The Call for Colloquialisms: Origins and Remedies

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Abstract

This research aims at discovering the gap between Standard Arabic and the current spoken varieties of Arabic due to social, educational, political, colonial, and media factors. The researcher will try to also analyse the causes of the current gap and suggest remedies.Standard Arabic (SA) or FuSha (the Arabic term for 'standard Arabic') is the language used for recording intellectual output in general, while spoken varieties or colloquialisms are used for everyday needs. SA has relatively fixed governing rules, whereas colloquialisms are relatively spontaneous and are subject to change according to the change of generations and the surrounding circumstances. This existence of dialects next to the standard is a general phenomenon in all living languages (Arabic spoken varieties are inherent for more than 1500 years). Hence, the existence of spoken Arabic varieties is not odd among languages. This research tries to highlight the colonial, educational, political and media factors that deliberately intensifies the gap between SA and spoken varieties as well as being behind the call to adopt spoken varieties instead of SA.

Keywords: Arabic Colloquialisms: social, educational, political, colonial factors

1. Introduction

Standard Arabic (SA) or FuSha (the Arabic term for 'standard Arabic') is the language used for recording intellectual output in general, while spoken varieties or colloquialisms are used for everyday needs. SA has relatively fixed governing rules, whereas colloquialisms are relatively spontaneous and are subject to change according to the change of generations and the surrounding circumstances. This existence of dialects next to the standard is a general phenomenon in all living languages (Arabic spoken varieties are inherent for more than 1500 years). Hence, the existence of spoken Arabic varieties is not odd among languages (see Salah 2006).

The fact that SA has been intelligible to users of spoken Arabic varieties over 1500 years is unique. This advantage exists in Arabic because of the Holy Qur'an that truly kept the language unified and protected from being broken into several languages. Colloquialisms draw on SA for their vocabulary and grammar with varying degrees of flexibility in grammar.

SA (which itself was one of the spoken dialects in the Arabian Peninsula) was chosen to be the literary language for Arabs many years before the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Those Arabs who made the choice of SA as a literary language had had their own dialects. This choice of SA was not made haphazardly but because of certain characteristics that SA (the dialect of the tribe of Quraysh) enjoys over other dialects in the Arabian Peninsula. (See Salah 2006).

However, early spoken varieties of Arabic did not disappear but have survived in current spoken varieties of Arabic. Most current colloquialisms lack certain expected grammatical inflections which had already been lost in ancestral spoken varieties of Arabic. The spread of spoken varieties of Arabic among Arabs and the prevalence of colloquialisms had led Arabic linguists to write treatises drawing attention to errors in common speech, in order to encourage people to use correct forms. The first such book to appear was *Mistakes of the Public*, written in the year 810 A.D. by the Arab linguist Al-Kisa'i. Several works followed dealing with the same topic. Such books did not aim at studying colloquialisms but aimed at serving SA by correcting the common mistakes of everyday Arabic speakers. This was done to protect SA from any change and to bridge the gap between Standard and colloquialisms by educating the masses as well as creating awareness of ungrammatical or incorrect usage. Colloquialisms remained the tool of everyday life but never were the language of literature.

2. The Call for Colloquialisms and the Concept of Diglossia

The interest of the west in the study of Arabic dialects is not new; it goes back to 1727 when the Naples School for Oriental Studies was established as Sa'id (1980) states. Several schools for teaching Arabic spoken varieties were founded in Europe, following the example of the Naples school; books for teaching the dialects, written by Arabs in European languages started to appear (see Sa'id 1980:9-42). However, the call for colloquialism did not appear until the year 1880 when the German Wilhelm Spitta (director of the Egyptian National Library during the British occupation to Egypt) wrote a book entitled *The Grammar of the Spoken Arabic Egyptian*. In his book, Spitta called for replacing SA with spoken Egyptian colloquialisms, and urged that colloquial Egyptian be treated as a literary language. He concludes with a recommendation that the Latin script be used for writing colloquial Egyptian instead of Arabic script, trying to

convince the readers that SA is as remote from spoken Egyptian as Latin is from the Romance languages. Spitta also assured his readers that if his proposal were accepted Arabic will be restricted to religious purposes just as Latin had been.

