضو، كا نوع، انتي، لكي، اشتقتي، انتا، فا بالله، ربانتي، زوعماء، المنخفيض، قومت، ح اقراهو، ابوكوا، عليكوا
- Shortening of long vowels (11%) as in: البجهم، بتنجان، بذنجان، برحتك، بضمنك، جعنين، حبيتي، حيين، داكرة، ديمة، ساعات، ي مدام، ياخونا، يولاد، مبلحش، يسمك، الشخصامي، الشخصسد، شورمه، الطوله، عوز، عيزه، فلحين، موضيع، وسيجيه يتولنا ماترف، محدش، وميتحركش، ام اشوف،
- Reduction of phrases and graphemes (10%) as in: لبنات، لجديد، لخارجيه، لخرة، لكبير، لمناصب، لولاد، ملوا لساحات، الولاد، الفي، لشايفينو، هل عم يقصف، اليفتكر، نشالله، وانشالله الهايكلو، مسالف، الهم، وقالي، ياله، اليل، يلا، نشالله، وانشالله، فاي، فخراب، يالله، مشالله.
- Lengthening of short vowels (9%) as in: إلكي، انتقلتي، انتي، قرأتي، قلتي، كنتي، لكي، يجزيكي تسعومية، سوا، عينا، فيا، عليهو، معايا، مندو، منكي، هيروض عليا، بي سلام، توافو، رائس، رائيك، شوكرن، فا احنا، فخوفت، لا يسماح، مودرس، فا أكيد.
- Faulty Hamza (glottal stop) (5%) as in: اتفاجنت، اسئل، اقرئوا، بداءت، البذائة، بتلك، التتمل، ثلبي، رائيك، سانت، شورائيه، عبئال، فداء، القبائل، المرء، مفاجاة، الموءمين، تتفاجئ، وتسؤ، وشئنه.
- Detachment of words and attached particles and prepositions (3.5%) as in: ع الشجرة، ف أنا، م علقت، عل أكيد، ف اعمل (منذ)

Many make agreement, definite article attachment, plural formation, derivation and other types of errors: Vowel errors (38%), pronoun errors (19%), particle errors (17.6%), attached preposition errors (12%), consonant errors (7.6%), pause and juncture errors (8%), definite article errors (8%), double /l/ + relative pronoun + Allah (8%), hamza errors, i.e., glottal stop errors (7.6%), and silent grapheme errors (6%).

Some use non-Standard, invented spelling. Slang words are spelled in invented ways that deviate from Standard Arabic spelling, as in "فماني" instead of "في أمان الله"; "يا حافظ" instead of "يحافظ"; "فمنسي" instead of "في منسي"; "فبيوتهم" instead of "في بيوتهم"; "تكبروا" instead of "تكبروا"; "هي" instead of "هي"; "يوظفوكي" instead of "يوظفوك"; "جيين" instead of "جيين". They tend to spell words phonetically as they pronounce them, especially in cases of juncture within phrases. In some cases, the attached form of Arabic letters in word medial position is used in word final position. Diacritics are misplaced in others as in: ثيووت عنكبوت، أنما الدنيا فناء تقريباً يومياً لك انك له منه بسمه امانه.

3.2 Participants' Views of Their Inadequate Translanguaging Skills

The subjects reported that it is easier for them to express themselves in slang and Colloquial Arabic, rather than Standard Arabic, which is more formal and inappropriate for casual communication and conversation on social media especially Facebook. They feel they are talking with each other, not writing. They think that it is more suitable to use Colloquial Arabic than Standard Arabic as they like to write the way they speak. They prefer to express their opinions in the spoken language, their vernacular, not Standard Arabic. Some medical doctors or preachers believe that they would reach a wider audience when they deliver information in the vernacular and write the way most Arab Facebook community writes as it is easier to comprehend by people from different backgrounds and educational levels. Some expressed their inability to use Standard Arabic as they have difficulty figuring out the correct spelling and grammar, even though Arab students use SA in grade school for 12 years and study all content courses such as religion courses, history, geography, social studies, religion math, science courses in Standard Arabic, in addition to Arabic poetry, grammar, reading, and composition courses in every grade level.

Educated Arab users of Facebook insert English words in Colloquial Arabic discourse as a habit. Some said:

- "It is fashionable and common practice nowadays".

It gives others the impression that they are high class, educated and civilized. Use of foreign words is due to the use of English in the workplace or because it is their specialty. Because they mix Arabic and English at the workplace, they do the same when they write and respond to others on Facebook. They believe that it is more glamorous and prestigious to use foreign words such as: *profile, post, share, comment, mention, hashtag* in their Facebook discourse.

- I unconsciously insert English words when I write on Facebook as I use English in college all the time.
- It is very common nowadays to use such words. Everybody writes like that on social media.

- *To show off and brag about knowing English.*

People like to imitate T.V. anchors, artists and singers who code-mix and insert foreign words in their speech and posts on social media.