Ten years later, in 1890, another German scholar, K. Vollers (Spitta's successor as director of the Egyptian National Library) authored a book in German which was translated into English in 1895 under the title *The Modern Egyptian Dialect of Arabic*. Like Spitta, Vollers dealt in his book only with the dialect of Cairo. He made the same allegation, that SA is rigid while spoken Egyptian is a living language. Therefore, he argued, Egyptians should take their spoken variety as a national language and write it with Latin letters (see Sa'id: 1980).

These two Germans, Spitta and Vollers, are considered the founders of the call for colloquialism in Egypt. Hence, it is not surprising that the first to coin the term diglossia to describe the Arabic lingual situation was the German Krumbacher in 1902, although he had initially restricted his work to examining the relation between the oral and the written varieties of Greek (see Britto: 1986, Hary: 1992).

The call for colloquialism was resumed in the year 1901 by the British judge Selden Willmore who wrote a book in English called *The Spoken Arabic of Egypt*. Willmore praised the work of Spitta and made the same call for use of the colloquial dialect of Cairo as a standard literary language for Egypt. He supported his call by claiming that the origin of the Egyptian language is not Arabic but Punic. Punic is said to be the European mother language of the Maltese language. However, Punic was originally the dialect of the Arab Phoenicians who first inhabited Palestine and Lebanon. Modern Maltese is a variety of spoken Lebanese Arabic, but has been assigned to the status of a European language (see Versteegh 2003: 209-211 and Salah 2006).

 Willmore recommended that this Egyptian language should be written in Latin script instead of Arabic for convenience and to connect Egypt with its western origins. He also criticized Arabic as being a difficult language, and accused all books of Arabic grammar as being dull and useless by referring to what Spitta had written about Arabic grammar. He ended his book with a plea to the Egyptian government to help him in achieving his goal of replacing SA by the colloquial dialect of Cairo because he wanted to participate in the spiritual development of the Egyptian people who were sorely in need of this help (see Sa'id 1980:25-29).

In 1926, A. Powell (a judge of the civil Egyptian courts) wrote a book together with professor D.C. Phillott (a professor at Cambridge University) entitled *Manual of Egyptian Arabic*. The book contained humorous slang and anecdotes in the dialect of Cairo as materials for discussion. The two authors repeated the call to replace SA with the Egyptian dialect and to use Latin letters instead of the Arabic alphabet because this "will regain for the Egyptian language its lost dignity" (quoted in Sa'id 1980:30).

Among those who called strongly for colloquialism was William Willcocks who came to Egypt in 1883 as a minister of irrigation under the British mandate government. Willcocks made known his strong opposition to SA by publishing a number of articles and giving many lectures to propagate his ideas among educated Egyptians. Among his famous lectures was one given in 1893 entitled *Why Egyptians Lack the Power of Invention Now* which he also published in *Al-Azhar* magazine in the same year (in Sa'id 1980:32-42). In his lecture, Willcocks relates the lack of invention in Egypt at that period of time to the use of SA as a literary language. Willcocks states in this lecture that "Arabic is an artificial language which Egyptians learn as foreign language: if it reached the head it will never reach the heart. Studying it is a mental slavery. This language has hindered the Egyptians from development and possessing the power of invention" (quoted in Sa'id 1980:39). He strongly recommended the use of colloquial Egyptian (the dialect of Cairo) to replace SA which he claimed would not allow the expression of original thought. Willcocks also insisted in this lecture and in several articles which he later wrote that "Syria, Egypt, North Africa and Malta speak Punic not Arabic". He preferred that the new Egyptian language should be written in Latin not Arabic letters since this would attach Egyptians more closely to the developed world and give Egyptians the power of original thinking. Willcocks promoted the use of colloquial Egyptian as a literary language by writing several articles and translating English literature into one of the Egyptian colloquialisms (the Cairene dialect, which he claimed to be the spoken tongue of all Egyptians: he called it "the Egyptian language"). He translated *Hamlet*, *Henry IV* (part one and two) and the Bible into one of the Egyptian dialects. Willcocks spent 40 years of his life in Egypt fighting SA and propagating spoken varieties of Arabic writing articles in *Al-Azhar* magazine which he took charge of in 1893 (see Sa'id 1980:30-42).

In a quick look at the works of those who called for colloquialism in Egypt we will see that all of them agreed on certain ideas:

    1-   Standard Arabic should be abandoned

    2-   The Egyptian dialect (assuming that all Egyptians speak one dialect) should be used as a literary language instead of Standard.

    3-   They all considered the dialects of Cairo as one dialect, and as the only dialect in Egypt and completely neglected the Sa'eedi dialects (the dialect of the majority of the Egyptian population), the rural dialects, and the Bedouin dialects.

    4-   They all believed that the new Egyptian language should be written in Latin letters not the Arabic alphabet.

    5-   They all made the same allegation that the Egyptian language is not Arabic, but Punic (Punic is the Arabic dialect of Phoenicians who inhabited Palestine and Lebanon).

6- They all asserted the idea that Egyptians are hindered from achieving any development because of the use of SA, since it is a dead language similar to the case of Latin.

The first question that would come across the reader's mind is why they all neglected the other Egyptian dialects. Why did they insist on using Latin letters rather than Arabic for the new Egyptian language? Why did all of them make the same false allegation that the so-called "Egyptian language" is not of Arabic origin but Punic? Why they insist that Punic is European language and not of Arabic origin? And why did all of them target the Egyptian dialect, and not any other spoken variety of Arabic?

It is clear that the British occupation intended fighting SA in the Arab world in general but intensified that campaign in Egypt because they understood that Egypt is the heart and the leading country of the Arab world. If the British occupation had been successful in achieving that in Egypt, then it would have been easy to apply in the rest of the Arab countries. The Arab world is unified by language, religion, history, and culture. Isolation of the language would cause the other elements which unify the Arab World to fall apart because the language is the key factor of all other elements - religion, history and culture. The British occupation of the Arab World was not unique since the French occupation of North Africa did the same thing in fighting Arabic, to the extent that teaching Arabic had to be done secretly in houses and mosques because teaching Arabic was a crime during the 120 years of the French occupation of the Arab countries of North Africa (see Al-Manasrah: 1999, Al-Ziyadi: 1998, Bin-Tinbak: 1986).

Versteegh (2003:132) noted that:

> In the nineteen century… even in Egypt many people felt that the role of the Classical language as the uniting factor in the Arab world was threatened by too much attention to the dialects, symbols of the fragmentation of the Arab world. There was some truth in this suspicion, since in some cases the colonial authorities actively promoted the use of dialects. In Algeria, for instance, the French for some time outlawed the teaching of Classical Arabic, which was replaced by the Algerian dialect, and in Egypt the British authorities actively supported experiments by Orientalists to replace the Arabic script with the Latin script as a medium for the Egyptian dialect. As a result, dialectology became associated with the divisive policy of the colonial authorities, and the dialectologist was regarded as a tool of imperialism.

What is really interesting is that none of the scholars who called for colloquialism as a mean of developing the Arab mind discussed what was an overwhelming problem in the Arab World at the time of occupation and is so still at the present time -- illiteracy.

In the current age of fast communication and development of information, the Arab World is still hindered by high rates of illiteracy. 70 million people in the Arab world in the age group 15-35 are illiterate, according to a UNESCO report published in 2003. The rates of literacy in Egypt in the year 2000 were only 60.6 percent for males and 43.7 percent for females. Illiteracy in the rest of the Arab countries was even worse. The rich Gulf country of Kuwait rated 74 percent of its population in the same age group (15-35) as illiterate in 2003 (see www.rrz.uni-hamburg.de/UNESCO-UIE/literacyxchange/arab_world.pdf).