The insertion of English and French words in Arabic discourse on Facebook reflects poor knowledge of and lack of proficiency in Standard Arabic and/or of Arabic equivalents of the foreign words that they use. Some said that they are not familiar with Arabic equivalents to the English words they use. Others are lazy and do not work hard to search for Arabic equivalents. They insert foreign words in Arabic discourse as a social class identity, education and modernization marker.

4. Discussion & Recommendations

It seems that educated Arabs are unable to switch from L1 (Arabic) to L2 (English) and vice versa with equal proficiency. They use Colloquial instead of Standard Arabic, use foreign words although Arabic equivalents exist, and commit spelling errors. They completely ignore Standard Arabic spelling rules. They spell words the way they pronounce them in their vernacular. They cannot connect phonemes with the graphemes they represent, do not seem to recognize word boundaries, and cannot distinguish vowel length. Their knowledge of English/French surpasses that of Standard Arabic especially as in the case of users who studied college in English or French.

The linguistic phenomenon, observed in the current study on social media is not unique to Arabic-speaking users on Facebook and but is also common among social media users using other languages such as English, Chinese and Japanese, as reported by prior studies mentioned above. It is also consistent with the language forms found on social media in the Arabic studies reported above which showed that Arab users of social media extensively use Colloquial Arabic written in Arabic script or transliterated in Romanized script more than Standard Arabic because they believe that these forms are trendy in social media communication, it is a casual and informal form that Facebook users use to communicate with friends (Warschauer, El Said & Zohry, 2006); Al-Saleem, 2011); Chelghoum, 2017); Darwish, 2017); Khedher, Abandah, Al-Anati, Ababneh, Zghoul and Hattab, 2015); Qudah, 2019); Albawardi, 2018); Al-Jarf, 2011b).

The language forms, multiple deviations and inaccuracies in the spelling and transliteration of words, found in the current study, complement and reinforce findings of prior studies in the literature that show other spelling and transliteration weaknesses as the absence of vowels, gemination errors, glottal stop and voiced pharyngeal fricative transliteration errors, variant and deviant transliterations of the same Arabic personal names, variant spelling of the definite article /al/, and compound personal names containing the prefixes عبد abd, أبو abu, and the suffix الدين -ddine; the emergence of hybrid lexemes containing foreign affixes added to pure Arabic words, and adding the Feminine Sound Plural suffix /a:t/ to borrowed English words ending in /z/ or /-iz/ as in fans فانزات /fanz-a:t/, shoes شوزات /ʃuz:-a:t/; Jeans جينزات /dʒi:nz-a:t/ (Al-Jarf, 2023f; Al-Jarf, 2022d; Al-Jarf, 2023a; Al-Jarf, 2022c; Al-Jarf, 2022b; Al-Jarf, 2023c; Al-Jarf, 2023b; (Al-Jarf, 2023e; Al-Jarf, 2023g). These drastic spelling errors found on social media in the current study, and in prior studies, are threatening the status of the Arabic language and might eventually lead to its deterioration (Al-Jarf, 2021a; Al-Jarf, 2019).

Furthermore, the code-mixing and insertion of English words in Arabic posts, although Arabic equivalents exist, is also consistent with findings of prior studies by Al-Jarf (2016) and Al-Jarf (2011a). The mixing of English and Arabic by educated Arabs is not limited to Facebook posts and comments. It has been extended to shop and hotel names as shown by Al-Jarf (2022a) who reported that 64% of the shops in Saudi Arabia have foreign names (25% international foreign names and 39% local names); 24% have pure Arabic names and 12% have mixed names. This is because shop owners think it is more glamorous to use a foreign name as it is associated with modernity, prestige, and elitism. They added that in Arab people's cognition, foreign names are connected with high quality. The Arabic culture and Arab people look at English as more sophisticated and fancier than Arabic. An English shop name has a different effect than an Arabic name. Similarly, Al-Jarf (2021b) found that global culture is reflected in retaining the names of international hotel chains such as "*Hilton, Sheraton, Marriott*" and hotel names in Riyadh combine a local designation with an English or French descriptor such as "*Coral, Crowne, Tower, Plaza, Palace Royale*" as in (*AlFahd Crown; AlFanan Palace, Coral AlHamra*).

Facebook Arab users who insert foreign words in their Arabic Facebook posts do so because they feel that English is superior to Arabic because it is a global language used and needed in many domains. Some prior studies showed that Arab students believe English is more suitable for college courses such as medicine, engineering, and computer science, whereas Arabic is more suitable for Arabic literature, history, education and religion courses. They advocate English and use it more frequently than Arabic as it was the language of their college studies (Al-Jarf, 2008; Al-Jarf, 2005a; Al-Jarf, 2004a; Al-Jarf, 2004b. Even 75% of a sample of parents Al-in Al-Jarf's (2023d) study prefer to teach English to their children starting from kindergarten.

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