If the level of illiteracy is that high in the Arab world in the twenty-first century, when education up to the 10th grade is free of charge in most of the Arab countries, how was it then during the periods of occupation: when only rich people could afford to send their children to school? It was only after the end of the British occupation of Egypt, when education became free for all Egyptians, that the high illiteracy rates started to drop in the 1950's (see Al-Sayyed: 2003).

3. The Gap between SA and Spoken Varieties

The high illiteracy rate in the Arab world is the key factor of increasing the gap between SA and colloquialisms. In addition, the role of the colonial powers in the Arab world was directed toward two issues as stated by Al-Kenai (1985: 74):

A. To spread the use of the colonial language in administration and education.

B. Or alternatively, to encourage the use of selected vernaculars as co-official languages in place where a uniform Arabic was in use. (My own emphasis).

It was obviously in the interest of all colonial powers (and missionaries) to encourage small pockets of recognized indigenous local varieties in order to silken the cultural homogeneity of their protectorates. The results of this policy were summed up by Fishman and Cooper, who in a worldwide survey of bilingualism found that "former Anglophone colonies were more linguistically diverse than the other countries. Whereas almost 80 percent of the countries which had never been Anglophone colonies were characterized as having a dominant language, only a little over one-third of the former Anglophone colonies were so characterized. Conversely, whereas less than 10 percent of the countries which had never been Anglophone colonies were described as linguistically mixed, about one-third of the former Anglophone colonies were so described". Consequently, the colonial authorities (British, French, Spanish and Italian) reinstated the use of Berber in Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya, the Coptic and Egyptian dialects in Egypt (the attempts of Wilmore and Wilcox are well known in this respect), Bornu and Waday in Sudan, Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish, Hebrew, Syriac and Phoenician in the Levant, Anzi and 7adrami dialects in the Peninsula. Even after independence linguistic legacies of the colonial period continued to create a political-cultural disparity among the different Arab countries who felt that, after almost complete neglect of Arabic under the colonialists, it was almost impossible to raise Arabic to be the sole vehicle of education and administration immediately.

The long period of foreign occupation of the Arab world resulted in political weakness and indecisiveness on the issue of SA as a national language for education, in spite of the fact that all the constitutions of Arab countries stipulate that SA is the only national language. None of the Arab countries have applied this principle, since English and French are still the main languages for university education.

This tendency has resulted in a judgment of the teaching and study of Arabic in the Arab world as an inferior branch of knowledge. The neglect of Arabic made Arabs repeat all the accusations about Arabic as a rigid and dead language. The study of SA among Arab students lacks enthusiasm. The reason for that is the absence of qualified Arabic language teachers, the old Arabic curriculum taught in schools, and the obsolete methods used in teaching Arabic (See Zughoul 2005 and 2007).

Moreover, people in the Arab world now believe that it is more important to master English as a global language than any other language even their own language.

The political frustration in the Arab world and lack of unity among Arabs are among the reasons that have made many Arabs direct their children toward foreign private schools like the American and British schools which have spread all over the Arab countries. It is also considered prestigious in Arab societies nowadays to register children in such schools where teaching is done wholly in English. The effect of globalization is clearly reflected in such schools not only in the adoption of English as a main language, but also in the absorption of foreign cultures and habits.

A more recent tendency led by the United States is that Arabic is a source of "terrorism", and that therefore, the teaching of Arabic should be resisted. Zughoul (2005:iii) states that "the United States has launched a new campaign on Arab and Islamic countries threatening that, unless they undertake a reform program at the educational level for reducing the teaching of Arabic and Islam, sanctions will be implemented". Zughoul (2005:v) claims that this policy -- "more English: less Islam" -- is now followed by most Arab countries who have started teaching English in the first grade even before the child is able to acquire his mother tongue: the number of English classes are far more than Arabic. As for higher education teaching, Zughoul adds that after September 11, most of the universities in the Arab world have transformed the official language of teaching into English as is the case in the universities of Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar.

The lack of unity among the Arabic Academies of the Arab world, their reluctance to standardise the Arabicization of terms and their inability to develop modern Arabic dictionaries that incorporate colloquial usage and newly coined expressions so as to extend Arabic and reflect the development of Arabic as a living language, are among the factors that deepen the current dilemma of SA.

Arabic mass media and the new private satellite channels vigorously promote colloquialisms and foreign cultures. Some internet sites play a massive role in propagating colloquialisms. The movie industry and TV drama series (which are basically monopolized by Egyptian cinema) are the main force promoting colloquialism. The publication of new magazines in the Arab world that depend wholly on colloquialisms as a way of attracting readers is also part of the current situation affecting SA (see Zughoul 2005 and 2007).

Another drawback is inconsistent political decision-making. The continuous and rapid change of education ministers in the Arab world does not allow educational policies to be implemented successfully. Ministers in the Arab world are appointed by the rulers of Arab countries. Ministers are prone to lose their ministries in a few days, months, or years. Such continuous cabinet reshuffling seriously harms the educational process and its development.

The deteriorating economic situation of the Arab states has resulted in a dangerous social-educational phenomenon of child labour and street children. The US Department of Labour published a study carried out in Egypt in 1988 and in 2001 of child labour, reporting that 1.4 million children in the age range of 6-14 work:

> While education is compulsory in Egypt until age 15, economic and social factors force many students out of school and into the workplace. Ministry of Education statistics show that 88 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 12 attend school, but a study carried out in cooperation with the World Bank by the National Council for Education Research indicates that 20 percent of the children enrolled in the first grade in the 1979-1980 school year dropped out before completing the sixth grade, Due to resource constraints many public schools operate on a shift schedule where up to three sets of children attend classes for approximately four hours apiece. Public school tuition, uniforms, and other school supplies raise the yearly cost of primary education to approximately $15 per child. Public primary education is also perceived by much of the population to be ineffective. Private lessons are regarded as essential if a child is to successfully complete the exams required for admission to secondary schools. These lessons, which must be paid for, are often given by the same person who teaches the child in the public school. One study of working children, conducted by an Egyptian social service organization in conjunction with the International Labour Organization, found that of all mothers interviewed, 90 percent complained of the high cost of education. (See www.dol.gov/ilab/media/reports/iclp/sweat/egypt.htm)

The situation of child labour in the rest of the Arab countries is no better than that in Egypt. Child labour and lack of confidence in public education aggravates the situation of illiteracy in the Arab world which is increasing the gap between SA and spoken varieties (see also Al-Deeb 2003, Zughoul 2007).

4. Spoken Varieties, Intelligibility, and Diglossia

Spoken varieties of Arabic are mutually highly intelligible. An Egyptian can communicate with a Palestinian with close to 100% intelligibility without the need to resort to SA. A similar situation applies to all members of the Arab world (except for Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia because of the influence of French in forming a special Franco-Arabic dialect). The reason behind this high intelligibility among spoken varieties of Arabic is that all of the varieties are based on SA vocabulary and grammar. The use of the voweling system differs from one part of the Arab world to another, but this does not influence intelligibility at all since all current voweling systems are remnants of earlier ones (see Rabin 1955, Zughoul 2007 Salah 2006). Another major difference between dialects is the change of certain sounds e.g. the /q/ could be pronounced /?/, /k/, /g/, and /'3/. This change of pronunciation is not new at all since it is also a remnant of early dialects of Arabic (see Salah 2006). Al-Kenai (1985: 72) states that:

> The existence of dialectal situation in the early and middle Muslim periods was revealed in several other events, for example:
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> 1. It is reported that the second Caliph Omar Bin Al-Khattab (634-44 A.D.) once scolded a Bedouin for reciting the Qur'an with a tribal accent.
>
> 2. The Umayyad Caliph Abdel-Malik Bin Marwan (685-705 A.D.) is said to have cautioned his sons and court attendants against petty colloquialism, by saying that: "a solecism */la7n/* in the speech of an honourable man is uglier than smallpox on a beautiful face, and it is even worse than a cut in a much-cherished dress."
>
> 3-The geographer Al-Maqdisi, who is best known for his travels in the Arab world during the fourth century A.H. (the ninth century A.D.) described the linguistic situation at that time in terms which indicate the relation between Qur'anic Arabic and spoken forms as not very different from the current situation.
>
> 4- Among the well-known writers on Arabic language and literature are Ibn Jinni and Al-Jahiz. These two expressed their acceptance of the existing dialects as different but equally valid varieties of Arabic. The former wrote a full chapter about dialects in which he says that "one will not be in the wrong to use these dialects especially when the need arises to compose a line of rhymed prose". (See Al-Kenai 1985:72)

Although dialects have existed all through the history of Arabic language, the dialectal situation has never hindered Arabs from achieving full communication.

The concept of diglossia as first represented by Krumbacher in 1902 implies two languages or two varieties that are distinct from each other as in the case of Latin and the Romance languages. The case of Arabic does not fall in the same category as the Latin situation. In Fishman's extended diglossia, every language would be described as diglossic. In effect, the whole concept of diglossia needs revision as stated by Britto (1986:7):

> The concept of diglossia demands the use of some key words, such as 'language', 'dialects', and 'variety' for unambiguous interpretation. Ferguson (1972:233) chooses to use them 'without precise definition' and assumes that 'they occur sufficiently in accordance with established usage'. He also uses another important phrase 'superposed variety' without definition.

Moreover, Ferguson tested four cases under nine heading or "rubrics" namely: function, prestige, acquisition, standardization, literary heritage, stability, lexicon, phonology, and grammar. The idea of intelligibility was never examined in Ferguson's diglossia, yet intelligibility is, in fact, a major parameter for judging a language as diglossic. Fasold (1984:40) notes that: "Ferguson restricts the term 'diglossia' to cases in the middle range of linguistic relatedness (more difference than there is between styles, less than there is between separate languages)". Ferguson's definition of diglossia is ambiguous and allows every language to be diglossic.

The diversity of Arabic language style and lexicon is not clear to many. Arabic grammar allows a variety of styles and all of them are valid. The sentence *hiya fi: almadrasati* ("she is in school"), for example, can be expressed in many ways in Arabic. it can be *fi: almadrasiti hiya* ("in school she is"), *almdrasati hiya fi:ha:* ("school she is in it"). All three styles are valid and acceptable. Therefore, almost any style used in colloquialisms is valid and purely Arabic. The lexicon of Arabic is based on forming words out of roots (mostly triliteral roots). Some roots can generate 120 words; the Arabic language has at least 100,000 roots (see Al-Jundi 1982). One commentator (Abdel-Tawwab 1997) claims that about 97-99 percent of ordinary speech among Arabs is purely Arabic words, with difference of vowel representations according to the dialect (see also Zughoul 2005, Al-Mousa 1987, Al-Tannir 1987, and Salah 2006). The problem that Arabic faces is with loan words where Arabic Academies have not settled on a single term for their translation or Arabicization. This dilemma forces Arabs to adopt a foreign expression as is without any change. The term "internet server" is translated in some Arabic Academies as *muzawwid alshabakah al?ilktruniyah*, and in some it is *'7adim alshabakah al?ilktruniyah*. The two translations are accurate but both are long and inefficient for everyday speech. Hence, Arabs tend to use the term *internet server* as it is in their speech. (See Al-Kenai, 1985).

5. Arabic Dictionaries and Arabicization

The Arabic language needs to arabicize such existing technical terms and include them in modern Arabic dictionaries. Arabicizing foreign terms can easily be done in Arabic if the political decision is taken and cooperation among Arabic Academies is achieved.

Political decisions should be taken not only regarding the Arabicization of foreign terms, but also to force their inclusion in Arabic dictionaries which require modification.

Arabic dictionaries lack documentation of modern usage of SA terms as is the case for the term *sayyarah* which is a Qur'anic term (Sura 12, verse 10). The term *sayyarah* was used to mean "caravan or convoy". The term *sayyarah* is used to mean "a car" in spoken varieties of Arabic. However, most modern Arabic dictionaries lack documentation of this current usage.

Therefore, Arabic dictionaries need to document the evolution of the modern usage of some Arabic terms and their pronunciation in at least the main colloquialisms of Arabic in order to promote Arabic language and culture, and facilitate the study of Arabic among foreign students. Such recommendations among others are mentioned in the *Arab Human Development Report 2003* by the UNDP which states in its introduction (UNDP, 2003:iv):

> The Report proposes a strategic vision that could support a creative Arab renaissance buttressed by five essential pillars:
>
> • Providing and guaranteeing the key freedoms of opinion, expression and association through good governance.
>
> • Broadening quality education and making it available to all.
>
> • Embedding science in Arab society, broadening the capacity for research and development and joining the information revolution decisively.
>
> • Shifting rapidly towards knowledge-based and higher value-added production.
>
> • Developing an enlightened Arab knowledge model that encourages cognitive learning, critical thinking, problem solving and creativity while promoting the **Arabic language**, cultural diversity, and openness to other cultures. **(My own emphasis***)*

The issue of the Arabic language was tackled separately in this report and the recommendation given is to maintain SA as a tool for education (not any of the colloquialisms), to extend Arabic dictionaries and to include modern scientific terms in Arabic dictionaries. The report also emphasizes the inability of any of the Arabic dialects to substitute for the standard and suggests wider promotion of standard usage as a main tool of education (especially higher education) and mass media to bridge the gap between Standard and spoken varieties.

6. Conclusion

Arabic language, in its current situation, will always be seen as a diglossic language if nothing is done to explain the relation between spoken varieties and SA. Arabic language should follow the example of the English language with its various dialects all over English speaking societies. Every dialect in English has its uniqueness, as being distinct from other English dialects, but intelligibility is high among those dialects, which is similar to the case of Arabic (see *The English Languages* by McArthur, 1998). However, English linguists are aware of the importance of including new vocabulary items. English dictionaries reflect the etymological development of lexicons. These multiple inputs into English are a source of power and strength in the language. The global political and economic dominance of the English language is the reason behind this continuous development of English which keeps the language updated and linked to all speakers of English. Arabic, however, has stronger reasons to follow the example of English since it is the language of religion, cultural heritage (that goes back one thousand five hundred years), and deeply rooted traditions. The economic and political factors are variables which could change within a few decades; while religion, culture and traditions are stable factors that protect the language from fragmenting into separate languages as was the case of Latin and the Romance languages. The Arabic language is united perforce as long as the main three factors exist: religion, cultural heritage and traditions. Hence, an Arab political decision must be taken to empower and revive the Arabic language to meet the needs of the twenty first century as a scientific and a literary language. Arabic should be cherished for being the only language in which ordinary people, with a little effort, can read materials that go back fifteen hundred years.

6.1 Recommendations

1) The current situation of the Arabic language should change as soon as possible, as recommended in the extended approach, by revising current Arabic dictionaries to include colloquial and slang usage of terms.

2) Arabic Academies have to accept the Arabicization of foreign words that have entered Arab societies even if they do not have easy equivalents.

3) The educational systems have to be revised in the Arab world to put an end to the high illiteracy in Arab societies which aggravates the gap between standard and spoken varieties.

4) Standard Arabic should be promoted and enhanced by a political decision to make it the language of education.

5) Methods of teaching Arabic are not as effective as they should be. New methods for teaching Arabic need to be adopted to improve the command of SA among Arab students.

6) The Arabic Mass Media need to understand their vital role in promoting standard. A political and social decision should be taken to make Arabic Mass media a tool for bridging the gap between standard and spoken varieties.

7) Arab linguists and rulers of the Arab world should be more aware of the ongoing call for colloquialisms as a colonial survival void of objectivity. This call should be defied by the call for standard as it was recommended in the Arab Human Development Report 2003 issued by the UNDP.

8) Inherent varieties or "colloquialisms" that existed for more than 1500 years should be accepted as dialects of Arabic that could not develop to be a separate language because of the strong and continuous connection with SA via religious practices, Mass Media, education and cultural heritage.

9) Before persuading Arab students that Arabic is an adequate replacement for foreign languages, it will be necessary to show them that Arabic can give them access to materials of the same quality as those available in English and French. This can be achieved through promoting the process of translation into Arabic and encouraging research in the Arab world. Research and translation in the Arab world are the lowest among all nations (see *Arab Human Development Report* 2003).

10) Illiteracy is a major problem in the Arab world. The eradication of this problem will greatly contribute to bridging the gap between SA and spoken varieties of Arabic.

A Guide to Arabic Transliteration

The study will use the following representation of Arabic sounds:

Arabic letters (consonants)	Transliteration	Place and Manner of Articulation	Example
أ	?	Glottal stop (plosive)	?amal (hope)
ب	b	Voiced denti-alveolar, non-emphatic	ba7r (sea)
ت	t	Voiceless denti-alveolar plosive, non-emphatic	tilmi:TH (student)
ث	Th	Voiceless dental fricative	Thaman (price)
ج	j	Voiced palato-alveolar affricate	jamal (camel)
ح	7	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative	7ama:m (pigeons)
خ	'7	Voiced uvular fricative	'7ashab (wood)
د	d	Voiced denti-alveolar plosive, non-emphatic	dawlah (country)
ذ	TH	Voiced dental fricative, non-emphatic	THawq (taste)
ر	r	Voiced alveolar trill	ra?s (head)
ز	z	Voiced denti-alveolar sulcal fricative	zuka:m (cold)
س	s	Voiceless denti-alveolar sulcal fricative, non-emphatic	sama:? (sky)
ش	sh	Voiceless palato-alveolar fricative	shams (sun)
ص	S	Voiceless denti-alveolar sulcal fricative, emphatic	Saqr (falcon)
ض	D	Voiced denti-alveolar plosive, emphatic	Da'7m (big)
ط	T	Voiceless denti-alveolar plosive, emphatic	Ta7i:n (flour)
ظ	<u>D</u>	Voiced dental fricative, emphatic	Dama? (thirst)
ع	3	Voiced pharyngeal fricative	3ayn (eye)
غ	'3	Voiced uvular fricative	'3uba:r (dust)
ف	f	Voiceless labio-dental fricative	fam (mouth)
ق	q	Voiced uvular plosive, emphatic	qamar (moon)
ك	k	Voiceless velar plosive	kalb (dog)
ل	l	Voiced denti-alveolar lateral	layl (night)
م	m	Voiced bilabial nasal	misr (Egypt)
ن	n	Voiced denti-alveolar nasal	naml (ants)
ه	h	Voiceless glottal fricative	hawa:? (air)
و	w	Voiced bilabial glide	wa7sh (beast)
ي	y	Voiced palatal glide	ya:fa: (Jaffa)

The double consonant can be achieved through the "shaddah" (a small Arabic s) over the consonant that need to be doubled.

Short and Long Arabic Vowels

Vowels	Transliteration	Place and manner of articulation
-------ǒ	a	Low back short vowel
-----ǒ́---	u	High back short vowel
------ǫ--	i , e	High front short vowel
--و----	u:	High long back vowel
--ا-----	a:	Low long back vowel
---ا----	o:	Long mid round tense back vowel
--ي----	i:	High long front vowel
--ي----	ai	Closing diphthong

Note: "tanween" is part of the voweling system of Arabic achieved through adding one of the short vowels: /a/, /i/, or /u/ to the sound /n/ to locate the grammatical slot of the term, e.g. the word "kita:b" (book), it would be inflected "kita:ban", "kita:bun" or "kita:bin" according to its grammatical slot.

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